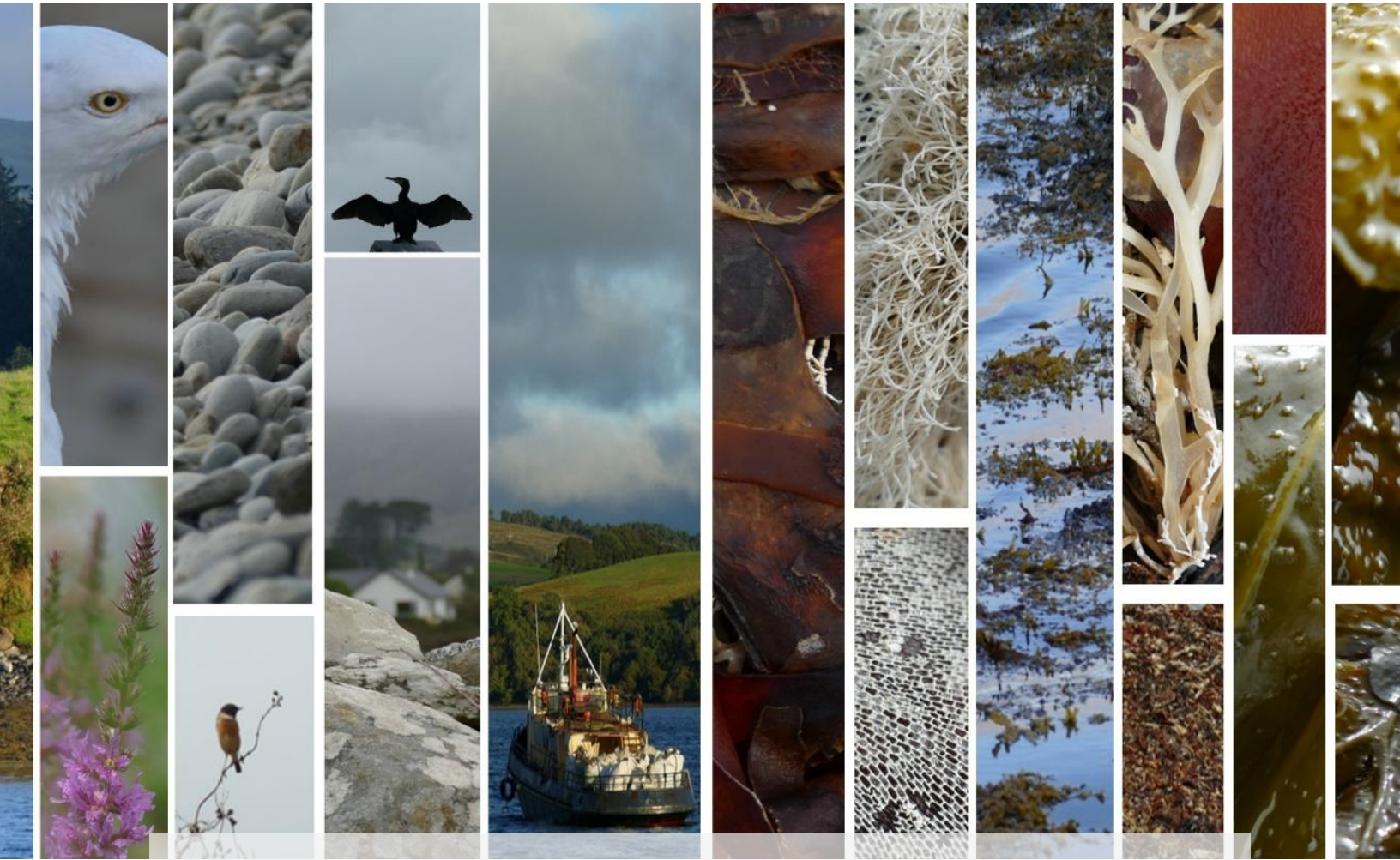




Listening With Feeling:

Setting the course for an emotional marine governance

A thesis submitted to Faculty I – School of Educational and Social Sciences of the University of Oldenburg
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree and title of Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. Phil.)

by

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Abstract

While marine governance has emerged to manage the global interest stimulated by the ‘oceanic turn,’ it largely hinges on techno-rational approaches that do not account for the human dimensions of the oceans. Focusing on the case study of an environmental campaign resisting a decision made by the Irish government to grant a mechanical kelp harvesting licence in Bantry Bay, this research attends to these human dimensions with the aim of better understanding the place of emotion in marine governance. In particular, the research a) develops a methodology for researching emotion in a marine context; b) builds on a method for analysing emotion through deep listening; and c) explores various emotional connections to the oceans through this deep listening approach. Situated within the marine social sciences, feminist and emotional geographies, feminist political ecology and arts-based research, this research employs policy analysis, semi-structured interviews, and autoethnographic snorkelling to collect data. Using the Listening Guide methodology to analyse data, the study reveals *listening* as a key tool for researching emotion, shedding light on the deeply emotional nature of resource conflicts, the centrality of emotion in ‘connecting with each other’ and ‘connecting with the ocean,’ and the importance of reflexively listening to our own voice as researchers. These findings lead to an art-science collaboration that works with and through emotion to think about how to listen for emotion as a collective. Ultimately, by consolidating existing work on oceans, emotions, and governance, and making significant methodological and empirical contributions to these fields, this research serves as a springboard for future work that aims to respond to the question of, ‘*Whose emotions come to matter in marine governance?*’

Zusammenfassung

Die Meerespolitik hat ihren Ursprung in einem gesteigerten weltweiten Bewusstsein, welches durch die „Ozeanische Wende“ angeregt wurde. Sie baut auf einem technisch-rationalem Weltbild auf, ohne dabei jedoch die menschliche Dimension der Meere zu berücksichtigen. Um ein besseres Verständnis für den Stellenwert menschlicher Faktoren, insbesondere Emotionen, in der Meerespolitik zu erlangen, wird im Rahmen dieser Arbeit eine Fallstudie näher betrachtet. Die Studie ist in der irischen Bantry Bay situiert und betrachtet den Widerstand einer Umweltkampagne gegen die Erteilung einer Regierungserlaubnis zur industriellen Ernte von Seetang. Im Rahmen der Forschung wird a) Methodik entwickelt, um Emotion im Meereskontext zu erforschen; diese basiert b) auf einer Methode zur Emotionsanalyse, die im „deep listening“ Ansatz fundiert ist; dabei werden c) vielfältige emotionale Verbindungen zum Meer näher betrachtet. Diese Studie hat ihre Wurzeln in den marinen Sozialwissenschaften, aber auch feministischer und emotionaler Geografie, sowie feministischer Politikwissenschaft und kunstbasierten Forschungsansätzen. Zur Erhebung von Daten nutzt sie semistrukturierte Interviews und autoethnografisches Schnorcheln. Unter Verwendung der Listening Guide-Methode zur Datenanalyse enthüllt die Studie *das Zuhören* als Schlüsselinstrument für die Erforschung von Emotionen und beleuchtet die zutiefst emotionale Natur von Ressourcenkonflikten, die zentrale Bedeutung von Emotionen bei der „Verbindung miteinander“ und der „Verbindung mit dem Ozean“ sowie die Bedeutung des reflexiven Zuhörens auf unsere eigene Stimme als Forscher. Die Erkenntnisse münden in einer künstlerisch-wissenschaftlichen Zusammenarbeit, bei der darüber nachgedacht wird, wie das Kollektiv mit und durch Emotionen wirken kann, um die eigenen Emotionen besser zu berücksichtigen. Durch die Konsolidierung bestehender Arbeiten zu Ozeanen, Emotionen und Meerespolitik und durch bedeutende methodische und empirische Beiträge zu diesen Bereichen dient diese Forschung als Sprungbrett für künftige Arbeiten, die darauf abzielen, die Frage zu beantworten: „*Wessen Emotionen zählen für die Meerespolitik?*“

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can be a space of joy, healing, love, growth, magic, liberation, and intention (and so much silliness). I can't wait to see where our paths will take us and when they will cross again.

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Declarations of independent authorship and good scholarly practice

I hereby declare that I have produced this thesis independently and without unauthorised external assistance, that is to say without using any means other than the aids specified, and have acknowledged and attributed all thoughts taken directly or indirectly from external sources.

I hereby declare that the contents of this thesis have not already for the most part been used by me for a Bachelor's, Master's, Diplom or similar examination paper.

I hereby declare that I have followed the regulations on good scholarly practice of the University of Oldenburg to conduct this research and to produce this thesis. This research has received ethical clearance from the Research Impact Assessment and Ethics Committee at the University of Oldenburg (see letter of ethical approval in Appendix A).

I hereby declare that no commercial placement or consulting services (PhD counselling) have been used in connection with this doctoral project.

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Publications and Presentations

This thesis has been the source of inspiration for a triple-blind peer review publication by Levi and Peters (2024), which frames emotion as a crucial component of marine governance. It is cited as follows:

Levi, S. & Peters, K. (2024). Concerning emotions: feminist contributions to reflexive marine governance. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 27(1), pp.66-78. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1523908X.2024.2395862>

Parts of this thesis have been disseminated at the following conferences: the Conference of Irish Geographers 2023 (Wexford, Ireland); MARE – People & the Sea 2023 (Amsterdam, Netherlands); POLLEN 2024 (Lund, Sweden); and the International Geographical Conference 2024 (Dublin, Ireland). In addition, this research has been shared at invited events, including the Ocean Future Lab Hackathon 2022 (virtual event), and the Heritage for Global Challenges Symposium (York, UK).

While this project has not directly interacted with or included industry stakeholder perspectives, it has engaged with industry actors and shared parts of this research through a poster presentation at Seagriculture 2024 (Tórshavn, Faroe Islands), a global seaweed industry conference.

As discussed in Chapter 7, this research also entailed an art-science collaboration which transformed the findings into a public-facing musical performance, entitled *Wrack 'n' Roll – a musical exploration of seaweed*, performed on the 2nd of August, 2024 as part of the Resonate Festival in Skibbereen, Co. Cork, Ireland.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The world is experiencing an ‘oceanic moment’: a moment in time in which the seas and oceans are at the forefront of global interest (Boswell et al., 2022; Peters et al., 2023; Peters & Steinberg, 2019; Poto & Vita, 2025; Probyn et al., 2020; Steinberg & Peters, 2015), both academically and in everyday, policy realms (typified by new global treaties and initiatives). The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030); the widespread uptake of management tools such as marine spatial planning (MSP) and marine protected areas (MPAs); growing commercial interest in extracting and commodifying marine spaces and more-than-human entities (e.g., seabed minerals and marine biopharmaceuticals); and a push towards marine renewable energy (including offshore wind, wave, and tidal energy) all attest to this ‘oceanic turn’ (DeLoughrey, 2016) – or what J. Anderson et al. (2022, p. 3) term a ‘(re)turn’ – noting the long history of influence of the sea in lived experience and scholarly interest. Overall, there is a growing recognition of the marine realm as one of vital importance to the well-being and survival of our species, as well as to every other species and ecosystem around the world (see for example Franke et al., 2020).

Marine governance has emerged as a way to manage the flurry of recreational pursuits, geopolitical interventions, research engagements, and economic investments stimulated by this ‘oceanic turn,’ as well as negotiating and coordinating overlapping interests and activities across scales and sectors (see Germond, 2018 and Singh & Ort, 2020 for an overview of marine governance). Crucially, McKinley et al. (2024b) remind us that

while marine governance has traditionally been driven by ecological, and more recently economic, dimensions of ocean systems, it is important to recognise its origins as a human construct, and that it is essentially about managing human activity and its impact on the ocean, coasts and seas at various scales. (p. 2)

Yet, despite the maxim that “[m]anagement of marine resources is management of people,” governance practices and processes remain hinged on techno-rational approaches to management that at best ignore and at worst enact violence toward human-ocean relations (Neilson & São Marcos, 2019, p. 1). Indeed,

the seas and oceans are not vacant, neutral spaces devoid of humanity. Human histories, imaginaries, fortunes, concerns, political agendas, power relations, bodies, waste, diseases have and continue to circulate like currents in and on and across the seas and oceans. As humans, we have lived and died by (and at) the sea; we love it and fear it; we paint it and sing of and to it; we exploit and pollute it. We are *of* it: the salt in our tears, the calcium in our bones, the waters of our wombs all speak to a heritage shared by all human beings (see Carson, 2003 and Hau'ofa, 2008). The seas are undeniably emotional. Why, then, does the raft of research taking people and society seriously in the context of the sea remain oddly unemotional in accounts of such relations?

In this work I¹ build from those who advocate for human oceans (Anand, 2023; Bennett, 2019; Farr & Zurita, 2025; Hau'ofa, 2008; Kearney et al., 2022; Mulrennan & Scott, 2000; Todd, 2018), but serves as a crucial reminder that when the world is peopled, it is inhabited, it is lived, it is experienced, it is practiced – *in deeply physical and emotional ways*. Efforts to govern the seas 'rationally' are not only out of touch with this emotional reality. By ignoring emotions, fundamental aspects of the human dimensions of the seas are neglected. We do not do the seas – and ourselves – justice by governing without emotion, or at least paying attention to their very real presence and tangible influence. It is crucial, then, to shift towards modes of governance that are accepting of and guided by the emotional complexities of human-ocean relations (Levi & Peters, 2024). "Recognising emotion," note Levi and Peters (2024, p. 69) "thus becomes not simply a matter of ticking a box but a matter of politics and of justice."

1.1.1. Research rationale, aims, contributions, and ethic

We do not often think of emotions and politics as going hand in hand, but emotions are highly political, and politics are highly emotional (Ahmed, 2004; Ling, 2014). Many voices in academia have acknowledged the need for greater recognition and consideration of emotions in politics and governance, but as of yet, few have taken up this call to take emotions seriously in the context of *marine* governance in particular (for exceptions see for example Kearns & Collins, 2012 and Pafi, 2021). However, K. Anderson and Smith (2001) maintain that

academic commitment to highlighting the emotional consequences of seemingly rational economic decisions is an important element in bringing these actions to account. If the logic of efficiency *depends* on

¹ See 'positionality statement' in Section 3.2.3. for an explanation of my use of the first-person 'I' throughout this thesis.

the silencing of the emotions, academics have a role in pointing out that this is an ethically questionable state of affairs. (p. 8)

While there has been extensive research on the emotions-politics link through terrestrial, territorial lenses, to date, there has been a dearth of academic engagement with emotions and politics in *marine* contexts (see burgeoning work on ‘emoceans’ by McKinley et al., 2023, McKinley et al., 2024a and McRuer et al., 2024). In this thesis I attend to this crucial area with the **overarching aim of better understanding the place of emotions in marine governance**, in the hope that embracing, rather than eschewing, emotion will enable us “to imagine – and in turn build – different governance futures” (Peters, 2020, p. 8). To investigate the ways in which emotion plays a role in marine governance, this thesis a) **develops a methodology for researching emotions in marine contexts**; b) **builds on a method for analysing emotion through a deep listening approach**; and c) **applies this methodology to explore and make sense of various configurations of emotional connections to the oceans and their relevance to marine governance**. As such, in this thesis I draw on calls to study emotions and the oceans (*emoceans*, to follow McKinley et al., 2023, McKinley et al., 2024a) through special attention not only to emotional human-ocean relations, but also to the development of a methodological approach for grasping them as well as for understanding the processes by which they come to matter (or not).

In this three-fold manner – how to research emotion, how to listen for emotions, and how to make sense of emotions – in this research **I make both empirical contributions to the understanding of governance-emotion relations, and critical methodological contributions to the ways in which emotions, in their various and often subtle forms, can be researched and listened to**. In doing so, I take on a newly emergent field and then build an approach to study that field. To illustrate how emotions are part of the various aspects of governing the marine environment, this research takes a timely, topical and emotive case study to respond to the above questions. The thesis centres around the case of an environmental campaign (named *Bantry Bay – Protect Our Native Kelp Forest* and henceforth referred to as ‘the campaign’) a community-based campaign that emerged and mobilised in response to a marine governance decision made by the Irish government to grant a licence for the mechanical harvesting of kelp (or seaweed) in Bantry Bay (Co. Cork, Ireland). This carefully-selected case was chosen to offer fertile ground (or water) for exploring the inextricable links between emotions in marine governance processes.

In making original empirical and methodological headway in the study of emotion in marine governance, this thesis is centred most significantly in marine social sciences (Bavinck & Verrips, 2020; Bennett, 2019; McKinley et al., 2020; McKinley et al., 2022). The marine social sciences are not ‘one’ monolithic discipline,

but – for each study of the sea – engage the necessary social science subjects needed to explore the topic in question. As Bennett (2019) explains:

The marine social sciences draw from a diverse and well-established set of disciplines, methods, and theories to rigorously study the human dimensions of ocean and coastal issues and challenges (Aswani et al., 2017; Bennett et al., 2017). The traditional disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, economics, geography, political science, history, and psychology, can inform marine social science efforts. So too can more applied disciplines – such as law, education, communication studies, and development studies – and interdisciplinary efforts that examine the marine environment as a socialecological system. Drawing on diverse disciplinary roots, the field employs a broad array of methods – including quantitative (e.g., surveys, economic analysis), qualitative (e.g., interviews, focus groups, archival research) and participatory methods (e.g., participatory mapping, community-based research, action research, arts-based methods) (p. 246).

Given the attention to emotions and their longstanding *place* in geographic studies (K. Anderson & Smith, 2001; Davidson & Milligan, 2004), in this thesis I bring together various sub-disciplines of *geography* (feminist, critical resource, and emotional geographies), feminist political ecologies, along with broader feminist theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches that stem from the critical social sciences. Additionally, I weave a creative strand through this thesis which has been informed by (and responds to) arts-based research around oceans (Bennett & Roth, 2019; Brennan, 2018; Jung et al., 2022; McKinley et al., 2024a; Strand et al., 2022; Whittaker, 2024; Whittaker et al., 2024). Framed by these literatures and creative sensibilities, the research employs multiple methods from different disciplines to approach the case study, ranging from policy analysis to semi-structured interviews, from a methodology of deep listening to a community musical performance. Rather than converging on one narrow point, these multiple methods act as a ‘collage’ (Freeman, 2020) to elucidate a broad research area, namely, *emotional marine governance*. Through the case study, literatures, data collection and analysis methods, and creative components, **in this thesis I demonstrate that marine governance, from its conception and development to its implementation and evaluation, is saturated with emotions**. While I do not claim to hold definitive solutions to complex governance issues, I offer a much-needed starting point for taking emotion seriously in marine governance as well as in broader scientific and policy contexts.

Every part of this thesis is guided by feminist ethics of care (McEwan & Goodman, 2010; Middleton & Samanani, 2020; Raghuram, 2021), from case study selection and design to formulating specific aims and objectives, from engaging with research participants in the field to analysing data and interpreting findings (see Section 3.2. for a ‘positionality statement’ and Chapter 6 for deeper autoethnographic reflections on positionality). Critical to this feminist ethos is the approach to knowledge as situated and contextual

(Haraway, 2013; Ojeda et al., 2022). The human and more-than-human beings living in this place are the origin of the knowledge that forms the foundation for the evidence and arguments found in this dissertation. Challenging the violence of divorcing knowledges from their contexts, this thesis treats them as inseparable to acknowledge and honour their relationality (Ojeda et al., 2022; Querejazu, 2022; Todd, 2016; Tynan, 2020). For the remainder of this introductory chapter, then, I dive deep into the particulars of the case study: the cultural and social significance of seaweed, the complex governance of seaweed in Ireland, the geographical context of Bantry Bay, and the story of a campaign that arose out of these specific contexts and this particular place.

1.2. Case study: mechanical kelp harvesting in Bantry Bay

In this section I introduce the case study around which this research centres, namely, the case of mechanical kelp harvesting in Bantry Bay. To sum up the case study in simplified terms (ahead of the finer details and intersecting contexts): a company applied for, and was granted, a licence by the Irish government to mechanically harvest kelp (*Laminaria hyperborea*), a type of brown seaweed, in Bantry Bay, Co. Cork, Ireland (see map in Figure 1 below). The licence was granted in 2014; however, after learning of this governance decision only in 2017, there was widespread frustration and anger across communities living around the bay over not feeling listened to, and concerns about minimal legal considerations for the environment. In response, an environmental campaign was formed to resist this governance decision to allow mechanical kelp harvesting. After years of protests and legal battles, the campaign was ‘successful’ in the sense that they achieved their objective of blocking the kelp harvesting operation from moving forward, albeit at an incredibly high financial and *emotional* cost for the individuals and communities involved.

This is a simplified version of events; the reality is much more nuanced and complex; much more human and deeply emotional. In this section, then, my aim is to better understand *why* these events unfolded as they did. I first provide background on the natural and cultural dimensions of seaweed to demonstrate why seaweed comes to be emotional. I then describe the contemporary and historical governance context in which this case study is embedded to demonstrate that governance does not emerge from a vacuum but is contingent on historical and socio-political forces. To situate the case study in its particular geographical context, I then outline a brief ‘biography’ of Bantry Bay, with descriptions of its unique geomorphology, flora and fauna, designated sites, and socioeconomic profile. Lastly, I provide a detailed account of the key events relevant to the case study and how they unfolded across the years.

In this way, this section frames the case study in spatial and temporal terms, and situates it within its entangled geographical, and associated social, political, and historical contexts. In addition, I firmly situate this research, from the literatures to the data collection and analysis methods to the findings, within the contexts that have informed and shaped it (Haraway, 2013). This too, is a highly geographical approach that operates “as if place mattered,” particularly in relation to planning and decision-making (Alkon & Traugot, 2008; J. Anderson et al., 2010, p. 600; Booth, 2014; Parés et al., 2014).

1.2.1. Seaweed: a natural and cultural resource

There is a long history of human use of seaweed around the world, for various purposes ranging from medicine, fertiliser, building material and fuel, to food, currency, jewellery and ceremonial use (Delaney et al., 2016; Mouritsen & Pérez-Lloréns, 2024). This close link between humans and seaweed is also reflected in the cultural heritage of many societies, with references to seaweed found in art, mythology and folklore (Mouritsen et al., 2021). East Asia, for instance, has a history of using seaweed for different purposes, particularly for culinary use, spanning thousands of years (Delaney et al., 2016). However, because the case study in this research focuses on Northern Europe, for the remainder of this dissertation I focus on the use of seaweed in Northern Europe, and in Ireland in particular. Coastal communities have historically and traditionally related to and used seaweed, primarily as a food source and as fertiliser for their land, but also as animal feed, soil treatment and building material (Delaney et al., 2016; Mouritsen et al., 2021; Zocchi et al., 2024). The hand-harvesting of seaweed is a traditional activity that has sustained livelihoods, food culture and sustainable agricultural practices for generations, and continues to be culturally and socioeconomically important in many coastal communities today (Mac Monagail & Morrison, 2020; Zocchi et al., 2024). Of particular cultural significance, both in the past and today, are several species of brown seaweed, including *Ascophyllum nodosum* (knotted wrack), *Laminaria hyperborea* (tangle or cuvie), *Laminaria digitata* (oar-weed), and *Saccharina latissima*, (sugar kelp), red seaweeds such as *Palmaria palmata* (dulse) and *Chondrus crispus* (Irish moss or carrageen), and a type of coralline red algae known as maërl (Delaney et al., 2016; Mac Monagail & Morrison, 2020; Zocchi et al., 2024).

However, “despite its notable economic and sociocultural significance, seaweed embodied elements of privation, underdevelopment and hardship that characterised life patterns in Irish coastal communities, and consequently, it has a complicated identity and presence” (Zocchi et al., 2024, p. 2). The devastating Great Famine of 1845-1849 played a significant part in the widespread associations of seaweed with poverty, tragedy and starvation (Mouritsen et al., 2021; Mac Monagail & Morrison, 2020; Zocchi et al.,

2024). Before British occupation, land ownership in Ireland was communal and decentralised, involving cooperative farming practices and a high degree of diversity in crops and livestock, which supported agricultural resilience, food security, and food sovereignty (O'Connor, 2023). British imperial control transformed this system into one of centralised, private land ownership, leading to widespread displacement and dispossession of farming communities (O'Connor, 2023). Agriculture shrank to a monocrop model focused on exporting cash crops such as wheat and potatoes, thus eroding the agricultural resilience and food sovereignty offered by the traditional system and exacerbating the vulnerability of local populations to food insecurity and famine (O'Connor, 2023).

As potato blight and mass crop failures swept the country, starvation took hold of the population, people turned to the shore in a desperate search for sustenance, and “access to the foreshore with a rich vegetation of nutritionally dense seaweeds became the ‘last resort’ for the starving population” (Mouritsen et al., 2021, p. 444). There was a steep decline in the consumption of seaweed in the century following the Famine, but recent years have seen a revival of interest around seaweed as a trendy culinary ingredient and for its potential in mitigating climate change (Mouritsen et al., 2021; Zocchi et al., 2024). Indeed, Zocchi et al. (2024) argue that the revival in Ireland is culturally – and perhaps *emotionally* – significant, involving a redefinition of meanings and values around seaweed:

This revival does not entail only the food uses of seaweed but also the redefinition of the cultural significance of seaweed for the local population, emphasising its ecological importance and fostering community engagement in its revitalisation. This bottom-up approach seems to revitalise seaweeds through an actualisation process, which has also been identified as one of the dynamics underpinning the heritagisation processes in food and gastronomy. Through this process, new meanings are attributed to seaweed that redefine its past significance, often linked to scarcity and famine, and attribute it new values associated with ideas of wellness, leisure and sustainability, as also observed for other wild foods and associated practices. (p. 24)

With sustainability now more relevant than ever before (Kleespies & Dierkes, 2022), seaweed has come into the global limelight as a ‘solution’ for a range of environmental and social issues, with the potential for preventing disease, mitigating climate change, combatting pollution, addressing the plastics crisis, serving as a source of sustainable fuel, enhancing food security and nutritional health, improving agriculture and animal husbandry, and providing important bioactive ingredients (Farghali et al., 2023; Mouritsen et al., 2021). Indeed, in a review of papers exploring the various potentials of seaweed, Farghali et al. (2023, p. 141) found that as carbon sinks, “seaweeds provide a solution to climate change”; as sustainable fuel, for “resolving the current energy crisis”; as a bioplastic, “to combat plastics pollution and

replace synthetic plastics”; for their bioactive ingredients, used in “antimicrobial, antioxidant, anticancer, antifungal, antiviral, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant products”; in medical products, “could reduce reliance on chemical products and their resistance issues, such as antimicrobial resistance, thereby improving the health of humans and livestock”; and for use in cosmetics as a “anti-ageing, anti-acne, deodorising, moisturising, whitening agent, anti-wrinkle, anti-inflammatory, sensory enhancer, ultraviolet protection, anti-allergic, stabiliser.”

In addition, there is a growing recognition of seaweed’s ecosystem services for environmental and human well-being. These include supporting services (e.g., formation of sediments, photosynthesis, primary production, nutrient and water cycling, and provision of habitats for a diversity of species); regulating services (e.g., climate regulation, erosion protection, water purification, production of atmospheric oxygen); provisioning services (e.g., fibre, food, biochemicals, pharmaceutical compounds); and cultural services (e.g., educational, aesthetic, spiritual, and cultural values, recreation and tourism, inspiration, and role in local knowledge systems) (Cotas et al., 2023). These ecosystem services demonstrate the critical importance of seaweed to nature and to people, as well as the intimate link between the two. Both for its current ecosystem services and its future potential, seaweed has attracted considerable interest from a wide range of stakeholders, including local communities, industry, and governance actors across all scales of governance (Mac Monagail & Morrison, 2020). However, there are few regulatory mechanisms in Ireland for managing seaweed resources, both in terms of the kinds of seaweed that can be harvested and the quantities thereof (Mac Monagail & Morrison, 2020). I now turn to the complexities involved in governing seaweed in Ireland.

1.2.2. Seaweed: an (emotional) marine governance context

In the Republic of Ireland, the Foreshore Act 1933 (henceforth ‘the Act’) is the key piece of legislation that is used to regulate seaweed (including *Laminaria*). Under the Act, the seabed and shore below the mean high water mark are the property of the State, and, as public land, may not be sold, but may be leased for particular uses. The definition of the foreshore also comprises ‘beach material,’ an umbrella category of organic materials that includes seaweed (Mac Monagail & Morrison, 2020). With some exceptions made to protect historic ‘seaweed rights’ and ensure traditional harvesting of seaweed on or adjacent to one’s coastal property, any party wishing to remove ‘beach material’ from the foreshore (e.g., the removal of sand, the harvesting of wild seaweed) must apply for a foreshore licence as set out by the Act (Mac Monagail & Morrison, 2020).

Levi and Peters (2024) recognise emotions as driving forces behind *why* marine governance emerges as it does, as something that both structures and is structured by governance processes, that is embedded within and shaping power relations that privilege certain emotions (experienced by powerful groups) over others. Interrogating “the broader (and often hidden) conditions and infrastructures in which a particular mode of governance is situated, and from which particular displays of emotions emerge – or rather, are *legitimised* and *allowed to emerge*” is critical for understanding the specific ways in which emotions come to matter, for “whose emotions become political matters *is a political matter*” (Levi & Peters, 2024, p. 69, emphasis in original). In order to situate key events of the case study in this dissertation within a particular governance context, and to better understand *why* these events unfolded as they did, I now turn to a brief summary of the historical (and highly emotional) context out of which the Act emerged.

The Act was developed in the highly turbulent 1920s following the Irish War of Independence, the Partition of Ireland, the Irish Civil War, and the formation of the Irish Free State, the state precursory to the modern-day Republic of Ireland.. The Irish post-colonial context is important to better understand how forms of contemporary governance have emerged – not out of a vacuum but out of a deep and complex history. When the Irish Free State was being established, a new Constitution was being drafted to govern the newly independent state. One of the most important tasks in the establishment of independence was asserting sovereignty over all of the lands and nature (in terms of natural resources) within the newly-independent nation. During the drafting of the Constitution, Kevin O’Higgins, a politician involved in this process of drafting, argued in a parliamentary debate on the 18th of October 1922 that Article 12² of the Constitution “reserves to the State all the land, waters, mines, minerals and all forms of potential energy within the area of the State, and it forbids their alienation” in the form of transfer of ownership rights through the sale of land (O’Higgins, 1922, n.p.). By ensuring that the State would lease land rather than selling it, this Article, according to O’Higgins (1922, n.p.), “protects the country that has become politically free from becoming economically unfree by reason of having its resources bought up by capitalists of other countries.” There is a strong implicit equation in this sentiment between political and economic freedom, suggesting that safeguarding land and natural resources – or rather, their economic value – is an integral part of safeguarding independence; control over nature is control over territory.

The finalised text of the original Act (Foreshore Act 1933) states the purpose of the Act and lays out definitions for the foreshore, tidal lands, the seashore, and beach material. The Act allows for “the

² This went on to become Article 11 of the finalised Constitution of the Irish Free State.

granting of leases and licences in respect of foreshore belonging to Saorstát Éireann³; this lease- and licence-granting capacity is a function of Article 11 (Article 12 in its earlier draft form) of the Constitution, which safeguards against the alienation through leases rather than sales of land. It defines the extent of the foreshore belonging to the Irish Free State, over which the State has the right of control and ownership. In doing so, it extends the territory of Ireland past the land and into the sea. However, as described above, the foreshore consists of more than just the ‘bed and shore’ of water bodies; it also comprises socioeconomically valuable ‘beach material’ including “sand, clay, gravel, shingle, stones, rocks, and mineral substances... and also seaweed whether growing or rooted on the seashore or deposited or washed up thereon by the action of tides, winds, and waves” (Foreshore Act 1933). At first glance, the lumping together of sand, clay, gravel and other geological materials with seaweed seems arbitrary. There is, however, a very specific reason for this categorisation. The Mines and Minerals Act 1931 was being developed around the same time as the Foreshore Act. This Act reserved the right to the State of “all minerals and substances in or under land obtainable by underground or surface working” (Mines and Minerals Act 1931). In order to protect private property rights, this definition expressly excluded sand, clay, gravel, and stones, because these four materials co-constitute the physical materiality of land.

In a parliamentary debate on the Mines and Minerals Act, one senator emotionally remarked (Comyn, 1931):

This empowers them to enter upon a man’s land and to deprive him of the sacred right of property and the sacred feeling of property. Stone, gravel, sand and clay are minerals... if you authorise any man for any purpose to go inside a man’s farm to get a mineral which for this purpose includes ‘stone, gravel, sand or clay,’ you tear up the agreement you made with him, because under his agreement of purchase and under his vesting order ‘stone, gravel, sand or clay’ are his and you cannot touch them... You have no right to touch him. This Bill, by indirect means, is an invasion of the private rights of the small farmers of this country. (n.p.)

It was not acceptable, then, for the State to lay claim to material found on one’s privately owned land, and thus such economic and deeply emotional intensities around land ownership and property rights led to the exclusion of stone, gravel, sand, and clay from the Mines and Minerals Act. The foreshore, however, was a different matter. These materials were physically present on the foreshore as well, but because the foreshore was public land under the ownership of the State (as established by the Foreshore Act), these materials were lumped together with seaweed, found uniquely on the foreshore, under ‘beach material.’

³ Saorstát Éireann means ‘Irish Free State’ in the Irish language.

Section 3 of the Foreshore Act was the clause invoked when approving a foreshore licence submitted for the removal of ‘beach material.’ Section 3 (Foreshore Act 1933) reads as follows:

If, in the opinion of the Minister, it is in the public interest that a licence should be granted to any person in respect of any foreshore belonging to Saorstát Éireann... to remove any beach material from such foreshore... the Minister may, subject to the provisions of this Act, grant by deed under his official seal such licence to such person for such term not exceeding ninety-nine years commencing at or before the date of such licence, as the Minister shall think proper.

It is this section that grants the relevant Minister power to grant foreshore licences for the removal of ‘beach material’ (including seaweed). On the surface, the dry legal wording of this section does not appear emotional. After looking more closely at the historical context of the Act, however, it is clear that emotion runs through every part of the governance process, from conception and development to implementation of legislation (see for example emotionally-charged quotes above by lawmakers in parliamentary debates). In this particular case, definitions of natural resources (‘beach material’) and boundaries (‘foreshore’) as well as the reasons for existence of the Foreshore Act in the first place (‘the granting of leases and licences’) are deeply emotional.

In analysing Irish abortion policy, Fletcher (2001, p. 573) writes that “criticism of that policy can be more persuasive if it takes account of the historical production of a deep cultural anxiety about reproduction,” a statement that can be seen to apply to the case of nature reduced to natural resources as well: history, context, place – *matters*. Governing seaweed, then, is never just about seaweed: it is about assuaging post-colonial fears and anxieties; it is about sovereignty, freedom, value, profit, ‘the sacred feeling of property’ (Comyn, 1931). Such is the affective legacy built into the legislation governing the foreshore. Affective legacies function as infrastructures in Star’s (1999, p. 379) terms: they are “sunk into and inside of other structures”; they are embedded within contemporary marine governance, invisible yet there, exerting a subtle structuring force with material and emotional consequences. Through such affective legacies, then, it is possible to see why this is a fitting case study for exploring how emotion matters in marine governance.

1.2.3. Bantry Bay: a brief biography

Thanks to its unique geological history and geographic location, Bantry Bay, in County Cork, is a region incredibly rich in terrestrial and marine biodiversity as well as social and cultural significance (see map of Bantry Bay in Figure 1 on the next page). In this section I briefly describe the human and more-than-human

inhabitants of Bantry Bay, and their entangled relationships, to provide the context for the story of the campaign in the next section, as well as for the entire dissertation that follows.

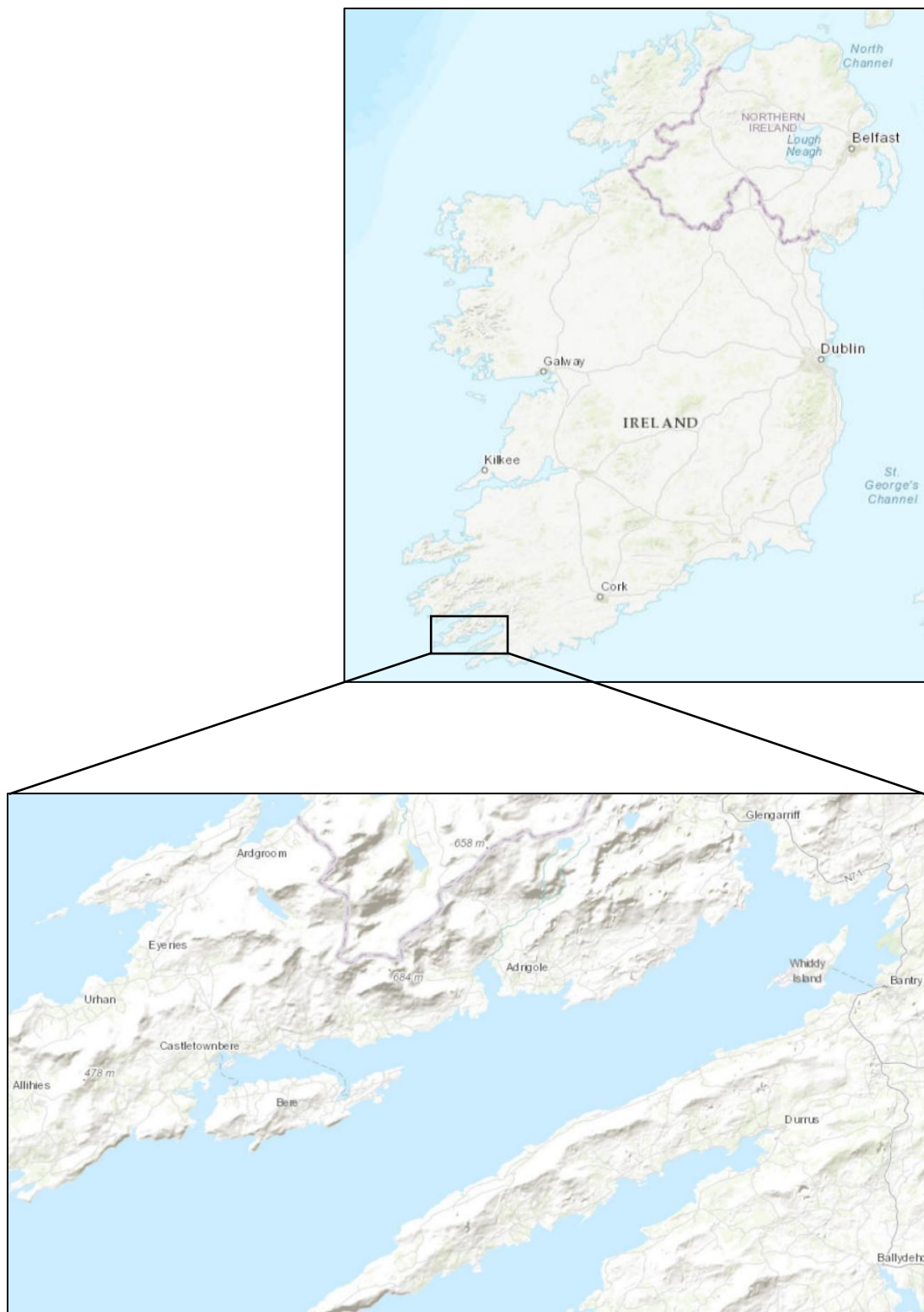


Figure 1. Map of Bantry Bay and its location on the island of Ireland.

1.2.3.1. Geomorphology of Bantry Bay

Wedged between the dramatic Caha Mountains on the Beara Peninsula to the north and the gentler hills on the Sheep's Head Peninsula to the south, emptying out westwards into the Atlantic Ocean, Bantry Bay is one of the many deep-water bays found in the south-west of Ireland (Brunt, 2021). Running approximately 35 kilometres from north-east to south-west, reaching 40 metres at its deepest point, it is one of the largest and deepest bays in all of Europe. The bay is a ria, a coastal river valley that has been flooded by post-glacial sea level rise and that drains into the ocean (Ní Longphuirt & Devoy, 2021). It is studded with drumlins, low mounds of glacial sediment deposits so numerous that they form a geologically significant 'drumlin swarm' (Cork County Council, 2022; O'Mahony & Conlon, 2021; O'Sullivan et al., 2018). These drumlins form the base of the islands – Whiddy, Horse, Hog, Rabbit, and Chapel Islands – found at the head of the bay (An Foras Taluntais, 1963). At the other end of the bay, water from approximately 100 streams and rivers flowing down from the bay's islands and encircling mountains is discharged into the Atlantic Ocean (Streamscapes, 2017). This distinct geomorphological profile, of deep water flanked by steep ridges of land to the north and south, tapering to a valley at the head and broadening oceanward at the mouth, is home to a diverse array of habitats and inhabitants, which are described in the following sub-sections.

1.2.3.2. Oceanic socio-natures of Bantry Bay

Due to its geographic location at the south-western tip of Ireland, Bantry Bay is exposed to the warming effects of the Gulf Stream, experiencing high rainfall and humidity throughout the year but also enjoying a milder climate compared to the rest of the country (Streamscapes, 2017). The bay's geomorphological and climatic conditions allow for a rich tapestry of biodiversity to flourish in both its terrestrial and aquatic realms. On land, the mountains, valleys glens, rivers, coastal margins around Bantry Bay are home to a mosaic of natural and anthropogenic habitats. These habitats include peatland, upland and lowland blanket bog, heath, upland pasture, scrub, rough woodlands, rivers, as well as forestry plantations and extensive farmland (Streamscapes, 2017). Montane habitats support a mix of peatland, heath, and alpine flora, while lowland woodlands support a diversity of native and non-native tree species, ferns, mosses and lichens. The extensive river network around the bay supports salmon, eels, sea trout, freshwater pearl mussels, otters, kingfishers, and dippers (Streamscapes, 2017).

Turning now to the marine environment, the littoral zone edging around the bay is predominantly rocky. With a high degree of vertical zonation, the sheltered littoral areas of the inner bay are home to a variety

of lichens, seaweeds, sponges, anemones and tunicates; while the exposed areas of the outer bay, where vertical zonation is weaker, are home to limpets, barnacles, and winkles (Emblow et al., 1994). The bay's sublittoral zone is largely of a soft substrate, with the more sheltered areas containing fine mud, and the exposed areas containing firmer sand. This soft substrate supports a rich array of invertebrates, from bristle worms and brittle stars to prawns and anemones (Emblow et al., 1994). In places, there is also a hard substrate of rock, which supports extensive kelp beds composed mainly of *Laminaria hyperborea*, *Laminaria digitata*, *Alaria esculenta* (winged kelp), *Saccharina latissima* (sugar kelp), and *Saccorhiza polyschides* (furbelows) (Emblow et al., 1994; Schoenrock et al., 2020). The bay is home to large numbers of resident and migratory seabirds (e.g., gulls, terns, gannets), shorebirds (e.g., oystercatchers, turnstones), wading birds (e.g., herons, curlews, greenshanks), and water birds (e.g., mallards, mute swans), as well as coastal birds of prey (e.g., white-tailed eagles) (RPS Group, 2012). Furthermore, a number of marine mammals, including cetaceans (e.g., harbour porpoises, common dolphins) and seals (harbour and grey seals), are found in the bay (RPS Group, 2012).

Upwards of 10,000 people live in the various towns and villages around the bay, including (but not limited to) Bantry, Castletownbere, Glengarriff, Ballylickey, and Adrigole; as well as on several of the islands in the bay (Whiddy, Bere, and Dursey Islands). The main sources of employment are agriculture, fishing and aquaculture. Historically, fishing in particular has been an important socioeconomic activity for communities around the bay, with Castletownbere, a village at the tip of the Beara Peninsula, designated a Nationally Designated Fisheries Port (Hegarty, 1997). Aquaculture consists primarily of farmed salmon and mussels cultivated on ropes (Hegarty, 1997; Fitzpatrick et al., 2021). Due to its outstanding natural beauty and possibilities for many different types of recreational activities (e.g., cycling, fishing, sailing, windsurfing, diving, kayaking) the bay experiences heavy tourism, particularly in the summer months (Hegarty, 1997; Stevens & Associates, 2006). The rich cultural heritage of the region also attracts large numbers of tourists who visit archaeological monuments and historical sites. There is also significant potential for ecotourism, as the natural heritage presents opportunities for birdwatching and observing marine mammals such as seals, whales, and dolphins (Hegarty, 1997).

1.2.4. Key events

Having set the scene for the case study by describing the intersecting environmental, social, and political contexts surrounding it, I now provide an account of the key events in relation to the case study.

In June 2009, BioAtlantis Ltd.⁴ submitted an application⁵ to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food⁶ (DAFF) for a foreshore licence to mechanically harvest *Laminaria hyperborea* and *digitata* in Bantry Bay. In the application document, BioAtlantis Ltd. (2009a) stated the reason for the mechanical harvesting of seaweed as follows:

The reason for the request is the unavailability of harvested *Laminaria* species in Ireland. BioAtlantis requires this material for the production of a range of products which are designed and proven to modulate gastrointestinal health, increase performance, encourage beneficial gastrointestinal microflora and stimulate a beneficial immune response. Put in simpler terms, the products will be used in animal feed applications as a replacement for the prohibited growth promoting antibiotics, banned in the EU since January 2006 due to public health risks associated with development of antibiotic resistance in several microbial strains. These products also have application in human function foods as potent prebiotics and modulators of immune and defence response. (p. 2)

This application was submitted following an earlier application on the part of BioAtlantis to the DAFF in July 2008 for a foreshore licence to mechanically harvest *L. hyperborea* and *digitata* as well as *Ascophyllum nodosum* in Kenmare Bay, a Special Area of Conservation (BioAtlantis Ltd., 2009a). Protected sites in Ireland, including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), fall under the European Union's Natura 2000 network of ecologically important areas regulated by the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) and the EU Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC). Any proposed activity in a Natura 2000 site is required to carry out an Appropriate Assessment to ensure that the activity will not negatively impact the conservation objectives and environmental standards of a given site (DEHLG, 2009). Outside of a Natura 2000 site, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) may be carried out to assess the environmental impacts of a proposed activity. The EU EIA Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU) sets out that whether an EIA is necessary is determined by an EU Member State on a case-by-case basis.

The earlier application by BioAtlantis for a licence to mechanically harvest seaweed in Kenmare Bay was denied on the grounds that Kenmare River is a Special Area of Conservation, and that possible impacts of the proposed activity on the environmental conservation objectives of the protected site had not been fully considered (Marine Licence Vetting Committee, 2010). In its final report on this application, the

⁴ BioAtlantis Ltd. is a company based in Tralee (Co. Kerry, Ireland). The company website writes that "[t]he vision of BioAtlantis is to provide natural compounds, extracted from renewable marine and terrestrial resources, to reduce stress in plants, animals and humans by strengthening natural defence systems and by enhancing the innate immunity of animals and humans" (BioAtlantis Ltd., 2023, n.p.).

⁵ All of the documents referenced in this section are on the public record and may be accessed at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/foreshore-notice/e62b9-bioatlantis-ltd-bantry-bay/>

⁶ Known as the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine as of April 2025.

Marine Licence Vetting Committee (MLVC), “a non-statutory multi-disciplinary committee which is convened, as required, for the purposes of undertaking a technical, including environmental, assessment of an application under the Foreshore Act 1933, as amended,” composed of members representing various organisations on a voluntary basis, recommended future applications remain outside protected areas (Marine Licence Vetting Committee, 2010, 2020, para. 1). Bantry Bay is not a Natura 2000 site; hence the application in 2009 for a foreshore licence to mechanically harvest kelp in Bantry Bay, and the granting of that licence without the requirement to conduct an EIA.

As part of the process of assessing the application for a foreshore licence, the MLVC considered written submissions from relevant bodies, including the Marine Survey Office, the Central Fisheries Board, the Marine Institute, the South Western Regional Fisheries Board, the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority, and both the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Underwater Archaeology Unit on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) (Marine Licence Vetting Committee, 2010). In the submission of the Marine Survey Office on 21/07/2009, it was written that while “[t]his office has no objections from a navigational viewpoint to the above application,” prior to the granting of the licence, BioAtlantis will be “required to arrange the publication of a local marine notice. This local marine notice should give a general description of operations and approximate dates of commencement and completion. An advertisement in a locally read newspaper will suffice” (Marine Survey Office, 2009, para. 2). On 12/12/2009, then, BioAtlantis published a notice in the *Southern Star*, a local newspaper in West Cork, providing general information on the proposed activity as follows:

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 19 of the Foreshore Act 1933 that BioAtlantis, Kerry Technology Park, Tralee, Co. Kerry have applied to Brendan Smith T.D., Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for a licence under Section 3 of the Act to occupy an area of foreshore for the purpose of harvesting specific seaweed at Bantry Bay, Co. Cork. (BioAtlantis Ltd., 2009b, para. 1)

In addition, the application documents were on display at the Bantry Garda Station for a period of 21 days starting on 12/12/2009, with no submissions received from the public during this time (Marine Licence Vetting Committee, 2010). The notice published in the *Southern Star*, and the availability of the application documents for a period of 21 days in the garda station, fulfilled the requirements for public consultation as part of the foreshore licence application procedure (Marine Licence Vetting Committee, 2010).

After reviewing the application and accompanying documents submitted by BioAtlantis, and the written submissions from the various organisations, the MLVC concluded on 01/12/2010 that “kelp represents a significant natural resource that, if sustainably exploited, could lead to the development of novel products

which would, in turn, stimulate economic development”; and recommended the licence be granted on the grounds that “the proposed harvesting of the seaweed is not likely to have a significant negative impact on the marine environment, would not adversely impact on marine Natura 2000 sites” (Marine Licence Vetting Committee, 2010, p. 2). Along with this recommendation, the MLVC proposed a number of conditions for the approved licence, one of which was for BioAtlantis to “submit a detailed monitoring plan for approval by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government prior to the commencement of any harvesting activity” in order to survey the baseline state of flora and fauna of Bantry Bay and to assess the possible environmental impacts of the harvesting activity (Marine Licence Vetting Committee, 2010, p. 3). On 21/03/2014, a foreshore licence was granted to BioAtlantis by the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government⁷, with a validity period of ten years (Licence Agreement, 2014).

As part of the conditions of the granted licence, on 19/05/2016 BioAtlantis published a plan for a baseline survey and monitoring programme, outlining the intended survey areas and the methodology to be employed to survey the flora and fauna of Bantry Bay (BioAtlantis Ltd., 2016). In the request of BioAtlantis for approval of the monitoring programme and baseline survey, which was approved by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government on 30/11/2017, the campaign is mentioned for the first time in an ‘official’ correspondence:

The proposal was the subject of an episode of the R.T.E. environmental issues programme *Eco-Eye* in early 2017 which lead to a campaign to suspend or rescind the licence. A group of campaigners who threatened to initiate legal proceedings have recently confirmed that they will not be pursuing this course. Officials will meet with representatives of the group on 28th November [2017]. (BioAtlantis, 2017, para. 1)

In February 2017, RTE⁸ programme *Eco Eye* aired a special segment titled ‘*Seaweed Matters*,’ part of which focused on the proposal for kelp harvesting in Bantry Bay. This was a turning point in the timeline of events, because it was only when this episode aired that the communities around Bantry Bay first heard of the proposed kelp harvesting activity (Baker, 2017; Conroy, 2017). In the months following the airing of the episode, public outcry and frustration began to coalesce into a community-driven environmental campaign through social media and word of mouth. The newly-formed campaign, *Bantry Bay – Protect Our Native Kelp Forest*, began organising fundraising activities and holding demonstrations, both around Bantry Bay and in Dublin (McGuinness, 2018; Southern Star Team, 2018). In a bid to resist the proposed

⁷ Known as Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage as of April 2025.

⁸ Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTE) is Ireland’s national television and radio broadcaster.

harvesting, the campaign commenced legal proceedings against both BioAtlantis and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG), involving an application for a judicial review in one case and, in another, a motion seeking an injunction to prevent commencement of the harvesting activities on the grounds that the harvesting was an unauthorised development under the Planning and Development Act. Several years and a number of appeals from both sides later, both cases were ultimately dismissed. In March 2024, the 10-year validity of the licence expired, and following this expiry date, as of the summer of 2024 the campaign has been winding down its efforts. However, a number of campaign members have a desire to keep up the marine education and awareness activities begun as part of the campaign, particularly the weekly snorkelling club that aims to bring locals together to engage with each other and with the marine environment (more on the snorkelling club in subsequent chapters).

In an early study investigating the need for and possibilities offered by a community-based model of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) in Bantry Bay, Hegarty (1997) came to the following conclusion:

By focusing on Bantry Bay in the southwest of Ireland, it has been demonstrated that the traditional top down and *ad hoc* approach to coastal development has not worked. The result is confusion, conflict, and a lack of understanding among bay users, with no indication of the biological capacity of this coastal area. To turn this around, there is a need to start with what the people know and understand, and work from there in a coordinated and integrated manner. It is only then that sustainable development can become attainable. In the words of one of the coastal stakeholders:

“Start from local level, get the people thinking right... bring them along with you and work from here. It should involve all interested parties.” (p. 197)

Three decades later, this sentiment still holds true.

1.3. Outline of dissertation

Having set out the academic rationale for this thesis and its original contribution to the marine social sciences, and particularly the geographical studies under this umbrella, the remainder of this thesis takes on the task of addressing the aims set out in Section 1.1. above. The thesis unfolds as follows. In Chapter 2 I draw together and review literature from feminist and emotional geographies, feminist political ecology, and arts-based research to situate this research in the relevant academic debates that

underscore the study⁹. Then, given the overarching methodological ‘steer’ of the thesis towards not only how emotion matters in governance, but also how we *do the work* of researching such emotion, in Chapter 3 I provide an in-depth account of the broad methodological and ethical approaches guiding this thesis as well as the specific data collection and analysis methods used.

Moving from theory and methodology to empirics, then, in Chapter 4 I introduce the Listening Guide analysis method and its novel application in an emotional marine governance context, and present empirical evidence gleaned through this analysis that points to the importance of *deep listening to voice* when researching emotion. In Chapter 5, building on the Listening Guide methodology developed in the previous chapter for *how* to listen for emotion, I piece together the emotional journey of the campaign through the analysis findings, thus demonstrating the practical value of *what* we might learn about emotion through this deep listening methodology. In Chapter 6, I continue building on the Listening Guide by adapting it for an autoethnographic analysis of my field notes, arguing that to understand the varying emotions that matter in marine governance, it is vital to learn to *reflexively listen to our own voice* as researchers in this field. In Chapter 7 I continue building on the methodology for deep listening by discussing an art-science collaboration which emerged organically out of this research as a way of listening *for, with, and through* emotion. Finally, in Chapter 8 I summarise the three modes of deep listening that unfolded through this research – ‘listening to others’ – ‘listening to self’ – ‘listening with the collective’ – discuss opportunities for future research, and close this dissertation with concluding remarks.

⁹ Further literatures beyond the ones discussed in Chapter 2 (e.g., polyphony, infrastructures, insider-outsider positionality) emerged in each chapter as relevant to specific points of discussion.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

In Chapter 1, I introduced this research, the issues it aims to address and through which objectives, and, in order to contextualise it, briefly described the geographical, social and political contexts in which this research is embedded, surrounding the case study of a proposal for the mechanical harvesting of kelp in Bantry Bay. In this chapter, to further embed the research its context, I review the key fields of literature that inform the study, and in turn to which it makes conceptual and methodological contributions. I critically review relevant literature to develop a nuanced understanding of the relevance of emotion to governance, to situate the research and its empirical and methodological contributions within contemporary academic debates, and to provide a theoretical starting point for future research into this strand of marine governance inquiry.

Recent scholarship has argued that marine governance is not simply a technocratic exercise but is profoundly shaped by emotions (Levi & Peters, 2024; Schutter et al., 2025; Tugend, 2025). McKinley et al. (2023) have introduced the concept of ‘emocean’ to capture how human emotions such as grief, hope, and attachment can and do affect ocean policy and conservation efforts. Traditionally, governance frameworks have overlooked these affective, subjective dimensions in favour of rational, ‘objective’ approaches to decision-making. However, this is not to say analysis of governance approaches are unpeopled. Indeed, there is ample work on the role of enrolling people into governance processes, and of the power dynamics replete in doing so (e.g., Flannery, 2023, Flannery et al., 2018, and Ritchie et al., 2019 on marine spatial planning processes). Yet emotion as an explicit concern remains rather hazy. Recent work demonstrates that taking emotions seriously in governance processes is essential for developing policies and interventions that are not only environmentally sustainable but also socially just (Kearns & Collins, 2012; McKinley et al., 2023; McRuer et al., 2025; Murray et al., 2025; Pafi, 2021). In line with this, Levi and Peters (2024, p. 69) assert that “[r]ecognising emotion thus becomes not simply a matter of ticking a box but a matter of politics and of justice.”

In order for marine governance to take emotions (and *emoceans*) seriously, however, it must first acknowledge that oceans are emotional spaces (see work of J. Anderson, 2022, Brennan, 2016, and Britton, 2014, 2019, 2021 on emotional oceans), grapple not only with what emotion *is* but also with what

it *does* (see work of Gálvez Campos, 2021 and González-Hidalgo & Zografos, 2020 on what emotions *do* in political ecology), and find ways of listening to emotions that do justice to the complexity of those emotions and to the people and places to which they belong (see methodological contributions of Feminist Political Ecology, e.g., Sultana, 2011, and of arts-based research, e.g., McKinley et al., 2024a and Strand et al., 2024).

Accordingly, this chapter begins in Section 2.2. by situating this research in the marine social science literature about oceans and experience (Bavinck & Verrips, 2020; Bennett, 2018, 2019; McKinley et al., 2020; McKinley et al., 2023). This is followed in Section 2.3. by a discussion of geographical debates and aligned feminist geographical theories and methodologies, which have extensively theorised emotion and its relationship to space/place, and have also developed rigorous methodological pathways for accessing and listening to emotion (Bondi, 2005; Massey, 2005; Sharp, 2009). In line with its broader feminist approach and ethic of care, this research also engages more specifically with feminist and critical resource geographies in Section 2.4., and with feminist political ecologies in Section 2.5., to think about (and with) the emotional dimensions of natural resources as well as the marine environment (Berman-Arévalo, 2018, 2021; González-Hidalgo, 2017; Sultana 2011). Lastly, Section 2.6. discusses arts-based research that emphasises the role of art not only in communicating environmental issues but for *humanising* these issues by focusing on emotional connections, and particularly on the emotional dimensions of human-ocean connections (*emoceans*) that are frequently overlooked in decision-making (Bennett & Roth, 2019; Brennan, 2018; Ebbin, 2020; Harder, 2024; McKinley et al., 2024a; Strand et al., 2022; Tremblay & Harris, 2018; Whittaker, 2023).

2.2. Emoceans: from ocean emotions to emotional oceans

To take emotion seriously, marine governance must first recognise the oceans as emotional spaces. The term ‘emoceans’ has been defined by McKinley et al. (2023, p. 5, 3) as “emotional connections to the ocean,” connections which are “about how a person feels and emotionally responds when they think about, are near/within, or consider issues relating to the ocean, coasts and seas.” I argue that the scope of this definition should be expanded beyond individual feelings to include the oceans themselves as deeply felt, human, emotional spaces (Bennett, 2019; Peters & Steinberg, 2019). Accordingly, in this section I draw on literature from the marine social sciences and from emotional geographies to demonstrate how oceans come to be emotional spaces, and to situate this research on emotions firmly within a marine context.

2.2.1. Emotional oceans

According to Steinberg (2001, 2013), the oceans are social constructions built through discourses, narratives, and metaphors; shaped by social and cultural conflicts and relations; and governed based on collective imaginaries (see also Campbell et al., 2021; Neilson & São Marcos, 2019). There are a number of dominant Eurocentric constructions of oceans that shape contemporary marine governance. These include the dichotomous discourse of oceans in crisis versus oceans as a frontier for development; narratives of oceans as uninhabited, empty expanses; and metaphors of oceans as sources of resources, sinks for pollution, and surfaces for transport and military activity (Arbo et al., 2018; Campbell et al., 2021; Steinberg, 2001). These constructions are rooted in the Eurocentric, rationalist, positivist epistemology that has reigned since the so-called Age of Enlightenment and has traditionally left no room to explicitly think *with* and *about* emotions or subjectivity (Jay, 2012). In recent years, there have been increasing calls for shifting from the Eurocentric paradigm of empty oceans (J. Anderson et al., 2022; Germond & Germond-Duret, 2017; Peters, 2010; Steinberg, 2013) to ‘peopled seascapes,’ along with modes of governance that include the human dimensions of the marine environment (Bennett, 2018, 2019; Neilson & São Marcos, 2019; Walsh, 2021). Reflecting the deeply emotional complexities of ‘peopled oceans,’ and the political implications of these, Neilson and São Marcos (2019, p. 1) declare that “[m]anagement of marine resources is management of people,” and that it must account not only for the biophysical conditions of the marine environment but also the socioeconomic, political, and institutional circumstances that impact or are impacted by it (Bennett, 2018).

The oceans are, and have always been, emotional places. Whether through a watery “affective presence” (Roe & Lyons, 2021, p. 46) that has the capacity to produce and maintain long-standing emotional connections; a fluid, turbulent, dynamic materiality that brings together biophysical and socio-political worlds (Steinberg & Peters, 2015); embodied encounters (such as swimming, surfing and diving) requiring full engagement with one’s entire being (J. Anderson, 2022; Foley, 2022, 2023; Britton, 2014, 2021; Squire, 2017); or vectors (such as mist, wind, and scent) that extend the oceans inland and into individual and collective senses and imaginaries (Peters & Steinberg, 2019) – the oceans have enormous emotional significance that extends to how they are experienced, ascribed meaning, and managed (Kama, 2021, p. 61; Kearns & Collins, 2012; Kellert, 1997; Probyn, 2021; Yates et al., 2017). However, in the extensive literature that considers the ocean as experienced – and to some degree the (emotional) connections with it (e.g., ‘stoke’ in the experience of surfing, see J. Anderson, 2014) – there is less discussion of the relationship between such embodied, emotional engagements and marine governance/governing.

Considering “the ocean as ‘felt’” in the construction and governance of the oceans lends a critical perspective that is currently lacking in dominant modes of management, which rely instead on the rational, objective organisation of marine space (Arbo et al., 2018; Ritchie et al., 2019; Kearns & Collins, 2012; Peters & Steinberg, 2019, p. 305; Walsh, 2021).

2.2.2. Oceans and well-being

Seas and oceans have been central to the ways of life, individual, collective and cultural identities, and social relations of traditional and Indigenous communities for millennia (Farr & Zurita, 2025; George & Wiebe, 2023; Hau’ofa, 2008; Ingersoll, 2016; Lobo & Parsons, 2023; Mulrennan & Scott, 2000; Todd, 2018). It is only in recent years that Western academia has experienced the ‘oceanic turn’ and begun to recognise concepts such as ‘more-than-human’ and ‘rights of nature’ that many communities have advocated for and lived with for thousands of years (Todd, 2016). In Western academia, much work has explored how the oceans are intimately intertwined with human well-being, from sustaining livelihoods and recreation to fostering a sense of self and belonging to shaping histories, identities, and cultural narratives (Bennett, 2019; Britton, 2019; Kearns & Collins, 2012; Kelly, 2018). Emotion is a key component in the formation of ‘ocean identities,’ which are vital to a holistic sense of well-being (Buchan et al., 2024; Kelly et al., 2023). Ocean identities and ocean emotions are historically, geographically, culturally, and sensorially contingent (Buchan et al., 2024; Murray et al., 2025). In addition to these, gender, race, and class play a role in the formation of ocean identities; this demands an intersectional approach to understanding emoceans (Murray et al., 2025).

Recent work in health geographies has framed ‘blue spaces’¹⁰ as health-enabling, therapeutic, healing spaces (Britton, 2023; Britton & Foley, 2021; Foley & Kistemann, 2015). Embodied engagements with oceans, such as swimming and surfing, have emerged as avenues to individual mental and physical health as well as collective social well-being (Foley, 2015; Foley & Kistemann, 2015). Foley (2023b) attributes the therapeutic effects of swimming in ‘blue spaces’ to the short-term bodily and emotional effects of physical immersion in water as well as the long-term effects on one’s identity and well-being through repeated exposure to water over longer periods of time. Similarly, surfing fosters a sense of identity, belonging, and culture through a long-term, sustained engagement with the ocean over time (J. Anderson, 2022).

¹⁰ I use the term ‘blue space’ here specifically in the context of health and well-being geographies, in which this term is very prevalent. In other contexts, the usage of the word ‘blue’ in relation to marine and coastal space has been critiqued (see for example work by Ferwerda, 2024 on the coloniality of the colour blue, and the concept of ‘blue-washing’ by Perez, 2023). Outside of this particular section, I use the terms ‘oceans,’ ‘marine environment,’ and ‘marine space’ throughout this thesis.

Moreton et al. (2022) write that surfing may enhance well-being because it gives one a feeling of bodily autonomy when surfing, increasing confidence as one's skills begin to develop, and a sense of community and social connection to other surfers. However it manifests, immersion in 'blue space,' argues Foley (2022, p. 306), "taps into almost all our senses and emotions and is at its heart an embodied experience that, through a set of open connections across multiple subjects and settings creates space to develop an unbounded oceanic 'blue body.'"

However, these immersive, embodied and emotional engagements are not without political dimensions. While surfing is commonly associated with freedom and exhilaration, J. Anderson (2022, p. 317) reminds us that "surfing spaces are not free and open zones, but rather places that are explicitly and implicitly controlled by surf cultures," cultures which often reflect (and reproduce) hegemonic social norms and dynamics. Indeed, surf spaces are traditionally White, masculine and heteronormative, and surf spots around the world are shaped by settler-colonial histories (Isahunter, 2018; Roy, 2014; Wheaton & Olive, 2024). As an embodied ocean activity, surfing intersects not only with gender and race but also with socioeconomic status and dis/ability (J. Anderson, 2022; Olive, 2019). Similarly, while swimming is touted as a recreational activity with innumerable health benefits, these benefits – as well as the risks of not knowing how to swim – are felt unequally. Indeed, Hastings et al. (2006) argue that race and class shape disparities in swimming participation in the United States, leading in turn to higher rates of drowning among African Americans. Waller and Norwood (2021) attribute the persistent racial disparities causing the 'swimming gap' (and resulting higher mortality rates) to several types of barriers, including structural (e.g., lack of access, lack of infrastructure), cultural and social (e.g., historical segregation, racial stereotyping), and economic (e.g., cost of lessons and equipment, pool fees). Both sets of authors agree that swimming is not only a recreational or therapeutic activity; it is a matter of social justice and, indeed, a matter of life and death. These embodied engagements, then, are shaped by social and political dynamics; and these dynamics also shape the emotions that emerge through participation in these experiences (Roy, 2014). However, not all engagements with the oceans are therapeutic or conducive to well-being. Indeed, both now and throughout history, many regard or have experienced the oceans as spaces of fear, loss, risk and violence.

2.2.3. Oceans as spaces of fear, loss, risk and violence

The oceans have been spaces of profound loss, trauma and violence for countless people across history, with the effects of these violences reverberating across time and continuing to impact people today, often centuries after they have taken place (Fawcett et al., 2022). For instance, the transatlantic slave trade,

and the nightmare of the Middle Passage, took place on and across the Atlantic Ocean, with slave ships as sites where racism and capitalism intersected to (re)produce deeply gendered violence as well as labour power, in the form of enslaved people, and race, a social construct that justified the continued enslavement of Africans (Mitchell, 2022; Morgan, 2021; Rediker, 2008; Smallwood, 2007). More-than-human beings were not free from this process of violence, either; indeed, sharks were enrolled into the regime of terror onboard slave ships, with captains and crew members actively feeding sharks to encourage their presence and using that presence to discipline, instil fear and discourage escape (Rediker, 2008). This history of violence did not stop once the transatlantic slave trade ended. Reflecting in an interview on the process of writing a book on the slave ship, Rediker says: “I learned that we live with the consequences of those slave ships every minute of every day” (Rediker et al., 2022, p. 64). Indeed, Sharpe’s (2016) concept of ‘residence time’ highlights how the Middle Passage did not just erase human lives, identities and cultures; the bodies of enslaved Africans that jumped or were thrown overboard transformed the ocean into a site of continuing Black existence (Heathcote, 2022). A further example is the mass emigration of Irish people across the ocean to escape the Great Famine. Conditions aboard the vessels were so poor, with disease and desperation rampant among the passengers, that the ships became known as ‘coffin ships,’ and the ocean morphed into a symbol of loss and grief (Britton, 2019).

Beyond (yet intimately linked to) historical processes of violence, the oceans are spaces of multiple forms of injustice. Particularly in light of the climate crisis, the need to ‘conserve’ the marine environment, and the growing emphasis on the ‘blue economy,’ the term ‘ocean grabbing’ has emerged to describe the (often well-intentioned) appropriation of marine spaces and resources, often at the expense of small-scale fishers and vulnerable coastal communities (Bennett et al., 2015; Franco et al., 2014; Satizábal et al., 2025). Franco et al. (2014, p. 3) have defined ocean grabbing as “the capturing of control by powerful economic actors of crucial decision-making around fisheries, including the power to decide how and for what purposes marine resources are used, conserved and managed now and in the future.” Ocean grabbing has wide-ranging and deeply detrimental impacts on these communities, including loss of livelihoods, food insecurity, environmental degradation, loss of social and cultural connections to marine space, and outright violence (Bennett et al., 2015; Franco et al., 2014).

There are countless instances in which marine protection measures that have resulted in both environmental and social harm. For instance, the Mnazi Bay-Ruvuma Estuary Marine Park in Tanzania has led to the exclusion and dispossession of local communities (Kamat, 2018). Marine resource extraction, as part of Blue Economy efforts in Namibia, has been criticised as reinforcing existing inequalities by

perpetuating historical exclusions tied to colonialism and apartheid (Carver, 2023). Further, Marine Protected Areas in Colombia, which, despite having been shaped by colonial and neoliberal logics leading to the exclusion and dispossession of traditional communities, have been used by those communities to assert their customary rights in ways that both granted them power and subjected them to pervasive power imbalances (Satizábal & Batterbury, 2018). To recognise the complex intersections between ecological degradation, social injustices and climate change, Hübschle and Berg (2024) have argued for a reframing of oceans as ‘harmscapes,’ as spaces of multiple forms of oceanic harms, which are bodily and emotionally felt.

2.2.4. Human oceans

Emotions are an undeniably integral part of being human (and of human well-being). Taking emotion seriously in the realm of marine governance, particularly in light of the recent calls for more attention to human dimensions, may contribute to nuanced, “more ‘fully human’ accounts” of the seas and oceans (Kearns & Collins, 2012, p. 951). Failing to do so may risk reverting to and perpetuating the detached, rational epistemology that views “oceans as unpeopled” (Campbell et al., 2021, p. 426). Recognising “the ocean as ‘felt’” and as a place capable of producing and maintaining emotional connections is a direct challenge to this epistemology and the regimes of governance it underpins (Peters & Steinberg, 2019, p. 305). The marine social sciences have a significant role to play in the development of governance alternatives and futures that are more attuned to emotions – and therefore more human (Arbo et al., 2018; Bennett, 2019; Peters, 2020). By offering critical concepts such as relationality, agency, assemblage, and the more-than-human, the social sciences help transform the sea from a discrete entity isolated from human life towards a state in the hydrological cycle that is part of a broader relational, continuous process – a part of, not apart from, human life (Arbo et al., 2018; Peters & Steinberg, 2019; Spence, 2014; Yates et al., 2017). Despite the enormous potential in social sciences approaches, there remain barriers to a full embracing of the emotional and subjective dimensions of the oceans due to the singular emphasis on scientific, ‘evidence-based’ policy; mismatches in social and scientific policy objectives; challenges in measuring and integrating ‘non-scientific’ knowledge; and the tendency to perceive such knowledge (and any management it informs) as ‘feminine’ and hence less legitimate and credible than traditionally masculine bureaucratic approaches (Christie et al., 2017; Gissi et al., 2018; Hemphill & Blakely, 2015; Peters, 2020; Westberg & Powell, 2015). There is hope, however: as Jay (2012, p. 95) points out, “the way is open” for governance practices that recognise the sea as a complex, relational assemblage composed

of entangled natural and social processes, human and more-than-human feeling subjects – a deeply human, ‘peopled sea.’

2.3. Emotion: feminist geographical perspectives

In this section I turn from the emotional ocean to feminist geographies, which have extensively theorised not only what emotion is but also what it does and for whom, and how it shapes and is shaped by space and place. I first describe what feminist theory is in order to contextualise and justify my decision to centre this research around it. Then, through a feminist geographical lens, I consider various aspects of emotion, including different definitions and key components of emotion. Lastly, I consolidate these perspectives into a cohesive understanding of emotion, which serves as the ‘container’ holding and guiding this research.

2.3.1. Feminist and emotional geographies: a brief overview

In the 18th and 19th centuries, in an effort to establish geography as a legitimate and credible science, geographers eschewed anything that was not in the realm of hard objectivity and pure rationalism – including emotion (Hemphill & Blakely, 2015; Sharp, 2009). In the 20th century, specifically the 1970s, humanistic geography emerged as a response to the quantitative, reason-centred approach that had dominated the field until then. Arguing for a geography that could account for the subjectivities of life, including attitudes, beliefs, and experiences, humanistic geographers opened the doors of the discipline to the possibilities of engaging with emotion in geography (Bondi, 2005; Seamon, 2014). The concept of ‘place’ rose in importance with the turn to subjectivity in humanistic geography. Rather than an objective, abstract, two-dimensional surface composed of bounded objects (what we might understand as ‘space’, see Cresswell, 2004), ‘place’ became a relational configuration of overlapping meanings, entities, spatiotemporal reaches, and processes that reflected the complex relationship between people and their surroundings (Massey, 2005). Simply put, ‘place’ can be understood as the product of relationships developed through lived experience and deep engagement across space and time (Briggs et al., 2020; Donnelly et al., 2020; Hubbard, 2006; Hui & Walker, 2018; Kearney & Bradley, 2009; Kearns & Collins, 2012; Jay, 2012; Spence, 2014).

However, space and place are not neutral; indeed, they are shot through with power relations which privilege certain bodies, relationships, and productions of place over others (Djan, 2024). In the tail end of the 20th century, feminist geographers further challenged the masculinist, objective, binary

assumptions hitherto underpinning the field (Bondi, 2005; Dixon & Jones III, 2014; Pile, 2010). Thinking about space and phenomena relationally, they used gender as a lens to analyse societal, political, and spatial dimensions of power (Dixon & Jones III, 2014; England, 2006; Valdivia et al., 2021). By embracing subjective, embodied, nuanced experiences of place, feminist geographers were some of the first to explicitly incorporate emotion in the discipline (Bondi, 2005; Sharp, 2009).

With the stage set for a full reckoning of the role of emotion in shaping the world around us, the ‘emotional turn’ in the first decade of the 21st century gave rise to the sub-discipline of emotional geographies (Bondi et al., 2006; Davidson & Milligan, 2004; Pykett et al., 2016). Furthering the relational perspective used in the feminist tradition, emotions in this sub-discipline are viewed not as subjective, individualised mental states, but rather as embodied outcomes of encounters between people and places (Bondi et al., 2006; Conradson, 2006; Davidson & Milligan, 2004; Pile, 2010; Sultana, 2011). Indeed, emotions are products of relationships between people and places; they allow for place to be “actively engaged with, respected, immersed in and enjoyed” (Conradson, 2006; Kearns & Collins, 2012, p. 947). K. Anderson & Smith (2001, p. 8) pose the following question: “What possibilities are there for developing a geographical agenda sensitive to the emotional dimensions of living in the world?” Guided by these possibilities, and recognising emotions as legitimate “ways of knowing, being and doing,” emotional geography seeks to better understand the powerful influence emotions exert on society and space (K. Anderson & Smith, 2001, p. 8; Caquard & Griffin, 2018; Davidson & Milligan, 2004; Sharp, 2009).

2.4. Natural resource emotions

The broad ethical and intellectual approaches of this research are guided by feminist theoretical perspectives. Within these broad approaches, the more nuanced understandings of and explicit connections to the subject matter and case study involved in the research (the matter of emotional marine governance, specifically in the context of the Bantry Bay kelp campaign) have been informed by feminist geographies, which theorise the relationship between emotion and space/place; critical resource geographies, which explores natural resources and their role in constructing place and society (and vice versa); and feminist political ecology, which focuses on questions of justice and power in relation to the construction, use, access, and management of natural resources. In this section, I draw these disciplines together to situate the Bantry Bay case study within contemporary academic debates surrounding the role of emotion in tensions and conflicts over certain natural entities reconfigured as natural resources, turning them into objects to be commodified and exploited.

2.4.1. Emotions in natural resource conflicts

Resource conflicts are about much more than resources themselves; they are more than conflicts of access, use, and control of resources; and more than even the power dimensions present in these struggles. At their root are “embodied emotions, feelings, and lived experiences relating to the resource” (Sultana, 2011, p. 164). From this perspective, access to resources, understood as the capacity to benefit from, rather than an inherent right to, resources, also involves emotional benefits (Fent, 2021; Ribot & Peluso, 2003; Sultana, 2011). A social wellbeing approach investigating a central governance question, “who wants what and why,” is useful for closely examining these emotional benefits (Britton, 2014; Chuenpagdee & Jentoft, 2007, p. 659). Considering the emotional dimensions of material, relational, and subjective well-being can provide insight into how resources become “expressions of a particular understanding of the world,” and in turn how these expressions are put to work in governance (Britton, 2014; Bryan, 2021, p. 449). These issues are particularly pertinent with respect to the seas and oceans as spaces of frequent (and often emotionally-charged) social, environmental, political, military, and commercial resource conflicts.

2.4.2. Natural resources as emotional

The idea of resources as expressions of understandings of the world is underpinned by Zimmerman’s (1951, p. 15) argument that “resources are not; they become” – a process shaped by social, historical, geographical, technological, political, economic, and cultural factors (Huber, 2021; Perreault, 2021). One such natural resource that is contingent on these factors is the concept of ‘wildlife.’ The idea of wildlife has been produced by fantasies of what wildlife should be; by values influenced by structural power relations and modes of production that deem what is ‘profitable’; and by “human desire, ingenuity, and intervention” (Biermann et al., 2021; Furlong et al., 2021; Lunstrum & Massé, 2021, p. 360; Perreault, 2021). The centrality of human desire – and by extension, emotion – in shaping natural resources should not be underestimated: the fantasies of those in power are the ones that are projected, “imagined and actively imposed upon certain landscapes,” in turn shaping how these environments are managed (Lunstrum & Massé, 2021, p. 361). Much research on the production of natural resources, including wildlife, has had a strong land-centric and terrestrial focus, with little attention given to the marine environment. With “the science we need for the ocean we want” as the cornerstone of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, it is more important than ever to interrogate how marine

natural resources are produced, prioritised, and managed through human desire (IOC-UNESCO, 2020, p. 1).

Keeping with the view of resources as expressions of different understandings, resources also act as “cultural appraisals of nature” that reflect national identity (Perreault, 2021, p. 127). ‘Resource nationalism’ is the process by which national and natural interests become aligned and co-constitutive, and natural resources become “expression[s] of social power in geographical form” (Bridge, 2010, p. 825; Perreault, 2021). Resource nationalism is fundamentally shaped by emotion, whether it is expressed through art and literature, social movements, or discourses that construct a “national imaginary” (Perreault, 2021, p. 135). Insight into the emotional dimensions of resource nationalism may further understandings of how and why natural resources are managed the way they are, and in turn how emotions become not only “means and targets of governance, but also as fueling resistance to being governed” (Slaby & Bens, 2019, p. 341). This plurality of emotions in relation to governance – as means, targets, resistances – is particularly relevant to the marine environment. While dominant regimes construct the seas and oceans as spaces in which to project power and exercise sovereignty, their dynamic, voluminous, liquid materialities continue to resist and confound traditional, terrestrial notions of territory and belonging (Steinberg, 2001; Steinberg & Peters, 2015).

2.5. Emotion: feminist methodological approaches

In the preceding sections of this chapter I set out the feminist theoretical and conceptual perspectives surrounding the matter of emotional marine governance. However, given that this research makes significant methodological in-roads into the burgeoning field of emotional marine governance (and to the study of emotion more broadly), understanding the methodological landscape of emotion is vital for contextualising and situating the methodological contributions of this study. Due to the highly interdisciplinary nature of this study, and of emotion research more broadly, it is difficult to limit emotional methodologies to a single discipline. However, because my approach to emotion in a natural resource context has been largely influenced by Feminist Political Ecology (FPE), in this section I limit the scope of emotional methodologies to FPE studies investigating natural resource emotions across a variety of geographical and socio-political contexts.

2.5.1. Affect as methodology

The methodological approaches and decisions made throughout the research process have been guided by the feminist ethic of care at the core of this thesis. There are many different feminist methodologies and methods for researching emotion. This includes methodological approaches, methods of data collection (e.g., interviews can be feminist), of data analysis (e.g., LG), and of communicating and disseminating data. Indeed, Åhäll (2018) advocates for prioritising affect itself as a feminist methodology to analyze the politics of emotion. Many studies of emotion in International Relations (IR) and political science explore affect but fail to engage with feminist theory, leading to a masculinized and depoliticized view of emotions (Åhäll, 2018). Affect as methodology counters this by considering emotions, feelings, and sensibilities as central to understanding global politics (Åhäll, 2018; Kangasluoma & Lempinen, 2023). As a feminist tool, it uses emotional tensions, contradictions, and embodied feelings to critically analyse power relations (Beattie et al., 2019; Gustafsson & Hall, 2021; Mc Morrow, 2019; Seide & Fantini, 2023).

Affect as methodology shifts the focus of research from what emotions *are* to what they *do* – how emotions, feelings, and affective responses shape social and political structures (Ahmed, 2004). Rather than attempting to pin emotions down with labels, it may be more productive to attend to the political work they do. Indeed, while emotions such as anger and sadness have negative associations, González-Hidalgo (2017, p. 73) argues that attending to the work they do (for instance in mobilising communities to resist extraction) may transform these associations from ‘negative’ to ‘positive’: “if we focus on the work [emotions] do, and particularly on the *political* work they do, the characterisation of these emotions as ‘negative’ may be well off the mark.” Moving away from a negative/positive binary conception of emotions to focus on embodied, lived experiences; localised, situated knowledges; and the multiplicity and relational nature of emotions – affect as methodology may be employed to interrogate the status quo, challenge dominant narratives, and reimagine different futures.

2.5.2. Researching emotions: mixed-methods approaches

The majority of studies employing a feminist methodological approach to studying conflicts around natural resources involve the use of complementary mixed methods that capture different dimensions of emotional experience. This section reviews FPE research on natural resource emotions across a variety of contexts, discussing both specific methods used to study emotion as well as how a mix of methods can be employed to access emotion from different angles or ‘entry points.’

2.5.2.1. 'Ethnographic sensibilities'

Studies on emotions around natural resources and extractive spaces are often guided by ethnographic approaches to research. Berman-Arévalo (2021, p. 203) has developed the notion of 'ethnographic sensibilities' to describe "a mode of engagement with people, places, and field-based knowledge-making premised on the researcher's physical and epistemological exposure to the places and relations through which research unfolds." Employing ethnographic sensibilities in research, argues Berman-Arévalo (2021),

involves situating resources within the broader set of practices and relations of "life-with-resources," understood as the entanglements between resource production, everyday life, and politics (Valdivia 2017; Valdivia and Lu 2020). In turn, engaging life-with-resources as ethnographic grounds requires researchers to *attend to the affective, ordinary, and mundane aspects of resource relations* and to interrogate the everyday ways in which resource politics, resource spaces, and resources are constantly reconfigured and redefined. (p. 206, emphasis mine)

In ethnographic research around the politics of land and territory in a black campesino village in Montes de María, Colombia, Berman-Arévalo (2018) employs participatory mapping to trace changes in land use over time and to reconstruct histories of how land was lost, occupied, or defended over decades of conflict. Through these reconstructed histories, it becomes evident that political violence creates emotional landscapes of dispossession, trauma, and survival, and that the matter of land ownership is a deeply emotional matter linked to a sense of belonging and identity. Focusing on everyday life, storytelling, and local knowledge not only as research methodologies but also as political practices, Berman-Arévalo (2018) argues that emotions are deeply political – they shape who resists, how land is claimed, and how people navigate conflict in rural contexts.

A further example is the ethnographic study of González-Hidalgo (2017) comparing the role of emotion in environmental conflicts across two case studies: one on peasant struggles in Mexico, and the other on Mapuche resistance to forestry in Chile. In this research, González-Hidalgo develops Emotional Political Ecologies (EmPEs) as a novel conceptual framework within Feminist Political Ecology (FPE) to examine how emotions shape power dynamics in natural resource conflicts, particularly in terms of political subjectivities, activism, and collective mobilisation. Using ethnographic methods, including semi-structured interviews, participant observation, 'performative' focus groups and documentary analysis, González-Hidalgo (2017) finds that emotions have multiple functions in environmental conflicts: they may be leveraged by states and corporations to control subjectivities through emotional governance (emotional environmentality); they may operate through environmental injustices to create trauma and

distress and suppress resistance (emotional oppression); and they may mobilise individuals and communities to take action for environmental justice (emotional environmentalism). Because emotions have the capacity to both mobilise environmental activism and resistance and reinforce 'status quo' power relations, González-Hidalgo (2017, p. 111) argues that "this ambivalence contained within the political work of emotions offers opportunities for scholars and movements to get a better grasp on power asymmetries in environmental conflicts."

While these studies vary greatly in terms of geographical and socio-political contexts, they draw on ethnographic sensibilities and feminist methodologies that centre the role of emotion in natural resource conflicts (Berman-Arévalo, 2018; González-Hidalgo, 2017). By foregrounding the ordinary and affective dimensions of natural resource struggles, and, by incorporating ethnographic sensibilities, interrogating "the everyday ways in which resource politics, resource spaces, and resources are constantly reconfigured and redefined" these studies underscore the vital role of feminist methodologies in highlighting (and challenging, and resisting) the deep entanglements between emotions, power, and environmental justice (Berman-Arévalo, 2021, p. 206). Further, they highlight the ambivalence involved in 'the political work of emotions,' stemming from the dual nature of emotions as both sites of oppression and resistance, and point to this ambivalence as a productive, generative space for deeper inquiry on the part of researchers and movements. González-Hidalgo (2017, p. 111) suggests that "movements can set politically productive spaces for sharing emotions in contexts of mobilisation and political ecologists can further consider the private and public, the individual and collective spheres of environmental conflicts." In this way, the political power of emotion can be leveraged to subvert entrenched hierarchies and to make space for non-extractive modes of relating to and living with nature to emerge.

2.5.2.2. Mixed methods in FPE research

Beyond ethnographic approaches and sensibilities, FPE research often involves the use of mixed methods to triangulate on a dataset or to 'grasp' emotion through different complementary means. Some studies do this by combining quantitative and qualitative methods. For instance, in a study analysing the gender dimensions of water conflicts in northern Ghana, Alhassan et al. (2024) used household surveys, focus groups, and temperature data to triangulate their data. The use of qualitative methods, including surveys and focus groups, allowed for capturing the emotional, embodied, lived (and highly gendered) experience of water scarcity, while temperature data provided a quantitative measure of the availability of water in the region. Through this mixed-method approach, the study found that despite the central role of women and girls in collecting, managing, storing, and using water, they are often excluded from decision-making

on water resource management, and that water scarcity further exacerbates their vulnerabilities by negatively affecting their economic activities (Alhassan et al., 2024). In a study on the gender dimensions of water scarcity, this time in Mapuche communities in San Juan de La Costa, Chile, Bravo and Fragkou (2019) employed a mix of quantitative surveys and qualitative focus groups and interviews to measure perceptions of water scarcity and to explore emotional, social, and cultural responses to water crises. While conducted in very different geographical and social contexts, both studies arrive at similar conclusions regarding the importance of emotion in resource struggles. In particular, they discuss the gendered nature of the emotional labour involved in managing water resources and experiencing water scarcity, and the centrality of emotion in responding to, negotiating and resisting this scarcity. Finally, they highlight the role of feminist methodologies in bringing to light the embodied, emotional, and gendered dimensions of environmental struggles, and that understanding emotions is key to better understanding the complexities of these struggles (Alhassan et al., 2024; Bravo & Fragkou, 2019).

While some FPE studies blend quantitative and qualitative methods, yet others combine a variety of qualitative methods to ‘get at’ the more ephemeral, intangible aspects of emotions around natural resource conflicts, particularly in terms of the political power of emotion. For instance, Balderson (2023) employs a mix of interviews, participant observation and participation in ‘dialogue table’ meetings to trace how emotions influence how conflicts emerge, escalate, or remain suppressed in a mining conflict in Mataquita, Peru. Using emotional climate analysis to track how different emotions such as hope, fear, frustration, and resentment shape the trajectories of these conflicts, Balderson (2023) argues that emotions are not passive responses but active, dynamic, emergent processes through which communities leverage power, resist dispossession, and work towards justice. In a study examining environmental activism around rivers in Kerala, India, Sony and Krishnan (2023) use in-depth interviews, participant observation and archival research to capture local experiences of environmental pollution and activism. The authors discuss the concept of ‘affective labour’ in environmental activism, where activists engage in protest movements not just for material reasons but because of emotional attachments to nature; indeed, it is the emotional connections to nature that drives participation in environmental movements (Sony & Krishnan, 2023). Similarly, Egge and Ajibade (2021) use semi-structured interviews, participant observation and thematic coding of emotions to examine community activism around water insecurity in East Porterville, California. They argue that emotions may be used to mobilise community action, particularly because they enable “individuals [to] exert power by claiming access to resources based on their suffering... they not only change political relationships but also change the physical flow of water and the philosophical underpinnings of water locally” (Egge & Ajibade, 2021, p. 281). Emotions, then, may

be consequences of (and for) resource struggles as well as becoming central to politically powerful tools of resistance and action (González-Hidalgo & Zografos, 2020; Jasper, 2011; Murrey, 2016).

While FPE research largely relies on mixed methods to examine emotion, recent studies have called for a more nuanced and experimental methodological approach to researching emotion. Indeed, Tremblay and Harris (2018, p. 175) note that “there is interest in pushing methodological approaches on these [emotional] concerns forward, including experimenting with alternative research methods, such as storytelling and art, to access and critically reflect on emotion and subjectivity.” To address this interest, Tremblay and Harris (2018) develop Participatory Video as a feminist methodology to understand issues around water and sanitation in settlements in Accra, Ghana and Cape Town, South Africa. The authors explore the use of Participatory Video in amplifying individuals’ narratives and co-creating knowledge, and consider the potential of arts-based methods for informing decision-making processes. They conclude that arts-based research can play a role in “legitimizing and valuing multiple ways of knowing in the world” and in “open[ing] up new ways of thinking, new approaches to dialogue, and new ways of understanding subjectivity, community wellbeing or how we relate to human and non-human ‘others.’” (Tremblay & Harris, 2018, p. 181).

In a mixed-methods FPE study on gendered struggles in rice farming in Tolima, Colombia, Inamoto (2024) combines more traditional methods including interviews, participant observation, surveys and document analysis with participatory arts-based workshops to explore the emotional, lived experiences of rice farming. The workshops served as collaborative spaces where intangible and often invisible experiences could be given a voice and made tangible through art. Additionally, regardless of workshop participants’ backgrounds and technical knowledge, their emotional, subjective, embodied knowledge of rice farming was a legitimate form of knowledge. Reflecting on these arts-based workshops, Inamoto (2024, p. 181) writes that they “offered a powerful way to make abstract emotions and values more tangible, allowing participants to express attachments, struggles, and pride in ways that traditional interviews could not capture... providing rich data on the affective dimensions of rural life.” This capacity of arts-based research in “legitimizing and valuing multiple ways of knowing in the world” (Tremblay & Harris, 2018, p. 181), and in “producing rich data on the affective dimensions” of life (Inamoto, 2024, p. 181) holds tremendous potential for expanding the scope of what counts as legitimate knowledge, particularly in decision-making processes around resource struggles (Bennett & Roth, 2019; Brennan, 2018). Having discussed the important role of Feminist Political Ecology in researching emotion and subjective knowledge, I now turn to literature on arts-based research to more fully explore its potential for research on emotion.

2.6. Arts-based research

Lastly, I turn to arts-based research (ABR) as one possible avenue for researching emotions in marine contexts as well as a natural resource context, and explore its potential for better understanding the relationship between emotion and marine governance. In particular, in this section I discuss how arts-based research functions as a legitimate mode of inquiry, with the capacity to render the intangible visible, to foster deeper emotional connections with oceans, and to reimagine possible ocean futures.

2.6.1. Arts-based research: a legitimate mode of inquiry

In recent years there have been growing calls within academia to recognise and meaningfully engage with alternate ontologies and epistemologies, to interrogate and resist the hegemonic paradigms of positivism and objectivity, and to include subjective, embodied, emotional ways of knowing and being (McNally, 2022). ABR, emerging as one path towards meaningful engagement with affective life, “attempts to walk a delicate epistemological line between peer-reviewed rigour on the one hand, and the recognition of the validity of embodied and otherwise nonverbal forms of knowledge on the other” (McNally, 2022, p. 25-26). A common theme across ABR literature is that art is not only a tool for communicating scientific knowledge rather, it is a rigorous, legitimate mode of inquiry and of knowledge generation in its own right (Ahiagba, 2024; Boyd, 2022; Harder, 2022; Lin et al., 2024; McKinley et al., 2024a; Paterson et al., 2020; Vicente & Lucas, 2022). Many scholars also critique the persistent and false dichotomy between art and science – a dichotomy often reinforced by institutional structures and siloed disciplinary boundaries – and call for holistic transdisciplinary approaches that bridge artistic and scientific inquiry through iterative, reflexive, co-creative collaborations (Boyd, 2022; Harder, 2024; Lin et al., 2024; Paterson et al., 2020; Vicente & Lucas, 2022). Strand et al. (2024, Opportunities for Transdisciplinary Arts-Based Research as ‘Comprehensive’ Transdisciplinarity section, para. 3) argue that “transdisciplinarity as an epistemology recognizes that our lived experiences, our emotions and feelings, our sense of community and our positionalities will influence and impact what we know, what we conceptualize as knowledge, and how we come to know something.” Such transdisciplinary art-science collaborations, then, are uniquely positioned to address ‘wicked problems’ with a high degree of complexity and uncertainty such as climate change (Jung et al., 2022; Vicente & Lucas, 2022).

There are several recent examples of ABR that demonstrate how ABR as a mode of watery inquiry unfolds in practice. For example, Montecchio (2024) uses the mythological figure of Medusa as a metaphor to structure an artistic inquiry exploring oceanic grief, multispecies entanglements, and environmental loss

through different oceanic depths. Medusa as metaphor functions as a methodological anchor for navigating the complex emotional terrain of the ocean and for critically engaging with colonial legacies, migrant deaths at sea, and the hidden costs of globalisation (Montecchio, 2024). In an introduction to a special issue on artistic inquiry into the sea, Psarras (2024, p. 152) frames “the sea as a space of multiple narratives, as a medium and condition of art practice.” Åsberg et al. (2020) expand their artistic inquiry to include the more-than-human, developing a methodology of ‘thinking-with’ kelp as an embodied, multispecies mode of knowledge generation. They turn to kelp forests for lessons in different ways of being and caring:

So we ask, can the environmental shelter provided by kelp forests and other forms of macro-algae, that also form piles of rotting seaweed on the beaches of Lofoten, provide object lessons for such practices of care, concern and curiosity, perhaps even treatments for the ailments of our time? (Åsberg et al., 2020, p. 6)

Here, ABR is framed as a generative practice of multispecies knowledge production that involves entering into conversation with what Åsberg et al. (2020) term the ‘affective vernaculars’ of emotion. Further, ABR has the capacity to capture and express environmental grief, wonder, and loss, and to enable emotional, embodied approaches to ocean knowledge, in ways that ‘rational,’ ‘objective’ scientific discourse often does not provide (Montecchio, 2024). ABR is thus inclusive of a plurality of ontologies and epistemologies, including relational values and emotional knowledge, which are often excluded from policy, and particularly from nature conservation discourses (Brennan, 2018; Jung et al., 2022).

While artistic approaches have often been relegated in conservation and natural resource management contexts to instrumental tools of communication, recent scholarship has critiqued their instrumentalisation and called instead for the full potential of artistic approaches to be recognised. Bennett and Roth (2019), for instance, argue that artistic approaches should not only complement scientific evidence or function solely as a vehicle for communication, but should be harnessed to challenge, interrogate, resist, and imagine alternatives to the hegemonic assumptions and power relations that shape contemporary natural resource management. ABR, then, is not only about influencing policies – it is also about shifting paradigms and making space for different ways of knowing and being in the environment to emerge (Bennett & Roth, 2019). Brennan (2018) echoes this perspective, noting that conventional resource management largely frames humans and nature as separate realms. ABR disrupts this nature/culture binary by highlighting how humans are embedded within their environments and are entitled to have a say in governance processes that manage these environments (Brennan, 2018). Such

work renders visible the emotional dimensions of human-ocean connections (*emoceans*) that are frequently overlooked in decision-making.

2.6.2. Arts-based research and visibility

The capacity of ABR to enhance the visibility of emotion is increasingly important in the context of environmental governance and decision-making, not only in terms of rendering emotional connections visible but also in terms of making scientific knowledge more accessible, emotionally resonant, and context-relevant (Harder, 2024; Matias et al., 2023; McKinley et al., 2024a). Traditional forms of scientific and policy communication, such as academic publications and policy briefs, are often inaccessible and unengaging for non-academic audiences, particularly local and Indigenous communities who are directly impacted by and implicated in governance decisions (Kihia et al., 2023). To bridge this gap, there is a growing body of scholarship that turns to art-science collaborations to translate scientific knowledge into more emotionally and culturally grounded configurations (Kihia et al., 2023; Strand et al., 2022). As Ebbin (2020) and Harder (2024) suggest, these collaborations work to humanise science as well as fostering both emotional connection and environmental action.

Visual and performative arts, and participatory forms of these in particular, have proven effective in making visible ecological issues and environments that are hidden and that often go unnoticed. For instance, Mammola et al. (2025) explored the role of ABR in the conservation of subterranean ecosystems, which are hidden and often overlooked, both physically and politically. They argue that ABR can shed light on subterranean worlds both figuratively and politically, eliciting emotional connections to otherwise hidden ecosystems and thus making them more relatable and accessible to both the public and decision-makers (Mammola et al., 2025). Similarly, Brennan (2018) employed artistic methods including storytelling, place-naming and local narratives to attend to the affective and cultural dimensions of marine ecosystems, which are often hidden from view. Indeed, participatory ABR methods, such as visual mapping, storytelling, photography, video, and theatre, may help reveal spiritual, emotional, and cultural relationships and practices that communities hold towards the marine environment (Brennan, 2018; Strand et al., 2022; Tremblay & Harris, 2018). For instance, McKinley et al. (2024a) demonstrate how a theatre performance captured community-held *emoceans*, and revealed deep-seated community values such as trust, access, activism, and memory. Strand et al. (2022) discuss how many communities already have a rich repository of relational oceanic practices, including rituals, oral traditions, and intergenerational knowledge. In this way, ABR renders visible invisible worlds, whether these worlds be material and ecological or emotional, spiritual, and cultural.

In addition to visibility, however, a key component of ABR is local relevance and context specificity. Rather than implementing one-size-fits-all solutions, ABR projects and initiatives are most effective when they are grounded in the particularities of local contexts (Harder, 2024; Matias et al., 2023). Kihia et al. (2023) recommend the use of iconic species and local stories to connect science and policy with community values. By employing ABR methods that enabled participants to take photographs and record stories in their own languages and contexts, and thus to produce situated, contextual knowledge, Strand et al. (2022, p. 7) show how ABR allows for “remembering the past and imagining more inclusive futures where local communities have more of a say in the stewardship of their coast and ocean.” Whether it be iconic species, participatory art, or any number of other creative approaches, context-specific projects are effective because they tap into the entangled emotional, historical, and socio-political contexts of particular communities, thus building an ecological awareness that is locally relevant (Kihia et al., 2023; McKinley et al., 2024a; Strand et al., 2022). Moreover, they hold a locally-relevant emotional resonance that fosters deeper emotional connection with the ocean as well as “remembering and imagining, or reimagining, ways in which people relate to and care for the ocean and coast” (Strand et al., 2022, p. 12).

While local relevance and context specificity are essential components of effective ABR, artistic approaches are gaining traction within global policy frameworks as well. Whittaker (2023, 2024) highlights the role of ABR in supporting the objectives of the UN Ocean Decade (2021-2030), and Challenge 10 in particular, which aims for “an inspiring and engaging ocean where society understands and values the ocean” (IOC-UNESCO, 2020, p. 11). Echoing the work of Ebbin (2020) and Harder (2024) emphasising the role of ABR in humanising science and engagement with the environment, Whittaker (2023) points to the role of emotion as a critical component of this humanising capacity of ABR. “Emotion,” argues Whittaker (2023, p. 2), “is critical for engagement, and so a medium like art... can provide fluidity to static understandings of ocean worlds.”

2.6.3. Fostering emotional connections and (re)imagining futures

Recent work in ABR has highlighted the vital role of artistic approaches in expanding emotional connection and a sense of possibility regarding the future. As Laing (2020, You Look at the Sun section, para. 18, emphasis mine) writes of art, “[i]t shapes our ethical landscapes, it opens us to the interior lives of others. It is *a training ground for possibility*. It makes plain inequalities, and it offers other ways of living.” Indeed, Ahiagba (2024) argues that imagination enables individuals to reflect on ecological issues not only by recollecting past events but by envisioning possible futures as well as the means to attain those futures, thus transforming individuals from passive witnesses into active agents of change in the face of

uncertainty. ABR, then, opens up spaces of possibility where individuals and communities can dream, speculate, co-create alternative futures (Ghirardello & Isetti, 2023). Indeed, Lin et al. (2024, p. 44) argue that “ArtScience is a means to explore uncertainty, not through the examination of probability but through the lens of possibility.” Rather than putting forth a unifying utopian vision of the future, ABR enables what Harder (2024) terms the ‘complexification’ of multiple futures where diversity, plurality, and uncertainty are embraced. This future-facing dimension of ABR is particularly germane in the context of marine governance. Jung et al. (2022) argue that the arts offer tools for reimagining human-ocean connections – *emoceans* – and for moving from a model of extractivism to a model of care and reciprocity.

By opening up space for exploring the limits of what kinds of *emoceans* are possible in the future, such artistic approaches also have the capacity to shape how individuals and communities relate to the ocean and define sustainability not only for the future but also for today. While the notion of sustainability has traditionally comprised of three core pillars (economic, environmental, and social) there are calls for a fourth pillar – that of culture. Drawing on the work of Hawkes (2001), Matias et al. (2023) argue that arts and culture must be incorporated into this model of sustainability:

Hawkes (2001) regards the arts as the fourth pillar of sustainability; the arts’ techniques involve improvisation, intuition, spontaneity, lateral thought, imagination, cooperation, serendipity, trust, inclusion, openness, risk taking, provocation, surprise, concentration, unorthodoxy, deconstruction, innovation, fortitude, and an ability and willingness to delve beneath the surface, beyond the present, above the practical and around the fixed. (p. 3)

ABR thus becomes a crucial element of sustainability, a concept which includes the intangible, emotional, subjective dimensions of human life that underpin how people relate to the environment (Anggakarti & Murnawan, 2024; Muhr, 2020). The role of ABR in this context is to bring imagination, empathy, and emotional engagement into sustainability discourse and environmental research more broadly, and in doing so make visible the myriad emotional connections, values, and meanings around the natural environment that are not easily captured through more traditional quantitative scientific approaches (Matias et al., 2023; Strand et al., 2024). This role is particularly important in the context of marine governance, where intangible, subjective, emotional and cultural values and relationships to the marine environment are often invisible within technocratic decision-making processes (Brennan, 2018). As Strand et al. (2022) argue, ABR sheds light on these intangible relationships and values that are difficult to measure in numeric terms but that are critical in understanding how and why communities engage with the oceans as they do. Further, ABR works to (re)humanise environmental issues by centring on emotional connection and meaning-making around ecological issues and ecological futures (Ebbin, 2020; Harder,

2024; Whittaker, 2023). In doing so, ABR resists dominant scientific and policy discourses that prioritise 'rational' and 'objective' knowledge over emotional knowledge. In turn, it fundamentally interrogates what sustainability it and who gets to define it, and offers a space for reimagining alternative futures that move us 'from what is to what if' (Hopkins, 2019). This potential of ABR to reimagine alternative futures resonates with the overarching aim of this thesis, which seeks to better understand the place of emotion in marine governance, as well as whose emotions – and whose *emoceans* – come to matter in marine governance.

2.7. Conclusion

This chapter has brought together and critically engaged with the key fields of literature that inform this research, and to which this research makes conceptual and methodological contributions. In critically reviewing literature on emotion in fields including the marine social sciences, feminist geographies, critical resource geographies, and arts-based research, I have demonstrated that emotion is a powerful methodological and conceptual lens for research on marine governance. Indeed, the marine social sciences literature has discussed the crucial role of emotion in shaping how oceans are experienced, governed, and *felt*. By delving into the emerging concept of *emoceans*, this review has situated this research within marine social sciences work that foregrounds the emotional dimensions of marine governance. Feminist geographies and critical resource geographies, then, have offered critical insights into how emotions shape the construction and experience of space and place, how they are generated and mobilised in conflicts around natural resources, and how they serve as politically powerful tools to negotiate and resist governance. Feminist political ecologies have illustrated how emotions in natural resource contexts may be researched through care-full and critical methodological approaches, and indeed that emotion itself may be used as a methodological lens. Finally, literature on arts-based research has pointed to the role of artistic approaches in rendering visible and tangible emotional experiences and relations with the oceans, as well as fostering deeper emotional connections with the oceans and reimagining alternative ocean futures.

In reviewing these literatures, this chapter has uniquely brought these bodies of literature into conversation for the first time, and has consolidated the building blocks of prior work that serve as the foundation of this study and the theoretical scaffolding for the empirical and methodological contributions that follow. By situating and framing this research within academic debates on marine governance, feminist geographies, critical resource geographies, feminist political ecologies, and arts-

based research, this chapter has demonstrated the complexity of researching the role of emotions in marine governance, and the need for a highly interdisciplinary approach to address a highly interdisciplinary question. K. Anderson and Smith (2001) maintain that

academic commitment to highlighting the emotional consequences of seemingly rational economic decisions is an important element in bringing these actions to account. If the logic of efficiency *depends* on the silencing of the emotions, academics have a role in pointing out that this is an ethically questionable state of affairs. (p. 8)

In this chapter I have laid the groundwork for the ‘academic commitment’ of this research. In the following chapter, I provide a detailed account of the methodological approach and the methods of data collection, processing, and analysis I employed to conduct this research. In doing so, I offer a methodology for the *doing* of this ‘academic commitment’ to foregrounding the emotional consequences of marine governance decisions.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

All these things tangled up in a web – kelp, people, community, marine health, global chains of violence and extraction, history, environmental discourses and narratives, power, money – they are all part of the same web; different temporalities and spatialities crisscross, are mixed up, they come together and break apart... Nothing is neat, nothing can be boxed in; everything is part of everything. How can we make sense of things? Or is shedding light on this web all we can do? How can that be enough?

Excerpt from field diary entry, “Reflections on receiving High Court judgment – 27/10/2023”

3.1. Introduction

In Chapter 1, I introduced the research aims and justification and contextualised the case study of mechanical kelp harvesting in Bantry Bay around which the research is centred. In the literature review in Chapter 2, I situated this thesis within the debates that have shaped and that speak to this research and to which this research speaks in turn (oceanic studies of emotion, feminist geographies of emotion, critical resource geographies and arts-based approaches to research). In this chapter, I discuss the overarching methodological approach I took to address the research aims, the specific methods of data collection, processing, and analysis that I employed to address the research objectives – and the method that I further developed for researching emotion. Before doing so, I reiterate the research aims and objectives here in order to frame this chapter.

The overarching aim of this research is **to better understand the place of emotions in marine governance, where emotions have until recently remained underexamined** (see interest rising on ‘emoceans,’ McKinley et al., 2023; on emotional reflexivity, Levi & Peters 2024; and on emotions around coastal change, Pafi, 2022, for example). The specific objectives of this research aim to: a) develop a methodology for researching emotions in marine contexts; b) build on a method for analysing emotions through a deep listening approach; and c) explore and makes sense of various configurations of emotional connections to the oceans and their relevance to marine governance.

I open this chapter in Sections 3.2. and 3.3. by outlining my ethical orientation and positionality as a researcher, and the broad methodological approach I took throughout my research. In Sections 3.4. and

3.5., I describe in detail the secondary research I undertook prior to embarking on fieldwork, my fieldwork experience, the methods I employed to collect data during the fieldwork period, and the methods I used to process the data. In Section 3.6., I discuss in detail the Listening Guide, the method I used to analyse the data I collected (to which I return in the chapters to follow). Finally, I conclude in Section 3.7. by summarising this chapter and emphasising the novel methodological contribution of this research.

3.2. Ethical orientation and positionality

This research is nonnegotiable centred on a feminist ethic of care. Fisher and Tronto's (1990, p. 40) germinal perspective on care "includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible." Caring is an affectively animated practice that tends to the relations that constitute 'our world', which extends to our bodies, selves, and environments (Fisher & Tronto, 1990; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017). Questioning the notion of a singular 'our world,' however, Puig de la Bellacasa (2017, p. 65, emphasis mine) asks: "For *what* worlds is care being done for?" Centred on and driven by a feminist ethic of care, this research attends to what worlds – which oceans, whose *emoceans* – care is being done for.

While the concept of care has been criticised for its ambiguity, I am interested not in pinning down and defining what care *is* but rather what it *does* – how it might nourish and support, complicate and unsettle, resist and disrupt; but also how it might cause harm and enact violence. To this end, my aim is not to develop a normative theory of 'care-full governance' or propose care as a catch-all concept for all modes of governance (Domínguez-Guzmán et al., 2022; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017). Indeed, care is "not so much a notion that explains the construction of things than it addresses how we participate in their possible becomings" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 66). My approach, then, is an ethical commitment to creating and 'becoming-with' (and *feeling-with*) more inclusive and pluralistic worlds (Ross, 2021; Tronto, 1993). "This meaning of care," writes Puig de la Bellacasa (2017, p. 64, emphasis mine) "translated into a way of doing knowledge about science and technology is about *finding ways to re-affect an objectified world.*" This ethical approach, then, is particularly suited to research that aims to take seriously the role of emotion and the value of subjective, lived experience more broadly.

I think with care to better understand the varying manifestations and expressions of emotion in the specific governance context of the Bantry Bay case study, which is a context bound up with multiple and overlapping geographic, socioeconomic, political, historical, and cultural contexts, as well as other

governance regimes, at multiple and overlapping scales (see Chapter 1 for a glimpse into this complex context). In a study on communally caring for water infrastructure, Domínguez-Guzmán et al. (2022) write:

The specificities of all these variants of care deserve to be recognised on their own terms, because if they are not attended to, cherished, differentiated, there is a risk that they will disappear. There is no need to add them up into a generalizable model... What would be grand, instead, is if our stories were to help widen the conceptual and the political space to shape human-canal relations more attentively, better attuned to local specificities, more caringly. What would be grand is if *you* were inspired and emboldened by them to attend to the specificities of the sites and situations relevant to your research. (p. 2166)

My commitment to an ethic of care, then, is also a commitment to a context; and to becoming keenly attuned to the particularities of the context of Bantry Bay. In the remainder of this section I outline the ethical approval I obtained from the University of Oldenburg, and discuss my ethical orientation and positionality as a researcher beyond institutional ethical considerations.

3.2.1. Ethics approval

This research has obtained ethics approval from the Research Impact Assessment and Ethics Committee at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg (Kommission für Forschungsfolgenabschätzung und Ethik der Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg) on 03/02/2023 (see letter of ethical approval in Appendix A). The scope of the ethics approval extends to the following data collection methods: stakeholder analysis, discourse analysis, semi-structured interviews, participatory mapping, participant photography, and autoethnographic swimming.

While ethics approval was obtained for these particular methods, I did not end up using every method during the fieldwork period of 2023; indeed, I intentionally discarded several of these methods, either due to time and resource constraints or in response to the needs the research once I was 'in the field' (e.g., the participatory mapping component, as discussed above). For instance, I describe in my ethics application my plan for collecting data through participant photography:

Photography is widely acknowledged as a valid way of capturing, representing, and communicating intangible phenomena, such as emotion, in ways that language cannot capture. Therefore, as part of the goal of this research to understand how different people value seaweed differently, participants will be asked to take photographs that visually represent their emotional connections to seaweed. Participants will then be able to elaborate on why they took these photographs, and what the contents of the photographs mean to them, in unstructured interviews.

However, once I arrived ‘in the field,’ and began spending time with my research participants during the snorkelling excursions and, later, during the semi-structured interviews, I started to feel the weight of what I was asking from them, in particular their time and their knowledge. I was concerned that asking them for more – their time in further unstructured interviews, as well as the time they would need to visit various locations on the coast and take photographs – would at best risk irritation or confusion, and at worst risk research fatigue and an extractive mode of research, which runs counter to the ethic of care at the core of this research (Casal-Ribeiro et al., 2024; Clark, 2008; Flannery et al., 2018). With my research participants in mind, then, I discarded this method, and focused my energies on semi-structured interviews and the autoethnographic snorkelling, supported by the secondary textual research I conducted prior to embarking on fieldwork (more on this in Section 3.4.2. below).

3.2.2. Attunement as ethical orientation

The ethic of care driving this research is underpinned by an ethical orientation of *attunement* – tuning into, listening to, the presence of other bodies, other forms of agency, other possibilities for existence. “Bodies as well as objects,” writes Ahmed (2010, p. 245), “take shape through being orientated toward each other, an orientation that may be experienced as the cohabitation or sharing of space.” An ethical orientation of attunement demands a practice of tuning into the relationality and interdependency of all things. Attunement is a deeply resonant orientation; it reverberates in different iterations throughout this dissertation: as the capacity of music to foster a sense of co-presence, of sharing space together; as the Listening Guide’s approach to deep listening that “requires quieting down and tuning in” to voice (Gumbs, 2021, p. 24, see Chapters 4 and 6); as co-presence with other (human and more-than-human) bodies immersed in water; as an ontological approach to emotion that, rather than defining what emotions *are*, asks: “What do they *attune* to?” (B. Anderson, 2014 p. 12, emphasis mine). Attunement, then, is many things at once – an ontological, epistemological, methodological, ethical, and political commitment – and in its different configurations is a red thread running through this research.

More than these, however, attunement is the responsibility that comes with being in reciprocal relation. “Listening with care,” writes Puig de la Bellacasa (2017, p. 58), “is an active process of intervening in the count of whom and what is ratified as concerned; it affects the representation of things, adding mediation to mediations.” Intervening in who and what matters in the world is far from neutral; it is a responsibility embedded within intersecting power dimensions. Maintaining a high degree of reflexivity and awareness of one’s own positionality is thus essential (Levi & Peters, 2024). I ask myself: *Who am I responsible to?*

To which places, which stories, which voices? Answering is neither easy nor comfortable, but not asking is not an option.

3.2.3. Positionality statement?

A positionality statement often functions as a discrete section of a project that covers aspects of a researcher's position to demonstrate that there is a person behind the research, with their own subjectivities and lived experiences and perspectives, and that the research process and outcomes are not value-free and objective but rather shaped by this researcher. In stating their positionality, a researcher may share aspects of their identity (or intersecting identities) that have some kind of bearing on the research, particularly when working with marginalised groups and/or sensitive topics. In doing so, they may be highly reflexive, shedding light on the power relations and asymmetries at work in the research as well as on their own internal assumptions (King, 2024). However, positionality statements have also received widespread criticism in recent years due to several reasons, including the risk of performativity in favour of genuine reflexivity, the risks of disclosing researcher vulnerability, and the difficulty of neatly categorising and labelling complex social identities (King, 2024; Martin et al., 2022).

My reflexivity is an ongoing process throughout the research, and my subjectivity is firmly embedded within and present in various configurations within this dissertation. In particular, these are evidenced in (but not limited to): my consistent use of the first-person 'I,' which resists the standard, 'objective' third-person voice in much of scientific writing; my reflexive reflections in multiple thesis chapters; my occasional use of evocative, emotional language; my use of a data analysis method of which reflexivity is an integral component; my inclusion of reflexive field diary entries and autoethnography; my involvement in various creative endeavours and arts-based methods, of which emotion is a core element; and lastly, my deep love¹¹ of West Cork and my regard for its (human and more-than-human) inhabitants, which suffuses all parts of this work.

Due to the aforementioned criticisms of positionality statements, as well as the strong presence of reflexivity and subjectivity throughout my research (reflections on myself and my research practice permeate almost every chapter, and particularly in the autoethnographic reflections on positionality in Chapter 6), I do not think it necessary to include an explicit positionality 'statement' here, as that would

¹¹ Ahmed (2004) reminds us that love is not an intrinsically positive thing; she discusses love as a motivating factor for the violence enacted by right-wing fascist groups in the name of loving their nation to demonstrate the fine line between love and hate.

feel like a performative, box-ticking exercise¹². That being said, I acknowledge that the central elements of this research, including critical understandings of waters and oceans, listening, emotion, territory, ontology, more-than-human, and care, have been heavily influenced by the critical, de/anticolonial work of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian American and Pacific Islander women and non-binary scholars (see for example Ahmed, 2004; Cameron, 2012; Crenshaw, 2010; Eddo-Lodge, 2020; George & Wiebe, 2023; Gumbs, 2020; hooks, 1987; Ingersoll, 2016; Kimmerer, 2013; Noxolo, 2017; Sultana, 2011; Sundberg, 2017; TallBear, 2011; Tania et al., 2019; Todd, 2016; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Watego, 2021; Watt-Cloutier, 2018; Watts, 2013; Yong, 2020; Yusoff, 2018)¹³.

Drawing on such critical, de/anticolonial work (as that cited above) is not without complexity, not least when bringing it into conversation with this context of this research, since undertaking such research in the Republic of Ireland means reckoning with a complex colonial history and legacy. Indeed, Fletcher (2001) eloquently writes on the complexity of the Irish post-colonial condition:

In accepting the claim that the Republic of Ireland was once colonized, I am not suggesting that its people experienced the same sort of colonialism as any of the indigenous peoples of India, Australia, the Americas or Africa. Rather I am claiming that there is something about the British settlement of Ireland that can be explained in terms of metropolitan political control and economic exploitation of a peripheral territory, that is, in colonial terms. And therefore the experience of British colonial settlement, along with other historical experiences, has effects on the way Irish society develops economically, politically, culturally, and legally. (p. 573)

The context of decolonisation, then, matters. In the context of Ireland, it matters for “reconciling the tensions between the apparent binary of being either colonised or coloniser and the reality that people on the island [of Ireland] were both/and — that is, colonised and colonisers” (Dháibhéid et al., 2021, p. 309; Gopal, 2021). It is with the deep discomfort of holding this tension, then, that I use the aforementioned body of de/anticolonial scholarship to make sense of the issue of coloniality in this research. At the same time, while much of the thinking in this research aligns with oceanic, marine, maritime and watery de/anticolonial work, decolonisation extends beyond the intellectual and into the material realm. Indeed, decolonisation is an inherently material process that demands tangible reparations for tangible losses, otherwise it risks ‘decolonisation without decolonising’ (Gopal, 2021). I am

¹² This is not to say that all positionality statements are performative box-ticking exercises. However, for the purposes of this specific research, in this specific context, on this specific topic, I feel that it would be. But this is also a subjective opinion; perhaps if someone else was doing this research they would include a positionality statement. There is no one-size-fits-all solution; rather, it is a subjective assessment based on research purpose and context.

¹³ See Ahmed (2013) for critical insights into the politics of citation practice.

uncertain about whether this research can offer material reparations (to whom, and for whose oceans), and consequently uncertain whether I can label it as decolonising. Rather than ignoring these uncertainties, however, I sit with them without ‘comforting the discomfort’ (Applebaum, 2017). Like Haraway (2016), I ‘stay with the trouble’, leveraging it to stay critical and reflexive; and like Hoover (2022), I regard this discomfort as a ‘generative affective practice’ that opens up new possibilities for learning and humility through deep listening (Koch, 2020; Saville, 2021).

3.3. Methodological approach

This research is guided by the concept of *collage*, a methodological approach that involves the use of multiple methods, perspectives, and lines of inquiry to explore and analyse a broad field of research, rather than to converge on a particular point through triangulation to demonstrate the validity of a given dataset (Freeman, 2020). The multiple methods and insights are brought together through a flexible, interpretive process that involves the “layering of theoretical, artistic, and intersubjective knowledges,” and that attends to the points where these layers overlap and intersect as well as to the gaps, blank spaces, and tensions between them (de Rijke, 2024, p. 304; Freeman, 2020). The messiness of this approach might be criticised for being theoretically weak or sloppy; however, “collage lays bare how messy research actually is, namely, the scrabbling about and collection of data, the cutting, pasting, and reworking of literature and reference” (de Rijke, 2024, p. 303). Rather than its weakness, then, the strength of collage lies in being transparent about and embracing the inherent messiness of the research process. Used well, it may be just as rigorous a research methodology as any other (Hosseini, 2024).

Scotti and Chilton (2018, p. 363) argue that “collage is particularly suited to arts-based researchers who seek to uncover, juxtapose, and transform multiple meanings and perspectives, and to integrate different aspects of a person or phenomenon through embodied, multisensorial processes.” Collage, then, is particularly well-suited to research on emotion, which is messy, non-linear, relational, subjective, embodied, multisensory and multimodal. As a methodological approach, its capacity for “coexistence, combination, layering, juxtaposition, and integration of multiple experiences” holds space for exploring and grasping the complexity of emotion without being reductive or essentialist (Scotti & Chilton, 2018, p. 364). For this reason, I have selected collage as the methodological approach guiding this research.

3.4. Data collection

In line with the methodological approach of *collage*, in this research I drew on multiple methods to explore and analyse the emotional aspects of governance, in the specific case of Bantry Bay. Table 1 on the next page provides an overview of all the data collection and analysis methods I employed throughout the course of this project. In this section I describe each method in Table 1 in detail, provide a justification for its selection, and demonstrate its relevance to the overarching research aims.

Table 1. Overview and timeline of all data collection, processing, and analysis methods employed during doctoral research project.

Timeline	2023												2024											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pre-fieldwork preparation																								
Contextual research																								
Reaching out to key contacts																								
Logistics prep (e.g., public transport, accommodation, equipment)																								
Preparing fieldwork 'methods toolbox'																								
Preparing interview questions & topics																								
Methods: fieldwork & data collection																								
Familiarisation period: getting to know Bantry Bay																								
Conducting semi-structured interviews																								
Recording post-interview summaries																								
Participating in snorkelling club																								
Recording snorkelling reflections in field diary																								
Methods: data processing																								
Transcribing post-interview summaries																								
Transcribing interviews																								
Digitising snorkelling reflections																								
Methods: data analysis																								
Listening Guide: analysis of interview transcripts																								
Listening Guide: autoethnographic analysis of field diary reflections																								
Creative interventions																								
Musical art-science collaboration																								

3.4.1. Approach to case study design

This research was initially designed as a case study of one particular environmental campaign (*Bantry Bay – Protect Our Native Kelp Forest*) within a specific geographical area (Bantry Bay) and time period (2017-2024), and embedded within a specific social, historical, and political context. However, because of its deep and extensive entanglement with so many other places, other time periods, other people, and other contexts, drawing boundaries around this governance issue, and treating it as an isolated case study, was challenging. For instance, while the campaign began to mobilise in 2017, the governance decision that led to its mobilisation (i.e., approval of mechanical harvesting licence) was made in 2014 (see more on the campaign and its entangled contexts in Chapter 1). The Foreshore Act, the law conferring political power upon a Minister to grant this approval, was developed in the politically tumultuous 1920s and enacted in 1933 by politicians who recognised, after living through Ireland’s transition from colony to independent nation, the need to create new legal frameworks to reflect the new order of things (Foreshore Act 1933). After the EU banned the use of antibiotics as growth promoters in animal feed in 2006 to mitigate the public health threat of antibiotic resistance, there was a widespread move to identify and trial alternatives to antibiotics. *Laminaria* species (i.e., kelp) contain several promising antimicrobial compounds, particularly laminarin and fucoidan (Beagan et al., 2024; Keihani, 2016; Rajauria et al., 2021). Bolstered by the EU’s more recent attention to the potential of the blue bioeconomy to tackle sustainability issues, seaweed has emerged as a marine resource of particular interest (European Commission, 2024). This is evidenced by the proliferation of initiatives and reports focusing on algae, including ‘EU4Algae,’ an EU-wide algae stakeholder platform; the first EU Algae Awareness Summit held in 2023; and expert publications such as *Algae and Climate* (van Duinen et al., 2023).

In conversations with my supervisor in my PhD office, the notion of the ‘expanded field’ of my PhD kept cropping up. Due to the complexity and multi-sited nature of this governance issue, as well as due to my own resource constraints, my approach to the case study design shifted. Rather than a siloed case study, I saw it as a distributed, multi-sited thing, which Cook (2001) calls the ‘expanded field,’ and which Pottinger (2024) describes using a ‘patchwork metaphor.’ This approach felt more fitting for research on emotion, because it reflected the messy, non-linear, collage-like mode of inquiry into emotion that has been at the core of this dissertation.

3.4.2. Pre-fieldwork preparation (analysis of secondary data)

Prior to commencing fieldwork, between January and May 2023, I undertook an in-depth investigation into the various social and political contexts relevant to the case study. This was a significant portion of research, not just conducted in preparation for ‘primary’ research (e.g., interviews, autoethnography) but as secondary research in its own right. One strand involved policy research on specific pieces of Irish and EU legislation, both historical (e.g., Foreshore Act 1933) and contemporary (e.g., Maritime Area Planning Act 2021; Marine Strategy Framework Directive; Birds and Habitats Directives; Maritime Spatial Planning Directive), as well as broader Irish and EU policy frameworks (e.g., National Marine Planning Framework; Project Ireland 2040; European Green Deal; EU Blue Growth Strategy). Another strand involved research on the social and cultural history of seaweed in Ireland, including its historical significance, cultural values, presence in literature and art, and culinary use. Yet another strand involved social and geographical research on Bantry Bay, including its various terrestrial and marine habitats, climate, major settlements, demographics, economy, and local amenities. A final strand involved research on the campaign, including an analysis of publicly available material such as newspaper articles, social media posts, harvesting licence application documents, court case transcripts, government publications, and television programmes.

Through this contextual research several key actors began to emerge, including campaign members, local communities and businesses, and governance actors. In the two months leading up to the fieldwork I began to send out feelers, reaching out to key individuals with the hope of establishing contact before my arrival. Many e-mails went unanswered, others were encouraging but too busy (or too wary) to get involved. One individual, a campaign member, responded with interest; we had an introductory phone call to get to know each other, arranged to meet in person as soon as I arrived in Bantry, and agreed to see how things would go from there, with no expectations from either side. This was part of my ethical research practice, which aligns with the view that “research and knowledge production are undertaken *with* (not *on*) participants, who are viewed as agents rather than objects or subjects of research, with respect to their values, knowledge, expectations and needs” (Burke et al., 2023, p. 840, emphasis in original).

In addition to identifying key actors, the contextual research helped me with the preparation of the fieldwork logistics. For instance, due to the rural and remote location of Bantry Bay, public transport options are limited to a handful of bus routes between the larger settlements and Cork, running once every few hours at their most frequent and once or twice a day at their least. This meant I would either have to stay in Bantry for the duration of the fieldwork or commute from Cork by public transport. While

I would have liked to stay in Bantry for the entirety of the fieldwork in order to feel more ‘immersed’ in the case study environment, accommodation options were likewise very limited and their price much too steep for my research budget. I therefore chose to stay in Cork during the fieldwork period, with a small number of overnight stays in Bantry for those times when I had to be in Bantry outside bus operating hours, whether late in the evening or early in the morning. While this meant I wouldn’t be physically ‘immersed’ in the research environment full-time, it gave me the flexibility to commute not only to Bantry but to other settlements around Bantry Bay, and pushed me to think creatively about what ‘immersion’ could mean for this project (more on immersion in Section 3.4.3. below).

The final strand of fieldwork preparation informed by the contextual research was methodological. Initially, all I knew was that I wanted in-depth interviews to form the core of my fieldwork data. However, although my Master’s thesis was based on data I collected through surveys and interviews with locals in coastal communities (see Levi et al., 2021), I had no formal training in social science research methods (interviews included). In the beginning, then, my approach to the semi-structured interviews was very rigid and shaped by entrenched positivist assumptions formed during a tertiary education wholly in the natural sciences. I began by assembling a set list of interview questions based on issues into which I wanted to gain insight, with the intention of asking the same questions to each participant so that I could compare different participants’ answers to the same questions in a standardised manner. I asked my colleague Vani Sreekanta for feedback, as I knew she had extensive experience with fieldwork and interviewing. It was from her that I received one of the single most important pieces of advice on how to interview (and how to *listen* to people): if I asked everyone the same set of questions, I would risk appearing like I wasn’t really listening to them, like I was there simply to extract information, with no regard for what they themselves wanted to talk about or share with me. Instead, she suggested something different and much more flexible: an interview topic guide containing a number of key themes and broad issues to explore rather than specific and narrow questions (more on the interview topic guide in Section 3.4.3.2. below).

Moreover, aside from interviews I wasn’t sure what methods to implement. There were countless ideas and examples in the literature, but how would I choose from among them? Through meetings with my colleague Paula Satizábal Posada¹⁴, I came to see this as a political matter, and to understand the

¹⁴ I cite the intellectual contributions of my colleagues here to push against the notion of ‘independent research’ that pervades so much of academia. While this dissertation is an independent piece of work in the sense that I carried out the research and wrote the thesis myself, to say that this was a wholly independent endeavour is to erase the support and solidarity shown by the members of our group towards one another, and the myriad contributions that

importance of listening to local concerns, needs, causes, and activism, and aligning my fieldwork methods and topics of investigation with these matters. Indeed, *listening* became a crucial step in determining which methods might be a good fit, as well as which might not. For instance, one of my fieldwork objectives was to create a literal emotional geography of the campaign through participatory mapping. However, when I began to ask participants about mapping the emotional and environmental impacts of the campaign, they responded with scepticism, because to them the impacts were not limited to individuals or even local communities but nationwide. Seeing that trying to affix a cartographic scale to emotion made sense neither for my own research objectives nor to my participants' experiences, I quickly discarded this method and shifted my focus to exploring emotion in greater depth through semi-structured interviews.

3.4.3. Fieldwork and data collection

This research involved two stints of fieldwork. The first fieldwork period ran from the beginning of July to the end of October of 2023 and consisted of a more traditional approach to data collection through semi-structured interviews, as well as a significant immersive, autoethnographic component. The second fieldwork period took place sporadically between May and August of 2024; its focus was on exploring creative approaches to the research findings, and developing an art-science collaboration. In this section I describe the sense-making and data collection methods I used in the 2023 fieldwork period; I discuss the 2024 fieldwork period, and its creative approach, separately in Chapter 7.

3.4.3.1. Familiarisation period

Arriving into 'the field' was a deeply emotional experience that was at the same time familiar and wholly unfamiliar. My accommodation in Cork was, happily, a room in the very house I had called home for four years prior moving to Germany for the PhD. Everything around me – the constant roar of the river, the creaks of the house settling in the night, the joy of walking the secret riverside trail, the misty pre-dawn stillness and the heart-stopping watery sunrises – was *home*; and the knowledge that I was there for four months only made me determined to make the most of every minute I was there. The challenge would

have shaped this thesis in so many ways. "Academic women have the capacity and commitment to enable one another to grow toward interdependence," writes Johnsrud (1991, p. 16). I firmly believe that, because research doesn't occur in a social vacuum, acknowledging our work as 'interdependent scholarship' is a way to honour others' intellectual contributions to our research as well as the labour involved in showing care and solidarity in academic spaces. Moreover, while much of the labour of care and solidarity in academia is disproportionately gendered, I believe that not only 'academic women' but *all* academics have the capacity for interdependence.

be finding ways to familiarise myself with Bantry Bay and its surrounds while accounting for the budgetary and logistical constraints of the project as well as the environmental conditions of the region.

I found my bearings around Bantry Bay primarily through two modes of curious exploration: the first, holing up in the public library in Bantry and pouring through the books in the section on local history and knowledge; and the second, creative writing as I wandered up and down Bantry town and around the more remote villages and coastal walkways on the Sheep's Head and Beara peninsulas on either side of the bay (see map of Bantry Bay in Fig. 1). I fell into a pleasant routine, those first few weeks of fieldwork: waking up at the crack of dawn, taking the earliest bus from Cork to Bantry, spending the morning in the library, then, weather allowing, either setting out for a wander or, on rainy days, remaining in the library until closing time, and then taking the evening bus back to Cork and unwinding at home until bedtime.

In the library, one book in particular stood out to me, and gave me a tangible sense of closeness to this new place: Hourihane's (2021) compilation of historical photographs, *Bantry Through the Centuries – The Images*. Reflecting on looking through this book, and at one photo¹⁵ in particular, I write in my field diary:

Looking at the old photographs – the serious and smiling faces, curious and flirty glances, families and blacksmiths and fishers with cigarettes dangling from the corners of their mouths; crowded market days and boats crowding the water and buildings that have since burned down and nets and crates and lobster pots at low tide... knowing that it is all gone; it gives me a queer feeling, unsettling... Earls and soldiers, postal workers, altar boys and firemen, schoolchildren with starched collars, horse-drawn carriages and stone cottages and the packed square on Fair Day in 1855, 1920, 1933... but the photograph that gets to me is this: a mother and her two children playing on the beach at low tide; the youngest wears a white dress and bonnet, the oldest a dress and wide-brimmed hat; lobster pots crowd the foreground; a ghostly figure moves behind them between the boats; the town is still behind them. I'm not sure why it's this photo; maybe the children playing, maybe the blurry figure, maybe the stillness of the captured moment – but something reaches out, makes me feel like this place is a little more familiar, a little more within my grasp.

Field diary entry, Bantry Library, 18/07/2023

On days I wandered out, I often found myself walking the Beicín Loop, a short but breath-taking trail leading from the heart of Bantry northward along the water to a shingly beach in a sheltered cove, then veering eastward, turning away from the bay and uphill into the fields, and then south and downhill back into town. On these walks I would find somewhere to sit and write as a way of making sense of this new

¹⁵ French, R. and Lawrence, W., 1865. *General View, Bantry, Co. Cork*. Accessed on 03 January 2025 at: <https://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000321872>

environment and of my own emotional responses to it. On a blustery July afternoon, for instance, I sit on a bench along the Beicín and write in my field diary:

I feel I'm sitting in a composition; horizontal streaks of red algae and grey rocks and brown wrack, then a wide pool of blue, then on the far shore streaks of brown wrack and grey rock and the green of fields... Strung around are the mountains, pinched upwards like dough. Grass and leaves and waves ripple into texture. A lone red kite flutters into view, then hovers. So still, suspended in the air: it seems as though the world were turning around the kite... Deserted now but never truly quiet. The patter of large leaves; the whisper of long grass; the hum of wind in trees; a pair of wagtails peeping on the rocks by the water; the wind filling my ears; the pleading cries of distant gulls; the scrape of dried leaves on pebbles; the quiet lap of little waves by the shore, and the song of deeper water; the wub-wub-wub of sails in the wind; heavy wingbeats of a wood-pigeon.

Field diary entry, somewhere along the Beicín Loop, 25/07/2023

Journeying through time in the library books, journeying through space along the coast on foot, journeying inwards through my field notes; together, these became tools for navigating through and making sense of the layered landscape – the historical, the material, the emotional landscape – of ‘the field’; to establish an embodied, emotional connection to this place, and a sense of my own place in it.

3.4.3.2. Semi-structured interviews

Interviews are one of the most widely-used social science methods to understand subjective lived experiences. They fall under three broad approaches: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews (Knott et al., 2022; Osborne & Grant, 2021). Structured interviews involve a researcher asking a pre-determined set of questions in order to obtain answers that can be standardised and compared; this style is influenced by the positivist view of data as objective and the interview as tool for the collection of objective data. In an unstructured interview, on the other hand, a researcher does not prepare questions in advance, and instead adapts questions during the interview based on the flow of the conversation and what an interviewee wants to talk about. Semi-structured interviews fall between the two; researchers use an interview guide to explore broad themes, allowing for particular topics of interest to be covered while providing enough flexibility to pursue new lines of inquiry (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Further, a semi-structured interview assumes that there is no such thing as objective data; indeed, feminist researchers view interviews as “not only as a place to collect data, but also a site where data is co-constructed, where identities are forged through the telling of stories, and where meaning-making begins” (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008, p. 335). A feminist approach to interviewing recognises the presence

and influence of power relations on the interview process, and highlights the importance of researcher reflexivity throughout the research process (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008; Hesse-Biber, 2007).

I selected semi-structured interviews due to their flexibility and adaptability, their approach to knowledge as situated and relational, their capacity to access hidden emotions and subjectivities, their emphasis on deep listening, and their suitability for a feminist ethic of care. In this sub-section, I discuss the strategies I used to recruit participants and the total sample size, describe in detail the interview process and the various considerations surrounding it, and provide an overview of the interviews conducted.

3.4.3.2.1. Developing the interview topic guide

The process of constructing an interview topic guide was an intuitive and messy one. I first created an 'interview question dump' spreadsheet containing a list of all possible questions I might want to ask someone, based on the overarching research aims and questions (e.g., *What does kelp mean to you?*, *How do you feel about kelp?*, *What do you know about kelp?*, *Why is kelp important to you?*). After listing 67 potential questions, I grouped the questions into emerging themes (e.g., *Kelp*, *Marine Environment*, *Place*, *Kelp Harvesting*) and dimensions (e.g., *Knowledge*, *Meanings*, *Values*). Finally, I structured these themes and dimensions into an interview topic guide (see Table 2 on the next page).

Table 1. Interview topic guide.

Interview Topic Guide: Participant _____

Objectives

- To explore how people relate to, know, value, experience kelp & the marine environment
- To understand people's knowledge of the proposed mechanical kelp harvesting issue, as well as their perceptions of the different issues and impacts

Introduction

- Introduce broad research project & specific case study; information & consent
- No right or wrong answers to the questions
- Highlight total anonymity

1. Kelp & Bantry Bay

- Relationship
 - What is your connection to Bantry Bay? What makes it special for you?
 - What is your connection to kelp in particular?
 - Prompt: What is it that makes you care about...?
 - Prompt: Memories, activities, feelings associated with...?
- Meanings/values
 - What makes kelp valuable to you? Why?
 - Prompt: What is it that you value about...?
 - Prompt: Do you feel kelp is important to people and to nature more broadly? Why?
- Encounters
 - In what ways do you engage with kelp? (what, where, how?)

2. Proposed mechanical kelp harvesting in Bantry Bay *(only ask if participant feels comfortable answering about their participation)*

- Perceptions & knowledge on proposed kelp harvesting
 - How did you first learn about the proposed kelp harvesting? How did you feel when you found out about it?
 - What, in your personal opinion, are the main issues in all of this? What are your main concerns?
- Participation in campaign
 - Personal involvement in campaign
 - Why did you join the campaign? How do you feel about being part of the campaign?
 - Campaign actions *(impersonal questions; options if people don't want to talk about their personal involvement)*
 - How does the campaign try to make people aware of what's going on?
 - What kinds of resistance actions has the campaign taken?
 - What have been some of the challenges the campaign has faced?
 - Results of campaign
 - Has being involved in the campaign changed how you feel about the bay (and the marine environment)?
 - Has the campaign created new links between people, places, campaigns, which didn't exist beforehand?

3. Mapping anticipatory solastalgia

- First, I want you to think about and list:
 - Who do you think will be impacted? (individuals, communities, businesses, etc.)
 - What do you think will be impacted? (species, ecosystems, geology, etc.)
- Then, I want you to try and put these on a map:
 - Where (and when) do you think these impacts might take place?
- Then, reflect:
 - How do you think these impacts could be reduced or avoided?
 - How has the anticipation of these impacts affected your life?

4. Conclusion

- Any final thoughts or points before we wrap up?

The interview guide is divided into three broad categories of inquiry: *Kelp & Bantry Bay, Proposed mechanical kelp harvesting in Bantry Bay*, and *Mapping anticipatory solastalgia*¹⁶. I derived these overarching categories from the aforementioned list of potential questions. Within each category, I included broad, open-ended questions to guide the flow of the interview towards key topics of interest while leaving it open enough to follow new or unanticipated topics and lines of inquiry. Finally, I included different types of probes under several of the questions, in case I felt that a given topic would benefit from a fuller explanation or further elaboration on the part of the participant. These probes, based on the typology of Legard and Keegan (2003), served different purposes, including amplification (i.e., elaboration), exploration, explanation, and clarification. Such in-depth probing, write Legard and Keegan (2003, p. 141), “permits the researcher to explore fully all the factors that underpin participants' answers: reasons, feelings, opinions and beliefs. This furnishes the explanatory evidence that is an important element of qualitative research.”

Constructing the topic guide in this way, with a clear structure containing key topics to address as well as more open-ended questions and probes, allowed me to respond to individual participants and interview situations on the spot. As a neurodivergent researcher, this was particularly important for me during fieldwork. It meant that, rather than racing through possible responses and follow-up questions in my mind while a participant was speaking, and not processing what they were telling me as a result, I could focus my energies wholly on listening to what participants were communicating to me, and on being more fully present with them during the time we shared together.

3.4.3.2.2. Sample size and recruitment strategies

I interviewed a total of nine individuals; seven were local community members that had been involved with the campaign in some way; one was a decision-maker that had expressed support for the campaign; and one was a local individual who had not been involved with the campaign but had been opposed to the proposed harvesting operation.

¹⁶ ‘Mapping anticipatory solastalgia’ is the participatory mapping exercise I write about at the end of Section 3.4.2.; after the second interview I discarded this exercise and focused on the remaining two sections of the interview topic guide in greater detail.

To recruit participants, I used a mix of sampling strategies to reflect the mixed-methods nature of the research (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). I used purposive sampling to identify and recruit the decision-maker, as well as a key individual involved with the campaign. This key individual invited me to join a weekly snorkelling club, and introduced me to other campaign members. Through the snorkelling club and the introductions, I relied on snowball sampling, which has been described as a process in which “the researcher *relinquishes* a considerable amount of control over the sampling phase to the informants,” to recruit the remaining six campaign members (Noy, 2008, p. 332, emphasis in original). Lastly, I recruited a local individual not involved with the campaign after they responded to my post in a community notice board on social media (shown in Figure 2 below).

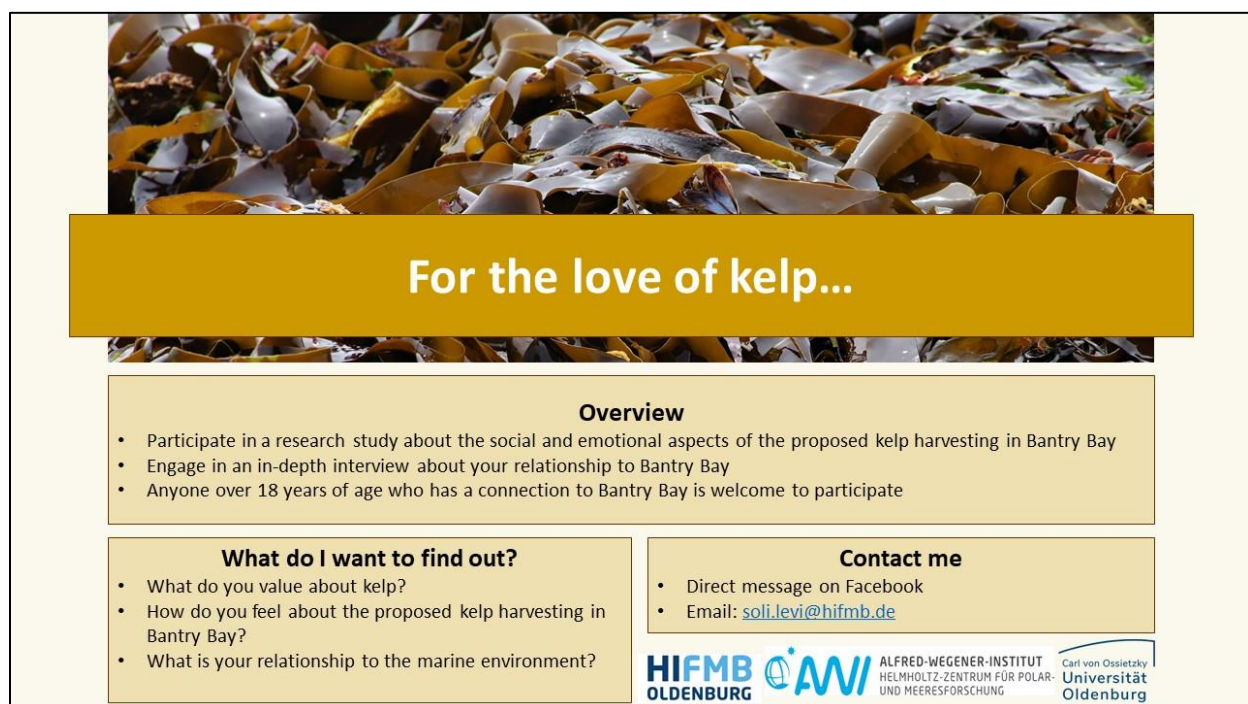


Figure 2. Poster posted on community notice board on social media for the purpose of recruiting research participants.

At first glance, nine participants may seem too small a sample. However, Hesse-Biber (2007, p. 119, emphasis in original) argues that “qualitative research is concerned with in-depth understanding and usually involves working with *small samples*. The goal is to look at a ‘process’ or the ‘meanings’ individuals attribute to their given social situation, not necessarily to make generalizations.” Indeed, the aim of this research is not to be representative of a given population or to be taken out of its context and generalised. Rather, it aims for *depth*: gleaning a deep understanding of affective meanings and connections; probing the depth of particular emotions; developing a deeply emotional relationship with

a place; exploring the watery depths of the ocean in a tangible, material manner. Moreover, while these interviews form the core of the knowledge in this dissertation, they do not exist in isolation; they are complemented by a variety of other methods and data, some already discussed (e.g., policy work), and others which I will discuss further down in this chapter.

3.4.3.2.3. Interview setting and ethical considerations

Aside from one telephone interview and one in-person interview at a participant's place of work in the outskirts of Bantry, all the interviews took place in person in the Bantry library. I selected the library because it is centrally located in Bantry town and easily accessible. It is also one of the only free, quiet indoor public space available, making it an ideal location in terms of research budget (free), interview audio recording (quiet), unpredictable weather (indoors), and health and safety (public). "Libraries," writes Leverentz (2023, p. 507) "are also good examples of the tension between different dimensions of a 'good' interview location, like sound quality and privacy." This tension was cause for concern: I feared that participants might feel like they wouldn't be able to say everything they wanted to say in a public setting. Indeed, much research has focused on the role of the interview location in shaping the relationship between researcher and participant as well as the knowledge constructed through the interview (see for example Bjørvik et al., 2023, Elwood & Martin, 2000, and Herzog, 2005). When I expressed this concern to one of my participants, they said that, due to their years of campaigning in (and for) the community, they weren't worried of being overheard, because everybody already knew how they felt about the issues at hand. While this feeling was shared by many, it was not the case for every interviewee on every interview topic. Due to the sensitive nature of many of the topics under discussion during the interviews, there are some matters I have excluded altogether from my analysis of the interviews as well as from the dissertation as a whole, out of respect for the highly sensitive nature of these matters as well as to safeguard participants (Pascale et al., 2022; Pickering & Kara, 2017; Saunders et al., 2015). Safeguarding against these risks outweighs the advantage of including such information in this project.

3.4.3.2.4. Interview process

When meeting someone for an interview, I would first lead them to a table in a quiet corner of the library, greet them and engage in small talk before formally beginning the interview. I would then give the interviewee the interview information sheet and consent form (see these documents in Appendix B), and then give them some time to go through the forms on their own and answer any questions they might have. Once all questions were answered and the forms were signed, I would verbally request permission

to switch on the audio recording function on the Olympus Digital Voice Recorder VN-541PC, as well as the voice recording function on my phone for back-up. Once I began the recording, I would ask one or two opening questions to get the conversation going, and use the interview topic guide to develop questions that were relevant both to the interviewee and to the research aims. When the conversation came to a natural conclusion, I would switch off the recording. At this point, I continued the conversation with some interviewees on matters about which they wanted to keep talking, or that they forgot to mention during the interview; some interviewees had other engagements, so we would say good-bye and part here; and yet others invited me for lunch or coffee right after the interview, so we would spend some more time chatting with each other before parting. After finishing the interview, once I was alone again, I would record a post-interview summary as a voice note on my phone, containing ideas, concerns, follow-up questions, and overall impressions of the interview. These post-interview summaries, while not included in the eventual analysis, provided useful contextual information about the interview data.

3.4.3.2.5. Overview of interviews conducted

Table 3 to the right provides an overview of the interviews conducted, including the number assigned to an interviewee and the date and location of the interview (following the ethical regulations and procedures of the University of Oldenburg). No identifying information is given to protect interviewees' identities.

Table 3. Interview numbers and dates.

Interview no.	Participant no.	Interview date¹⁷
#1	P01	01/08/2023
#2	P02	03/08/2023
#3	P03	19/09/2023
#4	P04	20/09/2023
#5	P05	20/09/2023
#6	P06	05/10/2023
#7	P07	06/10/2023
#8	P08	19/10/2023
#9	P09	20/10/2023

¹⁷Due to a very long and lingering COVID infection I was out sick and unable to conduct fieldwork during the entirety of August and into the beginning of September 2023; hence the large gap between interviews #2 and #3.

3.4.3.3. Snorkelling

Early on in the fieldwork, one of the interviewees mentioned to me the existence of a weekly snorkelling club run by campaign members, and invited me to join. The club was set up as part of the campaign, as a way to bring locals closer to the marine environment at their doorstep, to get them to put their heads under the water and experience the ocean in an accessible, safe, low-pressure setting. Running from late spring to late autumn each year, the club meets once a week, usually on weekends, at a different location along the coastline of Bantry Bay. Depending on the weather, sometimes there are picnics involved, and people stick around for hours enjoying the company and rare sunshine; other days it's a brief, shivering greeting and a short, freezing swim. I accepted their invitation with much trepidation. At the time (so much has changed since), I dreaded the thought of cold-water swimming, but I didn't want to pass up the opportunity to spend more time with the people I was getting to know as part of this research. Little did I know how fundamentally transformative the snorkelling would be, not only for my research but for myself as a person. I write extensively about this experience in Chapter 6; I note it here as well, however, due to its broader methodological significance.

My approach to the snorkelling has been inspired in large part by J. Anderson's (2020) rhetorical analysis of kelp agency in scientific discourse, which involves an immersive component that complements and bolsters the discursive analysis. J. Anderson (2020) describes her approach to immersion in kelp forests:

I consider how embodied attention to the ways kelp forests build relations have made me sensitive to interdependencies with marine ecologies. Through embodied experiences with kelp forests, I trace how kelp, as a rhetorical actor, have drawn me into association with nonlinear spatiotemporal scales, sensory forms of building relation, and the coproducing exchanges of assemblages. Throughout the analysis of this paper, I draw on these experiences of kelp as a rhetorical actor to consider how their forests can change ways of knowing, relating to, and building solutions with marine ecosystems (p. 36).

This deeply embodied attunement to interdependencies, to other ways of knowing and being, is both ontologically and epistemologically significant: it shapes both what she understands kelp to be, and how she comes to understand what kelp is. The body is not removed from the research in a pursuit of objectivity; rather, it is a site of knowledge production from which the research originates and develop (Foley, 2023a). It is this deeply embodied attunement that I have tried to emulate in my approach to immersion (Shefer & Bozalek, 2022; Squire, 2017). My regular participation in the snorkelling club functioned as an intentional exercise in attunement, and this attunement has shaped the way I have come

to know and relate to (and ‘think-with’) kelp¹⁸, both in this research and more broadly in my life (Åsberg et al., 2020). It is a feeling (and a knowledge) of being one small part in a vast and agential world; it is a feeling-knowing I hold within my body, that I can *feel* but cannot easily articulate in words¹⁹. It is what J. Anderson (2022, p. 314) calls a ‘carnal knowledge’ that produces a ‘carnal geography,’ that “raises questions regarding how bodily knowledge can be harnessed and communicated, how it relates to more traditional and restricted knowledge fragments, and, how we can effectively frame, approach and realise research questions that foreground embodied engagement in the world.”

Because articulating and quantifying this carnal knowledge is difficult (and perhaps beside the point), I relied on an autoethnographic approach to make sense of it by using a field diary during the fieldwork period to record and reflect on my snorkelling experience. In both short bullet-point entries and longer, descriptive autoethnographic reflections, I made use of various creative writing techniques to make sense of the new natural and social environment in which I found myself immersing. These field reflections form the basis for the analysis in Chapter 6. Having discussed these methods of ‘data’ collection, I now turn to the processing and analysis of the data as a bridge to the chapters to follow.

3.5. Slow data processing

I employed a number of ‘Slow’²⁰ methodologies for processing the different types of data I collected during the 2023 fieldwork period. For the semi-structured interviews, I transcribed every interview myself, without the aid of transcription software, following the transcription guidelines set out by Peraza (2019) to standardise the format of the transcriptions and facilitate their eventual analysis. While transcribing by hand was much more time-consuming, lasting nearly five months, it brought me much closer to the interview data. Listening to the same material repeatedly, over and over, was at times tedious, but it helped me become intimately familiar not only with what interviewees were speaking about, but also *how they spoke*: the shape of their speech, their accents, laughter, pitch and cadence; the sighs, the *ahmmms* and *hmmms*; the points at which they paused, the way they held their silence. This is a form of Slow scholarship that resonates with Ulmer’s (2017) notion of ‘Slow Ontology,’ which Rutter et al. (2024) build on with their concept of ‘Slow Feminisms.’

¹⁸ Swimming is not an apolitical undertaking; see Chapter 6 for an autoethnographic discussion of the politics of swimming.

¹⁹ But can perhaps articulate in music; see Chapter 7 for reflections on a musical collaboration on seaweed.

²⁰ I follow Ulmer’s (2017, p. 201) usage of capital ‘S’ to differentiate between ‘Slowness’ as an ethic and as a state of “being across time,” and ‘slowness’ as the rate of knowledge production as a function of time. Ulmer (2017, p. 202) terms this an ‘ontological Slowness.’

Likewise, my autoethnographic snorkelling diary reflections are a form of 'Slow Writing' and Slow data processing as well. I wrote the reflections as a way of making sense/sense-making of my immersive experience of snorkelling, and as a way of trying to put into words for myself the embodied feeling-knowing that emerged through this experience. I have always turned to writing for solace; it is the tool I use to attune to and navigate the world around me. Ulmer (2017) writes on the process of Slowing ontologically in our writing practice:

Writing might advance creative interventions in conventional research methodologies or creatively compose the organic materiality of nature, local landscapes, or sensory matter through sounds, images, videos, and other texts. If materiality and merit became as important as metrics, Slow Writing might lead not only to more joyful, productive writings, but also to scholarship that is more responsive to the landscapes and cityscapes in which we live. Moreover, a Slow Ontology might continue to write us. As Slowness lingers, percolating within our writings, we might begin to work within a living, shifting ontology that also provides us with an ontology for sustainable living. (p. 208)

It was to Slow Writing, then, that I turned to in order to reflect on consciously experiencing my body as a site of knowledge production, and to process the feeling-knowing unfolding from and through and with it. Adopting a Slow approach to my writing practice allowed me to write more creatively and to produce 'more joyful, productive writings.' At the same time, by becoming *attuned* to the natural rhythms and cycles of the environment, it allowed me (and my writing) to become 'more responsive to the landscapes' around me. Just as my approach to data processing was Slow and care-full, so too was my approach to analysing the data with Slowness and care.

3.6. Data analysis

To analyse both the semi-structured interviews and the autoethnographic snorkelling reflections, I implemented the *Listening Guide*, a method of listening first developed by Gilligan (1982). Also known as the Voice-Centred Relational Method, this is a Slow, qualitative, feminist mode of analysis that centres on deeply listening to individuals' voices as a way to attend to the complexities and subjectivities of their lived experiences (Gilligan & Eddy, 2017, 2021; Gilligan et al., 2003). Predominantly used to analyse interviews, it consists of multiple iterations of listening to interview audio while reading through an interview transcript, focusing on a different layer of the data and of the narrator's experience with each 'listen,' namely, the plot of the story being told; the narrator's sense of self; the relationships involved in the story; and the structures and contexts in which the story is embedded (Edwards & Weller, 2012; McKenzie, 2021; Woodcock, 2016; Yeo et al., 2023). Through these multiple 'listens,' the researcher

becomes deeply immersed in the data, and is afforded access to affective, intangible, ephemeral phenomena often obscured by more readily available surface insights (Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008).

Through a deep and varied engagement with the Listening Guide throughout the entirety of 2024 (see ‘data analysis’ and ‘creative interventions’ in Table 1 above), I have begun to understand and appreciate the immense power of deep *listening*, a capacity that extends far beyond hearing. Indeed, listening, Gumbs (2021, p. 24, emphasis mine) argues, “is not only about the normative ability to hear, it is a *transformative and revolutionary resource* that requires quieting down and tuning in.” Deeply listening to another, ‘tuning in,’ cannot take place without first ‘quieting down’; and to quiet down, we first need to listen to ourselves, reflexively examining and setting aside our own assumptions, values, and motives. It is only when we tune into our own selves that we can quiet down and tune into and accounting for others. And listening *is* a political exercise in accounting for others: as “an active process of intervening in the count of whom and what is ratified as concerned,” listening has the power to make certain matters and certain voices matter more than others (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 58).

I selected this method due to its justice-centric feminist politics, which align with that of this research; its capacity to access subjective, emotional knowledge; and its structured yet highly adaptable design. Indeed, while I used the Listening Guide to analyse both the interview data (henceforth ‘LG 1’) and the autoethnographic snorkelling reflections (henceforth ‘LG 2’), the different types of data (interview audio and transcripts vs. textual data), different units of analysis (interviewees vs. myself), and different research objectives (understanding others’ emotional experiences around governance vs. processing and reflecting on my snorkelling experience) required two adapted variations of the analysis protocol to fit the particularities of the two different datasets. Chapters 4 and 6 go into greater detail on these methodological adaptations and hence offer the original contributions of the thesis through an exploration of the specific steps taken to conduct the analysis for each dataset, in addition to presenting and discussing the findings of each analysis. For the remainder of this section I contrast and compare the two LG processes, reflecting on methodologically significant considerations that may inform future applications of this analysis method.

3.6.1. Comparison of LG data

While the LG 1 and the LG 2 were both engaged to analyse qualitative data concerning emotions on the marine environment, many aspects of the LG 1 and LG 2 data (interview and autoethnographic, respectively) differed, and these differences shaped how the analysis was adapted and implemented for

each dataset, as well as the findings that emerged from each analysis. Table 4 below provides an overview of all these differences, the most significant of which I discuss in the following sub-sections.

Table 4. Comparison of datasets involved in Listening Guide 1 and Listening Guide 2.

Aspect of data	LG 1: interview data	LG 2: autoethnographic data
Type of data	Qualitative	Qualitative
Purpose of data collection	To understand emotions of local community members towards marine governance and resource extraction operations	To record and reflect on own embodied snorkelling experiences
Source of data	Research participants	Myself
Data collection method	Semi-structured interviews	Field notes
Data collection design	Cross-sectional (snapshot in time across several participants)	Longitudinal (change across time for one individual)
Scope of data collected	Nine interviews	Eight field notes
Data recording device	Olympus Digital Voice Recorder VN-541PC (Samsung Galaxy 54A as back-up)	Field diary and pen
Data processing method	Interview transcription by hand, following Peraza's (2019) guidelines	Digitisation of handwritten notes using word processing software
Data storage format	Audio recordings: .m4a, .WMA Transcripts: .docx, .pdf, hard copies	Field notes: pages in field diary Digitised field notes: .docx, .pdf, hard copies

Among the various differences between the two datasets, the two that had the strongest influence on the progress and outcomes of the analyses were the sources of the data (research participants vs. myself) and the formats of the data (audio and textual data vs. textual data only). Rather than planning the analysis in advance, I allowed myself to be led by the data, and to adapt the analysis and consider the findings according to the particularities of each dataset. In the sub-sections below I discuss and compare the implications of being led by the data in the LG1 and the LG 2. This inductive, data-led process is in line with the 'collage' methodology guiding this thesis, which Freeman (2020) describes as a highly intuitive approach that differs from the pre-determined mix of methods employed for more traditional triangulation methodologies:

Collage differs from triangulation here because rather than setting out the methods I would use before conducting the research (as recommended for triangulation), it was *an intuitive process whereby I adapted my approach depending on what information was available* and who would discuss such a delicate topic with me... This was a sequential process where data collection informs future methods and approaches.

Collage, inspired by bricolage, needs to maintain an air of spontaneity and ‘tinkering’ in order to be most effective and this spontaneity is crucial for feeling out ways to gather information, rather than collecting information based on a pre-decided set of methods. (p. 7-8, emphasis mine)

It was in the spirit of ‘feeling out ways to gather information’ that I allowed myself to be led by the data, in a process that was intuitive and spontaneous yet still evidence-based and scientifically rigorous.

3.6.2. Dataset differences: sources of data

The different sources of the datasets used in each LG had several implications. First, while I listened to the voices of other individuals via the interviews in the LG 1 in order to better understand their emotions and perspectives, I could only grasp these emotions to a certain degree, because I hadn’t experienced them myself first-hand. While the LG provided an opportunity to listen deeply, through repeated rounds of listening, there remains a divide between understanding someone’s emotions through listening and understanding those emotions through lived experience. For this reason, reflexivity was a crucial component of the LG 1; constantly being reflexive helped me distinguish between my own assumptions, interpretations, and emotional responses towards a participant’s words, and the actual intended meaning behind those words. On the other hand, when I listened to my own voice and my own emotions in the LG 2, I understood what my words meant and what my emotions felt like, because I had lived them myself. Nevertheless, reflexivity was still key, because an autoethnographic approach demands a high degree of self-reflexivity (Koopman et al., 2020). Indeed, Butz and Besio (2009, p. 1662, emphasis in original) write that “autoethnography is the representational outcome – the performance, in a sense – of a process of *critical reflexivity*.” Being critically reflexive of my positionality in the context of swimming, for instance, led me to insights about the role of sensory perception in the development of emotional connections to the marine environment. While listening to others’ voices was different from listening to my own, then, reflexivity figured prominently in both processes, albeit for different reasons.

Beyond differences during the analysis process, however, the different sources of the data had implications for the findings as well. In the LG 1, because my aim was to better understand others’ emotions, I was intent on listening not only to *what* people said but also *how* they expressed themselves while doing so (Gilligan & Eddy, 2021). This led me to listen to the specific grammatical and discursive articulations (‘I,’ ‘we,’ ‘you,’ ‘they’) used by participants, through the use of the first-person, second-person, and third-person voices, when speaking on matters of care and concern (Springmann et al., 2025). Indeed, by closely attending to these articulations, I detected subtle patterns emerging. I noticed that participants, in their interviews, used many different voices and standpoints to describe emotional

experiences, and tended to use certain voices to discuss certain issues (e.g., using the first-person 'I' to discuss one's emotional attachment to the sea). As I listened back to the interviews during the analysis, I also noticed that many individuals used the same voice to speak about particular topics (e.g., using the first-person plural 'we' when describing the initial formation of the campaign). Moreover, participants frequently used the second-person 'you' to communicate highly subjective experiences (e.g., the feeling of snorkelling in a kelp forest).

Due to the autoethnographic nature of the data in LG 2, however, I predominantly used the first-person 'I' in my writing, the implication being that I didn't conduct a close analysis of my use of different voices (simply because I didn't use different voices). Rather, I listened to the 'I' in a different way: on some occasions, the 'I' indicated that I was using my 'own' voice, and in others that I was using my 'researcher' voice. Initially I attempted to separate these into two distinct voices, but moving through the analysis, it became clear to me that my subjective experiences and emotions were in fact deeply entwined with my positionality, and that my position was a constantly shifting one. Rather than trying to distinguish between these two voices, then, I reflected on my positionality, which fluctuated in a space between insider and outsider (see reflections on insider/outsider/in-between positionality in Chapter 6).

These different findings in relation to the use of voice also shaped how the poetic strand of the analyses unfolded. Due to the range and plurality of voices in the LG 1, I was able to construct rich 'voice poems' by weaving together the voices of different individuals speaking on similar topics. These poems communicated collective matters of care and concern through artistic means, which are more fitting for expressing emotion. However, due to the lack of multiple voices emerging through the LG 2, as well as the focus on my own subjectivity and position, I did not construct voice poems as I did during the LG 1. Instead, I collated I-poems from the I-statements in my written reflections, and in doing so was able to more deeply reflect on my insider/outsider positionality in this research (see more in Section 6.4.3.). While the poetic inquiry differed between the two analyses, they posed a similar question: is this good poetry? Leggo (2012, p. 143, emphasis mine) writes of poetic inquiry in research: "I no longer ask, Is this a good poem? I ask, What is this poem *good for*?" Questions of what constitutes 'good' art in the context of geographical research are not new. Madge (2014), for instance, wonders:

...if I am using the poem as a catalyst for creative thinking and debate, as an expression of my view of an event in the world through a particular form of world-writing (rather than as an example of isolated exemplary craft), is the poem 'good enough'? And who decides? (p. 180)

Similarly, Hawkins (2020, p. 5) asks, “What about good research? What is good research in this context? Is it acceptable to trade one off against the other? Great art but only acceptable research?”

I avoid limiting the emotional complexities and subjectivities contained within the poems I constructed by fitting them into a dichotomy of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ art. Instead, I take a more relational approach, considering what the poems are ‘*good for*,’ what purpose they serve – what they *do*. The poems that emerged from LG 1 eventually became part of an art-science collaboration that wove together gamelan music and fragments of the poems into a musical performance (more on this in Chapter 7). The music and the poems worked together to make people *feel* something about the sea and about seaweed; the poems were thus ‘good for’ disseminating research results but at the same for evoking the emotions of an audience. On the other hand, the poems emerging from the LG 2 were not necessarily good in terms of quality; they were good not for communicating data but rather good in a methodological sense, in that the process of constructing them led me to connections I hadn’t consciously made until then (more on this in Chapter 6). They were ‘good for’ enabling me to be more reflexive about my positionality and how this has shaped my approach to this research (Smith, 2020). The question of what constitutes ‘good’ poetic inquiry, then, is as much a question of purpose as it is about quality.

3.6.3. Dataset differences: formats of data

Just as the different sources of the datasets used in each LG had implications for the analysis process and findings, so too did the different *formats* of the collected data. In particular, during the LG 1 I analysed data that I had obtained through semi-structured interviews, which I recorded using a voice recorder during the interview and then transcribed by hand in the weeks following the interview. Thus, the interview data was comprised of both audio (voice recordings) and text (transcripts). On the other hand, in the LG 2 I analysed my written reflections, which I had digitised using a word processor. The data for the LG 2, then, existed solely as textual data with no audio counterpart. This fundamental difference between the two datasets (audio and textual data vs. textual data only) shaped how I was able to listen during the analysis, and in particular how I was able to *listen for emotion*.

The different data formats involved meant that *how* something was said, and in turn how I listened for and understood that *how*, was also different. Due to the audio recordings available during the LG 1, I was able to listen to individuals’ vocal cadence, intonation, pitch, volume, and stress; their non-verbal vocalisations including laughter, sighing, groaning, *ummm*- and *ugh*- and *ahm*-ing; their voices becoming shaky and throaty at difficult or emotional moments; their pauses and their silences. So much meaning

and emotional insight can be gleaned from attending to these aural cues. For instance, when speaking about the health benefits of seaweed in pig feed, one individual exclaimed: *“Even that it makes the pigs don’t have as much antibiotics, you know, like if they’re eating kelp, you know? Of course! Because it’s really good for them! It’s good for us. You know?”* Reading this quote without hearing them, we can’t tell if they are expressing joy, enthusiasm, anger, frustration, or sadness. We cannot read emotion. But listening to the recording, we can hear their voice wavering at ‘we are what we eat,’ rising in pitch and breaking at ‘it’s good for us’; we can hear that they are close to tears, that this is a deeply emotional issue for them. Listening for emotion, then, is not only a matter of listening to the words themselves but also to how they are articulated. *How* something is said may be just as, and occasionally more important than, what is said (Barnwell, 2025).

However, “listening to a recording is not the same sensory experience as reading a text, nor do written and spoken words necessarily create the same meanings” (Barnwell, 2025, p. 4). Indeed, listening, and listening for emotion in particular, during the LG 2 was a very different matter. The data, obtained from my written reflections, was in text form, which meant that each ‘Listen’ involved in the LG was, in reality, a reading. Due to the lack of audio data, I wasn’t able to rely on aural cues as indicators for emotion, as I did during the LG 1. Instead, I found another way to listen to *how* I said things, and for the emotion in those things: through a close reading of language. In particular, I paid close attention both to the particular linguistic devices (e.g., imagery, metaphors) as well as the tone of voice (e.g., informal, reflective, technical) I used in my writing. In doing so, I began to notice that each linguistic device and shift in tone did particular work, whether to overtly convey or subtly allude to an emotion, to make sense of an experience, or to render visible something previously unseen. This analysis also led me to reflect on the epistemological power of the act of writing and on the ontological power of language more broadly. In addition, it has expanded by understanding of what it might mean to listen in different ways. Indeed, while the means of listening varied considerably between the two LG analyses, they converged on an important point: that listening is much more than just hearing sound.

3.6.4. Approach to listening

As I conducted the LG 1, listening, deeply *listening*, emerged as a critical tool for accessing and understanding emotion in its myriad forms as it related to marine governance. After the LG 1, I wanted to experiment with listening in a different way, for another context and purpose, and to see whether I could expand the scope of what ‘listening’ might mean. In the LG 2, then, I used listening to gauge varying emotional perspectives that might relate to marine governance decisions, listening to my own voice in

particular, to demonstrate that what (and how) we write, record, and reflect on as researchers matters to research that seeks to understand these decisions. While the means of listening in each LG varied due to the format of the data, both LG analyses approached listening as something that transcends the ability to hear sound. Indeed, in the LG 1, the practice of listening attentively demanded a ‘tuning in’ not just of my ears but of my entire body. Listening with my body in this way became a deeply emotional and embodied commitment to the data. While the LG 2 involved listening to textual material, it was still a listening that involved my body; it was less about an exclusive ability to hear, and more about an inclusive capacity for attunement (see Section 3.2.2. above), a capacity that includes attuning to different forms of data. Expanding the scope of listening in this way disrupts hegemonic assumptions of what listening looks like (or rather sounds like), and makes space for diverse forms of knowledge as well as for the means of ‘tuning in’ to such knowledge.

An important aspect of ‘tuning in’ in the LG process is the repetition involved. Listening over and over to the same material, whether audio or textual, brings one intimately close to the data. Things that may have been missed in the first or second round of listening are noticed in the third and fourth; things that may have seemed significant at first give way to subtler hints picked up later on. Rather than individually conducting Listens 1 – 4 for one interview/reflection before moving on to the next, however, I conducted the 1st Listen for all the interviews/reflections, before moving on to the 2nd Listen for all interviews/reflections, and so on. This approach allowed me to detect subtle patterns unfolding across the interviews/reflections that I would have missed had I analysed each interview/reflection in isolation.

As I listened to the interviews one after another in the LG 1, for instance, the voices of different individuals began to enter into conversation with one other. A question posed by an individual in one interview would be answered by one in another; some individuals would discuss the same event from different perspectives; an issue alluded to by someone would be described in great detail by another; and so on. Listening in this way built up a collage of information in my head, with gaps, omissions, and uncertainties left by some filled in and cleared up by others. Because in the LG 1 I analysed cross-sectional data (see Table 4 above), this collage of voices and insights developing in my mind reflected a ‘snapshot in time’ of particular emotions. In the LG 2, on the other hand, I analysed longitudinal data, in the form of field notes that I had written over the span of several months. As I listened to this material repeatedly, in the sequential manner described above, I noticed subtle trends unfolding across time that I would have missed had I analysed each field note individually. Using a graph to track the frequency of themes mentioned in the field notes across time (see Figure 20 in Chapter 6), I saw not only which themes

emerged as significant, but also *when* they emerged as such. Thinking through this temporal dimension, I began to reflect on how our perceptions and emotions change over time, and what factors might be driving these changes.

While both LG analyses involved repetitive listening, then, this repetition led to very different insights into emotion: in the LG 1, concerning the scope of emotion across multiple individuals at one point in time; and in the LG 2, concerning the temporal extent and evolution of one individual's emotions across time. What can these and other insights in this section offer towards a better understanding of the role of emotions in marine governance? That there is more than one way to listen to emotion; and that how we listen to emotion is shaped by the nature of the available emotional data, which in turn is shaped by how we collect that data and for what purpose.

3.7. Conclusions

In this chapter I discussed in detail the overarching methodological approach of this thesis as well as the specific data collection and analysis methods I employed to address the overarching aim of this research **to better understand the role of emotions within marine governance**. The specific objectives of this aim are to: a) develop a methodology for researching emotions in marine contexts; b) build on a method for analysing emotion through a deep listening approach; and c) explore and makes sense of various configurations of emotional connections to the oceans and their relevance to marine governance. In this chapter I have shown how this research, grounded in a feminist ethic of care and an ethical orientation of attunement, has addressed these objectives through an in-depth exploration of the nuances of emotional governance in the context of Bantry Bay's contested kelp forests.

I was initially drawn to the methodological approach guiding this research, *collage*, for its capacity to hold space for the complexities and multiplicities inherent in studying emotion. In this chapter I have demonstrated how collage, through an intentional and care-full stitching together of bodies of literature, methods, and theoretical perspectives, has provided a flexible yet rigorous structure for researching emotion. In terms of the strategy for data collection within this collage approach, I conducted research on secondary materials, including policy documents and parliamentary transcripts, prior to commencing fieldwork. Further, I conducted semi-structured interviews and immersive autoethnographic snorkelling during fieldwork, which together offered complementary insights into both individual and collective emotional dimensions of marine governance. The careful attention I have given to interview preparation,

ethical conduct towards research participants and their knowledge, and *in situ* responsive recalibration of fieldwork methods further demonstrates the ethical commitment of this research to care.

Turning to data analysis, then, I discussed the analysis method, the Listening Guide, which I developed and applied in a novel manner both in terms of research context (emotional marine governance) and datasets (interviews, discussed in detail in Chapters 4 and 5; and written autoethnographic reflections, discussed in depth in Chapter 6). I explained how I tailored this method around the specificities of the different datasets and research contexts, and in so doing demonstrated both its robustness as a scientific method and its flexibility in application. I also compared various differences between the two datasets, including data sources and formats, to explore different dimensions of emotional expression and articulation, such as the significance of vocal cues in interview data and linguistic devices in textual data. In doing so, I have further extended the methodological scope of the Listening Guide in researching emotion.

The methodological contributions of this chapter are significant, particularly in their demonstration of how methodological flexibility and creativity and scientific rigour and robustness can work together to shed light on the complex emotional dimensions of marine governance. The novel application and further development of the Listening Guide, situated within the creative methodological framework of collage, has set the foundation for the subsequent empirical analyses and discussions in the chapters that follow. Moreover, it is my hope that going into such great methodological depth in this chapter may provide a ‘how-to’ blueprint for future academic inquiry into emotional governance. In the chapter that follows, I delve into the finer methodological details of this ‘how-to’ blueprint – in particular, how to *do* the work of deep listening to voice.

Chapter 4: The Listening Guide I

How can we listen deeply for emotions?

It feels good to be a part of something; not just reading about social movements and campaigns, but being inside of and witnessing in person. Everything becomes a lot more real, more solid. Emotions are playthings of theory no more, nor simply words on paper, but flesh and bone, speaking, breathing, living. The implications of this project become a lot more real, too; not just boxes to be ticked off and rubrics to be filled in, but an active responsibility to people and to a cause. I was told this would happen, but I didn't believe it for some reason. I wasn't prepared for the sheer intensity of it, of getting involved with people who have real lives and real hopes and ambitions and hurts and plans way beyond the scope of this project. In other words, shit is getting real.

Excerpt from field diary entry, "Reflections on 24/09/2023 kelp meeting"

4.1. Introduction: journey to the Listening Guide

Prior to embarking on fieldwork, I had an informal chat with my colleague, Paula Satizábal Posada, about data collection and analysis methods. I wanted to make sure I asked the right people the right questions about the right topics, so I could then conduct the right analysis to get the right results. She posed the following questions during our conversation: "What do you want to analyse? What is it that you really want to know? And how can methodologies and questions asked and things investigated support local activism and causes?" (P. Satizábal, personal communication, October 12, 2022). Rather than focusing on what was 'right' (or, indeed, that there was such a thing as a 'right' and 'wrong' way in the first place) she led me to see that my time would be better spent revisiting the aims, objectives and ethics of my research, using these to guide my approach to data collection and analysis, and leaving enough space for the unexpected to emerge during fieldwork. Accordingly, my fieldwork preparation largely consisted of building a strong ethical and methodological foundation which would give me the freedom to operate in a reflexive and emergent way in 'the field' (see Chapter 3 for a detailed account of the fieldwork

preparation process). After the whirlwind of fieldwork came and went²¹, I came away with nine interviews²², and so much more than just ‘data’: a handful of new acquaintances; a profound fondness for a small coastal town; and a strong sense of obligation to do right by the people and place that were so generous with their time and trust towards me. In line with the ethic of care at the centre of this research, this sense of obligation was part of a process of *attunement*, the responsibility that comes with reciprocity (more on attunement in Chapter 3).

When it was time to decide on a data analysis method, this sense of reciprocal obligation led me back to the questions my colleague asked. What did I really want to know? How could I analyse the interviews in a way that addressed the objectives of my research, and at the same time aligned with the needs and wishes of those I spoke with? To answer these questions, I allowed myself to be led by the data, and to intuitively select a mode of analysis that would reflect a feminist ethic of care (more on the intuitive nature of this process in Chapter 3). Through this intuitive process, the question shifted from “How can I access and understand people’s emotions?” to “How can I demonstrate *care* for the emotions people have shared with me?” And what better way to cultivate a practice of care than to start by simply *listening* to the voices of those I spoke with? Gumbs (2021, p. 24) writes that listening is “not only about the normative ability to hear, it is a transformative and revolutionary resource that requires quieting down and tuning in.” What I needed, then, was a method that would allow me to *tune in* to people’s voices before I could fully understand their emotions. My literature search, narrowed down to the hyper-specific key words “feminist+listening+voice+qualitative+interview+data+analysis+method,” yielded one result: a relational, voice-centred analysis method coined the ‘Listening Guide.’

4.1.1. Chapter aims and outline

The aim of this chapter is two-fold: **to discuss the application of the Listening Guide analysis method to a new discipline** (i.e., marine governance); and **to present empirical evidence that demonstrates the importance of deep listening to voice in researching emotions**. In this way, this chapter addresses the **first objective of this dissertation: to develop a methodology for researching emotions in marine contexts**.

²¹ The notion of ‘the field’ is complex in this project; it is extended, distributed, and multi-sited, resonating with Cook’s (2001) notion of ‘expanded field’ and Pottinger’s (2024) ‘patchwork metaphor’ (more on this in Chapter 3).

²² The aim of this research is not to be representative or generalisable; rather, it aims for *depth*: gleaning a deep understanding of affective meanings and connections; probing the depth of particular emotions; developing a deeply emotional relationship with a place; exploring the watery depths of the ocean in a tangible, material manner (see more on sample size in Chapter 3).

To achieve this two-fold aim, in this chapter I describe the Listening Guide method (and the 2nd Listen in particular) used to analyse the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews conducted with research participants during fieldwork. In Section 4.2., I provide the context and rationale for adapting the Listening Guide protocol. Then, in Section 4.3., I present an overview of the analysis results. Next, in Section 4.4. I reflect on the process of conducting the Listening Guide method. In Section 4.5. I outline the implementation of the 2nd Listen and in Section 4.6. I explore the results of the 2nd Listen more fully. Finally, in Section 4.7. I summarise the findings in this chapter and discuss their methodological and practical implications.

4.2. The Listening Guide

The Listening Guide (henceforth referred to as ‘the LG’) is a qualitative method of analysing interview transcripts, first developed by Gilligan (1982). Also known as the Voice-Centred Relational Method, it is a feminist methodology that focuses on listening to individuals’ voices and stories (Gilligan & Eddy, 2017, 2021; Gilligan et al., 2003). It consists of multiple iterations of listening to the interview audio while reading through the transcript, approaching the data through a different perspective with each ‘listen’ (Edwards & Weller, 2012; Woodcock, 2016; Yeo et al., 2023). These iterations traditionally focus on the following questions: 1. *What story is being told?* 2. *Who is telling the story, in what voice and what body?* 3. *What relationships are involved?* 4. *In what structures and contexts is the story embedded?* (McKenzie, 2021; Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008).

In attending to the multiple dimensions of voice through deep listening, the LG approaches voice as a layered thing into which the listener can go deeper, gleaning richer insight with each iteration. It is a subtle methodology that makes space for the intangible, the *emotional*, to rise to the surface. This, along with its time-consuming, repetitive nature, allows a degree of deeper access to inner subjectivities and human complexities than is afforded through other methods, whether qualitative or quantitative (Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008). For this reason, it has been used predominantly in research that requires a sensitive approach and a commitment to deep listening, including (but not limited to) studies on healthcare (Acke et al., 2023; Bright et al., 2018; McKenzie, 2021); education (Durrant, 2022; McCusker, 2020; Villasanta & Ofreneo, 2022); gender-based violence (Ajayi & Ajayi, 2023; Chmielewski, 2017; Frances, 2023; Geib, 2012; Johnstone, 2016); social work (Dawani & Loots, 2021; Fowler, 2023; Mountz, 2017); and conflict and resistance (Harel-Shalev & Daphna-Tekoah, 2021; Levi-Hazan & Harel-Shalev, 2019; Smith, 2015; Springmann et al., 2025). This iterative approach also resonates with the methodological approach of

‘collage’ which underpins the broader dissertation (see more on this approach in Chapter 3), which uses multiple methods not to triangulate or converge on the same point but rather to produce rich and diverse data that paint a holistic picture of lived experiences and realities (de Rijke, 2024; Freeman, 2020).

4.2.1. Adapted Listening Guide: the justification

While the LG provides enough flexibility to adapt to the particular needs of different projects and contexts, its highly structured nature poses the risk of stifling the data in favour of adhering to the ‘proper’ protocol. Indeed, in implementing the LG in autoethnographic research, Yeo et al. (2023, p. 2, 3) found that “it provided too directive for the analysis, stymying its ability to surface emotional resonance” and as a result it “did not engender a holistic enough understanding.” To counter this, they developed an additional ‘Fifth Listen’ that focused specifically on “*how* things were said, the emotion underpinning those words, and the emotion underpinning the interpretation of the listener” (Yeo et al., 2023, p. 4). This methodological adaptation allowed them to explicitly centre emotion in their listening approach, yielding far richer and more holistic insights which addressed their research aims more effectively. Like Yeo et al. (2023), I did not want to risk stifling or suppressing the emotion and emotional resonance at the core of my research by adhering to a prescriptive structure; and like them, I adapted the LG to fit the particularities of my project. My primary concern was, above all, to ensure that my analysis remained emergent; only through an emergent approach could emotional subtleties rise to the surface. However, I had to balance this need with the need for enough structure to conduct a robust, in-depth analysis. Accordingly, I developed a step-by-step protocol (see Table 5 on the next page) that, while structured, was flexible enough to recalibrate after each ‘listen.’ In adapting the LG and tailoring it around the needs of my own project, I hope to demonstrate the potential and flexibility of this method for use in future studies on emotion and in the marine social sciences more broadly.

After the 1st Listen, a number of themes emerged that led me to reconsider the aim of the 2nd Listen that followed. Themes such as the materiality of the marine environment, engagements with seaweed, and human-nature interconnectedness made me wonder whether the traditional focus of the 2nd Listen on ‘sense of self’ was too anthropocentric and non-relational for the purposes of my project. While the subsequent 3rd Listen does traditionally focus on relations with others, it did not feel appropriate (for my own research) to distinguish and isolate one’s relation to self from relations to other individuals, to community, and, indeed, to more-than-human beings. Therefore, I combined the 2nd and 3rd Listens into a single 2nd Listen that encompassed a sense of self as well as a sense of relation to (more-than-)human

individuals and communities. In turn, the 4th Listen, with its focus on social and political structures and contexts, became the 3rd Listen.

At the same time, I wanted to keep the central focus on emotion throughout the Listens. While I was initially drawn to the addition by Yeo et al. (2023) of a 'Fifth Listen' that explicitly centred emotion, I wanted to avoid isolating emotion to its own siloed Listen. Rather, I made emotion a core element of every Listen. The 1st Listen thus attended to the initial emotions that jumped out; the 2nd Listen to the emotions interwoven in relations to self and to others; and the 3rd Listen to the emotions shaping and shaped by social and political structures. In this way, I moulded and adapted the LG to fit the needs and priorities of my own project while staying true to its focus on deep listening to voice.

Table 5. Adapted Listening Guide 1 protocol.

Listen	Things to take into consideration while listening
1st Listen: Story What is the story?	Take note of: emotional resonance, repeated words, phrases, and images, information and comments that jump out, contradictions, omissions, and revisions; nuances of expression: non-verbal clues, the manner of speech and what a speaker chooses to leave unspoken; overall plot, recurring images and words, key metaphors, and dominant themes → basic trends and themes that illustrate the thread of the story Take note of: researcher's own responses, reactions, questions, and confusions; the moments of feeling lost, and/or the times when connections are made with the informant → reflexivity of researcher; positionality of researcher in relation to participant + story
2nd Listen: Relations Who is telling the story, embedded in which eco-social relations?	Take note of emotions that jump out at the initial listen How does the participant speak about themselves on their own terms, in their own voice, in their own body? What is the participant's relationship to other people, to community, to place, to the environment, to the more-than-human? How are all these entangled? Take note of: place names, places that are mentioned repeatedly; connections to nature and the environment; connections to the marine environment, the bay, the water; connections to the more-than-human (kelp, seaweed, fish, birds, etc.) Take particular note of: how do people talk about the marine environment? About kelp? Take note of: usage of voice statements (I, me; you, your; we, us, our; they, them, their) → relation to self and to others Take note of emotions that arise when talking about self, other people, place, nature, environment, the sea, and the more-than-human world
3rd Listen: Contexts In which contexts is the story & the participant embedded?	What social, political, historical, cultural contexts and structures is the participant embedded in and shaped by? How do these contexts intersect and interact? Take note of emotions that arise in relation to these contexts

4.3. Summary of results

“The purpose of exposing how things are assembled, constructed, is not to debunk and dismantle them,” writes de la Bellacasa (2017, p. 89); rather, “to exhibit the concerns that attach and hold together matters of fact is to enrich and affirm reality by contributing further articulations.” Each iteration of the LG analysis yielded different insights about people, emotion, (more-than-)human relations, and governance structures; insights that shed light onto how things hang together and how they are held together. In this research, illuminating the layered articulations of emotion through the insights gleaned from the LG works to ‘enrich and affirm’ the relationship between emotion and marine governance.

Significant themes that have emerged from the analysis have informed and shaped subsequent empirical chapters, and are explored more fully in Chapters 5 and 6. However, a brief overview of results and significant themes is provided in this section to present a complete picture of the analysis method, as well as to position the central focus of this chapter, the 2nd Listen, within the full extent of the analysis results.

4.3.1. The 1st Listen: listening for story

The 1st Listen involved listening to the story told by participants, with a focus on significant themes, metaphors, images, and particularly emotive moments in the interview. As Edwards and Weller (2012) note, this phase of the analysis is not dissimilar from a traditional thematic analysis. The 1st Listen was an effective way to understand which issues mattered most to participants and which topics required further investigation in subsequent Listens. To conduct the 1st Listen, I listened through each interview and highlighted the important themes (see protocol in Table 5 above) in each transcript by hand. I then created a spreadsheet for each participant containing the various topics they discussed, and organised these topics into overarching themes and sub-themes. Once I listened to all the interviews and, I collated all the spreadsheets of all participants into one master spreadsheet (Figure 4c below), which allowed me to see all themes and sub-themes across all participants, and, in turn, which themes were discussed most frequently.

While the master spreadsheet gave me an idea of which topics and concerns were important to people (and therefore relevant to my own research), the correlation between frequency and significance is indirect, slippery, and open to interpretation. Indeed, the frequency by which a topic is mentioned may have more to do with the questions posed by a researcher, the degree of chattiness (or mood, or personality, or proximity to an issue) of an interviewee, the level of trust between the two, the interview

setting, and the priorities of the research project, and less to do with how significant a topic actually is to an individual and how large a role it plays in their lived experience. Such subjective significance is immensely difficult to pin down, define, and measure – the very act of measuring changes it. What can we do, then, but to approach it obliquely, for instance by trying to grasp significance through indicators such as frequency of mention?

The most significant elements that emerged from participants' stories include personal connections (to nature, to seaweed, to the marine environment); the campaign; kelp harvesting; governance; and knowledge (of kelp, of the marine environment). These were followed by often emotional and embodied descriptions of interactions, experiences, and engagements with seaweed and the sea, as well as with the physical materiality of the marine environment. Lastly, a number of diverse topics were discussed, such as environmental activism and resistance; the interconnectedness between people and nature; concerns about cumulative environmental impacts from overfishing; the seaweed farming industry; and the persistent effects of colonial histories. These significant themes are the central focus of Chapter 5.

4.3.2. The 2nd Listen: listening for voice

The 2nd Listen involved listening to *who* is telling the story, in what voice and in what body. This step traditionally consists of gaining insight into an individual's sense of self by listening to an interview, marking each instance of the first-person 'I' and relevant accompanying text, and arranging the text into 'I-poems' that reveal how an individual speaks about themselves, in addition to their innermost desires and needs, and those things that drive and influence their behaviours and actions (Edwards & Weller, 2012; Fernández-Giménez, 2015; Frances, 2023; Inckle, 2020; Woodcock, 2016). While listening for voice, however, it became clear that participants used different voices (and perhaps deployed different identities) to discuss different issues. Moreover, they did not limit their statements to the first-person 'I' but also spoke on various subjects in the second person ('you') as well as the third person (they). Like Yeo et al. (2023, p. 5), therefore, I felt that "'I poems' is a misnomer, and so described them as 'voice poems.'"

Through the 2nd Listen, I traced the different voices and standpoints that participants used, and constructed a number of voice poems by not only using statements from individual participants but also by collating together statements from different participants that spoke on similar issues to create collective voice poems. The voice poems focus on themes such as kelp harvesting; the experience of being underwater; the campaign's arduous legal proceedings; and human-nature interconnectedness. While the method of constructing the poems is described in Section 4.5. below, the poems themselves are

discussed in Chapter 7 in the context of an art-science collaboration in which they played an important role. In this chapter, then, from Section 4.5. onwards, I will attend closely to the discursive articulations ('I,' 'we,' 'you,' 'they') expressed by participants through the use of the first-person, second-person, and third-person voices, and discuss the implications for marine governance of a 'sense of self' that is relationally constructed through these articulations.

4.3.3. The 3rd Listen: listening for (infra)structures

The 3rd Listen involved listening for the structures and contexts – social, political, geographical, cultural, historical – that underpin the stories and lives of the participants. I did not know in advance how this step of the analysis would unfold; it is hard to imagine how one might 'listen for structures' and look for them in what people had said. It quickly became apparent, however, that it was not so much structures as *infrastructures* that emerged as the connective tissue holding everything together. Infrastructures are "constellations of both material and social relations among systems" which are both material (ships, scientific equipment, documents) and immaterial (policies, norms, discourses), and which work to order and organise how these relations hang together (A. Wilson, 2016; Zemblyas, 2023, p. 944). Invisible, it is the way things should be, the way they have always been; it is only when infrastructure stops functioning as it should that it becomes visible (Star, 1999). "Understanding how infrastructures enable or hinder intimacy," writes A. Wilson (2016, p. 248), "is a conduit to understanding the concrete force of abstract fields of power by allowing us to identify actually existing systems rather than a priori structures."

For this reason, an infrastructural approach is particularly suited to critical research on emotion and marine governance: both of these move between the planes of the (in)material and the (in)visible; they are "sunk into and inside of other structures" (Star, 1999, p. 381). Indeed, Levi and Peters (2024) recognise emotion as a driving force behind *why* marine governance emerges as it does, as something that both structures and is structured by governance processes, that is embedded within and organises power relations that privilege certain emotions over others. Interrogating "the broader (and often hidden) conditions and infrastructures in which a particular mode of governance is situated, and from which particular displays of emotion emerge – or rather, are *legitimised* and *allowed* to emerge" is critical for understanding the specific ways in which emotions come to matter, for "whose emotions become political matters *is* a political matter" (Levi & Peters, 2024, p. 69, emphasis in original).

The 3rd Listen exposed and traced several of these infrastructures, in which emotion and marine governance are mutually co-constitutive. For instance, the Foreshore Act 1933 is a key piece of legislation

that defines and governs seaweed (including *Laminaria*) in Ireland. The Act emerged in the highly turbulent 1920s following the Irish War of Independence, the Partition of Ireland, the Irish Civil War, and the formation of the Irish Free State, the precursor to the modern-day Republic of Ireland. The legislative process of the Act – from the drafting and scrutinising of the bill across multiple stages and committees to its enactment – was saturated with the complex emotions circulating in this socio-political context (see more on this complex context in Chapter 1). This emotionality shaped *why* the legislation governing the foreshore emerged as it did; legislation which, in turn, became an infrastructure enabling the emergence of new affective relations, in the form of the environmental campaign whose purpose was to resist the mechanical harvesting of kelp that was approved by this very same legislation.

Developing such an infrastructural approach to emotional marine governance has been beyond the scope of this research due to time and relevance constraints. However, burgeoning work on ‘affective infrastructures’ (see for example Bosworth, 2023, Knox, 2017, A. Wilson, 2016, 2023, and Zemblyas, 2023) holds much promise for theorising emotional marine governance through an infrastructural lens, and is a possible avenue for future research in this discipline (see recommendations for future research in Chapter 8). In Chapter 5, then, I discuss the findings of the 1st Listen to discuss the emotionality of the campaign itself – *what* people were emotional about. For the remainder of this chapter, however, I focus on the 2nd Listen – on *how* people articulated emotion.

4.4. Methodological reflections

The Listening Guide was not only a methodology for listening to others’ emotions, but was in and of itself an emotional and sensorial process. Due to its novel methodological contribution, and for the sake of reflexivity, in this section I reflect on the experience of listening back to my own voice and how this affected my interview technique; the pros and cons of listening to the same material repeatedly; and the limitations of the method. I share these reflections to be transparent about my own research process and to discuss the deeply emotional aspects of research methodologies, with the aim of demonstrating that subjective emotion and scientific rigour are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, being aware of (rather than ignoring, dismissing, or denying the existence of) our own subjectivities further strengthens the robustness of the science we do.

4.4.1. More-than-listening

Listening back to recordings of my own voice is always difficult. It is the ultimate form of reflexive “self-confronting” – there is always a dissonance between how my voice sounds in my head and how it sounds played back; hearing myself the way others hear me is disorienting (Beck, 2006). Beyond listening to the sound of my voice itself, listening to how I spoke made me feel, at times, embarrassed. As this was my first time conducting proper in-depth interviews, I was simultaneously overenthusiastic and awkward, which resulted in jumpy flows of conversation. However, I also consistently used an informal and friendly tone, with much joking and laughter, throughout the conversations, and was always honest and open with those I spoke with. Listening back to the interviews while still in the field, I came to realise that I often interrupted people in the middle of important thoughts because I would get excited by what they were saying. While often painful, listening back had the overall effect of improving my interview technique: I began to recognise when I would get excited, and rather than interrupt, I would remain silent and allow an individual to follow their train of thought to an often intriguing conclusion that they would have not reached otherwise. In this way, the LG allowed me to listen more attentively to others by listening more to myself.

The deep listening involved in the LG, however, extended beyond hearing. Barry et al. (2021, p. 6) note that “listening involves a range of sensory and bodily engagements and affective responses, and is better understood as a form of touching.” The LG, as a more-than-listening process, was deeply touching, both in its emotionality and in and intimately tactile sense (more on listening as ‘more than hearing’ in Chapter 6). The printed interview transcripts ran to 136 pages in total: the paper hot out of the printer, cooling quickly between my fingers; the heft of the stack in my hands; line after line of vibrant highlighter colour; the physical movements of highlighting, underlining, annotating; shuffling and straightening reams of paper, hole-punching and stapling and sliding them into clear plastic sheet protectors like a wrapping of gifts: this tactile experience created documents layered with sensory meanings. Layered spatialities and temporalities also mapped onto the documents: the time and place of the interviews; of the acts of listening and transcribing; of printing; of conducting the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Listens; of carrying the documents with me on a plane, on a train, in a bus, in a car; from field to home to office and back again.

Lastly, while the contents of the interview transcripts remain unchanged, I do not: I have changed since being in the field, I am always changing; my ongoing engagement with place and my deepened relationships with people continue to guide my research approach as well as my ethical obligations. Such circulations of senses, times, and places allow for a sustained relationship with people and place extending

beyond ‘the field’: the documents carry the field within them; and I carry the field with me when I carry them.

4.4.2. Listening over and over (and over again): reflections on repetitiveness

I listened to each interview approximately six times through: once right after the interview, once when transcribing, once before conducting the LG, and three times through during the LG analysis process. Factoring in the original interview, this made for listening to the same material a total of seven times – rewarding yet challenging. Listening attentively demanded a ‘tuning in’ not just of the ears but of the whole body; and at some point the mind and eyes inevitably begin to wander, the hands fidget, a leg bounces up and down in an effort to remain engaged. On the other hand, listening with the whole body became a deeply emotional and embodied commitment to the material, which made possible an intimate knowledge not only of the content of the interviews (*what* people said) but also of the cadences, rhythms, emotional inflections and silences particular to each individual’s voice (*how* people spoke). In addition, as I listened to the interviews one after another, the voices began (as my colleague Vani Sreekanta put it) to *enter into conversation with each other*: issues important to some individuals would be addressed by others; matters omitted or left intentionally vague by some would be described in detail by others; the same event would be narrated across different perspectives until a rich collage of knowledge began to emerge.

4.4.3. Challenges of the LG

Beyond the challenges posed by the repetitive nature of the LG, other challenges had less to do with the LG method per se and more with the constraints of the broader research (narrow scope, time and resource constraints, omission of sensitive or identifying information) projected onto the analysis. For instance, while the LG allowed me to listen to *how* people said what they said, by attending to their vocal intonations and rhythms, I was not able to incorporate this dimension of voice into my analysis due to time constraints. Additionally, due to the sheer amount of information emerging out of the LG, it has not been possible to fit every single piece of information into this dissertation. For instance, while the 3rd Listen yielded rich insights into the various contexts and infrastructures surrounding the kelp issue, I have

chosen to focus on the findings of the 1st and 2nd Listens because they directly address the crucial matters of *what* people are emotional about and *how* people express that emotion²³.

Further, out of an ethical obligation, I omitted from the analysis any information that was potentially identifying or of a sensitive nature to minimise risk to the individuals I spoke with; much of this information was highly relevant, and its omission has likely influenced the results of the analysis (more on safeguarding research participants in Chapter 3). Nevertheless, while the analysis is missing these dimensions of knowledge, they have still shaped and contextualised my understanding of the issues at hand, and in this way they have still informed my approach to the analysis as well.

4.5. The 2nd Listen: implementation

This section will discuss the implementation of the 2nd Listen, whose focus on sense of self “creates a space for the participants to speak of themselves in their own bodies, before we, the researchers, speak of them” (Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008, p. 1449). As discussed in Section 4.2.2. above, however, the highly relational nature of my research demanded something more than understanding ‘self’ as an isolated, bounded, and individualised state. I thus expanded the focus of the 2nd Listen to a relational sense of self, one that emerges from and exists in relation with (more-than)human individuals and communities. For this Listen, then, I asked, “Who is telling the story, embedded in which eco-social relations?” (see analysis protocol in Table 5 above).

4.5.1. Tracing voices

To address this question, I listened to the interview audio and, using a blue highlighter, marked all ‘voice statements’ (see Section 4.3.2. above) made by participants throughout the interview transcript (Figure 3 on the next page). This reflected my move towards a more relational understanding of self: rather than focusing only on the first-person singular ‘I’ statements, I also included the first-person plural ‘we,’ the second-person ‘you,’ and the third-person ‘they’ statements in my analysis.

²³ This is not to say that context is absent in this dissertation; indeed, an understanding of context is vital for a deeper understanding of particular emotions. As I write in Chapter 3, my commitment to an ethic of care is a commitment to a context; and to becoming keenly attuned to the particularities of the context of Bantry Bay.

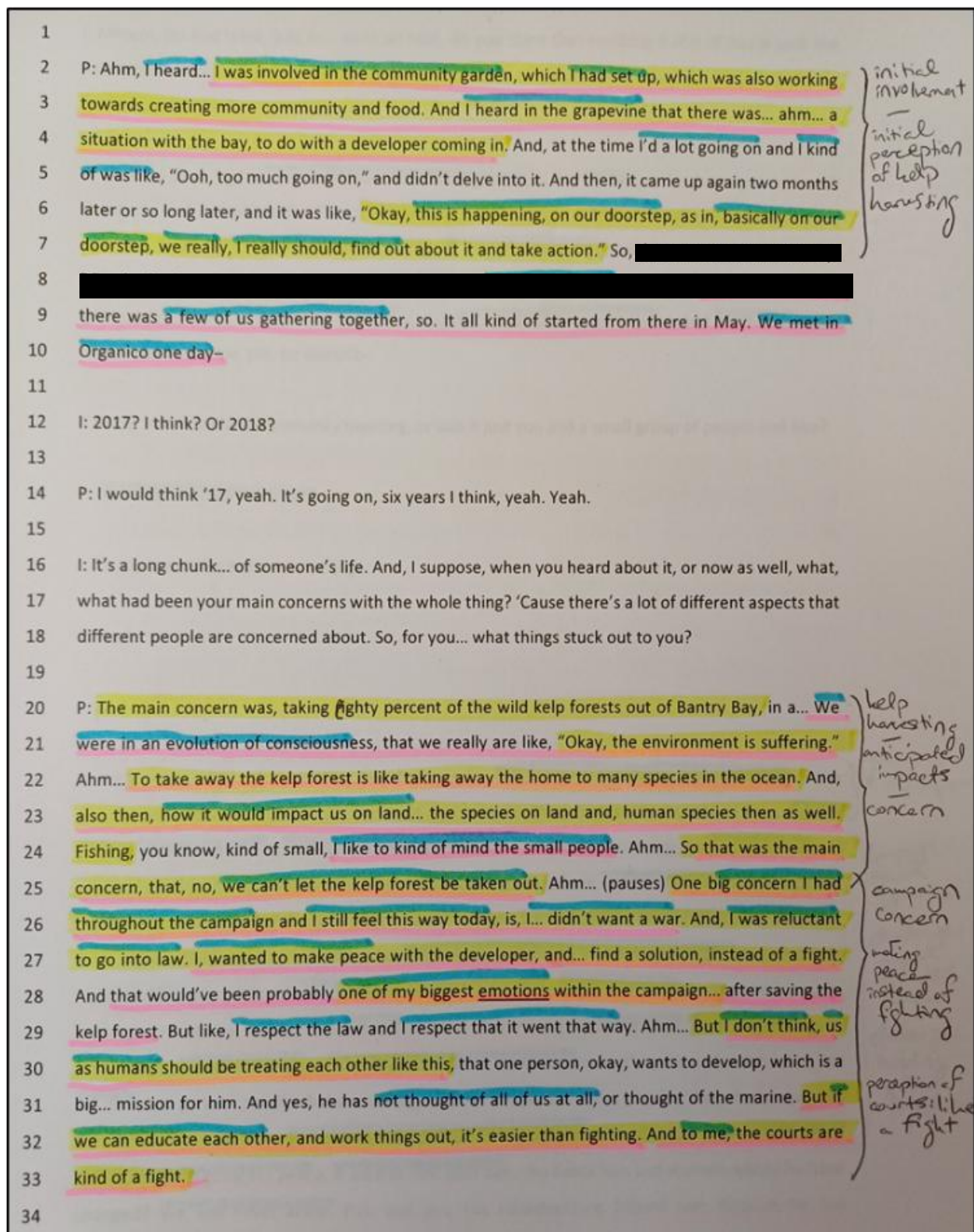


Figure 3. Photograph of a colour-coded interview transcript. Yellow highlighter was used during the 1st Listen, blue during the 2nd Listen, and pink for the 3rd Listen.

I then created a spreadsheet of all the voice statements made by each participant (Figure 4a). During this step, I noticed a subtle pattern emerging: individuals used different voices when speaking about different matters. Accordingly, I gave each statement a corresponding label to indicate the voice used (e.g., voice of local residents, voice of the campaign group, voice of Irish people, voice of all humans) (Figure 4b). I then compiled all the voice statements across all participants into one master spreadsheet, to get a broader sense of what kinds of voices were used by different individuals (Figure 4c). Once I created this master spreadsheet, I noticed another pattern: different individuals frequently used the same voices to speak about particular matters. Intrigued, I marked these voices used in common in a different colour and put them into a table to see precisely which participants used which voices in common (Figure 4d). The next section will describe these findings in greater detail and consider their significance in terms of the broader contexts of emotion and marine governance in which this research is embedded. This step-by-step process is outlined in Figure 4 on the next page.

Location	Statement	Voice	S/P	Whose voice?
2:31	we could be eating wild	First-person	Plural	People - Irish
3:2	I heard	First-person	Singular	Own
3:2	I was involved in	First-person	Singular	Own
3:2	I had set up	First-person	Singular	Own
3:3	I heard in the grapevine	First-person	Singular	Own
3:4	I'd a lot going on	First-person	Singular	Own
3:6	this is happening on our doorstep	First-person	Plural	People - local community
3:6-7	basically on our doorstep	First-person	Plural	People - local community
3:7	we really	First-person	Plural	People - local community
3:7	I really should find out about it	First-person	Singular	Own
3:8	I arranged to meet	First-person	Singular	Own
3:9	a few of us gathering together	First-person	Plural	Campaign members
3:21	We were in an evolution of consciousness	First-person	Plural	People - humans
3:23	how it would impact us on land	First-person	Plural	People - local community
3:24	I like to mind the small people	First-person	Singular	Own
3:25	we can't let the kelp forest be taken out	First-person	Plural	People - local community
3:25	one big concern I had	First-person	Singular	Own
3:26	I still feel this way today	First-person	Singular	Own

Statement	Voice	Whose voice?	Participant
our kelp is gonna be cut down	First-person	Local community	P09
we see the top of the water			P01
our vision ends there			P01
literally under our noses			P01
until we did start sticking our heads under the water			P01
we live here			P01
we can go out there			P01
we can see what's actually, you know			P01
we weren't going to get anything out of it			P01
we've no idea what ripping out that volume of kelp			P01
maybe we might have some idea			P01
we've seen a reduction in scallops			P02
we don't really know why			P02
we don't really know			P02
we're already seeing problems			P02
we already have the Ellen Hutchins			P02
we could have more fish			P02
We actually see them			P02
we've seen here a few years before			P02
we need moving forward			P04
we have, say, the salmon			P04
masses that we don't know			P05
We have			P04
we see this happening every year			P05
we're a long			P05
from our			P05
from our own pockets			P05

[illegible]

Common	
Campaign	P03, P04, P05, P08
Campaign - core group	P01, P02
Campaign - wider group	P01, P02
Campaign members	P01, P02, P07
Local community	P01, P02, P04, P05, P07, P09
People - Irish	P01, P02, P03, P04, P07
Voice of government	P01, P03, P04
People - humans	P02, P04, P05, P07, P08, P09
Voice of developer	P02, P07
Irish nation	P04, P06
Own	all
Own - childhood	P06, P09
Childhood family	P01, P02, P06, P07, P08
Current family	P04, P07, P09
Campaign + developer	P02, P07

Figure 4. Step-by-step process of tracing voices in interview transcripts: a) all the voice statements made by each participant; b) different participants' statements compiled by voice; c) overview of all voice statements across all participants; and d) voices used in common by different participants.

4.5.2. Constructing voice poems

As I discussed in Section 4.3.2. above, the 2nd Listen traditionally consists of constructing I-poems from participants' I-statements, a method with which "the researcher can prize open new vantage points on their own and the participants', meanings, subjectivities and perspectives" (Inckle, 2020, p. 3). As Figure 4c above shows, however, participants employed a plurality of voices extending past the first-person singular 'I' to include the first-person plural 'we,' the second-person 'you,' and the third-person 'they.' Because my aim was not to define and access a participant's isolated 'sense of self,' but rather to understand how such a sense of self is relationally constructed through the use of plural voices, I felt that constructing 'voice poems' which included multiple voices and standpoints, rather than 'I-poems,' was more suitable for the purposes of this analysis. But the question still remained: *how* precisely to construct the poems?

Inckle (2020) notes that poems may reflect a particular theme, voice, or standpoint. Further, in the case of a poetic approach to a broader data set beyond a single individual, themed poems "may incorporate the voices of many of the participants within a theme rather than an individual participant forming the stem for each poem" (Inckle, 2020, p. 3). Indeed, as Figure 4d above shows, several participants used a number of voices in common. The 'voice poems,' then, would be composed of not one but several participants' voices – *collective* voice poems – revolving around shared themes and standpoints. In the remainder of this sub-section I describe how I constructed the voice poems, and how this method fits into the creative approaches of the broader dissertation.

4.5.2.1. Voice poem construction method

To construct collective voice poems, I first examined the table of voices in common across participants (Figure 4d). I then went back to the interviews to see what themes participants discussed using the voices in the table (e.g., using 'campaign' voice to discuss legal process, internal conflicts, campaign timeline). This allowed me to identify 'collective voices' discussing similar themes, which I organised into a spreadsheet of voices (e.g., campaign), topics (e.g., internal conflicts) and standpoints (first-, second-, third-person voice) (Figure 5a below). I was then able to take the statements from this spreadsheet and compile them into collective voice poems, organised by theme (Figure 5b below). This process produced a number of collective thematic voice poems, several of which are discussed in Chapter 7 in the context of an art-science collaboration in which they featured prominently.

a

we've had a lot of stuff	conflicts	First
hurt between each other	conflicts	First
because we lost	conflicts	First
meetings that we had	conflicts	First
we'd a huge problem over	conflicts	First
how do we chair it?	conflicts	First
How do we	conflicts	First
the longer you're a group of people butting up against each other	conflicts	Second
you can see the divide is the problem	conflicts	Second
you'd be getting over it for a week	conflicts	Second
you'd've another meeting	conflicts	Second
you'd've another thing to do	conflicts	Second
people tend to bring their personal shit	conflicts	Third
they kind of	conflicts	Third
eliminated loads of each other	conflicts	Third
people bring their own traumas	conflicts	Third
get triggered by each other	conflicts	Third

b

we tried	
stuff is gonna come up for us	
we had a division	
our groups had a change	
we became	
a divide in our groups	
we closed that door	
We closed that consultation	
we've had a lot of stuff	
hurt between each other	
because we lost	
meetings that we had	
we'd a huge problem over	
how do we chair it?	
How do we	
	the longer you're a group of people
	butting up against each other
	you can see the divide is the problem
	you'd be getting over it for a week
	you'd've another meeting
	you'd've another thing to do
	people tend to bring their personal shit
	they kind of eliminated
	loads of each other
	people bring their own traumas
	get triggered by each other

Figure 5. Process of turning voice statements from spreadsheet into collective voice poems: a) compiled voice statements from voices shared in common across different participants; and b) collective voice poems obtained by collating these voices in common.

4.5.2.2. Poetic inquiry as arts-based research

Creating poems as part of the 2nd Listen is considered an arts-based scientific approach known as poetic inquiry. Poetic inquiry is a flexible approach that can take multiple forms (e.g., turning research into poems, or reflexively writing poems about research) for different objectives (e.g., producing, analysing, communicating, disseminating research) (Fernández-Giménez et al., 2018). As a creative methodology, poetic inquiry offers “new ways of seeing, and may reveal previously hidden complexity and contradictions that improve understanding of social phenomena” (Fernández-Giménez, 2015, Introduction: Poetic Analysis section, para. 1). There is a tension, however, between artistic and scientific objectives that manifests in this approach: the questions, ‘What is good art?’ and, ‘What is good science?’

may collide or they may synchronise (or both), often in generative ways (Hawkins, 2020; Jaeger, 2025; Madge, 2014). According to Fernández-Giménez et al. (2018),

Good poetic inquiry is *evocative* and *provocative*, effectively communicating emotional aspects of social life to evoke empathy, compassion, and understanding. Regarding its disrupting/transforming potential, poetic inquiry can *raise critical consciousness* by drawing awareness to power relations through evocative images of the status quo and by cultivating empathy with subjugated people. Similarly, poetic inquiry can *unsettle stereotypes, challenge dominant ideologies, and include marginalized voices and perspectives*, through empathy... ABR and poetic inquiry, then, *advance public scholarship, usefulness, and social justice*. (p. 3, italics in original, underline added)

This ability of poetic inquiry to communicate the emotional aspects of social life, disrupt dominant ideologies (e.g., objective/subjective binary), and include marginalised perspectives is deeply feminist, and makes this approach particularly well-suited to understanding the complex relationship between marine governance and emotion (Faulkner, 2018; Görlich, 2023; Shashwati et al., 2022; van Rooyen & d'Abdon, 2020; Vincent, 2021). Indeed, it demands commitment and scientific rigour while at the same time making space for alternative ways of knowing and feeling to emerge that are difficult to measure and operationalise without losing meaning and context. While the remainder of this chapter focuses on the findings gleaned from the 2nd Listen, and not on the poems constructed from these findings, a poetic sensibility permeates the findings, particularly with regards to notion of ‘polyphony’ or ‘polyvocality’ (Hurford, 2009; Pithouse-Morgan et al., 2014) (see more on ‘polyphony’ in Section 4.7. below).

4.6. 2nd Listen: results

Through the 2nd Listen, it became evident that participants spoke through a range of voices exceeding their own individual voice. This finding – that individuals are *polyphonic*, possessing and employing a plurality of voices – points toward a relational understanding of individuals that transcends scales and identities, and complicates the idea of emotions as internalised subjective states. The concept of a ‘polyphonic’ identity or self has been theorised in literary and organisational literature; for instance, Belova (2010) argues that in organisational settings

the polyphonic view suggests that self can be seen as a dynamic, continuous and open-ended metamorphosis and intersection of heterogeneous narratives and experiences that that come to shape the different aspects of one’s identity. It does not consist of a central part that stems from or moves around different positions but is composed of what can be described as *voices*. *Voices*, broadly defined, include not

only words of significant others but also discourses, cultural meanings, historical, social and economic circumstances that take on unique configurations in the life of each individual. (p. 70, emphasis in original)

Outside of a limited set of organisational (see for example Belova et al., 2008 and Sullivan & McCarthy, 2008) and media (see Bakhtin, 1929/1984, Benson, 2003, Bruns, 2008, Eskin, 2000, and Gomes & Teixeira, 2025) literatures, however, the notion of ‘polyphony’ has remained underexamined and underemployed. However, I believe that it holds significant potential for furthering our understanding of emotion in marine governance. I return to the concept of polyphony and consider its relevance to marine governance in Section 4.7, following the discussion of the 2nd Listen findings in this section, in which I describe the master spreadsheet of all voices used across all participants in the interviews (Figure 4c above). In particular, in Sections 4.6.1., 4.6.2., and 4.6.3. I discuss the use of first-person voice, second-person voice, and third-person voice (respectively) and consider the implications of these discursive articulations for marine governance. As such, in this section I focus not on *what* people said in their interviews (which I explore in Chapter 5 to follow), but rather *how* they said it (through the use of different voices). This resonates with work in Feminist Political Ecology that focuses not on what emotion *is* but rather on what it *does* (see for example Gálvez Campos, 2021 and González-Hidalgo & Zografos, 2020).

4.6.1. First-person voice

All nine participants used different variations of the first-person voice to address different topics from different angles. This section focuses on the voices used by Participant 01 as a representative example to illustrate this phenomenon common across all interviews. Rather than using quotes and listing first-person voices used across all nine participants (which are shown in Figure 4c above), I chose one participant at random to explore the use and significance of different first-person voices by the same individual. The former option would have been too simplistic and descriptive, and would show only that different people use different voices. While the latter option does this also, it also demonstrates that each individual uses many different voices – a finding which has implications for the way people define themselves, express different forms of intimacy, and identify with in-groups, which in turn is highly relevant for governance processes.

Participant 01, for instance, use their own voice to speak about their familial ties and roots in Bantry:

I was born here, I grew up here, um, you know, was reared in Bantry town... I suppose the bay was always, you know, just kind of an important part of the world I grew up in... Now that said, I kind of didn't have much real connection with the marine in a lot of ways, which in some ways is a bit strange 'cause my father was born on ____ Island, my father was an islander, ahm, but... I never did too much out on the water itself...

They also use the plural 'Bantry Bay residents' voice to describe their attachment to Bantry Bay:

...it's the emotional connection with... the landscape and living together in, yeah, really in the landscape, that, even if we don't know what's underneath the water, that the bay is part of our landscape and it is part of, even... Like it structures how we can travel, and what we can do...

When thinking about humanity's relationship to the environment more broadly, and their part in this relationship, they use the plural 'all humans' voice:

...we are a part of the biosphere, that like it's all, it's all about... We're in the middle of it, we're in the midst of it, it's everything that's around us, and we're around it, too.

However, when reflecting on the impact of the kelp campaign on their personal, intimate relationship to kelp, they revert back to their own voice:

...the whole experience has had a profound impact on my personal faith... in terms of just, I suppose... my understanding of god, my understanding of myself, my understanding of what church means, ahm, has been... has grown and developed and transformed in incredibly surprising ways. And if you told me, ten years ago, that seaweed, seaweed, would be central to my understanding and vision of the world and my place in it, and my relationship with whatever numinous, other, transcendent being may be out there, I would've told you you were completely mad. But. That is the truth.

When sharing their experience of learning more about their marine environment by snorkelling with a small group of locals and campaign members, they alternate between singular and plural, weaving their own voice through the 'local community' and 'campaign group' voices:

...from my perspective, discovering what it actually looks like, under the water, was just like, a revelation, that's the word. And it's just so bizarre, I think, that, you know, that there is this layer of invisibility, that we see the top of the water and, it's kind of like, our vision ends there... I call it like a paradise, like Garden of Eden, it's so bursting with life. And it's just astounding that it's right there, literally under our noses. And up until, I suppose the campaign happened and up until we did start sticking our heads under the water, I had no idea any of that was there. And it's, I suppose just wanting to share that, the fact that that was always there in front of us, and I never knew.

Participant 01 employ a plurality of first-person voices ('own,' 'campaign group,' 'local community,' 'Bantry Bay residents,' and 'all humans') to discuss their connection to the marine environment, and to the elements of which are meaningful to them: the water, the bay, the marine, the landscape, the biosphere. They position themselves in relation to this environment through familial ties ('*my father was an islander*'); roots ('*I was born here, I grew up here*'); daily life ('*it structures how we can travel*'); personal

beliefs (*'my understanding of god, my understanding of myself'*); place within nature (*'we are a part of the biosphere'*); and physical proximity (*'it's right there, literally under our noses'*). In addition, by tracing the first-person voices used by Participant 01, we can gain a sense of the in-groups with which they identify (e.g., local community, Bantry Bay residents, campaign group), and how belonging to these groups shapes their relation to the marine environment (*'up until we did start sticking our heads under the water, I had no idea any of that was there'*).

Attending to first-person voices may enable a deeper understanding of how participants position themselves in webs of (more-than)human relations. In particular, the first-person voices used by participants may act as articulations of identities (e.g., local community resident, campaign member) – identities which are not bounded or static but complex, fluid, and mobilised in relation to specific emotions and matters of care. As such, individuals may deploy different identities when expressing different forms of emotion, intimacy and relation, and may move between them horizontally as well as vertically, traversing scales of intimacy and belonging. Participant 01, for instance, speaks through different identities (own voice, 'childhood family,' 'Bantry Bay residents' and 'campaign group' voices) when discussing the different ways in which they relate to the marine environment.

These identities, however, do not exist in isolation. Indeed, feminist theories generally do not view "emotions as the internal expression of subjective identity": constructing categories of identity, and then ascribing specific emotions to specific identities, is at best reductive and at worst makes "emotion a commodity to be consumed as a spectacle or a target for therapeutic intervention" – intervention which may be tone-deaf, unjust, invasive, and even violent (Sharp, 2009, p. 76). Nevertheless, rather than disregarding identities (which may be a form of erasure in and of itself), listening to them *with care* allows us to recognise the complexity of individuals and their multifaceted connections to place, and to make space to incorporate these insights in governance processes. As Kurien (2011, p. 326) notes, "identity – how one defines oneself, how one sees oneself – has a strong impact on the making and working of governance arrangements," at the same time warning that even effective forms of governance "can get rude shocks, particularly if we assume that identities are fixed or uniquely defined." Governance practices, then, must find ways of acknowledging identity without objectifying it, recognising it without commodifying it, and incorporating it without operationalising it.

4.6.2. Second-person voice

While the first-person voice gives us a clear indication of participants' sense of belonging or emotional proximity to specific identity groups or matters of care, the second-person voice – 'you' – is less straightforward, more versatile and fluid in its use and intention. Importantly, the use of particular forms of speech varies across dialects and regions. Thus, tracing the second-person 'you' is highly context-dependent. In this case, the analysis focuses on a sample composed of native English speakers from Ireland, England, and Scotland. An analysis of native English speakers in other regions of Ireland where different forms of the second-person (e.g., 'yous' or 'ye') are used; of non-native English speakers of varying fluency in Ireland; conducted in another English-speaking country or in another language altogether would yield vastly different results. Anyone who conducts such an analysis should therefore be mindful of the linguistic particularities of their focus group and place.

As Edwards and Weller (2012, p. 207) note, however, variations across dialects and regions mean that "people may well talk about themselves in the second person in their interviews," and that attending to varying forms of speech may be "equally enlightening about senses of self" as the first-person 'I.' Indeed, this section uses quotes from several participants to illustrate how the second-person voice may be used to generalise and communicate intimate (and emotional) experiences and knowledge.

4.6.2.1. Subjective campaign experiences

From its initial formation to its motivations, its internal conflicts and successes, the kelp campaign was a demanding process into which countless people invested their time, financial resources, and physical as well as emotional energy. Participant 07, for instance, mentioned the emotional overwhelm they felt when attending frequent meetings in the early stages of the campaign: *"you'd be getting over it for a week and you'd've another meeting, and you'd've another thing to do and another thing to do and researching all night..."* Participant 04, on the other hand, acknowledged that

you might get triggered by someone else, you know, in your own personal stuff, and it's a way of actually healing your own shit, as you work with people. Because that's bound to happen, as you work with people, you know, there's gonna be conflict.

Because such conflicts and tensions are inevitable in large groups of people from different backgrounds, they believed in the importance of

a team of people that you trust, a team of people that you can be open with, that, you know, um... that is transparent, you know. And that it's accepted that, you know, you are who you are, and that other people

should be able to discuss things that are positive or negative about you, or your ideas, or your developed system...

Participant 07, reflecting on the lessons they learned from the campaign, similarly believed that

if you have a good community, if you have a good group, if you've a good solid group, that respect the wishes of everyone, and find a way that everyone's wishes is kinda channelled... that you've a very strong foundation... Kelp has taught me that, a lot more.

Lastly, in looking back at how they felt the campaign could have gone better, they stated that *"you need to have that vision, you need to have an answer of where you want to get, your destiny, like. Not an answer but a vision of, what do you see as a solution to this?"*

Why did Participant 04 say, 'you might get triggered by someone,' instead of, 'I might get triggered by someone'? Why did Participant 07 feel that, 'you need to have that vision,' rather than, 'we need to have that vision'? Participants had uniquely subjective experiences of the campaign and were able to reflect on these to extract meaning from and learn from them. They then used the second-person voice as a translation tool to communicate these experiences and lessons: a process of translation which does not simply transmit knowledge but also frames and interprets it, thus rendering it comprehensible and relatable to the recipient of this knowledge.

4.6.2.2. Social and political contexts

The kelp campaign did not emerge from a vacuum; it arose out of social and political contexts which shaped how things took shape. Participants frequently used the second-person voice to distil these broad, intangible contexts into more tangible terms when communicating their subjective lived experiences of them. For instance, Participant 02 described the state of Irish marine governance as follows:

The problem in Ireland is that you've fifty stools. You have the department of this, you have the department of that, you have this office, you have that office, you have this office, you have that office, and nobody's responsible.

Participant 04 cited this fragmented governance and overall lack of environmental protection as one of their motivations for joining the campaign: *"that puts you in a position where you have to then become that protective force, if something happens... they kind of force you, you know, to be that way, if you want it to actually not happen."*

Beyond governance structures, social context also played a role in ordering people's relations and interactions with each other. Participant 02, for instance, discussed the challenges of environmental activism in a close-knit society:

In Germany, if you have a problem with this person, whatever, you won't know his family, you won't know his cousins, you won't know anybody surrounding, so it's easier. There's a distance. You can say something harsh and it's not gonna come back to you. While in Ireland, if you say something harsh to someone it's almost certainly gonna be back before you get home, which is a problem, you know? You have to be a little bit more cautious of what you say...

As in this previous section, both participants used the second-person voice as a translation tool to make tangible their experiences of intangible contexts. However, while in the previous section participants used the second-person to reflect on past events, in this section, participants used it to describe ongoing phenomena and states of being. For instance, rather than, 'We had to become that protective force... they forced us,' Participant 04 said, 'you have to then become that protective force... they force you.' Similarly, Participant 02 said, 'You have to be a little bit more cautious,' instead of, 'We have to be a little bit more cautious.' The present-tense second-person may thus be used to transmit knowledge not only of complex, ongoing phenomena but also of the subjective experiences of these phenomena at a more intimate scale.

4.6.2.3. Embodied, intimate encounters of the marine environment

Many participants used the second-person voice when discussing their embodied encounters and relationships with the marine environment. Participant 09, an avid swimmer and snorkeller, described their experience of being in the water in highly intimate terms:

when you go into deep breathing, in the water, you're going into a state of kinda meditation, which brings a whole different thing in your heart, and in... your heart rate, and your emotional rate. And also in your kind of, psychological state. Ahm... swimming for me in the kelp is really intimate, in a way that, for a start, you've got your clothes off... because it's on your skin, and because you're wrapped around it...

They also expressed, in deeply sensual terms, encounters with kelp in which they are vulnerable, not the only one in control, and in which kelp possesses and exercises agency:

when you're swimming in kelp, it's fleshy, and it's large, and it's... You can go quite into the dark in it... It can really envelop you... And it can be a bit scary at times, because you're really in it. And, it then wants to know you... The kelp plays with you. Because it's constantly moving, and it's touching you, intimately.

In this context, participants used the second-person voice to generalise intimate, embodied encounters with subjective sensory and emotional dimensions, rendering them easier to access and understand. For instance, if Participant 09 had said, 'it then wants to know *me*... The kelp plays with *me*,' they would simply be transmitting this subjective knowledge. However, in saying, 'it then wants to know *you*... The kelp plays with *you*,' they translated their encounter, framing it in such a way as to make it more readily available to a listener's imagination – where the listener can then imagine that the kelp is playing with them. While such encounters are impossible to reproduce (or ever fully comprehend) they are nevertheless crucial to understand how individuals relate to the marine environment, and, indeed, precisely in what ways the marine environment exists as an intensely intimate and emotional space.

4.6.2.4 Environmental and historical trauma

Participants often used the second-person voice to describe complex phenomena and subjective experiences in more tangible terms. However, the second-person can also be used to create emotional distance between an individual and a particularly sensitive or painful topic. For instance, Participant 05, moved deeply by the impacts of cumulative environmental destruction, felt that

for the most part you can't do anything about it, so you just close off, you know... What happens then is you become numb and kind of... stop yourself from caring to protect yourself, and then, just more things happen, and so... it's just then, more shit will happen, you know. If you're numb, you'll let stuff be done to you, you'll let stuff to be done to your community, to your landscape, to your seas.

At the same time, the second-person voice may be used to close the emotional gap between the past and the present, by rendering traumatic histories more immediate, more relevant, and more open to empathy. Participant 09, in reflecting on contemporary environmental destruction, referred to the violent history of colonialism in Ireland and its lasting impacts on environmental attitudes:

Famine is happening, because it's enforced. And you're having to commit a crime, in order to be— You have to do twelve shillings' worth of damage, in order to get sent to Australia, which would make you live. You're forced to make that choice. And, it's made out like, it's your badness, you know. But it's actually an economic... the machine of colonisation working... All of it is interlinked. It's really intimate about what it is that we do with our environment.

The use of the second-person voice may thus serve not only as a translation tool but also as a way of negotiating emotional distance, whether by collapsing it (e.g., between past and present) or by expanding it (e.g., between individual and traumatic experience). Such use of the second-person voice may have less to do with an isolated 'sense of self' and more with how an individual navigates trauma. This may not

seem directly relevant to marine governance on the surface; however, governance practices and processes, even if 'effective' or well-intended, often perpetuate or exacerbate multiple forms of injustice, harm, and marginalisation of 'target' communities and places. In their feminist collaborative autoethnography on disabled identities in academia, Rutter et al. (2024) reflect on this discursive shift from first-person to second-person voice:

The move to and from first and second person is perhaps representative of the suppressed desire to distance ourselves from our *selves*, perhaps demonstrating a subconscious desire to reject, or at least diminish, our disabled identities. This is potentially due to the prevalent narrative of vulnerability in policy and society during the pandemic and trying to understand our positionality in relation to this. It may also have been a result of the dehumanising process we experienced because of a lack of support (financial, structural, emotional) from those in positions of power during the pandemic. (p. 61, emphasis in original)

While this quote is concerned with a different policy context from the one in this dissertation, it nevertheless demonstrates the capacity of policy to marginalise and render vulnerable, a capacity that trickles down from the scale of governance to the individual and that is experienced in deeply embodied ways. In addition, the authors' reflection on moving between first- and second-person voices gives credence to the findings in this sub-section, which point to the use of the second-person 'you' to negotiate emotional distance. It is vital for governance, then, to better understand how particular communities experience and process different forms of trauma (whether environmental, historical, social, or political) – but only if it wants to minimise the risk of reinforcing these same traumas. Tracing the second-person voice, however small its impact, may offer one path to such an understanding.

4.6.3. Third-person voice

Tracing the first-person 'I' and 'we' statements gives us a solid understanding of an individual's emotional proximity to particular in-groups and matters, and the second-person 'you,' while more nebulous, translates subjective experiences and negotiates emotional distance. The third-person 'they' is even more slippery. Participants often used the third-person to create distance or draw boundaries between themselves and an out-group or phenomenon with which they did not identify – whether by choice or not. Indeed, "focusing on 'communities of choice' should not make us forget the continued existence of communities of 'compulsion' or 'regulation'" (Bak & Chen, 2014, as cited in Daniel & Levi, 2014, p. 2). This section focuses on the voices used by Participant 04 as a representative example to illustrate this phenomenon common across all interviews.

While not from Bantry originally, Participant 04 has been living there for years and has made it their permanent home. They cited the local community as an important factor in explaining why they were drawn to Bantry in the first place, using the third-person to create a distinction between their identity and that of the local community:

The people here, yeah. Who are connected to the sea... I could see, economically what they had, socially what they had, um, in terms of work, you know, and knowledge and culture. Like, they have this amazing wealth of all of those things, um, which I guess I could see 'cause I didn't have that before... just that people still had that, you know, and they had a connection with each other, and, yeah, all of those things I just saw as really valuable and a really beautiful part of life, and I wanted to be a part of that.

They initially joined the campaign as a way to get more involved with the local community. Reflecting on the internal conflicts they witnessed (and were likely part of) within the campaign, they reflected that

people need to, like, commit to that process, if they're gonna be part of it. They need to commit to, okay, stuff is gonna come up for us individually, as people, and that's okay, and actually that's great, if we are committed to spending whatever time we need to be able to resolve things, as a group.

According to Participant 04, if people commit to the process, 'if *they're* gonna be part of it,' then 'we are committed to spending whatever time we need.' In their eyes, genuine commitment to a process transforms 'them' into 'us.' This shift from third-person to first-person voice demonstrates how individuals may move between out-group and in-group status, and the subjective conditions (e.g., commitment) that blur the distinction between the two. Similar to the first-person voice, then, out-group identity is not fixed and stable but fluid and relationally emergent.

Similar to most participants, Participant 04 experienced a high degree of frustration with the government and was deeply distrustful of decision-makers. In particular, they felt that decision-makers lacked an emotional connection to the marine environment:

D'you know people who are just like there, they're appointed to positions but they know nothing about the sea. It's just like a government, d'you know... Yeah, they have no connection, like, with it... they have no... They're not emotive about it, they don't care, they don't love it, they don't appreciate it, they don't, you know. I think that's really integral to someone who makes decisions about that thing.

They spoke about decision-makers in the third-person voice, positioning them in terms that are diametrically opposed to their own values. For instance, when they speak of decision-makers' lack of connection to the sea ('*they* don't care, *they* don't love it, *they* don't appreciate it') we can sense Participant 04 implying the opposite for themselves ('we care, we love it, we appreciate it').

Participant 04 also used the third-person to express suspicion and frustration with the government:

I looked at the money involved, there's millions. And I was like, 'So what have they sold off?' Yeah, so I was like, what I was trying to do was follow the money. So I was like, okay, China's investing masses, the US is investing masses, what have they actually sold off... basically like, so, shipping, they sold off, they privatised shipping, and sold it to China. So all of the private Irish shipping companies had to cease. Because China then owned the rights, the shipping rights, in Ireland... So I started looking at, yeah, who's investing what, and where's that actually going, and what— I couldn't really work, what do we owe, how do we owe them, what do we owe them back, you know?

While they refer to the government as a vague 'they,' framing it as an entity that is distant and intangible, they shift to 'we' ('what do we owe') to demonstrate the very tangible influence the government has on people's lives. This shift reflects the tension people may feel between feeling excluded from the government but at the same time being a part of its workings. Further, the vagueness, the uncertainty of *who* exactly is doing these things, may be due to a number of reasons. For instance, ineffective communication and engagement with the general public often leads to a high degree of non-transparency in governance processes, particularly at the national scale, which leaves people in the dark as to what their government is doing. Additionally, few opportunities for active participation and being listened to may work to disempower, exclude, and further alienate people from governance processes. In such cases, members of the general public are left with little choice but to conduct their own research and reach their own conclusions about what may be going on (see more in Chapter 5 on this feeling of not having a choice). For instance, the quote above may not necessarily 'accurately' represent events and actions taken by the Irish government. Indeed, I attempted to back up these and other claims made by participants through my own research, but could not find any tangible evidence for certain claims. Such claims reflect an individual's perceptions, interpretations, and beliefs. It is their truth, and, as such, is valid in and of itself; and it remains important for understanding how and why people respond to governance processes and practices as they do.

The third-person voice may thus be traced to understand how individuals position themselves in relation to groups and phenomena to which they do not feel they belong. As is the case with the second-person voice, this may not seem directly relevant to marine governance on the surface. However, understanding how individuals and communities feel about governance processes, particularly in terms of trust, is important for developing policies that effective because of their relevance to what is happening 'on the ground.' Such an understanding may also be used to improve communication and provide greater opportunities for meaningful participation. Tracing the third-person voice, while slippery and often

difficult to interpret, may thus generate insights into the emotional dimensions and impacts of governance.

4.7. Discussion and conclusions

The aim of this chapter was two-fold: **to discuss the application of the Listening Guide analysis method to a new discipline** (i.e., marine governance); and **to present empirical evidence that demonstrates the importance of deep listening to voice in researching emotions**. In this way, this chapter addressed the **first objective of this dissertation: to develop a methodology for researching emotions in marine contexts**. To achieve this two-fold aim, in this chapter I have provided an extensive account of the application and adaptation of the Listening Guide (LG), a feminist, voice-centred analytical method, to a new disciplinary context – emotional marine governance. Guided by a feminist ethic of care and attunement, in this chapter I discussed in detail how I tailored the LG, and the 2nd Listen in particular, to grasp to the emotional nuances found in the interviews I conducted with my research participants.

In this concluding section I briefly summarise the findings of this chapter before returning the concept of ‘polyphony’ for a discussion of its potential both in methodological terms (for the LG method) and in conceptual terms (for marine governance). Finally, I consider the contributions of this chapter to future inquiry into emotional marine governance. In doing so, this chapter responds to recent calls to study emotion and the ocean (*emocean*, to follow McKinley et al., 2023, McKinley et al., 2024a) by attending not only to the emotional dimensions of marine governance, but also to the development of a methodology for researching and making sense of these emotional dimensions.

4.7.1. Summary of findings

Each iteration of the LG analysis yielded different insights about people, emotion, (more-than-)human relations, and governance structures; insights that shed light onto how things hang together and how they are held together. In the 2nd Listen in particular, I noticed that participants employed a plurality of voices extending past the first-person singular ‘I’ to include the first-person plural ‘we,’ the second-person ‘you,’ and the third-person ‘they’ – a finding which has implications for the way people define themselves, express different forms of intimacy, and identify with out- and in-groups, which in turn is highly relevant for governance processes.

In particular, first-person voices used by participants may act as articulations of identities – identities which are not bounded or static but complex, fluid, and mobilised in relation to specific matters of care.

As such, individuals may deploy different identities when expressing different forms of intimacy and relation, and may move between them horizontally as well as vertically, traversing scales of intimacy and belonging. Attending to first-person voices, then, may enable a deeper understanding of how participants position themselves in webs of (more-than)human relations. With regards to the second-person voice, participants often assumed this voice to describe complex phenomena and subjective experiences in more tangible terms, but also at times to create emotional distance between themselves and a particularly sensitive or painful topic. The second-person voice may thus serve not only as a translation tool but also as a way of negotiating emotional distance, whether by collapsing it or by expanding it, and tracing the use of this voice may shed light onto the inner workings of these emotional negotiations. Lastly, participants used the third-person voice to create distance or draw boundaries between themselves and an out-group or phenomenon with which they did not identify. Listening to the use of the third-person voice shed light onto how individuals and communities felt about governance processes, particularly in terms of trust and the emotional dimensions and impacts of governance.

This usage of different voices to discuss different issues points to a ‘polyphonic’ understanding of identity as relationally constructed, and hence complicates the idea of emotions as internalised subjective states. Indeed, Belova (2010, p. 68) argues that “understanding identity as polyphonic enables to examine the close interrelation between self-constructions and social interactions, cultural and organizational meanings on which individuals draw in making sense of who they are.” This ‘polyphonic’ understanding has both methodological implications for the LG method and practical implications for the way marine governance operates – and how it might operate differently.

4.7.2. Polyphony: opportunities for LG methodology

As I outlined in Section 4.2. above, the LG traditionally consists of four rounds of listening, which focus on the following questions: 1. *What story is being told?* 2. *Who is telling the story, in what voice and what body?* 3. *What relationships are involved?* 4. *In what structures and contexts is the story embedded?* While I adapted these questions to fit the needs of my project (see more on adapting the LG in Section 4.2.), the main finding of this chapter, that individuals are polyphonic, is methodologically interesting for the LG.

In particular, the 3rd Listen of the traditional LG – listening for relationships – involves listening for contrapuntal voices. In some studies, this demands “at least two readings where the researcher attends to the ‘harmonies and dissonances’ between voices by listening for just one voice at a time” (Morgan et al., 2024, p. 3416); in others, for researchers “to extract two themes of the narrative that melodiously

react with one another or that are in tension with each other” (Woodcock, 2016, p. 6); and in yet others, that “[s]everal senses of self – contrapunctal [sic] ‘voices’ – can be identified for one person, which may be conflicting or complementary, resisting or capitulating, confident or distressed, firm or struggling to make themselves heard” (Edwards & Weller, 2012, p. 205). These studies share the view that ‘contrapunctal listening’ allows researchers to understand how these voices/themes/senses of self relate to one another (Petrovic et al., 2015; Woodcock, 2016). However, the precise definition of what is ‘contrapunctal’ is nebulous, ranging from voices to themes to sense of self.

A polyphonic perspective resonates deeply with this facet of the LG. Indeed, Belova (2010, p. 68, 71, emphasis in original) writes that a polyphonic perspective “does not only present identity as ambivalent and multi-sourced but also invites an analysis of how the different sources, or *voices* that make it up, interact between each other” and that “self can be understood not just as a plurality of merely juxtaposed voices but as their *interrelationship*.” As such, the notion of polyphony may help nuance the approach of the LG towards contrapunctal and relational voices and identities (see opportunities for future research in Chapter 8 for more). Belova (2010) poses several questions to guide future research in organisational contexts, but they hold great potential for further nuancing the LG as well:

What are the voices that make up the polyphony? Which ones are dominant, marginalized, clashing? How is the demand to be consistent and integral in the telling of the narrative is [sic] balanced with the need to adapt to a variety of situations and roles? What holds the different parts together? What is the organizing narrative? How is it embodied? (p. 74)

What would it mean for research on emotion to take up this polyphonic approach? How might marine governance look if it adopted a polyphonic practice when listening to and including a plurality of voices?

4.7.3. Polyphony: opportunities for marine governance

While there has been engagement with the concept of polyphony in planning theory and practice, its application in marine contexts has not yet been explored. However, the bridge between polyphony and planning, particularly in the context of urban and environmental planning and community engagement, provides a basis for drawing this link into the sphere of relevance around the role of emotion in marine governance (Hurford, 2009). In particular, polyphonic approach to planning demands the inclusion of many voices and perspectives (Antadze, 2018; Harsia & Nummi, 2024a, 2024b; Sarkissian & Wenman, 2010). However, “the coexistence of voices itself is not enough to create a polyphonic environmental planning process; voices should be recognised and heard, not merely present” (Antadze, 2018, p. 242).

Indeed, recognising these voices, *deeply listening* to them, stems from recognising and engaging in dialogue with their plurality rather than erasing their differences for the sake of consensus (Antadze, 2018). Adopting polyphonic principles in planning offers many opportunities for planning, including identifying ways to incorporate local place values and attachments into plans, increase the inclusion of a diversity of voices and publics, and explore more ‘affective’ planning skills and priorities in harmony with, rather than in opposition to, technical and scientific ones (Harsia & Nummi, 2024b; Hurford, 2009). Further, a polyphonic approach may enhance “a literacy of multiple publics” on the part of decision-makers, through “the qualities of expansive imagination and *polyphonic literacy* required to listen and to react to the experiences and meanings communities give to the places they live, work, and dream” (Hurford, 2009, p. 49, 19, emphasis mine).

This is particularly significant given the emergence of ocean literacy as a key strategy to foster engagement and connection between people and oceans (McKinley et al., 2023). Most ocean literacy interventions target ‘the public’; however, McRuer et al. (2024, p. 12) argue that “[i]n addition to understanding public levels of ocean literacy, there is also a need to look beyond civil society and for OLR [Ocean Literacy Research] to consider how ‘ocean literate’ our ocean decision-making institutions are.” Polyphonic planning principles – with their focus on place attachment, ‘literacy of multiple publics,’ and deep listening – have the potential to be a source of inspiration for ocean literacy interventions that target decision-makers (see opportunities for future research in Chapter 8 for critical recommendations for polyphony).

4.7.4. Concluding thoughts

Through a detailed methodological account, in this chapter I have demonstrated the importance of deep listening in research on emotion, emphasising how repeated ‘listens’ to interview data not only deepen one’s understanding of emotional matters but can also enable a researcher to actively improve their interviewing techniques *in situ* as well as enhancing their overall commitment to reflexivity. By arguing for a care-full and attentive practice of deep listening to a polyphony of voices, the work in this chapter contributes to developing a robust methodology for researching emotion within marine contexts, thus fulfilling the first objective of this dissertation, namely, **to develop a methodology for researching emotions in marine contexts**. This methodological foundation sets the stage for the subsequent empirical chapters that explore not only *how* we listen to emotion but also *what* we might learn from this listening, as well as the different expression of emotion that emerge from listening in this way.

Chapter 5: The Listening Guide I

What can we learn through deep listening?

5.1. Introduction

In Chapter 4 I described and developed the Listening Guide (LG) method *developed* and *deployed* to analyse the transcripts of the semi-structured interview conducted with research participants during fieldwork. In doing so I responded to the first objective of this dissertation, namely, to advance a methodology for researching emotions in marine contexts. Chapter 4 argued for the necessity of a special method for getting close to data and analysing for emotion. The LG, as the chapter showed, is a feminist methodology that listens deeply to individuals' voices and stories through multiple iterations of listening to interview data, approaching the material through a different perspective with each 'listen' (Edwards & Weller, 2012; Woodcock, 2016; Yeo et al., 2023). These iterations traditionally focus on the following questions: 1. What story is being told? 2. Who is telling the story, in what voice and what body? 3. What relationships are involved? 4. In what structures and contexts is the story embedded? (McKenzie, 2021; Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008).

In Chapter 4 I took this 4-stage model and developed it for marine governance research, developing a methodology for *how* we might listen for emotion in marine governance. I also discussed the findings of the 2nd Listen in detail, with particular attention to how people employed a plurality of voices to speak on matters of care, articulate a sense of belonging, communicate subjective experiences, and negotiate emotional proximity to and distance from a given issue. Building on learning *how* to listen to emotions in Chapter 4, **in this chapter I aim to show *what* we can learn about emotions using the LG.** Thus, I address the **second objective of this dissertation, namely, to build on a method for analysing emotions through a deep listening approach.**

In what follows, I demonstrate the value of this methodology by considering *what* we might learn through about emotion through this deep listening approach. To do so, I delve deep into the findings gleaned from the 1st Listen, which involved listening to the story/stories recounted to me by participants. This further nuances our understanding of how emotion works in different (yet deeply entangled) ways to shape social

engagements with marine spaces, with the use of marine resources, and marine governance more broadly.

At the core of this chapter lies the theme of connection – in particular, a sense of oceanic connection developed through *relationships* and emotional, embodied *encounters* with marine worlds (Murray et al., 2025; Tugend, 2025; Vita et al., 2025). There has been much work on ocean connections (evidenced, for instance, by the emerging concept of *emoceans* of McKinley et al., 2023), where awareness and education are viewed as bridges to fostering knowledge, care, and stewardship towards the oceans. Indeed, recent work by the Ocean Incubator Network has outlined two pathways to ocean literacy: ‘*connecting with each other*,’ which “emphasizes the importance of fostering connections among individuals, communities, and institutions involved in climate and ocean-related education and research,” and ‘*connecting with the ocean*,’ which “focuses on the intrinsic connections between human and ocean health” (Vita et al., 2025, p. 13). Drawing on findings emerging from the LG analysis, this chapter contributes to this work on oceanic connections by tracing how oceanic connections are built across times and spaces, and shaped by different positionalities in relation to marine worlds.

In addition to oceanic connection, this chapter is also embedded more broadly in the geographical literature on place connection and attachment: how we come to know, understand, and ultimately love place, echoing what Tuan (1974) famously termed ‘topophilia.’ Geography has long explored the relations between people and place, from humanistic geographers thinking on place attachment, belonging, and concepts of ‘home’ in the 1970s, to more critical feminist and intersectional perspectives emerging in the 1980s and 1990s interrogating the dimensions of power that underpin and complicate these concepts of place attachment and belonging (Bondi, 2005; Dixon & Jones III, 2014; England, 2006; Pile, 2010; Valdivia et al., 2021). This chapter is broadly situated within such debates, which have also long attended to the subjective and deeply emotional ways through which we come to know, love, protect, and connect to place. Importantly, however, I intentionally refrain from framing the place attachments and oceanic connections in this chapter (and in this research more broadly) as forms of place protectionism, localism, or NIMBYism. To do so would be to do an injustice to the complexity of the campaign by being as well as to directly contravene the explicit and clear sentiments of my research participants (more on this in recommendations for future research in Chapter 8).

The structure of this chapter follows the story of the campaign from its beginnings to its eventual conclusion. Accordingly, the chapter begins with a description of the methodological aspects of this story structure in Section 5.2. In Section 5.3., the emotional landscape of the research participants prior to the

commencement of the campaign is discussed. Section 5.4. outlines participants' motivations for joining the campaign, and Section 5.5. describes the participants' concerns around the proposed kelp harvesting in great detail. Section 5.6. provides an account of how participants experienced the campaign at an embodied, emotional level, while Section 5.7. discusses the lasting social (and deeply emotional) impacts of the campaign on individuals as well as communities. Lastly, Section 5.8. summarises the findings of the chapter, underscoring the importance of *connection* to each other and to the ocean in furthering an emotional agenda for marine governance.

5.2. Methods

In wanting to showcase what the LG can offer in understanding the emotional dimensions of marine governance and its implications, I arrived at the findings discussed in this chapter through the adapted LG, the protocol and approach of which can be found in Section 4.2.1. above. In thinking of how to structure and present the findings of the 1st Listen of the LG in this chapter, I have been inspired by the LG analysis protocol, and the 1st Listen in particular, which poses the following question: *What is the story being told?* Which marine governance story – or conflict – was at stake, and through which emotions arose? Looking at the data, I asked myself: what is the theme that ties everything together into a coherent narrative or story? Using this question as a lens (or code) to make sense of the data, the central narrative became clear at once. All the threads led back to the campaign; it is the campaign that holds everything together (see Chapter 1 for context on campaign). It is hence the story of the campaign that is the focal point of this chapter; it is this story that I use to discuss the meaning and implications of the findings, and for making sense of emotional dimensions of marine worlds.

Harris (2022, p. 836, emphasis mine) explores the potential of stories not only for narrating emotional connections, but indeed for enacting these connections, arguing that stories “help to define and consolidate our sense of self and how we move through the world. They help us connect to the past, and to each other, including *enacting connections to place and more-than-human worlds.*” Much Indigenous, Black and feminist scholarship has underscored the importance of telling stories and storytelling as a way to centre social and environmental justice in research, activism, and decision-making processes – as well as highlighting “the responsibility of finding ways to not just hear but *listen* to these stories that emerge from within community” (Harris, 2022; Wiebe, 2019, p. 34, emphasis in original; Yunkaporta, 2023). To think about storytelling in this chapter from a critical lens, I turn to questions posed by Mehta and Wibben (2018):

Whose stories are we telling? To whom? Who benefits from these narrations and analyses? Why are we telling these stories? How are we telling them? Since there will always be stories that continue to be untold or unheard, we need to further examine why they are omitted. We should ask: What stories are we choosing not to tell and why? Whose voices – and therefore stories – are we unable to hear because of our biases? (p. 5)

The story in this chapter, like all stories, is not a singular, objective one. Every individual I spoke with during my interviews had a different experience of the campaign, and shared with me partial glimpses and fragments of this experience. This story, then, resonates with the collage methodology guiding this dissertation, an approach that pieces together these fragments into a coherent narrative through “the coexistence, combination, layering, juxtaposition, and integration of multiple experiences” (Scotti & Chilton, 2018, p. 364) (see more on collage in Chapter 3). Because the focus of this chapter is on weaving together the stories and voices of research participants, I use quotes from my interviews with participants extensively throughout this chapter to fully evidence both the emotional aspects of their lived experiences and my capacity to listen deeply by being a ‘feminist ear’ (Ahmed, 2017). While I discuss the overarching themes emerging from the quotes, and how these themes are relevant to the aims of this research, I refrain from adding my own interpretation to the quotes. Instead, I give space for participants to speak *in their own words and notably in their own voice*.

5.3. Before the campaign

The community-driven campaign to resist the governance decision to approve a mechanical kelp harvesting licence, and to protect the kelp forests in Bantry Bay, generated a range of emotions among its members, but this is not to say that emotions were absent *prior* to the campaign. Indeed, many individuals had pre-existing relationships with the marine environment, both in Bantry Bay and further afield, formed over time, long before mechanical kelp harvesting emerged as a matter of concern. Once it did emerge, however, emotions about it played a role in shaping the formation and mobilisation of the campaign. In this section I discuss quotes from my research participants that reflect these pre-campaign emotions. Writing on the role of emotion in why marine governance unfolds as it does, Levi and Peters (2024, p. 67, emphasis in original) argue:

It is our contention that the ways in which we hold and develop particular values and identities; the ways we relate to individuals, groups, movements, and institutional and social structures; and the ways we respond to change are partly driven by emotion (Dixon, 2023). This is *why* we have concerns – why we care. This is why we may respond to governance as we do, whether by shaping it, negotiating it, or resisting it.

In other words, then, by shedding light on various pre-existing emotions and relations, the quotes in this section provide a ‘baseline’ emotional landscape prior to the campaign. This emotional baseline, in turn, may help us better understand *why* the campaign emerged as it did.

It is important to note, however, that these quotes are not representative of the campaign or of the broader communities around Bantry Bay. In addition, due to the indelible impact of the campaign on the lives of my interlocutors, hindsight bias is an important consideration when gauging pre-campaign emotions and relationships. And there is a further layer complexity: the matter of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ in the context of the campaign is not a straightforward one: in social movements, Einwohner (2002, p. 254) writes, “identity is not merely a static, pre-existing factor that leads to action. Most scholars agree that the identities relevant to collective action are also shaped during the action itself.” The identities of campaign members are complex, fluid, and relational; all are ‘insiders’ in some ways and ‘outsiders’ in others. For instance, they are all locals in the sense that they are long-term residents of Bantry Bay with a deep understanding of local issues and concerns. In this sense they may be seen as ‘insiders’ to the issues at stake; however, many also carry other qualities that situate them as partial ‘outsiders.’ For example, some participants have lived around Bantry Bay all their lives, with family ties to the area spanning centuries, while others are ‘blow-ins’ that moved to the area later in life. Some are Irish and some are not; some grew up near the sea while some did not; some have been heavily involved in the campaign while others have been involved to a lesser extent or not at all. These categories are fluid, intersecting and overlapping; and one category neither precludes nor assumes another. Indeed, many individuals shifted from ‘outsider’ to ‘insider’ through their involvement in the campaign (see Chapters 4 and 6 for more on the fluidity of these identity categories).

Nevertheless, many participants cited their early childhood connections to the sea (or lack thereof) as critical to the development of emotions in later life (McKinley, 2024; McKinley et al., 2020; Strand et al., 2023). Rather than using ‘local’ and ‘non-local’ labels, then, in this section I use ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’²⁴ labels to discuss pre-campaign emotions *in terms of presence or absence of childhood connection*, while

²⁴ The terms ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ come with their own complexities (more on these terms and finding an in-between space in Chapter 6). These terms reinforce an inside/outside binary, however I use them intentionally here because many of my interlocutors explicitly defined and positioned themselves as ‘insiders’ or ‘outsiders.’ While this is a constructed binary, it does particular work; and it is real in the sense that it produces tangible differences in the way people see themselves in relation to nature and to other people, and to their sense of belonging and community. My use of this binary in this chapter, then, is conscious of (and works to unravel) these complexities.

being cognisant of the complexities of these categorisations and of the risk of oversimplifying, objectifying, or reifying them.

5.3.1. 'Insider' emotions

The emotions of insiders, individuals who spent their childhood near the sea, revolve mainly around the physical proximity of the marine environment, the collection of seaweed for use as fertiliser in fields and gardens, and in-water activities including swimming and snorkelling. These emotional connections are often paradoxical: growing up next to the water, but not knowing what is there under the surface; collecting seaweed, but not knowing about its important role in the marine environment; swimming in the kelp but being afraid of it because of not being able to see into it (Peters & Steinberg, 2019). These are explored in turn.

When asked about their connection to Bantry Bay, Participant 01, a lifelong resident of Bantry, reflected on their childhood spent in very close proximity to the bay:

Well, I mean, I suppose, it starts very simply because I was born here, I grew up here, um, you know, was reared in Bantry town. And, it's very difficult, not to have a connection to the bay because it's right there. I mean, we went, you know, we'd go swimming every summer down the Beicín or down Cove or down Newtown, ahm, all the various strands close to the town. And, I suppose not just in terms of physical proximity but I think, it's difficult not to be aware of the bay as a physical element of the environment because, of the beauty of the landscape in some ways, and, like, any time— You know, I went to school in the ___, and then in the ___ school, ahm, both of which are up the hill above the town, so you couldn't go to school or come back from school without seeing the harbour and Whiddy Island and the Caha Mountains and Sugarloaf and so, I suppose the bay was always, you know, just kind of an important part of the world I grew up in. Now that said, I kind of didn't have much real connection with, the marine in a lot of ways, which in some ways is a bit strange 'cause my father was born on ___ Island, my father was an islander, ahm, but we didn't do much boating, or I never did too much out on the water itself, it was always on the shore.

Participant 01 has a strong connection to this particular place, and refers to the bay as an omnipresent presence in their life. The visual aspect of the bay is important to this sense of presence: growing up, they could see the bay from most parts of town; it has always been in their visual field; and the beauty of the landscape in particular plays a role in their sense of place. However, despite the fact that it's hard *not* to feel connected to the bay '*because it's right there,*' Participant 01 felt that they lacked '*much real connection with the marine.*'

Physical proximity, then, does not automatically imply a strong emotional connection in this case. Indeed, of the underwater environment, Participant 01 said that *“it’s just so bizarre, I think, that, you know, that there is this layer of invisibility, that we see the top of the water and, it’s kind of like, our vision ends there.”* This statement was corroborated by Participant 02, another lifelong resident of the area, who said of seaweed: *“It’s underwater, so nobody sees it, unless you go looking. So it’s kind of hidden away, and, ahm, unless you go looking, and snorkelling is the best way to do that, you don’t really understand what’s there.”* Several of my interlocutors cited this ‘layer of invisibility’ as a barrier to access and to knowledge (Januchowski-Hartley et al., 2020; Sjö Dahl, 2024; Steinberg & Peters, 2015).

When asked about their childhood connections to seaweed in particular, several participants mentioned that as children they used to collect seaweed to be used as fertiliser in their family gardens and fields. Participant 02, for instance, recollected:

I mean we used to collect seaweed, for the garden back in the day... Just off the beach, just off the bay, off the, down by the Abbey there, by the Abbey Slip. Ahm, and over the years, more and more plastic began to get into it, so it became more of a kind of, separating the seaweed from the plastic. There was times, I think when we finished up, it was kind of, there was as much, there was more plastic than seaweed. So it was like, it began to become more of like a... It wasn’t worth its while anymore, so my parents stopped doing it. But I’d very little understanding of the sea or seaweeds, and their role in the... in marine ecology.

Participant 07, another lifelong resident, had a similar experience growing up: *“Back in the, like fertiliser for the land would’ve been, I suppose, one of the most childhood memories, that I would’ve known of seaweed.”* In Ireland, the use of seaweed as fertiliser across history is well-documented, and remains an important cultural and economic practice along much of the west coast (Mac Monagail & Morrison, 2020; Rees, 2019; Zocchi et al., 2024). The emotions surrounding this activity, then, are complex. But it was not the only childhood experience described.

Several participants described swimming and snorkelling as a child, and the long-term emotional impacts of this later in life. For instance, Participant 06, a decision-maker that had vocally supported the campaign, explained:

I would’ve snorkelled, ahm, around the coast of ____ where I live, all the time. From, again, from a relatively young age. But I, ahm, well, many of my friends were afraid to swim in and around the kelp. I always loved swimming in the kelp... I really do have a very deep knowledge about the life history of the Laminaria species around the Irish coast. So, you know, I’d know their footholds, and I’d know, I’d know the different, ahm, types of species that feed on it, like the blue-rayed limpet and that... I’ve seen seals in the kelp... Ahm, so I do feel with the Laminaria, the kelp, particularly, that I have, like, a very, you know, I suppose, a kind of a,

like a, I have a huge love and fondness for kelp. Because when the sun shines and the tide is low, and particularly on a low, low tide, really, full-moon low tide, and, then, you know for me, to see the Laminaria shine up through the water, you know when you see it, like it's so... It's so... beautiful. It's so inspiring... like it's the rainforest of the Irish coastline. And it's, for me it's hugely inspiring.

For Participant 06, swimming and snorkelling from an early age has kindled and sustained a deeply intimate, lifelong connection to seaweed and to the marine environment more broadly. Participant 08, on the other hand, had a very different experience swimming as a child:

...because I remember even, when we were children, we'd be scared of seaweed, you know, swimming over it, because of not being able to see what was underneath and the feel of it, you know, when– And it took me years probably to get through that.

In this case, the long-term emotional impacts were not the enduring '*huge love and fondness*' of Participant 08 but rather a deep and visceral fear that took years to overcome. The visual element (or rather, lack thereof) was one of the causes of this fear: '*because of not being able to see what was underneath,*' Participant 08 would experience a fear of the unknown while swimming (Jackman & Squire, 2023). Coupled with the unfamiliar tactile sensation of seaweed – '*the feel of it, you know*' – this fear persisted into their adult life. This is something Participant 06 mentioned in their description as well ('*many of my friends were afraid to swim in and around the kelp*'). Participant 01, too, had a similar experience as a child: "*you'd generally be, well not afraid of it, but like you, if you go swimming and your legs touch the seaweed it would be 'ewww,' kind of an icky thing.*" The sensory experience of seaweed, in both visual and tactile terms, is an important factor in why individuals may emotionally respond to seaweed as they do.

5.3.2. 'Outsider' emotions

Whilst growing up and having childhood experiences forged important 'insider' experiences and emotions, 'outsiders' could be understood as individuals who moved to the Bantry Bay area later in life, and grew up far away from the sea. Their emotional connections to the marine environment are shaped by different forms of encounter with this environment, for instance through recreational activities, environmental activism, and swimming as a spiritual practice. Through these encounters, an often profoundly meaningful connection to the environment is formed, despite – or, according to some individuals, *because of* – the lack of physical proximity in early childhood. Running through these emotional connections often is a deep sense of gratitude for one's adopted home in West Cork, which is frequently described in stark contrast to one's place of origin.

Participant 04, for instance, is a self-described ‘outsider’ who moved to the Bantry Bay area from a place far away from the sea over a decade ago. As a newcomer, they began to engage with the natural environment, predominantly through outdoor activities, as a way to get to know their new home and to develop a sense of belonging to place. They attributed this ‘outsider’ perspective as vital to fully appreciating the environment around them, because they knew what it felt like to not live in such a place. Participant 04 described the importance of this ‘outsider’ perspective thus:

...where I lived in ____ was not anywhere near the sea... So before that I didn't have that. And I guess, I always, even now, feel like I'm on holiday. Like as an outsider I really appreciate the mountains and the sea and how that makes me feel... I just really, really appreciate, um, the time I spend in nature here, and visually what it does for me, and for the kids and stuff, and... So I think that's where... you know, a lot of that stems from. And now we still spend a lot of time at the beach, and the rivers, and kayaking, and in the phosphorescence, and. D'you know? There's kind of endless things to do that is free, and lovely and, you know, it gives you a lot. So, I think, I have a lot of gratitude for where I live here. And I kind of always felt with the kelp, as an outsider, um, I could see what there was here? Maybe in a different way than people who perhaps were brought up here.

While taking part in a range of outdoor recreational activities with their family played an important role in getting to know and to love a place, Participant 04 felt that their ‘outsider’ perspective in particular allowed them to not take the natural environment for granted. It was this perspective that eventually motivated them to join the campaign, because they could perhaps ‘see what there was here’ differently from ‘insiders’ who were brought up in the area. This is not to say that all ‘insiders’ take the natural environment around them for granted, or that there is a strict division between the emotions of ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ towards the natural environment, or indeed that there is a clear-cut binary between ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ status at all. Rather, it is to say that for this particular individual, their self-perception as having ‘outsider’ status (evidenced by their repeated use of the phrase ‘as an outsider’ during their interview) influenced the way that they came to know and connect with the marine environment, and how they positioned this emotional connection in relation to the connections of the perceived ‘insiders’ in their community. This points to the role of self-perception as one of many factors influencing emoceans. While emoceans may be shaped by historical, social and political forces and barriers, self-perception, itself heavily influenced by socio-political forces, may also be a structuring force shaping emoceans. While it is beyond the scope of this study, an interesting line of future inquiry may be to more fully explore the process through which socio-political factors shape self-perception, which in turn shapes emoceans.

Similarly to Participant 04, Participant 05 grew up far from the marine environment, and began to develop a relationship with it once they moved to West Cork later in life. They have a long history of environmental resistance, and feel that they have developed a connection to the marine in particular through their activism. They described their emotional connection as follows:

I didn't grow up near the sea at all, but, you know, just from living here I've sort of slowly become aware that it's really good for me to live near the sea. Um... You know, I got, actually through the ____ campaign I got involved in some marine activism... And just that feeling of being on the water, and... I find it, or being in the water, I just find it really... healing, you know. And it's like... I've always had, you know, since I was quite young felt this kind of connection to land, to landscape, to plants, and nature. And so it's like, just... You know, growing up, far from, relatively far from the sea, that was, you know, it felt very natural and healthy and good. And then, you know, moving near the sea it's just, it's kind of an extension of that, really.

Despite not growing up in close physical proximity to the marine, Participant 05 thought that their emerging connection to the marine '*felt very natural and healthy and good*'; rather than establishing a wholly new connection, it felt like an extension of an existing lifelong connection to nature. Indeed, they described the embodied feeling of being in the water as '*healing*,' pointing to a spiritual aspect of this emotional relationship (J. Anderson, 2013; Watson, 2019; Wheaton et al., 2020).

Like Participants 04 and 05, Participant 09 grew up far from the marine. However, unlike them, they grew up in a heavily urbanised and precarious setting and, as a child, felt no connection to nature whatsoever. They describe their childhood thus:

I grew up in ____, in a multistorey flat, in a set of multistorey flats that all... that all were, ahm, twenty-five thousand people were all moved into those areas, like in the same time... The Troubles were very much part of my growing up. And, full-on fighting. The place where I lived was the most violent place in Europe, at one point. So that level of dislocation as a child... From nature. Completely. Completely concrete. I looked out of a window, like, really high up, and it was all, like, bombed out from the war... And old factory, and all those kind of things. So I just had total dislocation. So for me now... to swim in the kelp is the nearest I get to church. It is absolutely holy for me, and is absolutely in connection.

In this quote, Participant 09 positioned '*that level of dislocation as a child from nature*' in stark contrast to their life in West Cork now. Similar to Participant 05, they described their connection to the marine, and the feeling of being in the water in particular, not only in emotional terms but also in profoundly spiritual terms (J. Anderson, 2013; Overbury et al., 2023). Indeed, they regarded swimming in kelp as '*absolutely holy*,' as '*the nearest I get to church*.' When they swim, they inhabit a place between the sensory and the spiritual.

5.3.3. Section summary

The presence and absence of physical proximity to the marine environment at an early age has had a significant influence on how the participants perceive and feel about this environment later in life. For physical proximity ‘insiders,’ the visual component of this proximity has played a particularly important role in feeling connected. Technical knowledge is not a condition for the development of this sense of connection; rather, it is *encounter*, in different configurations, that nourishes an emotional connection (Couper, 2018; H. Wilson, 2017). Similarly, for physical proximity ‘outsiders,’ *encounter*, whether through recreational activities, activism, or sea-swimming, has been vital to developing a sense of connection to the marine later in life. Indeed, in recent work recognising the importance of such connection, Tugend (2025, p. 183) argues that “[i]n the context of ocean literacy, connecting with the ocean thus involves more than intellectual understanding; it requires the ability to connect, empathize, understand, and emotionally invest in the ocean’s well-being.” For some individuals this connection can even have a deeply spiritual dimension, which points to the complexity of grasping such connections and the risk of reducing emotion to labels such as ‘love’ or ‘frustration’ (Milton, 2003). Further, while there were some differences between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders,’ the role of sensory perception in encounters with the marine was shared across participants. The relationship between emotion and sensory perception in the context of the marine, then, may be a future strand of inquiry to expand our understanding of the relevance of emotion to marine governance (Fulkerson, 2020; Rouby et al., 2016).

5.4. Joining the campaign

Having used the material from the LG to think on the emotions shaping connections to the marine environment that might have forged emotional resonances *before* the campaign, this section explores what drove people to join it. Research participants came from different backgrounds and had different motivations for joining the campaign. They were unanimous in their desire to take action – to *do* something. However, the meaning of ‘doing something’ varied greatly among campaign members, and ultimately led to much internal disagreement on the objectives, strategies, and desired outcomes of the campaign. Before discussing these conflicts in Section 5.5. below, in this section I describe several individuals’ motivations for joining the campaign to contextualise these conflicts. In particular, there is a pattern arising from the interviews that suggests that ‘insiders’ were motivated largely by the physical proximity of the perceived threat to a place they had a connection to since childhood, while ‘outsiders’ were motivated by a desire to strengthen their sense of belonging to their communities. Having said this,

I emphasise that, while everyone was united in wanting to *do* something, the campaign was composed of a highly heterogeneous group of individuals who varied in so much, including but not limited to their concerns, their emotional connections to the marine, their prior experience with activism, and physical and emotional resources (Giugni & Grasso, 2015; Walker & Stepick, 2014). Lastly, as discussed in Section 5.3. above, these ‘outsider’ and ‘insider’ categories are fluid, with many individuals shifting from the former to the latter through their involvement in the campaign.

As mentioned in the previous section, several of the research participants were ‘outsiders’ that had moved to the Bantry Bay area later in life. These individuals joined the campaign because they, like their ‘insider’ counterparts, wanted to do something. These ‘outsiders’ came from different backgrounds, but they shared an important driver for joining the campaign: to feel a sense of belonging and social connection to the place and to the community in which they live.

Reflecting on their motivation for joining, for instance, Participant 04 said:

And yeah, I don't know what made me get involved, really... Um... I guess I always wanted to save the world when I was younger. And um... Yeah, I don't know. I suppose I was fairly disconnected with the community, as well, so maybe it was a bit of a kind of reaching out to get to know people better, or help people, like. And I'm actually a bit of a sucker for that, as well. I'm getting better with my boundaries as I get older, but if somebody's kind of needy I'd probably try and help them, so, um, maybe I got drawn in... It was a mixture of things, I think.

Participant 05, another ‘outsider,’ explained their motivations for joining as follows:

Yeah, I guess I got involved in the kelp campaign because I have a long history of activism, and, it's something I feel, I've always felt drawn to, and it's also a great way of getting to know, getting to meet, know people, you know. So I was relatively new to the area at the time, and going on to a meeting and find what this is about, and... It's kind of gone from there, really.

From these quotes it is evident that these motivations are complex. For Participant 04, is a desire to ‘*get to know people better, or help people*’ in order to counteract feeling ‘*disconnected with the community*’; but this desire intersects with (and is perhaps reinforced by) their younger self’s dream ‘*to save the world*’ as well as their tendency to get ‘*drawn in*’ and help others. Indeed, they acknowledged that it was ‘*a mixture of things*’ that drove them to join. For Participant 05, on the other hand, the motivation to join is partly fuelled by a desire for ‘*getting to know, getting to meet, know people*’ and partly shaped by their ‘*long history of activism.*’ In both cases, however, there is a wish for a sense of belonging and intimacy

within one's community. This resonates with the importance of 'connecting with each other' as a critical pathway to ocean literacy and ocean stewardship (Murray et al., 2025; Vita et al., 2025).

Several of the research participants were 'insiders' that had grown up and spent their lives in the Bantry Bay area. These individuals joined the campaign because they, like their 'outsider' counterparts, wanted to do something. Unlike 'outsiders,' however, the motivations of 'insiders' to join the campaign did not arise out of a desire for a sense of community, but as a response to the immediate physical proximity of the proposed kelp harvesting operation. This resonates with the 'psychological proximity hypothesis' put forth by Sparks (2017, p. 5), which "states that when an issue is proximate, people are more likely to engage in political activism on the issue."

For instance, when Participant 07 first learned of the proposed operation, they thought: *"Okay, this is happening, on our doorstep, as in, basically on our doorstep, we really, I really should, find out about it and take action."* Participant 02 had a similar response when they found out about it:

And it was kind of, it looked like a crazy project, something that you'd hear about in the Amazon rainforest, 'We're gonna wipe out this amount of stuff,' or in Poland, 'We're gonna cut down so many trees.' But this was in Bantry Bay which is, it's only ten kilometres from my door. So I said, "I'd like to do something," so I kind of got a bit involved, and the more I got involved, the more I began to realise how crazy it was, you know.

Interestingly, both Participants 07 and 02 use the notion of 'our doorstep' and 'my door' to describe this sense of physical proximity, which suggests that such extractive operations are not perceived as being only 'out there' in the environment but also as encroaching upon one's home. Participant 01, another 'insider,' also alluded to this sense of home in terms of a deep sense of familiarity and knowing:

I'm gone off on a tangent here, but... I don't know if you've ever seen the film 'Ondine'... A kind of, fisherman fairy-tale discovers strange woman washed up from the sea. But, like, it was shot down on Beara, around Roancarrig and Castletown, and in Pulleen Harbour. And, I didn't know exactly where it was shot. But when I was living in ____, it came out when I was living in ____, I rented it from Blockbuster. And there was just an amazing experience, and kind of like, god, I know that place. And it was something very similar, watching the Eco Eye programme, because it was like, well here's this proposal for the mechanical extraction of seaweed, and the next thing you see Roancarrig Lighthouse. And it's like, hang on, that's here.

Participant 02 recounted the experience of watching this movie as a way of making sense of the instinctive feeling of *knowing* a place. However, this was not just any place. What particularly struck Participant 01, as well as Participant 02, was that this was not happening to some distant part of the world: it was *here*,

at the doorstep of their homes. It was this proximity, not just to one's natural environment but to one's emotional territory and sense of home, that spurred many 'insiders' to join the campaign. Here again, proximity was key to emotion. Participant 08, reflecting on their motivation for joining, felt this emotional dimension keenly:

And why did I get involved? I haven't really answered that – is because I wanted to do something about it. And I supported people like Greenpeace for years, but this was something practical I could do, locally. Um, you know, it's a way of countering feeling helpless about the whole situation.

Proximity, then, is not only a physical measure of distance but also an emotional sense of closeness, further complicating the local/non-local and insider/outsider binaries. Taking action, *doing* something, is not just an act of environmental resistance but also of emotional resistance. Such is the deeply intertwined nature of the marine environment and of emotions; a threat to one is a threat to the other. Indeed, Participant 01 summarised this entanglement when reflecting back on the success of the campaign:

It was probably one of the reasons why there was such a great coming together and community involvement, like... It was almost like– It was an attack on one of our own. I suppose that's the best way I can put it. So that's kind of what has driven a lot of standing up for it.

This quote points to an emotional intimacy with the marine environment that goes beyond a utilitarian enjoyment of 'blue space' by 'marine users.' It is a deeply relational view of the environment as being '*one of our own*,' not in a possessive sense but rather in terms of kinship – as being 'one of us.' Tugend (2025, p. 177, emphasis mine) reflects on the critical role of relationality in building ocean connections and literacies: "[r]elational values have a moral dimension that requires active and ongoing consideration and care. This ethical responsibility towards others and the ocean arises from the awareness of relationality and *can inspire an emotional connection with the ocean.*"

5.4.1. Section summary

While individuals joined the campaign from vastly different backgrounds and for a variety of reasons, there was a common denominator in their motivations for joining: that of proximity. 'Outsiders' were motivated by a desire to get to know the people around them better, and to feel a sense of belonging to their communities. While they resided geographically close to or within their communities, the campaign offered them a means to bridge the gap between physical proximity and emotional proximity. 'Insiders,' on the other hand, were spurred by the immediate physical proximity of the perceived threat; to them, proximity to the marine environment is not simply a sense of physical closeness but a deeply relational

and emotional intimacy. For this reason, joining the campaign was not only an act of environmental resistance but also one of emotional resistance. Recent work has explored the role of environmental movements, and activism more broadly, in driving “the transformation of matters of fact into matters of concern” (Gutierrez et al., 2019; Frąckowiak, 2023; Rusansky, 2021; Sanz, 2023; Schaeffer & Smits, 2015, p. 148). Further insights into the mutually reinforcing, but not mutually contingent, relationship between physical and emotional proximity may give us a deeper understanding of these processes of transformation, not least *why* certain matters of fact, and not others, become matters of concern.

5.5. Concerns

In Sections 5.3. and 5.4. above I outlined the emotions behind *why* individuals felt connected to the sea, and *why* they were motivated to join the campaign. In this section, I discuss the variety and scope of the concerns held by the research participants, concerns which extended far beyond the kelp forests of Bantry Bay. Sultana (2015, p. 644) writes that resource conflicts are much more than just about a resource: such conflicts also concern “the diverse emotions set in motion as these influence the practices and decisions people make in everyday resource use, control and conflict.” Indeed, the concerns of research participants were deeply entangled and complex, touching upon multiple resources, industries, habitats, places, communities, and governance practices. For the purposes of this chapter, however, I have classed them into two overarching categories: concerns for the social and environmental impacts of the proposed kelp harvesting; and concerns around the marine governance and broader political regimes surrounding the issue.

Levi and Peters (2024, p. 67, emphasis in original) argue that emotion is the reason “*why* we have concerns – *why* we care. This is *why* we may respond to governance as we do, whether by shaping it, negotiating it, or resisting it.” In this section, then, I hope to shed light on the link between emotion and marine governance through the lens of *concern*.

5.5.1. Impacts of proposed kelp harvesting

Concerns around the possible effects of the proposed kelp harvesting involved three main strands of concern: the short- and long-term environmental and social impacts of the proposed kelp harvesting on local communities; the risk of affecting and being affected by other local industries; and the risk of setting an unsustainable precedent for future kelp harvesting operations in other parts of the country. The quotes in this sub-section show that concerns are not only about one specific extractive operation at one place

and one point in time; concerns traverse, transcend and collapse scales. How might a marine governance operating at *the scale of concern* look? Such a question allows us to think on what an emotional approach to governance can reveal.

5.5.1.1. Environmental and social impacts

Research participants were conscious of the existing pressures on the marine environment, and were deeply concerned that the proposed kelp harvesting would have significant impacts on an environment already under pressure. The LG analysis made it possible to hear the concerns and emotions linked to biodiversity change, one of the most pressing issues facing many marine environments, adding further to proposed integrated approaches to tackling it (e.g., Edwards & Küpers, 2024; Hillebrand et al., 2020). Participant 04, for instance, worried about the knock-on effects of harvesting a keystone species:

...when I found out about kelp, and it being a keystone species, you know, it was very clear that it was incredibly important to an ecosystem, and that if you do something to that, you know, that there are effects on multiple things, yeah, whether species, everything, you know, is gonna have that effect.

Similarly, Participant 03 was concerned about the ecological imbalance that might result from the large-scale removal of keystone species:

...the main, um, thing for me was, uh, with the four-year rotation, there'd be a massive loss of biodiversity. And it's such a pristine environment, and what would happen would be that the faster-growing seaweeds would take over, you know... So you would end up with more of a monocrop, I think...

Research participants recognised the deeply intertwined relationship between 'nature' and 'society,' and were therefore concerned not only about the environmental impacts of the proposed kelp harvesting but also its potential social consequences. Participant 02, for instance, used the analogy of a forest to describe these impacts:

The thing is that the impact would be felt more wider, d'you know, for instance with fishing. Ahm, like we've seen a reduction in scallops already in the bay, we don't really know why that is. Is it something to do with Whiddy and the oil terminal? Ahm, that's the oil reserve there. But, ahm, we don't really know. Ahm, there is ecotourism coming out of Glengarriff and Adrigole, and so, you know, they would be impacted... Let's come back to the analogy of taking two thousand acres out of a forest, let's say out of Killarney... let's say you take out two thousand of the wood out of it. How would that impact? Would that impact tourism? Yes, it would. Would it impact, ahm, let's say, 'cause there's fishermen, I don't know what kind of things on land, let's say there was hunters in there that were hunting something that was inside the wood. Would they be impacted? Of course they would.

Participant 04, on the other hand, was concerned about multiple pressures not only in the ocean but also on land, and in particular that existing challenges faced by local communities would be exacerbated. For instance, potential negative effects on tourism would be compounded by the economic consequences of the COVID pandemic, and that coastal erosion, already worsening due to climate change, would be intensified by the removal of kelp forests. They explained their concerns thus:

Yeah, multiple pressures. You just don't know, like, the water condition, how. So that would affect the fishing, and that would affect the tourism. Um, which is, a lot of Bantry relies on summer tourism, so if, you know, that was harmed, that would have a real negative effect. Especially like with COVID and stuff, a lot of the pubs and restaurants have been under so much pressure, you know. If people didn't holiday in West Cork anymore, as well, d'you know, in the future, that sucks. Coastal erosion, so the kelp's supposed to buffet that. So, you know, places along the Sheep's Head... particularly, um, get hit by the west. So, d'you know, that might cause a lot of more coastal erosion. And they already have problems with roads and stuff like that, in terms of coastal erosion. And storms. So, kelp, I don't quite know how it works, but something to do with air pressure. The kelp actually slows the impact of wind speed, as it hits the land, so...

These participants' concerns about multiple environmental and social impacts point to a deep feeling of uncertainty about the implications of this operation. This may be explained by the fact that, in the case of this specific kelp harvesting licence, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was not a requirement for the granting of that licence (see Section 1.2.4. for an explanation for this). Setting aside the question of whether this was a 'right' or 'wrong' governance decision, the absence of any EIA has given rise to widespread uncertainties and doubts about the harvesting operation – simply because without an assessment there is no understanding of the risks involved.

However, while some participants felt a deep uncertainty, others felt that the emotional toll would be heavier. Participant 05, for instance, felt the toll of cumulative environmental impacts felt over a longer period of time:

You know, there's an ecological impact, but, and there's also a social impact... what can happen is like, people can go numb. It's like, you know, it's like, something you care about, and then it hurts. You know, a tree gets chopped down, a meadow gets ploughed up, you know, the river gets dammed, whatever. And it hurts. And... that... You know, the cumulative effect of all these little destructions, can just make people go numb and disconnect. And that, you know, and it's like, rather than feel, "Oh god, I've gotta feel more fuckin' grief, more pain over this," it's like, just close down. And then it's like, "Oh, it was always like this." You know, it was always a little bit dead, a little bit numb. You know, "No, that's just the way it is," you know? Yeah, if that [the kelp harvesting] had gone ahead, nothing would've happened, d'you know, in a way? It's

like, it would've had an impact, but nobody would've noticed, 'cause it would've been too hard... A few people would've noticed, and felt really terrible about it, sad, but you know, but on the whole, life would just carry on, you know. And things would be just a little, that little bit deader, that little bit duller, that little bit less life in the sea, that little bit less beauty... in the world. You know, and this process has been going on for generations now. And we... don't, on the whole we don't feel it. We just let it go on. Um... and you know, for the most part you can't do anything about it, so you just close off, you know.

While extractive operations have profound social and emotional impacts, these impacts must be approached not as isolated or specific to one operation at one point in time but rather as part of a longer chain of events, moving across time and space to follow capitalist interests, with far-reaching and entangled environmental and social repercussions. Indeed, research on emotions must be firmly situated within the contexts surrounding particular emotions in order to make sense of why these emotions emerge as they do.

5.5.1.2. Interactions with other industries

Beyond concerns about the direct impacts of the proposed kelp harvesting, several participants expressed concerns about interactions with other industries. Participant 03, for instance, was concerned about the aquaculture of salmon within the bay:

Salmon farms in the bay. Um... I mean, the seaweeds, in a way salmon farms are worse, I think, are a worse thing than the, uh, the mechanical harvesting. Um, I think if you've already got salmon farms, then, at least the, uh, wild seaweed mitigates the salmon farms, you know? And two things happening... So, um, I think it would just be a double blow, you know, if the seaweed was cut as well.

The important role of seaweed in mitigating environmental pressures was not limited to aquaculture, but also included concerns about the fishing industry. Participant 02 was concerned about negative impacts on this industry, particularly with regards to the overfishing of non-quota species:

So things like shrimp, and brown crab, which are already under pressure, I mean, their numbers are falling. Why are their numbers falling? Because they're non-quota species. So basically, there is no quota, which means fishermen can put in a thousand pots. There's five thousand pots, shrimp pots, in Castletownbere, there's nine thousand shrimp pots in Dingle. So they can just dump as much as they want into the water. These species require kelp forests. So if you take out a large amount... it'll be an extra impact on it.

Similarly, Participant 04 was concerned about the knock-on effects of negative impacts on the fishing industry and the repercussions of these effects on food security, which is already complicated by concerns around climate change:

Yeah, and there's just masses that we don't know about the knock-on effects of altering one part to another part, you know? Yeah, and then you have, like, food. I mean, like, you know, if there's no local fishing, you're gonna put more pressure on the farming, agriculture, which they're all so, like, they're trying to diminish people's herd stocks, under like... under climate change, they're trying to cut people's herds. So you're gonna have less meat, and less fish, if there's problems with the bay. So there's less protein, so everyone's gonna have to eat bugs, which is just their, like, plan of...

Concerns about interactions with the agricultural industry in particular were particularly emotive, not only in terms of food security and sustainability but also in terms of spiritual and moral values as well as historical traumas (see Section 1.2.1. for note on food sovereignty). This points to how using emotion as a methodological lens ('affect as methodology,' to follow Åhäll, 2018 in chapter 2) to attend to tensions, contradictions, and concerns may shed light on power relations and asymmetries (Beattie et al., 2019; Gustafsson & Hall, 2021; Mc Morrow, 2019; Seide & Fantini, 2023). For instance, Participant 09 expressed concerns about the harvested kelp's intended use:

...the idea of people, cutting it [kelp] down, for pig food especially... Because, I wouldn't eat pigs. And I do absolutely think they're sentient beings. They're the most hideously treated animals in the factory system. And to be part of that, practice, of like, of thinking that our kelp is gonna be cut down so that factory pigs can have, you know, like, a factory pig life. For me, that, again, it's like, would be totally against my religion... And for me, that becomes politicised in a way that Ireland is politicised. I would say, that the taking of the land is a colonial action. Is a patriarchal... that is a colonial, patriarchal act of, that even that you could think, that you would take what doesn't belong to you, and make it belong to you, and be as part of, like, the industry machine of killing, you know?

The concerns expressed in these quotes demonstrate that resource conflicts are never just about the resource itself (Sultana, 2011, 2015). Touching upon matters such as morality, spirituality, food security and sovereignty, and collective, intergenerational trauma, these conflicts are fundamentally emotional. Marine governance measures must reckon with the emotional complexities of the marine environment, which extends far beyond its physical margins and into people's hearts and minds. How might governance look if the scale of governance shifted from that of the ocean to that of the heart?

5.5.1.3. Setting a precedent

Beyond ramifications for the local environment and local communities, several participant were also concerned that the proposed kelp harvesting operation, if it had gone ahead as intended, would have set a national precedent for future extractive operations of similar or greater scope. They felt that the

campaign was fighting not only for locals but for the future of the entire country. Indeed, Participant 01 expressed this feeling as follows:

My first thought is that if it [the kelp harvesting] went ahead, everyone... When something dominates your life, it tends to be like, "But if it went ahead, everything would fall apart!" But it would, in the sense that, like, this is the precedent. This is the first attempt at it, so, it... It would be devastating, I would say, for Ireland, in terms of setting that precedent of mismanagement of the seaweed resources. That would have consequences, that would have consequences all the way up...

Participant 08 shared this feeling, particularly as a perceived 'outsider' fighting for a local issue: "...people'd say, 'Why are you bothering with this, this isn't your country,' kind of thing. And I think, it isn't just about, this, we're focusing on Bantry Bay, but it's gonna affect everybody." Here, too, scale emerges as an important consideration, particularly in thinking about solidarity. Ahmed (2004, p. 169) writes that solidarity involves "the recognition that even if we do not have the same feelings, or the same lives, or the same bodies, we do live on common ground." In this case, the presence of a threat to this 'common ground' works to blur the boundaries between insider/outsider and local/national. The collapse of these scales and binaries renders the entanglement among all things more visible and more deeply felt. What would a marine governance based on solidarity look like? What forms could these solidarities take? These kinds of question arise only when we commit to taking emotions seriously and approach marine governance through a methodology of emotion (see Chapter 2 for work of Åhäll, 2018 on 'affect as methodology').

5.5.2. Marine governance and broader political regimes

Resource conflicts, as I have discussed above, are never just about a resource itself (Sultana, 2011). In addition to concerns about the risks and impacts of the proposed kelp harvesting, many participants held concerns around the broader governance processes and structures surrounding the issue. These concerns revolved around perceived gaps in governance, including lack of investment in the seaweed farming industry, lack of enforcement of governance measures, lack of interdepartmental communication, and lack of emotional connection on the part of decision-makers. The quotes in this sub-section evidence to this deep mistrust of current marine governance systems.

5.5.2.1. Lack of investment in seaweed farming

Like many members of the campaign, Participant 03 was concerned about the lack of political drive and public investment towards Ireland's burgeoning seaweed farming industry, which in turn remains underdeveloped. They expressed their wishes and concerns around this industry as follows:

I think there's massive, massive potential for the west of Ireland. It's, um... We're actually falling behind all the other, um, Atlantic nations, the European nations now, but, because of the lack of political will. But I think it could be, it could be a huge, a huge local industry, which is sustainable. It could provide all the demands for industrial seaweed... I know seaweed farmers that are, that are just, um, throwing away their crops, because they can't find a market... Because, the future of seaweed farming, it's kind of, say the analogy was dairy, yeah? And if all the farmers, if there was no infrastructure, you know, then they would all be producing milk, and they'd only produce enough milk that they could keep or turn into cheese or yoghurt on their own dairies. But because there's national infrastructure and a milk marketing board, and milk's collected in tankers, and it's taken to, um, processing centres. So you've got a big industry, otherwise there wouldn't be any... So, it's the same with the seaweed. It's gonna stay as a cottage industry, which it is at the moment, um, until there's some sort of central, um, marketing board established, which, um, fixes prices. And there's, um, and there's a very good model being explored, but again, it takes political will and investment. And that is that, um, the seaweed, when it's harvested on farms, it can be turned into a green slurry, and then it can be pumped into tankers, food tankers, and if there were, um, if there were refineries, it could all be taken to a refinery and then everything could be extracted, all the different, um, elements, you know, nothing would be wasted, you know. And that's what's happening in other countries in Europe, but here we're all just like a bunch of, um, freelance farmers, you know, making it up, finding our own markets as we go along, you know? And now, because there's not much investment... But now it's all just been sort of left in the hands of, um, free enterprise, and I kind of think it... it needs, um... public investment, you know?

Participant 03 felt that, with more investment and more infrastructure, the seaweed farming industry would have the potential to become a sustainable alternative to the harvesting of wild seaweed. However, they were concerned that, without significant investment, seaweed farming would remain a cottage industry with no chance to develop. Without a viable seaweed farming industry, there could be a risk that harvesting wild seaweed would become the 'go-to' solution to meet the increasing demand for seaweed. Several participants held similar concerns around the lack of political will and investment into sustainable alternatives, suggesting that concerns around the proposed kelp harvesting operation were not isolated to this specific operation but reflected broader concerns about the flow of public expenditure.

5.5.2.2. Lack of enforcement

In addition to concerns around lack of political drive and investment, participants were concerned about the lack of enforcement of specific governance measures in the marine environment. Indeed, some individuals felt that a lack of enforcement was directly connected to a lack of investment. Participant 08, for instance, expressed their frustration around this concern:

Yeah, the government, when they came out, was it last week, the week before, about, you know, Marine Protected Areas, that made me really angry, because they don't protect, um, what already exists, which is not enough. You know, to allow all this pair trawling and, to go on, right into Glengarriff Harbour, which is supposed to be a protected area. They need to put a lot more resources into um... um, enforcing. They're being fined already. They're fined for years and years because they've never reached their targets. They impose— And they, I, I thought that was laughable. Um... It's 2023 now, and they are saying, within seven years, they'll get all these protected areas up.

Similarly, Participant 01 was concerned about designated nature protection areas, such as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) (see more on designated sites in Chapter 1):

And then, I mean, as with many things, things with official, like, I guess, SACs and SPAs, things that are officially protected under Irish law, um, often have literally no practical implementation method at all. So it might say one thing on paper, but, I mean, as with most things in the water, someone's interfering with a shipwreck over a hundred years old? You can't call the Guards. There's only five ships in the Navy, you know... Like, who's actually going to enforce the law on the waves?

They were aware that, while something might be legally protected on paper, this does not always translate to protection in practice. However, this lack of enforcement had not only environmental implications but social ones as well. Participant 04 cited this lack as one of the reasons for the mobilisation of the campaign:

It's just not policed, you know, so. I think that puts you in a position where you have to then become that protective force, if something happens. Which isn't the way that we wanted to go about it. We never, kind of were aggressive in that way, but then, they kind of force you, you know, to be that way, if you want it to actually not happen.

This hints at a feeling that played a significant role in mobilising the campaign: the feeling of not having a choice in the matter; the feeling that, in the face of a lack of protection, the campaign had no choice but to 'become that protective force.' Participant 01 expressed this in similar terms: "...in some ways this was something that was thrust upon us, rather than, we didn't go looking for it." These quotes demonstrate

that marine governance measures – and lack thereof – have tangible emotional repercussions on individuals and communities.

5.5.2.3. Lack of communication

Participants felt that, beyond lack of investment and lack of enforcement, one of the most significant challenges faced by the current system of governance is the lack of communication between different government departments, which results in fragmented and imbalanced governance processes. Participant 02 described how this lack of communication often results in things falling between the cracks:

And one of the problems that Ireland has is that... You know the expression 'something falls between two stools'? But in Ireland we say, 'It falls between two stools.' The problem in Ireland is that you've fifty stools. You have the department of this, you have the department of that, you have this office, you have that office, you have this office, you have that office, and nobody's responsible. They're all talking about, 'Actually you see that chair?' And things fall between the stools the whole time. Because that's how it's set up.

They felt that this was at the heart of the concerns around the proposed kelp harvesting; the problem lay not with the actions of a specific company, or with the decisions of a specific minister, but rather with the structure of the governance system, which allows things to '*fall between two stools*.' Indeed, Participant 02 explained their concern about this fragmentation, which results in the activities of wild seaweed harvesting and seaweed farming being governed by different departments with different financial resources, licencing processes, and regulatory capacities, which in turn creates unequal opportunities for communities:

I mean the fact is that, I'm not against people coming up with ideas. I think where it went wrong is when you put something forward to the government and they go, 'Yeah, 'tis grand,' without any thought. And then you have other people, who might want to do something which is much more like the... Getting licences for growing seaweed is very difficult. It's taken more than ten years in some cases to get a licence. So then you have people that want to spend ten years and a huge amount of money getting a licence for something that would be beneficial to the community, and to the environment and things, and they fight like mad. And then the other fellas just get it, you know? It's the imbalance of it... It's because the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Housing have different, just different streams, different things. Department of Housing has more money so they can pump things through quicker and things.

Their frustration stems not from the proposed kelp harvesting operation itself but from the fact that they have seen individuals in their community expend vast amounts of time and money to obtain seaweed farming licences, often to no avail, while a developer may be granted a licence to harvest wild seaweed

more quickly and through a more streamlined, efficient process, simply because these two activities are governed by different departments. Several participants shared these concerns, insisting that their frustration lay not with the developer but with the fragmented governance systems surrounding this issue, and with the power asymmetries underlying these systems, benefitting some while excluding others. These frustrations, for many, have led to widespread dissatisfaction and mistrust towards the government. Participant 01, for example, felt this sense of mistrust:

And in a lot of ways, even, like I wouldn't, I wouldn't trust the system we have. I'm that cynical now, that if there, that if the initial, for planning applications, for aquaculture applications that really in many ways it seems to be ticking the boxes, ahm, as opposed to real consideration of what the true environmental impact would be.

They felt that the fragmented state of governance favours an approach to licencing applications that is simply 'ticking the boxes' rather than a 'real consideration' of the environmental impact of wild seaweed harvesting. This concern was echoed by other participants, who felt that there is a general lack of care and connection on the part of governance actors and decision-makers. Tracing such concerns demonstrates how emotion as a methodological lens (following the work of Åhäll, 2018 on 'affect as methodology') can use emotional tensions and embodied feelings to critically analyse and shed light on power relations.

5.5.2.4. Lack of connection

In addition to concerns around the broader systems and structures of marine governance, some participants were concerned about the absence of a sense of connection to the environment on the part of decision-makers. Participant 04, for instance, felt that this manifested as an absence of emotional connection:

Yeah, they [politicians] have no connection, like, with it [the marine]. And... They're not emotive about it, they don't care, they don't love it, they don't appreciate it, they don't, you know. I think that's really integral to someone who makes decisions about that thing. Yeah, and about the people involved, d'you know, and about the communities, and it's just like, somebody that really can see that wealth and abundance and stuff of the country and humanity comes from that kind of interaction. Not from what we have now, the system, d'you know.

They felt that a decision-maker should have an emotional connection to the communities and to the natural environment of a place, and that they should 'care', 'love' and 'appreciate' the marine

environment in order to be able to make decisions about it. On the other hand, Participant 09 felt that this lack of connection is intentional, that keeping things separate is powerful and does political work:

I mean if you had to, if you had to visualise connection, and show, you know, show the whole pattern, of where it is that you fit into all of those interlinked networks, you know, then, it's, it's only because we see these things as separate, you know? That you're... we're in such a fucking mess... It's important to not connect. And not make the connections for, you know. So, a marine governance, I'd say the whole thing is, you know, if we had more grannies in charge, and less... very... fucked-up old men. You know, like, we absolutely need emotional qualities. And emotional qualities need to be, ahm, valued, before we can have a value for the emotional quality of a pig mother who's giving birth to pig children, who are, you know. It's... it's there, you know, it's Animal Farm (laughs), you know, like it's, you know?

Participant 09 felt that this absence of connection works to obscure the interconnection and interdependency between all things; indeed, according to them, 'we're in such a fucking mess' precisely 'because we see these things as separate.' They also believed that emotions are not valued in the current system of marine governance because it is a deeply patriarchal system; and that the emotions of human beings must be valued in order for the emotions of more-than-human beings can be valued. These quotes points to a perception of governance as a system that, whether intentionally or not, fundamentally lacks care and emotional connection; and to a deep-seated desire for a new system of governance that accounts for and honours emotion and interconnection. Indeed, recent ocean literacy work has called for a recognition of this interconnectedness in governance, with Tugend (2025, p. 184) arguing that "by embedding relationality and care into our understanding and practices, we can advance towards more holistic and inclusive governance models that reflect our interconnectedness with the ocean."

Conversely, as Participant 09 states, 'it's important to not connect.' Satizábal et al. (2022) argue that it takes *work* to obscure interconnection, to cast into shadow that which cannot be commodified and extracted through capitalism:

We show that while the shadows of capitalism render marginal certain social relations through commodification and extraction, they cannot be separated from how seascapes are known, lived, and produced, and ultimately give meaning to and shape the practices of coastal dwellers. In making visible the contested social and material relations within shadows, we contribute to exposing the injustices and intersecting power dynamics that turn certain seascape entities into commodities and enable their over-exploitation and alienation from local places and people (see Dauvergne, 1997; McLean et al., 2018; Plumwood, 2008). (p. 1969)

While future governance research would benefit from incorporating relationality, care, and interconnectedness, then, it is equally important to understand the processes and structures which work to obscure, occlude, and erase interconnectedness (see opportunities for future research in Chapter 8).

5.5.3. Section summary

The concerns of research participants fell into two broad categories: the intertwined environmental and social impacts of the proposed kelp harvesting; and perceived gaps in the current systems of governance. The concerns around environmental and social impacts touch upon deeply emotional matters, including morality, spirituality, food security and sovereignty, and collective, intergenerational trauma, thus demonstrating that resource conflicts are fundamentally emotional. On the other hand, concerns about gaps in governance revolve around lack of investment, communication, enforcement, and, notably, absence of emotional connections, a theme prominent across the stages of the campaign discussed so far. This is particularly interesting in light of high-level international initiatives that target ocean literacy and engagement at the societal level. For instance, one of the outcomes of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) is “an inspiring and engaging ocean where society understands and values the ocean” (IOC-UNESCO, 2020, p. 11). At the EU level, in 2020, the Mission Board on Healthy Oceans, Seas, Coastal and Inland Waters proposed *Mission Starfish 2030: Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030*, an initiative to restore the water cycle. One of the five objectives of this mission, ‘filling the knowledge and emotion gap,’ is framed through the view that “[t]he general public and our ocean and waters are separated by an emotional gap” and that “replenishing the emotional deficit of European citizens” is of the utmost importance to filling this gap (Lamy et al., 2020, p. 18, 29). However, while the concerns in this sub-section point to an emotional gap, it is a gap within systems of marine governance rather than a gap at the level of individuals or communities. How might efforts to increase ocean literacy and engagement look if the target audience was not ‘citizens’ or ‘the general public’ but decision-makers, policy-makers, and other governance actors with uneven political power?

5.6. During the campaign

In Sections 5.3. and 5.4. I outlined the emotions behind *why* individuals felt connected to the sea and *why* they were motivated to join the campaign, and in Section 5.5. I outlined the concerns held by the research participants, which included concerns for the social and environmental impacts of the proposed kelp harvesting, and concerns around the marine governance and broader political regimes surrounding the issue. In this section, then, I discuss the emotions shaping, circulating within and being generated through

the campaign, a highly emotional process which gave rise to emotionally-charged challenges but also engendered opportunities for deeper emotional connections, resonating with the importance of 'connecting with each other' in recent ocean literacy work (Vita et al., 2025). These challenges and opportunities fall into three broad categories: the emotionality of the campaign process itself; the societal factors around the campaign that played a role in this emotionality; and the snorkelling club that emerged out of the campaign's desire for more knowledge and a deeper connection to the marine environment.

5.6.1. Emotions within the campaign

As I discussed earlier, the campaign, although driven by a shared purpose, was composed of a highly heterogeneous group of individuals who varied their concerns, their emotional connections to the marine, their prior experience with activism, and their available physical, financial, and emotional resources. This heterogeneity posed a challenge in terms of the organisational aspects of the campaign. Participant 08, for instance, recollected the early structuring of the campaign:

At the time, there was, the beginning was quite funny-looking. Back, they were trying to divide people into task groups. Um... And, oh no, they first tried to divide them by area they lived in and, that didn't work, so then they divided into task groups.

The challenge, however, was not only to organise this heterogeneous group of people into task groups, but whether to institute an organisational structure in the first place. Participant 08 explained:

Um, so we would, there would be report-backs between different groups. Um, but I think, given, you've met enough people to know that, um, the idea of anything being organised, or, is anathema to many of the people involved. And, you know, we no longer have formal meetings. Um, and I think there's a gain and a loss in that.

Reflecting on this early period of the campaign, Participant 07 shared their perspective on what they believed was at the core of these organisational challenges:

Like we all of us that were in the campaign, there was at times, like, we'd so much paperwork, and there was seven sections of us, and there was sustainable solutions was one of them, but we never really kinda got there. You know, we'd law, and fundraising, and this and that, and sustainable solutions. Which to me is like... For me my experience was you need to have that vision, you need to have an answer of where you want to get, your destiny, like. Not an answer but a vision of, what do you see as a solution to this?

These challenges at the organisational level of the campaign, particularly the feeling that there was a lack of clarity around tangible objectives and solutions, trickled down into the level of individual campaign members. Indeed, Participant 07 described this feeling:

Like, the amount of meetings that we had that were very emotional and, you'd be getting over it for a week and you'd've another, another meeting, and you'd've another thing to do and another thing to do and researching all night, and. The first year, like, I was doing a full-time job with it, as well as my life, you know what I mean? And it's like, getting it simple and clarity and format is important. Like we'd a huge problem over, who's holding it. Who's in charge, how do we chair it? How do we, whatever.

Here, they explicitly mentioned the emotional aspects of these challenges, particularly in terms of the meetings themselves, where emotions ran high, and the emotional toll of attending meeting after emotional meeting while at the same time juggling a job and daily life needs. Participant 08 felt this emotional toll as well:

To be honest... I have nearly dropped out of the campaign a couple of times... it's emotion, but in a negative sense, of, um, disputes within the group. Which is draining of energy, and is stressful, sometimes.

While Participant 04 had a similarly emotional experience, they felt that experiencing these challenges together brought the group closer: “So then, the group became really small, after that. And, now it's still quite small, which sort of is solid. It's like a solid core.” Participant 05 agreed with this sentiment, citing the heterogeneity of the group as generative of tensions but that these tensions worked to strengthen the campaign in the long run:

It's a very diverse kind of group, and, it's been some meetings were challenging, 'cause of that diversity, but... Yeah, it's that capacity to hold, hold, tension, you know, to contain that tension is what makes us strong, a strong campaign, I think.

While Participant 02 acknowledged these challenges, they felt that the collective experience of facing a common threat transcended any differences or tensions within the campaign; it was a force, they explained, that brought people together around a shared purpose:

I think it's hard to understand the pressure. It was like, we were gonna go for a legal case, are we going to be able to make this money? Are we going to come up with so many tens of thousands– Like how the hell are we gonna do this? And I think that brings people together. Sometimes communities can fall apart over it, but thankfully we managed to keep it together. Now there was lots of... like, there was lots of excitement, but it managed to pull everybody together... I think if you wanna bring a community together, because communities are kind of divided with, you know, one person doesn't like what the other person is doing, you

know, but if you've got something big, that's hanging over all of them, 'We are now going to build a nuclear reactor on top of Seskin here,' and all of a sudden everybody comes together, and everybody– All that small shit has gone, and the big stuff is, well, all that matters. I think that's what happened here.

The emotions and tensions arising at the individual and collective levels were often difficult, but they were also generative and connective: they strengthened bonds between individuals, and strengthened the sense of community and solidarity within the campaign. Participant 01 noted this generative force: “*out of something that was potentially so destructive came something so creative, and positive, and wholesome*” (more on strengthened social connections in Section 5.7. below). Indeed, Murray et al. (2025, p. 78) highlight the importance of forging connections with each other in the context of ocean literacy: “[b]uilding strong emotional connections within ourselves and with others creates more empathetic, cooperative relationships, which supports a transformation in the way we perceive ourselves as connected and part of the same interconnected web of life.”

5.6.2. Societal factors around the campaign (connections)

In addition to emotions and tensions manifesting across the individual and collective scales, there were several factors at the wider societal level that influenced the emotions emerging through the campaign. These factors included the rural, remote location of the campaign; the intimate and close-knit social structures around the campaign; and the COVID-19 pandemic, the national impacts of which posed local challenges for the campaign.

Participant 05, for instance, noted a lack of connection to other environmental and social movements and causes across the country due to the remote geographical location of West Cork. This echoes ideas earlier in the chapter of proximity (see for example the ‘psychological proximity hypothesis’ of Sparks, 2017) and its complex place in the campaign, and its emotional aspects:

You know, down here, in West Cork, it's, you know, we're a long, you know, it's quite hard to get out of West Cork, really. So there's a certain lack of connection to what's going on in the rest of the country, I think. And... Just 'cause it, partly 'cause of distance. Partly 'cause, you know, it's a lovely place to live, so, you know, there's... Maybe people are inclined to be a bit sort of inward-looking sometimes.

This sense of isolation may cause people to feel that they are alone in their struggles, even though so many other communities are facing similar resource conflicts in other parts of the country. While a lack of connection to other communities poses this challenge, an abundance of connection within one's own

community poses another challenge altogether. Participant 02 described this challenge of living and campaigning in tightly close-knit communities:

The one thing to remember about Ireland is that, it is an island, it is a very small place where everybody knows everybody, and that's one of the difficulties. In Germany, if you have a problem with this person, whatever, you won't know his family, you won't know his cousins, you won't know anybody surrounding, so it's easier. There's a distance. You can say something harsh and it's not gonna come back to you. While in Ireland, if you say something harsh to someone it's almost certainly gonna be back before you get home, which is a problem, you know? You have to be a little bit more cautious of what you say, and it's... there is massive pressure and tensions there, but because it's family it's hard to make a difference.

According to them, one of the challenges this posed for the campaign was that it was difficult at times to speak out against or disagree with the actions of a particular person or group ‘because it's family.’ For many, the challenge was participating in the campaign while knowing that some of their close friends and family might be ‘on the other side’ of the issue. While it was vital ‘to be a little bit more cautious’ when negotiating these social ties, doing so involved a high degree of emotional labour to try and keep disagreements about the campaign from trickling into conflicts between family and friends.

While the close connections within communities presented a challenge, there was an unforeseen phenomenon that had profound implications for social connections and for the progress of the campaign. The COVID-19 pandemic began approximately two years into the campaign, and was particularly difficult in light of the legal procedures that had been initiated shortly before the pandemic. Participant 08 explained this challenge:

I mean I don't know how many years have we been involved in the legal process, it must be, three or four now. Um... And part, obviously a lot of things hold, were suspended during COVID, that, the courts weren't sitting... Also, it inhibited the kind of meetings we could have as well. Well we couldn't really have meetings. I think we had some, when things, uh, relaxed a bit over restrictions. We had outdoor meetings, for instance.

Due to the pandemic, courts all across the country were not in session, and legal procedures came to a halt until restrictions were eased. This meant that the campaign's legal process was effectively on hold for a significant amount of time. There were also social implications, as people tried to keep the campaign going during this time while at the same time juggling the many forms of stress caused by the pandemic. Indeed, Participant 01 described trying to keep the momentum of the campaign going during this time:

It's interesting because it felt– Well, it felt much more like this, in the early days, things have gone on so long, and then... Well, the time, and COVID, and the fact that it's kind of been in a legal, an unending legal

slow– Like it’s very hard to update people on the fucking High Court process, in a way, without talking to them for twenty-five minutes about details that they’re not interested in keeping track of. So the momentum is difficult in some ways.

According to them, the lengthy and convoluted legal process was already a challenge to keeping people engaged and motivated in the campaign. This was exacerbated by the stalling effects of the pandemic, and resulted in the slowing down of the initial momentum of the campaign. The emotionality of the campaign, then, was eclipsed (or perhaps compounded) by the emotional toll of the pandemic. Accounting for societal considerations and contexts, such as the ones in this sub-section, is important when trying to understand the role of emotion in marine governance. Greenaway et al. (2018, p. 2, emphasis in original) argue that “*emotion processes cannot be interpreted without context, because context both produces emotion and shapes how emotion is interpreted.*” They elaborate on the importance of context in understanding emotion:

We believe that context is not ‘noise’ to be washed out or controlled for statistically. *Context is, in our view, the very essence of emotion.* Context is what gives rise to the diversity and depth of human emotional experience and the myriad thoughts and behaviors that stem from such experience. Until emotion science, and indeed psychological science more generally, arrives at a comprehensive appreciation of contextual influences on psychological processes, progress in understanding those processes will be inherently limited. (Greenaway et al., 2018, p. 12, emphasis mine)

I argue that this ‘comprehensive appreciation of contextual influences’ would benefit not only emotion science or psychological science, but also the field of marine governance, and even to practical applications and decision-making processes linked to it (see Section 8.5. for practical recommendations for emotionally-informed assessment tools). Indeed, the quotes herein point to the importance of context, particularly social and societal context, in better understanding the role of emotion in marine governance. Tugend (2025) notes the importance of context, and emotional context in particular, in enhancing ocean literacy, which in turn may shape governance processes to be more locally (and emotionally) responsive and relevant:

Given the historical and cultural variations in human relationships with the ocean, a universal and timeless ocean literacy framework may not be as effective as locally informed approaches. Thus, regional ocean literacies would *systematically integrate emotional elements* and be constructed through knowledge co-production, engaging diverse expertise, and actors to produce context-specific knowledge and pathways towards a sustainable future. This approach ensures that ocean literacy is *responsive to local contexts* while

embracing the diverse perspectives that contribute to a comprehensive understanding of our relationship with the ocean. (p. 185-186, emphasis mine)

5.6.3. Snorkelling club

One of the concerns that the campaign sought to address was the dearth of knowledge about kelp forests in Bantry Bay. They felt there was very little research conducted on these kelp forests, and that the decisions being made about them, both in governance processes and in the courts, were not based on any scientific evidence (because of the lack of available scientific evidence). The concern about limited knowledge was compounded by the absence of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (due to a lack of legal requirements to conduct one), which resulted in heightened feelings of uncertainty around the unpredictable social and environmental ramifications of the proposed kelp harvesting. Beyond potential future impacts, however, the limited knowledge, and the decisions being made without evidence in the present, gave rise to a feeling of powerlessness and lack of agency. Participant 01 alluded to this feeling: *“...the fact that we were really being used as guinea pigs, that it was supposedly this trial for, to determine potential future licences for mechanical extraction, throughout Ireland.”* This sentiment resonates with the quote by Participant 08, in Section 5.4. above, on their motivation to join the campaign: *“it’s a way of countering feeling helpless about the whole situation.”*

To address these concerns, and to remedy this feeling of powerlessness, there emerged out of the campaign a snorkelling club, running from late spring to early autumn, the primary objective of which was to bring members of local communities into direct contact with the underwater environment in an accessible manner. At the same time as fostering encounters between people and the ocean, the club also provided campaign members with the opportunity for closely observing, surveying, monitoring, and collecting data on the kelp forests ‘at their doorstep’ in the absence of ‘official’ environmental data. The club was a site of joy and of connection to one another and to the marine; but it was also a site of resistance and of the recovery of agency through a deeply embodied process of knowledge production.

Participant 01 reflected on this dual purpose of the club in generating both emotional connection and scientific knowledge:

...discovering what it actually looks like, under the water, was just like, a revelation, that’s the word... Sometimes, I call it like a paradise, like Garden of Eden, it’s so bursting with life. And it’s just astounding that it’s right there, literally under our noses. And up until, I suppose the campaign happened and up until we did start sticking our heads under the water, I had no idea any of that was there. And it’s, I suppose just wanting to share that, the fact that that was always there in front of us, and I never knew. That, you kind of feel like,

wow, you know, this is right here for everybody, you know. Don't you know? Have you not seen, you know, have you not heard? So... part of it was just learning, well, what is this stuff? How can we recognise it? What does it look like? ...it was impossible to get any information, really, about, you know, how much kelp was there... Was it just kelp? Was there other kinds of seaweed? ...it really started just out of the desire to inform ourselves and actually I suppose gather data on what the actual environment in Bantry Bay was... rather than... talking about it in the abstract, we live here, we can go out there, we can see what's actually, you know.

For Participant 01, the simple act of 'sticking our heads under the water' opened up a world of opportunities for learning more about, and deepening their emotional connection to, the marine environment. The realisation that 'we live here, we can go out there, we can see' was profoundly empowering, because it provided them with the means to produce knowledge – highly subjective, embodied, emotional knowledge – about their marine environment on their own terms. In this way the snorkelling club enabled a sense of emotional agency over one's connection to the marine, as well as a sense of epistemic agency in how they came to know the marine. This resonates with recent work on ocean literacy that emphasises 'connecting with the ocean' through direct, embodied, emotional encounters (Tugend, 2025; Vita et al., 2025).

This feeling of empowerment was not limited to participants who described feeling a sense of powerlessness. Indeed, others felt disillusioned and tired from years of fundraising and resisting, and looked to the snorkelling club as a welcome opportunity for an alternative mode of resistance. Participant 04, for instance, was tired from fighting for so long, and turned to the snorkelling club for a renewed sense of connection:

Because I felt like, look, it's all there, this is their [the government's] intention, d'you know, like, actually I'm not gonna put any more money into fighting, you know? I didn't want to help them [the government]. And then I didn't want to fight them anymore, 'cause it was just like, kind of negative. So I think the idea to go snorkelling a lot and stuff, was really appealing... You know, I can just appreciate it a lot, and take people there a lot, and have people see for themselves. And I think that's one thing that's really come out of the campaign, like, everyone knows what kelp is, now, you know... Yeah, and a lot of people know a lot more about the sea... Yeah, I feel like, now I feel like really fiercely protective over it, now I've spent time with it. Like at first I was like, oh, if a boat went out, I probably wouldn't go and stand in the way, I've got little kids and all this sort of stuff. And now I feel really aggressively protective, like a mother over it, 'cause I feel like it's kind of defenceless. I think a lot of people feel like that, now. Which is kind of cool.

For Participant 04, the knowledge produced through the snorkelling club was significant in and of itself, but also because of what it did: it worked to create a vast change in how individuals feel and come to care about kelp. Indeed, after snorkelling, spending time with the kelp and getting to know it intimately, they developed a profound emotional connection to the sea, feeling *‘really fiercely protective over it.’* They described this feeling as *‘aggressively protective, like a mother over it’* because they believed it was *‘kind of defenceless.’* This resonates with the quote of Participant 04, in Section 5.2. above, on the lack of enforcement in the marine environment: *“I think that puts you in a position where you have to then become that protective force, if something happens... they kind of force you, you know, to be that way, if you want it to actually not happen.”* For them, the feeling of a lack of agency was brought about not only because of a lack of knowledge but also (returning to Section 5.5.2. above) because of a lack of enforcement: they became a protector because they felt they did not have a choice, because *‘they kind of force you.’* Participating in the snorkelling club gave them the opportunity to arrive at this protective feeling, not by force or lack of choice, but by allowing them to recover their sense of agency, both in an emotional and in an epistemic sense.

Participant 02 acknowledged the role of the snorkelling club as a form of resistance:

But the general destruction, and general care, respect for the environment is lacking, and so I think anything that helps with that. Getting people snorkelling, getting people to see what’s underneath the water. We’ve to tackle all fronts, and just, you know.

This quote points to the perception of the snorkelling club as vital in efforts *‘to tackle all fronts’* in the context of environmental destruction, because the emotional connections it fosters are a powerful antidote to the lack of *‘general care, respect for the environment.’* These emotional connections are powerful: they hold political power that moves communities to recover a sense of agency and a sense of connection, and that moves them to resist, challenge, and negotiate governance measures or regimes on their own terms.

5.6.4. Section summary

The campaign was a deeply emotional process in a variety of ways. Of particular significance were the emotions involved in the experience of being part of the campaign; the emotions shaped by various societal factors around the campaign; and the emotional connections fostered through the snorkelling club, which emerged out of the campaign’s desire for more knowledge about the marine environment. These emotions were at times difficult, but they were also generative, creative, connective forces that

strengthened bonds and built solidarity at the individual as well as the collective scale. Understanding these emotions more fully demanded a holistic perspective that accounted for the intersecting social contexts surrounding the issue. The most significant finding in this sub-section, however, is the recognition that these emotions are profoundly powerful, both in moving people to take political action as well as in empowering communities through a recovery of epistemic and emotional agency. The discussion in this sub-section demonstrates how governance measures impact individuals and communities in very tangible ways; impacts which, whether positive or negative, are deeply felt on multiple scales, from the body to the collective. In addition, it begins to draw together strands for future inquiry into the role of emotion in marine governance, such as the relationship between emotion and agency, the structuring role of context, and the political power of emotions, both in the short and the long term.

5.7. Impacts on individuals and communities

In Sections 5.3. and 5.4. I outlined the emotional landscape prior to the campaign, and in Sections 5.5. and 5.6. I described the concerns and emotions emerging and circulating during the campaign itself. In this final section I discuss the tangible yet unquantifiable impacts of the campaign on the perceptions, emotions, and lives of the individuals involved. These may well stretch from the present into the future. The most significant impacts mentioned by research participants were: strengthened ties, or connection, to one's self, to one's community, and to one's place; increased knowledge about kelp, and about the marine environment more broadly; and a better understanding of how to be a community. In discussing these impacts I hope to show how emotions are not isolated to one time or place but may live long half-lives, with resonances reverberating across time and space and bodies, before decaying into memory and being alchemised into individual and collective stories and identities.

5.7.1. Connecting to self, to community, to place

The campaign was a highly emotional journey for many of its members, despite differences in their backgrounds and perspectives. Rallying behind a common cause brought people closer to their communities and the places in which they lived. For some, the campaign also brought them closer to themselves. As noted in Section 5.6.1. above, “[b]uilding strong emotional connections within ourselves and with others creates more empathetic, cooperative relationships” and is a core component of the theme of ‘connecting with each other’ in ocean literacy (Murray et al., 2025, p. 78). Participant 01, for instance, described the impact of the campaign on their personal beliefs:

...just on a personal note, it's actually really had a profound... it has actually, the whole experience has had a profound impact on my personal faith... my understanding of god, my understanding of myself, my understanding of what church means... has grown and developed and transformed in incredibly surprising ways. And if you told me, ten years ago, that seaweed, seaweed, would be central to my understanding and vision of the world and my place in it, and my relationship with whatever numinous, other, transcendent being may be out there, I would've told you you were completely mad. But. That is the truth.

This sentiment resonates with that of Participant 09, who felt a deep spiritual connection to seaweed and to the marine environment (see Section 5.3.2.). While Participant 09 felt this spiritual connection prior to the campaign, however, for Participant 01, an 'insider,' it was the campaign that was a transformational process that changed how they related to seaweed, and how they viewed the world and their place in the world. This points to the emotional impacts of governance as extending into the realm of spiritual well-being as well as emotional well-being – or, perhaps, that these two dimensions of well-being are strongly linked (J. Anderson, 2013; Overbury et al., 2023; Watson, 2019; Wheaton et al., 2020). Beyond internal transformations, the campaign also worked to strengthen connections between individuals and their communities. Participant 05, an 'outsider,' reflected on these new connections:

And then in Bantry, you know, within the campaign, you know, I know people now who I wouldn't know if I hadn't gotten involved in the campaign. You know, it's like a way of, yeah, getting involved in stuff, in your local community. Like Tidy Towns, or volunteering at a second-hand shop, or, you know. And all these things are small, but they make... They make a difference, you know?

For them, the campaign was a way to become more involved in their community, and through this involvement, to feel a closer sense of belonging to that community. On the other hand, Participant 03, already an 'insider' in the community, felt a stronger sense of community through the campaign:

I've been involved in, it's been, you know, it's been a real... I've met a lot of people. And it's kind of created a community. Um... I was amazed, because I was very, it was very relevant to me, about the licence, the mechanical harvesting. Because I actually, um, I dive, and I know what the bottom's like, and, so, and it's, not in Bantry Bay specifically, but, you know, obviously it implicated me... But, I was amazed, you know, that it became such a public, um, community, the response, because people don't know what's under the water, you know?

For them, the sense of community stemmed from new social connections, but also from feeling that they were no longer alone in their matters of care. Participant 02 spoke about the way the community came together around a common matter of care despite their many differences:

Well, the big, there have been a lot of connections made that wouldn't've been normally made, but the big one's I suppose, fishermen talking to ordinary people. Not, when I say ordinary people I mean people they would not normally be together with. I mean, ahm... You have hippies, people that are not interested in, you know, ahm, dealing with people from Fine Gael, or people who are conservative or, you know, 'cause in Ireland you have, there's lots of different groups and little side issues you have. D'you know, Irish people that have been living in a very small area for a couple hundred years, and it's kind of... They have a certain way of, you know, operating. And then you have hippies who come in and kind of go like, 'D'you know, if you cut a tree or if you, you know, cut the grass or if you do this or that,' and it's all... And to have them sitting together in a room and making decisions... It was very powerful. And it still is. There's people still talking to each other that would not normally.

They were particularly struck by the fact that groups of people that would normally fundamentally disagree on social and political matters were able to set aside their differences, talk to each other and make decisions together. Participant 01, reflecting on the coming together of such different groups of people, felt that living in a place, particularly around the bay, was a commonality that eclipsed differences in social and political views:

*...I'm trying to articulate something about place, and belonging to a place, and living in a place, and people, and people care about that, and that they want to be involved... When we, as I said when I started out I didn't even know what kelp was, and I'd be prepared to guarantee you that many people who vehemently support the kelp campaign in our community wouldn't be able to tell *Laminaria digitata* from *Fucus vesiculosus*. Ahm, that's kind of not the point... I mean if you look at the map, you know, this is kind of our area... We live here on the bay, the people of Glengarriff live on the bay, the people of Adrigole live on the bay, the people of Castletownbere live on the bay, the people of Gearhies live on the bay, you know... And we, and like not just in Bantry town, but I think that's kind of a there is a common, like, there is a commonality there that we all share. So something that was threatening the bay... regardless of, you know, whether or how well you can understand or articulate what the precise nature of the threat is in terms of the harvesting of, you know, specific, the extraction of laminarin and fucoidan from two specific species... That, like, in many ways I think that's what, it's the emotional connection with... the landscape and living together in, yeah, really in the landscape, that, even if we don't know what's underneath the water, that the bay is part of our landscape and it is part of, even... Like it structures how we can travel, and what we can do, and...*

Participant 01 felt that, while the community benefitted greatly from learning more about kelp, having technical knowledge of kelp or an understanding of the proposed harvesting operation was '*kind of not the point*' of the campaign. Rather, it was the fact that so many communities shared the commonality of

'living together... really in the landscape,' and that *'something that was threatening the bay'* was not only threatening the bay. Indeed, the bay is more than a natural feature: *'it structures how we can travel, and what we can do'*; it is a force that shapes the lives of the people living around it in very tangible ways. A threat to the bay, then, was also a threat to the structure of people's lives, to their ways of knowing and being within a landscape.

5.7.2. Knowing more about kelp and the marine environment

Beyond new social connections, participants also cited greater knowledge about kelp and the marine environment as one of their key takeaways from the campaign. Participant 08, for instance, felt that, while they were always passionate about environmental matters, the campaign enriched their knowledge and their feelings of awe towards it:

It's informed me about, more about marine, um, natural, um, ecosystems. I've learned much more about the sea. I've always been fascinated by it. I've always loved, the variety.... I'd say it's enriched it... I'm in awe, really, of what is there, under the water. And... enjoyed, uh, learning more about it. 'Bout the environment generally, I've always, I like to think I've always felt quite passionate about it.

For some, learning more about kelp shaped not only what they knew about kelp but also how they related to it in their day to day lives. Participant 07 described their renewed interest in seaweed:

And then, when I got older, I would collect seaweed, myself for my land and, eat seaweed. But then when kelp came along, ahm, the knowledge of what they were going to do in the ocean here, I got more into... exploring lots of different seaweeds. And, I eat four species of seaweed, every week, in my kinda diet. And... Yeah, it's amazing stuff.

For Participant 07, learning about kelp, and about the proposed kelp harvesting operation, led them to learn about the health benefits of seaweed and to incorporate it into their diet as a result. This knowledge about seaweed, then, has a deeply embodied dimension, but it is not limited to individual bodies only. Participant 05 reflected on this embodied dimension, in particular on the embodied knowledge accumulated through the snorkelling club, and the collective impacts of this knowledge not only locally but nationally as well:

I hope it's made people more aware... It, you know, I think some of the activities that spin off from it, like the groups going snorkelling, I think that's really, I think, you know, even though it's a very small group, you know, I think that's... I think there's more, a bit more awareness around, d'you know? I think, I think we've made, we've brought the issue into the, sort of, spotlight in Bantry, and a little bit, nationally. I think there's

more people locally now, know a bit more kelp and what it is. Um, and a bit more about marine environments and the way they're important.

5.7.3. Learning how to be a community

In addition to learning more about the marine environment, some research participants felt that one of the most important lessons they learned from the campaign was on how to be in community with others. Manzo and Perkins (2006, p. 344) note that “shared emotional ties to *places* strengthen social relationships and collective community action even further,” pointing to the important relationship between emotional proximity and a sense of community. However, this is more nuanced than the social connections described in Section 5.7.1.; it is less to do with forging these connections and more to do with learning how to organise these connections so that they coalesce into a *community*, and how hold that community together. Participant 05 described this process as one of learning self-governance:

Like, I mean, another interesting thing that I think these campaigns do, is they teach... You have to learn sort of self-governance. You know, it's like a group has to learn how to make decisions, and... how to include people, and how to listen to people, and how, you know, how to make decisions and then implement those decisions. And those are really, that's really important, 'cause it's like, the reason things have got so... We, you know, we really had the power taken away from us, so we gave it away. And it's like, that capacity to be able to say, 'Okay well, yeah, actually, what do we want, how could we make that, how could we bring that about, with the means that we have available to us right now?' You know, maybe, maybe we can only make small changes right now, but by... building that capacity of self-governance, it's really, really important. And campaigns, that's what campaigns like this do, they sort of destroy your faith in the system. Make you realise that, you know, we're... the government does not care. The people must help themselves.

They regarded the current system of governance as both profoundly disempowering (*'we really had the power taken away from us, so we gave it away'*) and wholly indifferent to local struggles (*'the government does not care'*). To them, self-governance was about inclusion, listening, and collective decision-making. It was also about so much more: they felt that, in the absence of a just system of governance, learning the capacity of self-governance was a matter of reclaiming power and agency – *'the people must help themselves.'*

Similarly, Participant 07 spoke about learning to be in community, a process which for them was at times emotionally intense but that ultimately brought them clarity and healing, for which they felt a deep sense of gratitude towards kelp:

And I've learned loads from that. So I think, at the same time, even though it was turmoil and it was whatever, we come into these things to lessons, to learn life, and it is an amazing teacher. And I always like say, 'Thank you kelp.' And, one of kelp's healing properties is clarity. And I always think of that, it's like, kelp brings, has brought me so much more clarity on how I think and how I live my life. So. There's loads of blessings in it as well. And we are actually... You know, there's, we sat in a room together last time, and there are some of us that have had dynamics, but we're at peace in the same room. We're not, that dynamic, anger and stuff has gone... The turmoil that came up in it was intense, at times. But it taught me a lot about people, and community, and how we are actually structuring things. And again, where we have gaps, and where we're lacking gaps because... Everything– We mirror things, I think, things mirror each other. And, that's why, I feel if you have a good community, if you have a good group, if you've a good solid group, that respect the wishes of everyone, and find a way that everyone's wishes is kinda channelled... that you've a very strong foundation, and that's, that has been– Kelp has taught me that, a lot more. And that's really, I'm really really thankful to that. Ahm. So yeah. It has been really, really good as well. Really amazing. Really amazing journey. And I'm so delighted the kelp is in the ocean. And, that's very peaceful.

While they did not mention self-governance explicitly, they described learning '*about people, and community, and how we are actually structuring things*' as well the importance of '*respecting the wishes of everyone*' and finding '*a way that everyone's wishes is kinda channelled.*' These thoughts resonate with those of Participant 05 on the importance of inclusion, listening, and collective decision-making. This capacity to be in community, however, is not limited to humans only. Participant 07 regarded kelp as '*an amazing teacher*' that brought them '*so much more clarity on how I think and how I live my life.*' The campaign, then, was a formative process of learning to be in community with other humans as well as with more-than-humans. Indeed, Murray and Poto (2024) propose the importance of building an oceanic 'community of care' centred on emotional connection, which Tugend (2025) describes as follows:

In this community, caring becomes a collaborative effort, emphasizing learning from each other and the ocean itself. This approach extends beyond the awareness of our interconnectedness with the ocean; it embodies a sense of responsibility and stewardship. In this context, care is not merely a passive sentiment but *an active commitment to the ocean, driven by knowledge and emotional connections*, and aiming at its protection and preservation. It serves as a crucial piece for a revitalized human-ocean relationship that is mutually enhancing and dynamic. (p. 179-180, emphasis mine)

5.7.4. Section summary

In this sub-section I have outlined some of the tangible yet unquantifiable emotional impacts of the campaign on the individuals and communities involved. The most significant of these impacts were:

strengthening ties to self, to community, and to place; increasing knowledge about kelp and about the marine environment; and developing the capacity to be in community with both humans and more-than-humans. The presence of these impacts points to the need for a more nuanced conceptualisation of emotional connection.

The emotional connections to the bay, particularly as expressed by Participant 09 in Section 5.7.1., resonate with Feminist Political Ecology (FPE) research that explores connection to place and to natural features (see Chapter 2 for more on FPE). For instance, in a study on environmental activism around rivers in Kerala, India, Sony and Krishnan (2023, p. 9) found that “[t]he river thus becomes an unavoidable part of inhabitants’ lives,” and that this emotional connection influences how people engage in activism. In an interview with a river activist as part of the study, the activist echoes the sentiments of Participant 09 above:

People here can’t live by forgetting the river. Even the rich people can’t dismiss or avoid the river from their life... Like the way I am attached to the river, others also have an attachment. The intensity of the attachment might vary. But the river is there as the base. It was a part of our virtue... All family members used to go to the river [to wash clothes and bathe]. The riverbanks were a place for social interaction and exchange... This is not a simple thing. I have memories of such give and take between people... The basic thing that ties the life of the people here is the river. I believe, to an extent, all involved in the protest has an emotional attachment to the river. (Sony & Krishnan, 2023, p. 9)

Despite the differences in context between kelp harvesting in Bantry Bay and river activism in Kerala, India, this deep emotional connection, ‘the basic thing that ties the life of the people here,’ whether to a bay or to a river, is a commonality that both groups share. This points to such emotional connections as more than just ‘place attachment’; as something deeply intertwined with one’s sense of self as well as a shared, collective sense of humanity that extends past the individual.

5.8. Discussion and conclusions

In Chapter 4 I developed and employed the Listening Guide methodology to explore *how* we might listen for emotion in marine governance. Building on the methodology developed in Chapter 4 for *how* to listen to emotion, in this chapter, **I aimed to demonstrate the practical value of this methodology by considering *what* we might learn about emotion** through this deep listening approach. I thus responded to the **second objective of this dissertation, namely, to build on a method for analysing emotions through a deep listening approach**. To achieve this objective, I have explored in depth the emotional dimensions of the community-driven campaign against mechanical kelp harvesting in Bantry Bay. In

particular I have analysed the findings gleaned from the 1st Listen of the Listening Guide, which involved listening to the *stories* recounted to me by participants. I used the story of the campaign as a narrative to structure and discuss the meanings and implications of the findings, and to demonstrate how emotion was part of the conflict over marine resources in the Bay and their use and governance. In this concluding section I briefly summarise the findings of the chapter, and shift the emotional lens inwards to frame the following chapter.

5.8.1. Summary of findings

In thinking about the chapter aim – *what* we might learn about emotion – the findings in this chapter present a multitude of insights into the role of emotion in marine governance, and highlights that emotion saturates marine resource governance, a field often understood as technical/technocratic (see Levi & Peters, 2024). First, the chapter discussed the importance of pre-existing emotional connections to the marine environment in shaping individuals' emotional relationships to the sea, and explored distinctions between 'insider' and 'outsider' perspectives, which may be shaped by physical proximity, sensory perception, recreational practices, and spiritual experiences. These emotional connections, whether formed earlier or later in life, were crucial in motivating individuals to join and remain involved in the campaign, and point to the entanglements between emotional and physical proximity and the role of these in environmental activism.

The chapter also revealed the extent of participants' concerns regarding the proposed kelp harvesting, which revolved around environmental degradation, impacts on local livelihoods and sense of community, and the current systems of marine governance. Significantly, these concerns extended beyond localised impacts, and pointed to broader social and political implications as well as collective, intergenerational traumas. The extent of the concerns underscores the fact that natural resource conflicts are fundamentally emotional and rooted in historical, cultural, social and political domains (Sultana, 2011, 2015). Lastly, the findings alluded to the internal and highly emotional dynamics of the campaign itself, describing how the diversity of perspectives and backgrounds among campaign members posed particular organisational challenges but ultimately strengthened the feeling of solidarity within the campaign. The emotionally-charged processes of conflict, negotiation, and solidarity within the campaign allowed individuals to deepen their connections to each other and to their communities, to increase both their technical and embodied knowledge of the marine environment, and to enhance their capacity for community organisation and self-governance.

These findings point to the centrality of emotion in the two pathways to greater ocean literacy – ‘connecting with each other’ and ‘connecting with the ocean’ – and to the deeply intertwined and relational nature of these pathways (Murray et al., 2025; Tugend, 2025; Vita et al., 2025). Indeed,

Since ocean health is human health, maintaining the status quo “equates to the legalized destruction of nature”, so that relational and care-based values show a path towards re-imagined human-ocean relationships, defined not by dominion, but by care, empathy, and a sense of responsibility towards the ocean. (Tugend, 2025, p. 189)

Might it be possible to move towards a mode of governing based on empathy, connection, and solidarity, rather than extraction and disconnection?

5.8.2. Concluding thoughts

While emotional complexities certainly pose challenges to efforts to take emotion seriously in marine governance, what is a challenge may also be an opportunity that provides numerous possible points of entry into emotion. Indeed, by nuancing the understanding of how emotions operate in politically powerful ways in marine governance, and addressing the second objective of this thesis to build on a methodology for researching emotion in marine contexts, this chapter offers both methodological and conceptual ‘entry points’ for future academic inquiry emotional marine governance.

The chapter that follows is one such ‘entry point’ into a deeper understanding of the relationship between emotion and marine governance. In Chapter 6, I make use of the Listening Guide once again, this time turning the focus of the deep listening *inwards*. In an autoethnographic analysis of my field diary, I make sense of my own emotions as entangled in the story of the Bantry Bay campaign, and reflect on how our bodies, as researchers, are deeply intertwined with the emotional landscape of what we study. At the same time, I build on and further develop the Listening Guide, and so broaden the scope of what it means to listen – and of *how* we listen – in attending to the emotional dimensions of marine governance. As Yeo et al. (2023, p. 1) write, “[i]t is through the art of listening, both to one another and also to ourselves, that we also understand ourselves as such cultural, social, and emotional bodies.” Listening to ourselves as we *do* the work of researching emotional governance may prove to be just as important as listening to others.

Chapter 6: The Listening Guide II

How can we learn to listen to ourselves?

6.1. Introduction: A return journey to the Listening Guide

The *Bantry Bay – Protect Our Native Kelp Forest* campaign (as previously, referred to as ‘the campaign’ in this chapter) formed in 2017 following a televised environmental programme which brought to public attention a proposed plan to mechanically harvest kelp in the bay (see Chapter 1 for context). Alongside fundraising, awareness and education, and legal strategies, campaign members also established a snorkelling club, running every year from late spring to late autumn, with the aim of enabling locals living in the area to experience the underwater world – and the kelp forest in particular – at their doorstep.

Access was a key consideration in the founding of the club; initially, the organisers had planned on running a SCUBA club, but due to the high costs of training and equipment, in addition to increased logistical and safety concerns, they opted for snorkelling instead. Snorkelling still presents some barriers around access, including the ability to swim, the transport required to access the often remote snorkelling sites, and the cost of equipment, from the most basic (e.g., mask and snorkel) to the optional but useful (e.g., fins, wetsuit, hood, gloves, booties). However, it was still seen as an effective method for engaging people, as well as increasing the campaign’s knowledge about what they were protecting. Indeed, in my interview with them, P01 explained:

We took a SCUBA diving course in Baltimore, the second summer, in 2018. And that was, um, I suppose, kind of, the snorkelling then came out of that, in that snorkelling is less equipment, easier, less intimidating for people, ahm, but still a way of getting your, you know, exposing people to, well, be less afraid of, getting out into the water, looking down under the water and seeing what’s there. But it, I suppose it really started just out of the desire to inform ourselves and actually I suppose gather data on what the actual environment in Bantry Bay was, and in the proposed [kelp] extraction zones, just because, just to know what was there.

The club’s organisers select a different snorkelling location along Bantry Bay each weekend, to showcase the diversity of natural habitats in the bay, and set a start time in accordance with the tides of that date and location. The club is not publicly advertised and does not have a formal structure; this is because it is

organised by a handful of individuals who volunteer their limited time and resources every week to run the club. While anyone is technically welcome to participate, due to the club's informal organisational structure, important updates and information are sent individually over WhatsApp, and you have to know someone in the group to be able to join and access this information. Due to my initial connection with a campaign member before starting fieldwork (see Chapter 3 for more on this), I was fortunate in being invited to join the club during my fieldwork period, and snorkelled with the group²⁵ almost every weekend²⁶ from July to October 2023.

The snorkelling was, I will admit, extremely unpleasant at first: the freezing cold, the *sand in my socks*, the dripping wet commute back to Cork in the evening cold – I gritted my teeth but I dreaded it. Gradually, however, as each weekend passed, something changed: the things I most dreaded – the jarring shock of cold water, the vulnerability of changing in front of others, the near-constant biting wind and unpredictable weather – became the very things I most relished; they became the highlight of my week. In the evenings after snorkelling, warm and dry once more, I would sit and write reflections in my field diary, about my interactions with other snorkellers, my thoughts on the weather, the cold water, the feeling of my body in the cold water, and vivid descriptions of the natural environment around me. While the field diary is a well-documented tool of qualitative research (Berman-Arévalo, 2021), my snorkelling reflections, at the time I wrote them, had no other purpose but to serve as a creative outlet and as a way to record these special experiences for my future self. This resonates with the use of a field diary as a tool for incorporating 'ethnographic sensibilities' into critical resource geographies research (Berman-Arévalo, 2021) (see more on ethnographic sensibilities in Chapter 2):

Written by hand and from the field, the [field diary] texts evoked sensations and affective qualities of place and events, while ordering them in a narrative flow and pointing toward particular analytic directions. The diary became a creative outlet that helped me express a personal voice in an emerging academic narrative and was the basis for later developing ethnographic text. (p. 210)

For a long time, these field notes have had no function other than to keep me grounded. When I feel the distance stretching between that time and that place and myself; when place names and faces grow hazy and half-remembered; when on grey days I get a longing for that steel-grey wave-whipped sea; then I turn

²⁵ My participation would not have been possible without club members' consistent and generous offers of lifts between Bantry and remote snorkelling spots completely inaccessible by public transport, as well as loans of snorkelling equipment. The two of ye especially (you know who you are) – thank you!

²⁶ Unfortunately I had COVID followed by an exceedingly slow recovery period spanning the whole of August and into mid-September of 2023; for this reason I missed the snorkelling excursions that took place on the weekends during this time period.

to my notes to revive my memories and to ground myself in what is most important to me in this project: that root that, running deep, binds me to a particular place. Beyond as a means of grounding myself, however, I wasn't sure what to do with the notes, other than vaguely wanting to write something autoethnographic linked to emotion and governance (the themes of the thesis); but to what end, I didn't know. Unlike the interviews, which had a clear purpose from the beginning of the fieldwork, the contribution of these reflections towards the thesis' goals were less clear (see Chapter 3 for a comparison of listening to interview and autoethnographic data).

Yet, as I conducted the Listening Guide ('the LG') analysis of my interview data (see Chapter 4), *deep listening* (see also Chapter 5) emerged as a critical mechanism for accessing and understanding emotion in its myriad forms as it related to marine governance. As time passed and dissertation writing progressed, I came back again and again to the idea of doing something with my autoethnographic notes; but to what end, and, after diving into literature on autoethnography, precisely *how* to undertake an autoethnographic analysis, I still wasn't clear. One day, as I was revisiting literature on the LG, something clicked: if Yeo et al. (2023, p. 2) employ the LG as "a powerful and emotive tool for self and mutual exploration" in their feminist collaborative autoethnography, why couldn't I use it as a tool to analyse my own autoethnographic notes?

Autoethnography, according to Rutter et al. (2024, p. 57), is "an exploration of the self within specific cultural, emotional and social contexts"; a definition which resonates with the LG's multiscalar approach in listening for story, for self, for relationships, and for contexts. While in Chapter 4 I used the LG to listen to *others'* voices to access and understand their emotional connections, resonances, and reactions, in an effort to build an emotional methodological and analytical tool for taking seriously such aspects in marine governance work, it made sense to have a chapter in which I listened to my *own* voice. How did I generate (emotional) meaning related to marine governance? What were my own responses to this highly emotive campaign? My field notes, and my analysis of them, could be another avenue to accessing the emotion-governance relationship, by considering the deeply embodied, emotional, immersive experience of snorkelling in a particular place with a particular group of people, all linked to a campaign struggling over marine space. As Yeo et al. (2023, p. 1) write, "[i]t is through the *art* of listening, both to one another and also to *ourselves*, that we also understand ourselves as such cultural, social, and emotional bodies." Indeed, our bodies, as researchers, are deeply intertwined with the emotional landscape of what we study. This chapter, then, concerns the application of the LG for an *autoethnographic analysis* of my own post-snorkelling reflections, which I wrote in the time period between July and October 2023. As opposed

to listening to other people (as I did in Chapter 4), this chapter is an exercise in listening to *self*; an understanding of that self as embedded ‘within specific cultural, emotional and social contexts’; and an examination and interpretation of self as vehicle for a greater understanding of those larger contexts and structures (see Chapter 4 for more on listening for (infra)structures). In thinking about how to better understand ourselves as researchers working in oceanic disciplines, Murray et al. (2025, p. 89) pose the following guiding questions: “So how and where to begin when exploring our positionality for Ocean Literacy? How do we identify how our knowledge is situated, how to see the Ocean and who to see it with?”

This chapter is a response to this question, **contributing to the overall drive of the thesis not only in understanding the relationship between emotions and governance (here emotional connections between researcher and ‘the field’), but also in contributing practically to such an agenda by building a toolbox of techniques other scholars can use when seeking to research emotions in marine governance settings.** This chapter thus addresses the third aim of the dissertation, namely, (c) **exploring and making sense of various configurations of emotional connections to the oceans and their relevance to marine governance.** In Chapter 4 I developed a methodology for *how* we might listen for others’ emotions in marine governance, and in Chapter 5 I demonstrated the value of this methodology by considering *what* we might learn about others’ emotions through this deep listening approach. In this chapter, then, I continue to build on the LG method by adapting it and applying it to a different context, unit of analysis, and format of data. In doing so, I aim to broaden understandings of both *what* kinds of emotions are relevant in emotional governance (not least our own emotions as researchers ‘producing’ knowledge in this discipline) as well as *how* to listen for these emotions. Indeed, as Murray et al. (2025) note about the importance of reflexively understanding our own emotions as researchers in this space,

Ocean Literacy is not only about what we know about the Ocean, but how we come to know the Ocean. Positionality, that is, reflects upon our identities and how we position ourselves in relation to others and to the Ocean, is a self-critical and deliberate exercise of introspection. (p. 3)

6.1.1. Outline and aims of chapter

The aims of this chapter are three-fold: first, to explore the potential of the LG method as a tool for autoethnographic analysis; second, to contribute, and to provide empirical evidence to demonstrate the value of, autoethnographic research to the field of marine governance; and third, to highlight the importance of listening, while broadening the scope of what it means to listen – for *how* we listen – in attending to the emotional dimensions of marine governance. These aims address the third objective of

this dissertation, namely, to explore and makes sense of various configurations of emotional connections to the oceans and their relevance to marine governance. Indeed, in Chapter 1, I refer to the following quote by K. Anderson and Smith (2001) to justify the rationale for my research:

academic commitment to highlighting the emotional consequences of seemingly rational economic decisions is an important element in bringing these actions to account. If the logic of efficiency depends on the silencing of the emotions, academics have a role in pointing out that this is an ethically questionable state of affairs. (p. 8)

Being transparent and reflexive in this chapter about my own emotions as a researcher, and taking seriously their role in shaping the direction of my research, is part of my academic commitment to bringing to account the seemingly rational research process.

In what follows, Section 6.2. briefly discusses the LG method and its suitability for autoethnographic work and textual data; provides a justification for adapting the LG; an overview and description of the data to be analysed; and outlines the implementation of the LG to analyse the data. Sections 6.3. through 6.6. present and interpret the results of the 1st through 4th Listens of the adapted LG analysis method. Finally, Section 6.7. discusses the findings and their implications for marine governance, and considers the strengths and limitations of the LG as a tool for autoethnographic analysis and, more broadly, as a tool for marine governance research.

6.2. Chapter-specific methods

6.2.1. The Listening Guide, revisited and revised

In keeping with the approach of this thesis to build on and develop research and analysis methods, this section explores the LG method in relation to making sense of my autoethnographic fieldnotes. As noted in Chapters 3 and 4, the Listening Guide is a feminist analysis method, developed by Gilligan (1982), Gilligan & Eddy (2017, 2021), and Gilligan et al. (2003), that centres on individuals' voices as a way to attend to (and to take seriously) the complexities and subjectivities of their lived experiences. The method consists of multiple rounds of listening, traditionally to interview audio, while reading along and coding the corresponding transcripts (see Chapter 4). Each 'listen' focuses on a different dimension of the data and of the narrator's experience: the plot of the story being told; the narrator's sense of self; the relationships involved in the story; and the structures and contexts in which the story is embedded (Edwards & Weller, 2012; McKenzie, 2021; Woodcock, 2016; Yeo et al., 2023). Through these multiple

iterations the listener is immersed deep in the data and is able to glean a deeper understanding of affective, intangible, ephemeral phenomena often occluded by more readily accessible and self-evident insights (Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008). In Chapter 4 I adapted the LG for the purpose of analysing interviews with research participants during fieldwork. Aside from interview data, however, there was another form of data that I produced during fieldwork: textual autoethnographic reflections.

In conversations with my supervisor, the notion of the ‘expanded field’ of my PhD kept cropping up, particularly due to the case study research design, which traditionally focuses on a single site. Due to the complexity and multi-sited nature of the governance issue, however, as well as due to my own resource constraints, the case study became a distributed, multi-sited thing, which Cook (2001) calls the ‘expanded field,’ and which Pottinger (2024) describes using a ‘patchwork metaphor.’ It was suggested in one of these ‘expanded field’ conversations that I might perhaps develop a *reading guide*, as opposed to a listening guide, for textual material. And while the LG has been predominantly used to analyse interview data, it has also been used as a tool for analysing solely textual data without accompanying audio recordings (see Petrovic et al., 2015 for an analysis of reflection papers written by university students, and Rosales et al., 2024 for an analysis of letters written by a group of Latina research participants). The LG is a methodology of deep listening, yet listening need not (indeed, *should* not) be limited to the aural experience of hearing sonic input (Amsler, 2023). Indeed, in a study of listening and speaking in the classroom, Hanrahan and Billo (2023) argue that

Speech-as-presence and universalized listening privileges particular bodies (overwhelmingly white, able, cis-male bodies) while disciplining other bodies away from reproducing these norms... speech-as-presence reproduces ableist assumptions for speech that suggest we all embody the same mental and physical abilities to speak and hear in the classroom, marginalizing bodily- and neuro-diversity. (p. 1496)

Disrupting hegemonic assumptions of what listening looks like (or rather *sounds* like) makes space for diverse forms of knowledge and relation to emerge. “Listening,” writes Gumbs (2021, p. 24), “is not only about the normative ability to hear, it is a transformative and revolutionary resource that requires quieting down and tuning in.” Listening-as-tuning-in is a relational, embodied practice in which “we use all of our senses to become aware of ourselves in relation to other elements in the world around us and to each other” (Hanrahan & Billo, 2023, p. 1501). Listening in this way, with our whole selves, to ourselves and to others – whether human or more-than-human – “standing witness, creates an openness to the world in which the boundaries between us can dissolve in a raindrop” (Kimmerer, 2015, p. 300, in Amsler, 2023, *Species Loneliness as Sensibility* section, para. 1). Thus, listening becomes less about an exclusive

ability to hear, and more about an inclusive capacity for attunement; a capacity that includes attuning to what we may read and write.

The LG, then, may encompass a variety of modes of listening to a variety of articulations of voice, for a variety of ends (Petrovic et al., 2015). In the case of this chapter, I contend that to understand the varying emotional perspectives that might relate to marine governance decisions, listening to our own voice, to what we may write, record, reflect on as researchers, matters. “Researchers ascribing to a feminist epistemology;” write Yeo et al. (2023, p. 9) “those concerned with voice; those who wish to promote social justice; and/or those interested in representing autoethnographic accounts may find [the LG] particularly of use.” While several studies have employed the LG for a (feminist) collaborative autoethnography (see Rutter et al., 2024; Yeo et al., 2023), to my knowledge, none have used it for an *individual* autoethnography. This chapter, building on this collaborative autoethnographic work, does so. There is a strong resonance between autoethnography and the LG with regards to their approach to bridging self and society; in particular, their view of self as a relational self that is embedded in social contexts, and as a unit of analysis for better understanding those contexts. It is this resonant potential of the LG for analysing autoethnographic voice that I explore in this chapter, in line with the efforts of this dissertation towards building on and developing means for researching the emotional aspects of governance.

6.2.2. The Listening Guide, adapted

While this chapter and Chapter 4 both involve the LG, due to the different contexts and formats of the data involved (i.e., diary material as opposed to interview transcripts), I have once more adapted the LG analysis protocol to fit the needs of this chapter (see Table 6 below), rather than conducting the same analysis as I did in Chapter 4. In particular, due to the purely written, as opposed to audio, format of the data, I have incorporated elements of textual analysis in the protocol to take the place of elements of aural listening found in the traditional LG, to enable me to listen to textual data. For instance, the 1st Listen of audio data normally listens for silence, which “may manifest itself as pauses noted in the transcript as well as instances of informants either lowering their voices or allowing their voices to trail off” (Woodcock, 2016, p. 3); and “the nuances of expression: non-verbal clues, the manner of speech and what a speaker chooses to leave unspoken” (Yeo et al., 2023, p. 8). As this does not apply to textual data, an alternative approach to listening is necessary. Hence, the analysis attends to elements of written form, including style, voice, and other writing techniques. Additionally, in their work, Yeo et al. (2023, p. 4, emphasis in original) developed a ‘Fifth Listen’ focusing the emotional resonance of “*how* things were said, the emotion underpinning those words, and the emotion underpinning the interpretation of the listener.” I did not

include this Fifth Listen in Chapter 4, due to the capacity of the aural recordings to transmit a speaker's emotion through their voice (see Chapter 4 for a fuller explanation of this). However, because of the lack of aural data in this chapter, as well as the centrality of emotional context in autoethnographic data, I have combined 'listening for context' with 'listening for emotion' in the final 4th Listen of the present analysis as a way of more closely attending to emotion in textual autoethnographic data (see analysis protocol in Table 6 below).

Table 6. Adapted Listening Guide 2 protocol.

Listen	Notes	Parallel work: reflexivity
1st Listen: Listening for story	Take note of: emotional resonance, repeated words, phrases, and images, information and comments that jump out, contradictions, omissions, and revisions; overall plot, recurring images and words, key metaphors, and dominant themes; overarching trends and themes that illustrate the thread of the story Silences: what is left out, what is left unsaid? What is alluded to or implied?	Record: my own emotional responses and reactions to the text, my notes, thoughts, interpretations, connections, disconnections, and other comments
2nd Listen: Listening for self	How do I speak about myself on my own terms, in my own voice, in my own body? Take note of voice statements (I/me, you/your, we/us/our, his/her, they/them/theirs) Voice poems: construction of voice poems from voice statements	
3rd Listen: Listening for relationships	What is my relationship to other people, to places, to the environment, to the more-than-human? Take note of: place names, more-than-human beings, the environment, repeated mentions of these Take note of: how I talk about other people, my relationships to them, my place in these relationships, the consequences of these relationships	
4th Listen: Listening for emotional context	Focus on <i>how</i> things are said, the emotion underpinning those words, and the emotion underpinning the interpretation of the listener – the <i>feel</i> of the text Take note of: the emotional resonance in both what is said and unsaid Take note of writing voice and style: formal, informal, evocative, descriptive, succinct, objective, reflective? Take note of other writing techniques: repetition, rhyming, rhythm, imagery, wordplay, metaphors, similes, tone/mood	

Finally, there is a reflexive component running parallel to the four listens. Traditionally, the 1st Listen of the original LG includes a reflexive element wherein a researcher records their own emotional responses to their participants' stories, which Woodcock (2016) writes is a way

to appropriately learn from the tensions, the moments of feeling lost, and/or the times when connections are made... to note all personal reactions to the research, developing a closeness to his or her own reactions to the story... to strengthen validity in the ways it pays attention to personal reflexivity. (p. 4)

However, due to the highly reflexive nature of autoethnography, I did not want to restrict this reflexive element only to the 1st Listen, but rather to carry it across the five listens. The questions guiding the reflexive component have been adapted from the LG analysis of written data by Petrovic et al. (2015), making them particularly suited to this chapter. “The resultant trail of evidence,” reflect (Petrovic et al., 2015, p. 8), “allows me as well as others to examine the actions taken by our research team and those not taken and identify potential areas that may require further attention.” In this way, the reflexive component strengthens the validity of the findings as well as the transparency of the decisions taken to produce them.

6.2.3. Overview of data

Between late July and late October of 2023, I participated in eight snorkelling excursions with the snorkelling club, with a corresponding written autoethnographic reflection for each snorkel. The reflections, written with the sole purpose of making sense of the snorkels and capturing them for my own records, range from a few brief sentences to lengthy descriptive passages, shift across different standpoints, and cover a variety of themes and sensory experiences. On the next page, Figure 6 provides an overview of the geographic distribution of snorkelling sites around Bantry Bay, while Table 7 provides a timeline corresponding to the date and location of each snorkel in which I participated.



Figure 6. Overview of snorkelling sites in Bantry Bay visited during fieldwork period.

Each reflection describes a particular snorkel occurring at a particular date and time. However, it is important to keep in mind that the snorkelling excursions occurred chronologically over the span of several months; they are not isolated instances but rather exist on a temporal

Table 7. Dates and locations of snorkelling excursions.

No.	Date	Location
1	22/07/2023	Ahakista, Co. Cork
2	29/07/2023	Blue Pool, Glengarriff, Co. Cork
3	03/08/2023	Curraghavaddra Beach, Rooska, Co. Cork
4	17/09/2023 ²⁷	Aghabeg, Killaconenagh, Co. Cork
5	23/09/2023	Gerahies, Kilcrohane, Co. Cork
6	01/10/2023	Curraghavaddra Beach, Durrus, Co. Cork
7	08/10/2023	Reenrour East, Bantry, Co. Cork
8	15/10/2023	Sandmount, Ardagannive, Co. Cork

continuum. Indeed, these are not eight different snorkelling experiences belonging to eight different individuals, but rather eight sequential experiences belonging to one individual who evolves and changes with and following each experience. This demands of the LG not only a vertical perspective that, with each successive Listen, dives deeper into each reflection; but also a horizontal perspective that listens across the reflections and across time. The practical implication of this dual perspective is that, rather than

²⁷ See Footnote 2 above for an explanation of this gap between this snorkel and the one preceding it.

individually conducting Listens 1-4 for one reflection before moving on to the next, I conducted the 1st Listen for all reflections, before moving on to the 2nd Listen for all reflections, and so on. This approach allowed me to detect subtle patterns unfolding through time that I would have missed had I analysed each reflection in isolation.

6.2.4. From reflections to findings: a visual trail of evidence

Woodcock (2016) suggest creating a ‘trail of evidence’ to support one’s findings and claims. Accordingly, in this sub-section I evidence the steps of my analysis to demonstrate the process by which I moved from raw data to codes and themes to overarching trends and findings. Fig. 7a on the next page is an example of the colour-coded system I used in my analysis. Each colour corresponds to a different Listen; I used orange highlighter to highlight relevant themes during the 1st Listen; yellow during the 2nd; pink during the 3rd; and green during the 4th. In addition, I made hand-written annotations on the margins of the page, as well as on the back of the page, during the 4th Listen to take note of particular literary devices or tones of voice used (Fig. 7b on the next page).

The information highlighted during each Listen went into a corresponding spreadsheet containing the highlighted passages and other relevant information (e.g., themes, frequency of mention, voice, trends, tone). In the sub-sections below I evidence the process by which I coded the reflections to extract meaningful information which I eventually turned into relevant findings.

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Figure 7. Photograph of colour-coded autoethnographic snorkelling reflection: a) orange highlighter was used during the 1st Listen, yellow during the 2nd, pink during the 3rd, and green during the 4th; b) reflexive reflections written during each Listen on the back of the reflections.

6.2.4.1. Trail of evidence: 1st Listen

During the 1st Listen, I highlighted passages that felt particularly emotionally resonant, along with repetitions, imagery, metaphors, and significant themes. Figure 8 below is the spreadsheet I created for the 1st Listen conducted for the written reflection of Snorkel #5.

	A	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Things that jumped out (OG flow)	Themed flow (OG)	Things that jumped out (AB flow)	Themed flow (AB)	theme	count		
2	the weather was atrocious	weather conditions	slightly different from earlier this morning	a change in myself	change in myself	3		
3	it had been raining the whole day before		I feel as if I'm edging towards something, I don't know exactly what		anticipation of cold water	3		
4	a torrential downpour, really		each swim is like a brick laid onto a subtle structure under the waves of my consciousness		weather conditions	6		
5	it was cold		I was dreading swimming today	anticipation of cold water	changing in front of others	1		
6	I was dreading swimming today	anticipation of cold water	I couldn't think of something I wanted to do less		description of water	2		
7	we drive down a winding coastal path down to the sea	natural imagery	I was expecting the urge to scream to wash over me		evocative description of being in water	3		
8	the lashing rain	weather conditions	the weather was atrocious	weather conditions	exiting the water	2		
9	the driving wind		it had been raining the whole day before		feeling of determination	4		
10	the waves cutting up into the air like sharp gray glass	natural imagery	a torrential downpour, really		imagery	1		
11	the pebbles and winkles jabbing, slip-sliding underfoot		it was cold		more-than-human	2		
12	I couldn't think of something I wanted to do less	anticipation of cold water	the lashing rain		more-than-human encounter	11		
13	we stripped down and (wet)suited up	changing in front of others	the driving wind		natural	5		
14	the five of us huddled under the shelter of the raised door of the car boot	social bonding	we stripped down and (wet)suited up	changing in front of others	social bonding	2		
15	the pebble- and winkle- and wrack-strewn shore	natural imagery	our bodies slowly sinking into the cold, clear water	description of water	the body	2		
16	our bodies slowly sinking into the cold, clear water and what water it was	description of water	and what water it was		total	47		
17			the clarity that comes when there is water coming down from the sky and water coming up from the sea and you are all there is keeping the masses and masses of water from meeting	evocative description of being in water				

Figure 8. Screenshot of spreadsheet of themes emerging from 1st Listen of autoethnographic reflections.

Column A contains the highlighted passages, the 'things that jumped out,' and Column C is the theme I assigned each passage; the contents of both columns A and C are in the original order that they were written in the reflection. For my own convenience in getting an overview of and analysing these themes, however, I rearranged the contents of Columns A and C into alphabetical order; these are Columns E and F, respectively. Finally, to get a sense of the frequency with which I mention each theme, I created a new column of themes in alphabetical order (Column H), and, counting the number of 'things that jumped out' in each theme, created a column to reflect this count (Column I). I created a similar spreadsheet tracing significant themes for each reflection. Finally, I compiled the themes from each reflection into a new spreadsheet (Figure 9 on the next page), to get a sense of the significant themes emerging across all the reflections.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	theme	count	note			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	total
2	different perspective	5	1		anticipation of cold water	0	4	4	0	3	0	2	1	14
3	entanglement	3	1		atmosphere of group	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	5
4	immediacy of experience	4	1		awareness & perception after familiarity	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
5	immersion	2	1		back to snorkelling	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
6	more-than-human	2	1		campaign dynamics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
7	movement	12	1		change in myself	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	6
8	natural imagery	1	1		changing in front of others	0	0	0	0	1	8	1	2	12
9	sensory	1	1		cold-water euphoria	0	5	0	1	0	21	2	0	29
10	the body	14	1		data as intimate & relational	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	8
11	unfamiliarity	9	1		description of water	0	8	3	1	2	4	1	1	20
12	water - cold	1	1		different perspective	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
13	weather conditions	1	1		entanglement	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
14	anticipation of cold water	4	2		evocative description of being in water	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
15	awareness & perception after familiarity	2	2		exiting the water	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	4
16	cold-water euphoria	5	2		familiarity	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
17	description of water	8	2		feeling of determination	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
18	familiarity	2	2		feeling of safety	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
19	more-than-human	1	2		feeling outside element	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
20	movement	2	2		gratitude towards group	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
21	natural imagery	5	2		imagery	0	0	0	5	1	0	4	3	13
22	the body	1	2		immediacy of experience	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
23	unfamiliarity	2	2		immersion	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
24	water - cold	1	2		in-water activities	0	0	1	0	0	1	4	1	7
25	weather conditions	1	2		more-than-human	2	1	4	2	13	11	7	12	52
26	anticipation of cold water	4	3		movement	12	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	15
27	description of water	3	3		natural imagery	1	5	0	0	5	3	6	9	29
28	feeling of safety	1	3		others' activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	2	10
29	feeling outside element	2	3		place names	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	7
30	in-water activities	1	3		pre-snorkelling activities	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
31	more-than-human	4	3		research as emotional	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
32	back to snorkelling	2	4		sensory	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	6
33	cold-water euphoria	1	4		social bonding	0	0	0	6	2	5	4	11	28
34	data as intimate & relational	8	4		the body	14	1	0	1	2	0	0	5	23
35	description of water	1	4		travel logistics	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	6
36	gratitude towards group	4	4		unfamiliarity	9	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
37	imagery	5	4		water - cold	1	1	0	2	0	3	0	9	16
38	more-than-human	2	4		weather conditions	1	1	0	0	6	2	3	7	20
39	movement	1	4											
40	research as emotional	1	4											
41	social bonding & trust	6	4											

Figure 9. Screenshot of overview of all themes from all autoethnographic reflections compiled into one spreadsheet.

In particular, Columns H (theme) and I (count) from Figure 8 above became Columns A and B in Figure 9, with the addition of 'note' in Column C to indicate the specific written reflection (e.g., Snorkel #5) corresponding to a given theme. I then arranged all the themes in Column A into alphabetical order in Column E (again, for my own convenience), and noted the frequency of each theme in Columns F – M (corresponding to reflections #1 – # 8). Doing so gave me a sense of how themes might have shifted across time. Lastly, Column N indicates the total frequency of each theme across all the reflections. I interpret and discuss the meanings of these shifts and total frequencies for each theme in Section 6.3. below.

6.2.4.2. Trail of evidence: 2nd Listen

During the 2nd Listen, I highlighted passages containing voice statements (i.e., I, you, we, they). Figure 10 on the next page is the spreadsheet I created for the 2nd Listen conducted for the written reflection of Snorkel #5.

	A	B	C	D
1	voice statement	standpoint	S/P	voice
2	I'm not afraid to admit	first-person	singular	own
3	I was dreading	first-person	singular	own
4	picked me up	first-person	singular	own
5	in her car	third-person	singular	referring to snorkelling club
6	with her kids	third-person	singular	referring to snorkelling club
7	we drove down	first-person	plural	snorkellers
8	I couldn't think	first-person	singular	own
9	something I wanted to do less	first-person	singular	own
10	we stripped down	first-person	plural	snorkellers
11	the five of us huddled	first-person	plural	snorkellers
12	we gingerly walked	first-person	plural	snorkellers
13	our bodies slowly sinking	first-person	plural	snorkellers
14	I was expecting	first-person	singular	own
15	wash over me	first-person	singular	own
16	I was going to do it	first-person	singular	own
17	I could do it	first-person	singular	own
18	I did do it	first-person	singular	own
19	dunking my head	first-person	singular	own
20	I swam	first-person	singular	own
21	my hands	first-person	singular	own
22	you are all there is	second-person		
23	you slip under	second-person		
24	you see that it is good	second-person		
25	you come up for air	second-person		
26	you are still alive	second-person		
27	you see that it is good	second-person		
28	the ridge next to you	second-person		
29	you come closer	second-person		
30	you are just inches away	second-person		
31	not scared of you	second-person		
32	you are not scared	second-person		
33	waves lift you up	second-person		
34	you hang suspended	second-person		
35	you are the shag	second-person		
36	the shag is you	second-person		
37	water sucks you downwards	second-person		
38	you are off into the shallows	second-person		
39	we must go	first-person	plural	snorkellers
40	I walk begrudgingly	first-person	singular	own
41	we drive away	first-person	plural	snorkellers

Figure 10. Screenshot of spreadsheet of voice statements emerging from 2nd Listen of autoethnographic reflections.

Column A contains the highlighted passage, and Columns B and C specify the standpoint and whether the standpoint is in the singular or plural voice, respectively. Lastly, in Column D, I coded the voice statement as a specific voice. This was challenging, however; while the voices were at times distinct, they often heavily overlapped, and distinguishing them was not easy – and was, perhaps, besides the point (more on this below). I reflect on the challenges of this Listen in Section 6.4. below. Lastly, similar to the 1st Listen, I compiled the information from the spreadsheet of each individual snorkel into a new spreadsheet (Figure 11 on the next page).

	A	B	C	D	E
84	1	I wasn't thinking	first-person	singula	own
85	1	I simply was	first-person	singula	own
86	1	my whole focus was	first-person	singula	own
87	1	my whole being was	first-person	singula	own
88	1	allowing me to slice	first-person	singula	own
89	1	making me feel	first-person	singula	own
90	1	pushing me back	first-person	singula	own
91	1	the cold takes me out of myself	first-person	singula	own
92	1	it lets me think of nothing else	first-person	singula	own
93	2	I've been to before	first-person	singula	own
94	2	I didn't feel as apprehensive	first-person	singula	own
95	2	I knew what to expect	first-person	singula	own
96	2	I knew	first-person	singula	own
97	2	I would feel amazing	first-person	singula	own
98	2	I felt more oriented	first-person	singula	own
99	2	I was expecting the cold	first-person	singula	own
100	2	I didn't feel as disoriented	first-person	singula	own
101	2	make me feel so powerful	first-person	singula	own
102	2	propel me	first-person	singula	own
103	2	let me slice	first-person	singula	own
104	2	a shock to my system	first-person	singula	own
105	2	I start to feel run down	first-person	singula	own
106	3	I feel less apprehensive	first-person	singula	own
107	3	I know it'll be cold	first-person	singula	own
108	3	I also know	first-person	singula	own
109	3	I'll feel amazing	first-person	singula	own
110	3	entangles me	first-person	singula	own
111	3	I feel safe in company	first-person	singula	own
112	3	I struggle against the surge	first-person	singula	own
113	3	I clamber atop the rock	first-person	singula	own
114	4	cold water always shocks me	first-person	singula	own
115	4	last time I was in	first-person	singula	own
116	4	I didn't last	first-person	singula	own
117	4	I met	first-person	singula	own
118	4	including me	first-person	singula	own
119	5	I'm not afraid to admit	first-person	singula	own
120	5	I was dreading	first-person	singula	own
121	5	picked me up	first-person	singula	own
122	5	I couldn't think	first-person	singula	own
123	5	something I wanted to do less	first-person	singula	own
124	5	I was wrong time	first-person	singula	own

Figure 11. Screenshot of overview of all voice statements emerging from 2nd Listen of autoethnographic reflections compiled into one spreadsheet.

This spreadsheet in Figure 11 contains the same information as in Figure 10 above, with the addition of the number of the reflection (e.g., Snorkel #5) corresponding to each voice statement in Column A. Doing so enabled me to have an overall sense of the different voices and standpoints across the reflections.

6.2.4.3. Trail of evidence: 3rd Listen

During the 3rd Listen, I highlighted passages containing mentions of other people, of more-than-human beings, or of the natural environment more broadly. Figure 12 below is the spreadsheet I created for the 3rd Listen conducted for the written reflection of Snorkel #5.

Column A contains the highlighted passage. Because of the high degree of overlap among the highlighted quotes, rather than coding every quote individually, in Column C I have inserted an overview of the trends I noticed across the highlighted quotes in each written reflection. These include trends in the use of imagery and language to describe other people or more-than-human beings. After writing an overview of the trends for each written reflection, I began to notice that the trends that were emerging were the things that I tended to take note of most keenly – the things that were most alive to me. At the bottom of the overview of trends, then, I briefly summarised the trends in response to the question, “What is alive to me?”

	A	B	C
1	Quote		Trends
2	the weather was atrocious		Lots of imagery to highlight the unpleasantness of the day and the pleasantness of the snorkel itself
3	it had been raining the whole day before, a torrential downpour, really, and it was		
4	we drove down a winding coastal path down to the sea		Biblical language in more-than-human encounter alludes to deeply spiritual nature of encounter
5	the lashing rain		
6	the driving wind		The conditions necessary to enable a deeply meaningful more-than-human encounter: the transitory temporality of it ('for one moment'), the spatial component ('you have suspended eye level') of being on the same level as something else, the lack of fear on both sides - all the things that converge to make this moment possible; also, something that is so transitory but that stays with me long after it is over
7	the waves cutting up into the air like sharp gray glass		
8	the pebbles and winkles jabbing, slip-sliding underfoot		Mentions of other people and what they are doing; my place in these interactions begins to emerge: the five of us huddled, our bodies slowly sinking, waving at each other
9	the five of us huddled under the shelter of the raised door of the car boot		
10	the shore - the pebble- and wrinkle- and wrack-strewn shore		Highly evocative language to make sense of the experience of water coming at me from all sides - language as a sense-making tool once again
11	our bodies slowly sinking into the cold, clear water		
12	and what water it was		What is alive to me? The terrible weather, the strengthening social ties, the immense presence of the water, the shag
13	nets of spaghetti seaweed and serrated wrack		
14	a ridge of bare stone		
15	the clarity that comes when there is water coming down from the sky and water coming up from the sea and you are all there is keeping the masses and masses of water from meeting		
16	and then you slip under and the waters come together and you see that it is good		
17	a shag perches on the ridge next to you		
18	you come closer and closer, expecting it to fly off, but it remains on the ridge until you are just inches away, looking into its ocean eyes		
19	the shag is not scared of you		
20	you are not scared of the shag		
21	for one moment, as the waves lift you up and you hang suspended eye level with the shag, you are the shag and the shag is you		
22	then the water sucks you downwards again, and you are off into the shallows		
23	the shag is perched in the same place		
24	glancing back all the time to see if the shag is still there		
25	the shag is still there as we drive away		
26	J drops me off by my hotel, and the children and I wave at each other until the car is out of sight		

Figure 12. Screenshot of spreadsheet corresponding to trends emerging from the 3rd Listen of the autoethnographic snorkelling reflections.

Similar to the previous listens, I compiled all the quotes and trends from each individual spreadsheet into a new spreadsheet, to give me an overall view of all the trends across the reflections. Figure 13 below shows this spreadsheet. Column A contains the trends in Column C from Figure 12 above, along with the number of the reflection (e.g., Snorkel #5) in Column B. In Column C I have assigned a meta-code to the trend in Column A. Finally, in Column F I have inserted the succinct summary of trends ('What is alive to me?'), with the corresponding number of the reflection in Column E. Inserting the meta-codes and the summaries of the trends allowed me to get a sense of overarching patterns emerging from the trends in my writing on other people and other more-than-humans.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Trend	Note	Meta coding		Note	What is alive to me?
2	Trying to make sense of deeply unfamiliar environment by pondering on what lessons I can glean from it and how I can apply these lessons in my life	1	Sense-making through reflection		1	The water, the motion and movement of everything, what it means for a new perspective, a watery perspective
3	Frequent mentions of movement and motion to highlight unfamiliarity of environment	1	Language		2	The natural scenery, the water, the algae, the light, the meaning of all of it for my own shifting and broadening perception of things
4	What is alive to me? The water, the motion and movement of everything, what it means for a new perspective, a watery perspective	1	What is alive to me?		3	The waves, the kelp and seagrass, the mountains, the cormorants
5	Shifting between evocative and technical language when describing the environment	2	Language		4	The water, the kelp, the fish, the vivid relationships with others that are beginning to emerge
6	I begin to wax poetic on the virtues of the cold water; more evocative language to mirror my heightened perception and enthusiasm of the cold water	2	Language		5	The terrible weather, the strengthening social ties, the immense presence of the water, the shag
7	Further evocative language to describe the clarity of water; making sense of this clarity, which is wholly unfamiliar to me on land, and trying to make sense of what it means, or trying to describe this different experience using different terms to reflect this difference	2	Language		6	The people, the strengthening social ties, the cold water, the shark, the changes within myself
8	Also many metaphors used as a way to provide myself a familiar frame of reference in these experiences which are so different and unfamiliar; language is used as a sense-making tool here	2	Language		7	People and what they do, strengthening social ties, the multi-sensory experience of snorkelling
9	What is alive to me? The natural scenery, the water, the algae, the light, the meaning of all of it for my own shifting and broadening perception of things	2	What is alive to me?		8	The extreme cold of the water, strengthening social ties, people and their actions, sharks
10	Shift between evocative and technical language again	3	Language			
11	First mention here of other people (feeling safe in company); not talking about other people explicitly but rather my own feelings of being with them	3	Social relationships			
12	What is alive to me? The waves, the kelp and seagrass, the mountains, the cormorants	3	What is alive to me?			
13	The cold of the water is a big theme	4	Language			
14	Lots of natural imagery, motion	4	Language			
15	A lot more mention of social bonds emerging; building trust with others through spending time with	4	Social relationships			
16	Specific people begin to be mentioned; I begin to describe what they do	4	Social relationships			
17	I describe the scene in rich imagery to highlight the contrast between the desolate outdoors and the warm and cosy indoors	4	Language			
18	I am sense-making here; making sense of these intense new social connections by considering their place in the bigger picture, particularly in terms of my research and what these deepening relationships mean for the way I conduct research - again, an exercise in sense-making and making sense of the lessons I am learning and trying to fit them into a bigger context	4	Sense-making through reflection			
19	What is alive to me? The water, the kelp, the fish, the vivid relationships with others that are beginning to emerge	4	What is alive to me?			
20	Lots of imagery to highlight the unpleasantness of the day and the pleasantness of the snorkel itself	5	Language			
21	Biblical language in more-than-human encounter alludes to deeply spiritual nature of encounter	5	Language			

Figure 13. Screenshot of spreadsheet containing overview of all trends emerging during the 3rd Listen across all autoethnographic reflections.

6.2.4.4. Trail of evidence: 4th Listen

The 4th Listen involved two strands of analysis: first, an analysis of the specific linguistic devices I used in my writing; and second, an analysis of the tone of voice I used in my writing. In the sub-sections below I evidence these two strands of analysis.

6.2.4.4.1. Analysis of linguistic devices

Figure 14 below is the spreadsheet I created for the 4th Listen conducted for the written reflection of Snorkel #5. Column A contains the highlighted passage, and Column B notes the linguistic device used in the passage (e.g., imagery). Once I completed Columns A and B for each written reflection, I began to notice that each instance of a linguistic device *did* something, served some purpose, whether to emphasise a mood or illustrate a setting or was simply a stylistic choice. Once I realised this, I went back and added my interpretations of what each linguistic device did in Column C; this was a form of meta-coding that helped me see trends across trends. Finally, in Column E I summarised the trends in the use of language that stood out in my writing.

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Quote	Emotional resonance	What does it do?		Language
2	the lashing rain, the driving wind	Imagery + repetition	Emphasising bad weather		Informal language to report on general context
3	the waves cutting up into the air like sharp gray glass	Imagery + simile	Emphasising bad weather		
4	the pebbles and wrinkles jabbing, slip-sliding underfoot	Imagery + wordplay: consonance	Emphasising bad weather		Evocative language rich in imagery for natural descriptions
5			Wordplay = just for fun		
6	the shore - the pebble- and wrinkle- and wrack-strewn shore	Imagery + repetition	Illustrating the varied shoreline		Dynamic action verbs used when describing other people (we drove down, we stripped down, we walked down, our bodies slowly sinking, we must go, I drops me off)
7	and what water it was	Simple sentence	Emphasising the water		
8	a feeling like a stubbornness came in like a tide	Simile	Comparison		
9	I was going to do it. I could do it. And I did do it.	Repetition + simple sentence	Emphasising determination and triumph		
10	nets of spaghetti seaweed and serrated wrack	Imagery	Bringing environment to life		
11	wondering at my hands... wondering that they didn't... wondering at the clarity...	Repetition	Emphasising my feeling of wonder		Switch from 1st to 2nd person and from past to present tense when describing more-than-human encounter: suggesting the transient but outside-of-time feeling of the experience
12	when there is water coming down from the sky and water coming up from the sea and you are all there is keeping the masses and masses of water from meeting	Repetition + polysyndeton	Illustrating and emphasising the dynamism and all-encompassing water		
13	and then you slip under and the waters come together and you see that it is good	Polysyndeton + repetition	Reflecting dynamism of moment; Biblical allusions		Biblical language used to describe more-than-human experience: pointing to spiritual nature of experience
14	and you come up for air and feel that you are still alive, gloriously, aching cold but alive, and you see that it is good	Polysyndeton + asyndeton + repetition	Reflecting dynamism of moment; Biblical allusions		
15	and a shag perches on the ridge next to you, and you come closer and closer, expecting it to fly off, but it remains on the ridge until you are just inches away, looking into its ocean eyes	Polysyndeton + metaphor	Slowing pacing way down to bring attention to one specific moment and stretching out that moment		Complex sentence rhythm and variation to speed up and slow down pacing
16	The shag is not scared of you. You are not scared of the shag.	Simple sentence + repetition	Shifting focus to one specific matter		
17	you are the shag and the shag is you	Repetition	Emphasising interrelation		
18	then the water sucks you downwards again, and you are off into the shallows, and the shag is perched in the same place	Polysyndeton	Reflecting dynamism of moment		
19	the children are cold now, and we must go	Simple sentence	Stylistic choice		
20	to see if the shag is still there. It is still there... The shag is still there	Repetition	Emphasising focus on shag and the impression made by it		
21	the skylight above letting out the rising steam like a kettle	Simile	Comparison		
22	I feel as if I'm edging towards something	Simile	Comparison		
	each swim is like a brick laid onto a subtle structure under the waves of my consciousness	Simile + metaphor	Comparison		

Figure 14. Screenshot of spreadsheet of linguistic devices used in autoethnographic snorkelling reflections.

I then compiled the information from the spreadsheets of all the written reflections, seen in Figure 15 below. This spreadsheet included all the highlighted passages, corresponding linguistic devices, and my interpretations of what these device do (in Columns A, B, and C, respectively), with the addition of the number of the written reflection (e.g., Snorkel #5) in Column D. I organised the spreadsheet into the alphabetical order of the linguistic devices (Column B), for my own ease of use. This spreadsheet gave me a sense of the overall trends in my use of particular linguistic devices, as well as for what purpose I used these devices. Tables 9 and 10 of linguistic devices in Section 6.6. are derived from this spreadsheet.

	A	B	C	D
1	Quote	Emotional resonance	What does it do?	Note
2	the food eaten, the tea drunk, nothing remains now but to...	Asyndeton	Speeding up pacing after long, slow	8
3	everything billowing, frond and stipe and epiphyte	Imagery	Bringing environment to life	1
4	under the water it was relatively bare; mostly rocks and sea spaghetti and wrack, and everything covered by a dusty yellow film of algae	Imagery	Bringing environment to life	2
5	tall mountains and a waterfall visible on the far side, and cormorants climbing up the next rocky island	Imagery	Bringing environment to life	3
6	A lonely farmhouse at the foot of the mountain; door open to let in the last of the autumn light and warmth. A table spread of fresh-baked scones, tea, cheese, bread. Laughter and conversation around the table. The gentle warmth radiating from an ancient Stanley stove.	Imagery	Illustrating warm + convivial atmosphere of social event	4
7	nets of spaghetti seaweed and serrated wrack	Imagery	Bringing environment to life	5
8	a large brown shape swam by sinuously, at ease	Imagery	Bringing environment to life	6
9	sunny days and lovely wild wind-whipping ones	Imagery	Bringing environment to life	6
10	always scurrying off to hide behind piles of rocks or dripping all over the inside of D's van	Imagery	Illustrating my early fears of changing in front of others	6
11	the gentle rocking of the bus on the bumpy roads	Imagery	Bringing scene to life	6
12	the sea is wild beyond the rocky reef, but in the sheltered arc of the bay it's calm	Imagery	Bringing environment to life	7
13	it is warm and pleasant to wade through, gently catching at our feet and wrapping around our legs	Imagery	Evoking sensory aspects	7
14	the wind most always blows in from the Atlantic to the west, but it is a rare and icy east wind today	Imagery	Bringing environment to life	8
15	We form a circle around the picnic table laden with treats: P has brought cashew energy balls, her cousin apples and a basket of thermoses filled with hot water and tea; D has brought flaky Danishes and apples from their garden, and T ham and cheese sandwiches; my offering is a humble loaf of brown soda bread and sliced cheddar. We huddle closer, our backs to the wind, enjoying hot tea and company. I don't know how I will bring myself to go in the water today.	Imagery	Illustrating warmth + cosiness of relationship and convivial emotion as a contrast to the freezing wind and water temperatures	8
16	columns of billowing wrack and sea-oak; wrasse swim under me through the seagrass	Imagery	Bringing environment to life	8
17	swimming circles on the seabed	Imagery	Bringing environment to life	8
18	their smooth and circular undulations mesmerising us	Imagery	Bringing environment to life	8
19	a long hot shower, steam rising and water scalding my skin	Imagery	Bringing scene to life	8
20	I think about the sharks still, turning circles in the dark water	Imagery	Evoking emotions about sharks	8
21	when the sun broke through the clouds it set everything alight, and all the rocks seemed aflame and golden and the water took on a clarity not found	Imagery + polysyndeton	Bringing environment to life	2

Figure 15. Screenshot of spreadsheet containing overview of all linguistic devices used across all autoethnographic snorkelling reflections.

6.2.4.4.2. Analysis of tone of voice

To understand the overall tone of voice I used throughout my writing, I returned to Column E in Figure 14 above. I extracted the information in this column from the spreadsheets of all the written reflections, and organised it into a new spreadsheet, seen in Figure 16 below. Column A indicates the number of the written reflection (e.g., Snorkel #5), while the information in Column B is the same information found in Column E in Figure 14 above. Similar to what I realised about linguistic devices, I noticed that my use of particular tones of voice *did* something; I put my interpretation of what each tone of voice did in Column C. Doing so was a form of meta-coding that gave me a sense of overarching patterns in my use of different tones of voice. Table 11 of tones of voice in Section 6.6. below is derived from this spreadsheet.

A	B	C
1	Note Trend	Tone/language
1	1 Formal, academic tone for reflecting on meaning of embodied experience & its place in a 'bigger picture'	Academic tone for making sense of an experience and reflecting on its place in a 'bigger picture' or context
2	2 Academic language to reflect on meaning + bigger picture of experience	Academic tone for making sense of an experience and reflecting on its place in a 'bigger picture' or context
3	4 Academic tone to reflect on meaning + bigger picture + implications of building trust + relationships with research participants	Academic tone for making sense of an experience and reflecting on its place in a 'bigger picture' or context
4	5 Biblical language used to describe more-than-human experience: pointing to spiritual nature of experience	Biblical language to allude to the spiritual nature of a more-than-human encounter
5	2 Poetic language used for reflecting on the embodied effects of repeated exposure to cold water	Evocative language to make sense of subjective experience
6	1 Evocative language for natural descriptions	Evocative language when describing natural scenery
7	2 Evocative language rich in imagery for natural descriptions	Evocative language when describing natural scenery
8	3 Evocative language rich in imagery for natural descriptions	Evocative language when describing natural scenery
9	5 Evocative language rich in imagery for natural descriptions	Evocative language when describing natural scenery
10	7 Evocative language rich in imagery for natural descriptions	Evocative language when describing natural scenery
11	8 Evocative language rich in imagery for natural descriptions	Evocative language when describing natural scenery
12	1 Informal tone to provide general context	Informal tone for general context
13	3 Informal language to report on general context	Informal tone for general context
14	4 Informal language to report on general context	Informal tone for general context
15	5 Informal language to report on general context	Informal tone for general context
16	6 Informal language to report on general context	Informal tone for general context
17	8 Informal language to report general context	Informal tone for general context
18	6 Informal language to reflect on changes and shifting things within myself	Informal tone for reflecting on personal things just for me
19	4 Dynamic action verbs used when describing other people (T made some threats, P invited everyone)	Matter-of-fact tone when writing about other individuals
20	5 Dynamic action verbs used when describing other people (we drove down, we stripped down, we walked down, our bodies slowly sinking, we must go, J drops me off)	Matter-of-fact tone when writing about other individuals
21	6 Dynamic action verbs used when describing other people (she picked me up, we drove over, we got into our wetsuits)	Matter-of-fact tone when writing about other individuals
22	7 Dynamic action verbs used when describing other people (J has brought, P enjoys, J and the children search, J goes out, M gets cold, she sings, we wind down, we climb, we stand, we pack)	Matter-of-fact tone when writing about other individuals
23		

Figure 16. Screenshot of spreadsheet of patterns in tone of voice used across all autoethnographic snorkelling reflections.

6.2.4.5. Trail of evidence: reflexive component

Figure 7b above shows the reflexive notes I made for each written reflection throughout the Listens. Once I completed all the Listens, I entered the reflexive notes for each reflection into a corresponding spreadsheet, seen in Figure 17 below. Column A indicates the 'Listen' (e.g., 1st Listen, 2nd Listen), while Column B contains the reflexive notes. In Column D, I assigned meta-codes to the reflexive notes, to get a sense of the different themes and topics that tended to trigger me to think reflexively.

	A	B	C	D
1	Listen	Notes		
2	1	I smile as I read this because I can tell from my writing that I was reading <i>The Waves</i> by Virginia Woolf at the time - at times I try to do repetition like her		Reflecting on writing
3		This day was a turning point for me in the fieldwork - from a social aspect, it was my first time without D + T but only D's family; from the aspect also of proving to myself that I can indeed swim in the most miserable conditions --> this was the biggest thing, one of the snorkels that stays in my memory the most		Remembering
4		I remember dreading going in, but then not wanting to come out		Remembering
5		And this encounter with a shag that was almost spiritual in nature; I had such a feeling of connection, of "one-ness" that stayed with me long after I left... a deeply spiritual, embodied, emotional experience... being buoyed up + down by the waves, water coming at me from all sides, I felt like only one small moving part in a great big something wholly		Reflecting on more-than-human encounter
6		Thinking of how to represent stories; or, to go back through the analysis horizontally and also explore horizontal storylines (ex. the body, social bonds, more-than-human) --> how these change over time		Reflecting on writing
7		Representing a story in multiple dimensions; vertically, down the story (for an individual story's plotline); as well as horizontally across stories - what changes? What stays the same? What does it all mean?		Reflecting on writing
8	2	Fascinating use of the 2nd person to describe more-than-human encounter --> sticks out A LOT in a sea of first-person statements		Reflecting on writing
9	3	A lot more evocative language here to describe the atmosphere, the more-than-human encounter		
10		Imagery used to highlight the misery of the day and the contrast of it to my own enjoyment + fun of it		
11		Evocative biblical language alluding to powerfully spiritual feeling of the encounter		
12		"For one moment... as you hand suspended..." --> the conditions aligning for the experience; the fleeting + transitory nature of it; the temporal + spatial conditions that play a role in the encounter...		Reflecting on more-than-human encounter
13		More-than-human mentions: sometimes used as imagery, sometimes to mirror my own thoughts, sometimes as a genuine, deep encounter - multiple "uses"		Reflecting on writing
14	4	This one was VERY interesting to analyse - so many stylistic devices, such complexity, many layers		Reflecting on writing
15		Devices used: metaphors, similes, polysyndeton (to slow down pacing), asyndeton (to quicken pacing), imagery, repetition, switching of standpoints + tenses, varied sentence structure (syntax)		
16		Incredibly complex piece of writing to fully capture complex, transcendental more-than-human experience		
17		Biblical language (repetition + polysyndeton) to allude to spiritual nature		
18		Switch from past to present tense --> shows that, while encounter happened, it did not stay in the past; it is always happening inside me		

Figure 17. Screenshot of spreadsheet containing reflexive notes made for a given autoethnographic snorkelling reflection during each Listen.

Then, I created a new spreadsheet, seen in Figure 18 on the next page, into which I compiled the reflexive notes I took for all the written reflections. Column A contains the meta-codes found in Column D in Figure 17 above, and Column B provides examples for each meta-code. I created this spreadsheet for my own convenience, to have an overview of the trends in my reflexive notes and to begin to reflect on why I was being reflexive about these things in particular.

	A	B
1	Trend	Example
2	Remembering	Reading this, I have SUCH a clear memory of being there; even the play of sunlight on the yellow algae on the rocks, I remember it...
3	Nostalgia	It brings me such joy to read these notes and remembering such wonderful times. That's my overall feeling. Warm + fuzzy.
4	Reflecting on omissions	I remember this day; we found a huge oyster - why did I leave that out? Maybe I wasn't too impressed by a singular oyster. But the clarity of the day and of the water remain crystal-clear. Interesting, the things we take away from experiences, and what we choose to leave out. Maybe I didn't think the oyster was a big deal. Maybe I was too excited by and focused on my own bodily experience to take much note of anything, at this very early stage... As the weeks pass I mention other beings more, as I focus on myself less and take note of other things more...
5	Reflecting on emergence of particular themes	But it's not until I list all the things I marked that I see just how prominently the body features; what happens when it becomes disoriented, what these experiences can mean... I'm surprised, because it didn't jump out at me until I saw it listed there in front of me.
6	Reflecting on positionality	Also noticing the difficulty of separating my own self from my position as a researcher - something that I have to negotiate constantly.
7	Reflecting on writing	When I write about other people + other more than humans, it is always doing something - imagery, illustrating a point, mirroring my internal state, making a point - what is this doing? Why am I mentioning the things I'm mentioning?
8	Reflecting on more-than-human encounter	"For one moment... as you hand suspended..." --> the conditions aligning for the experience; the fleeting + transitory nature of it; the temporal + spatial conditions that play a role in the encounter...
9	Reflecting on reading notes	It's so interesting to read these notes one after the other in such short succession; as weeks and months collapse into hours, changes are more readily visible.
10	Reflecting on voice	There is a really determined voice starting to emerge - the cold brings out something brave in me! Resonates with "I could do it - I did do it" :)
11	Reflecting on relationships	Very interesting to see the development of different kinds of social bonds; from making plans + travelling together, to enduring + rejoicing in bad weather together; from changing in front of each other, to breaking bread together; bonding over mutual awe + wonder at the natural world... all the little things that give shape to emotional

Figure 18. Screenshot of spreadsheet containing overview of trends in reflexive notes made across all autoethnographic snorkelling reflections.

6.3. Findings: The 1st Listen

6.3.1. Significant themes

The above sections demonstrate the *work* of researching emotion, offering a detailed methodological account of this work (also corresponding to research aim (a) of developing a method for researching emotion). The 1st Listen (see Table 6 above) involved listening for the plot, the story, and the overarching themes emerging from each reflection. Figure 19 below shows the main themes emerging from the 1st Listen in order of the frequency by which they are found in the material. *More-than-human*, the most significant theme emerging across the reflections of the diary material, encompassed a range of more-than-human subjects, from brief mentions of specific species (e.g., of animals, plants, and algae), to long-winded evocative descriptions of the natural environment (e.g., mountain ranges, the bay) to detailed accounts of profound encounters with the more-than-human (e.g., cormorants, small-spotted catsharks).

There is a remarkably wide gap between *more-than-human* and the three next most significant themes, *cold-water euphoria*, *natural imagery*, and *social bonding*. While *more-than-human* and *natural imagery* may both deal with similar subjects, there is a difference in how I have approached these in my writing. *More-than-human* meaningfully takes note of or engages with a particular more-than-human subject (e.g., “never did I think there would be sharks gliding like angels under the surface”). *Natural imagery*, on the other hand, is purely descriptive and uses imagery to illustrate the natural setting (e.g., “the pebbles and winkles jabbing, slip-sliding underfoot”). These themes, in turn, are followed by *the body*, *description of water*, *weather conditions*, *water – cold*, *movement*, *anticipation of cold water*, *imagery*, *changing in front of others*, *unfamiliarity*, and *others’ activities*. There are many more minor themes, but the aforementioned are the most significant.

6.3.2. Significant themes across time

Figure 9, however, does not give us the full picture. As I explain in Section 6.3.1. above, the reflections were written sequentially across the span of several months, therefore taking a longitudinal perspective may reveal a temporal dimension to emotions that might not be apparent from a ‘snapshot in time’ analysis. Figure 20 below addresses this temporal dimension by plotting the distribution of the frequencies of the above themes across the reflections and, hence, across time. In doing so, we can begin to see not only *what* themes emerge as significant, but also *when* they emerge as such, and how the temporal trajectories of the themes move in relation to one another, whether by running parallelly, diverging, or converging with each other.

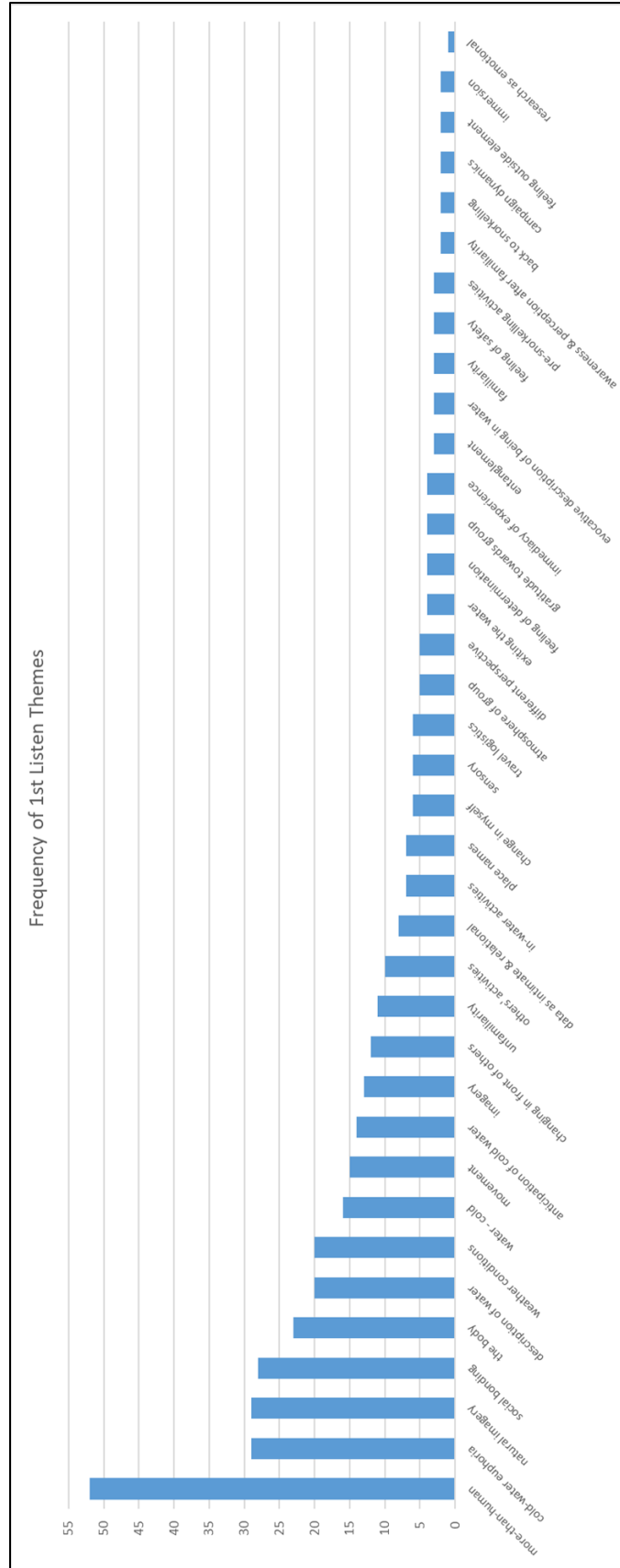


Figure 19. Frequency of themes emerging from the 1st Listen of the autoethnographic snorkelling reflections.

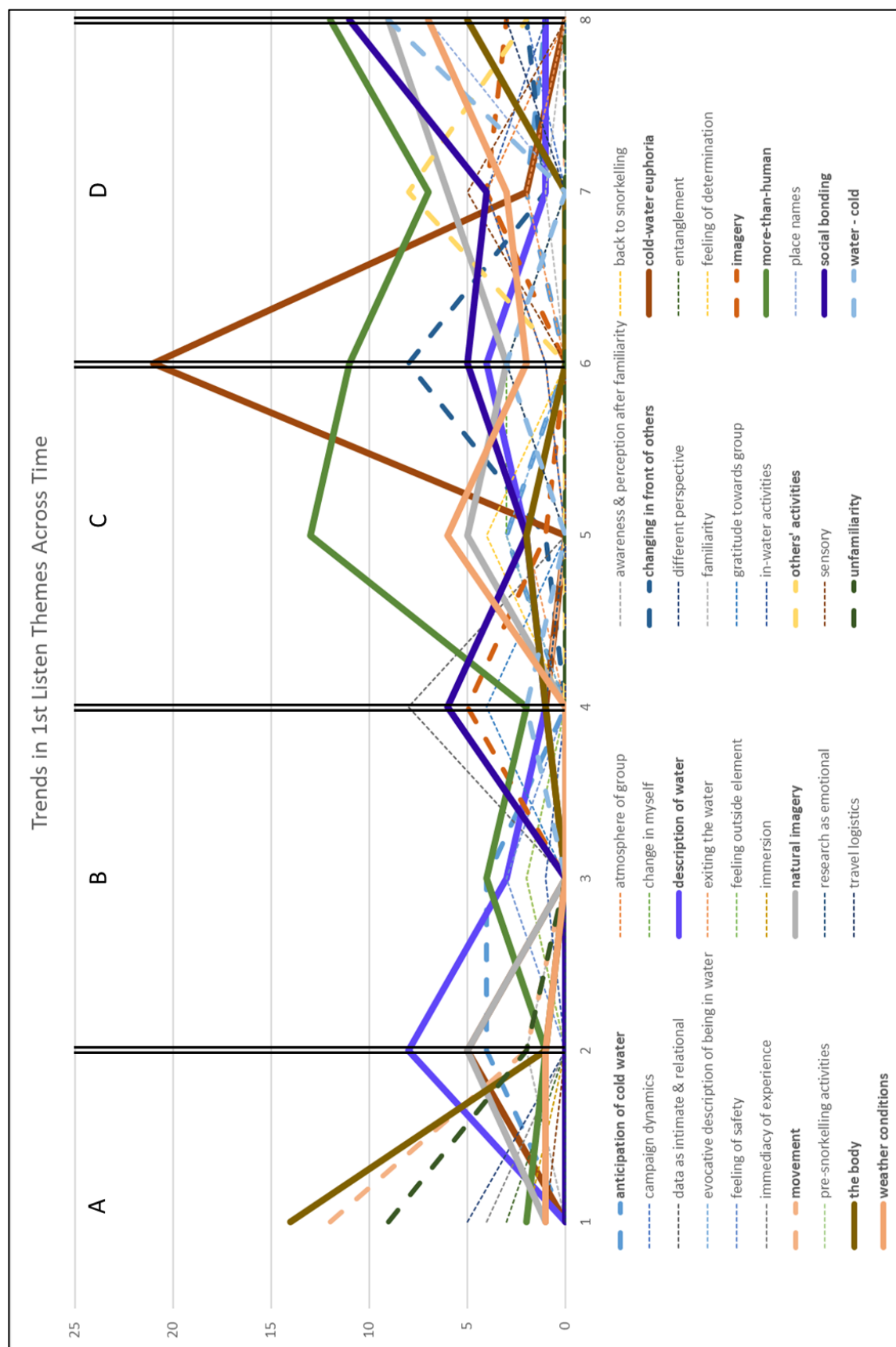


Figure 20. Distribution across time of all themes emerging from the 1st Listen of the autoethnographic snorkelling reflections. Line thickness corresponds to significance of theme: thick, solid lines indicate highest significance; thin, dashed lines indicate medium significance; and the thinnest, dotted lines indicate least significance. Quartiles A-D have been inserted for convenience when referencing the contents of this figure in the main body of the thesis. The y-axis corresponds to number of mentions of a theme.

There are several noteworthy temporal trends in Figure 20. In Quartile A, there is a drastic decrease from the initially high frequencies of *the body*, *movement*, and *unfamiliarity*, and an upward spike in *description of water* and *natural imagery*. This corresponds to the initial phase of my snorkelling experience, which was a period of acclimatising to a wholly new and unfamiliar social and environmental context. In other words, in Snorkel #1, I was completely blown away by the sheer cold of the water; consequently, in my reflections I wrote about a pervading sense of unfamiliarity, compounded by the cold and the constant movement of everything underwater, and how even my own body felt unfamiliar as its capabilities and sensations changed and adapted in response to this new context. By Snorkel #2, however, I knew what to expect. Even though I still wanted to scream when entering the cold water, I didn't feel as disoriented as the first time; and because of this I was able to let go of the focus on my body and to begin to take note of the things around me for the first time. This is the point at which brief mentions of the natural scenery around me begin to appear in my reflections.

In Quartile B there is some fluctuation, with *description of water* and *more-than-human* decreasing slightly and *social bonding* increasing slightly. This reflects the internal shift from disorientation to orientation; while I grew more familiar with the environment, and began to take note of the things I saw around me in the water, I also became more comfortable with the other individuals in the snorkelling group, and they in turn became more comfortable with me. After Snorkel #4, for instance, one of the group members invited everyone present, including me, to their house for tea; as a result, my post-snorkel reflection focused less on the environmental context of the snorkel and more on the social context of going to someone's house for tea. The post-snorkel picnics and teas were social occasions; at the same time, they functioned as an extension of what Rossiter et al. (2015) term a 'marine-space assemblage,' in which the social and ecological components are deeply intertwined, and in which one cannot be fully understood without the other. Indeed, Rossiter et al. (2015) argue:

While regulatory regimes are overtly – and overly – concerned with extensive spaces – that is, what can be measured, cordoned off, and divided into “manageable” areas – *intensive spaces of the affectual and emotional elements of everyday life must also be accounted for...* In other words, for policy to be truly effective it must account for what Dallman et al. (2014, p. 42) have called “a political ecology of emotion,” which “offers to... resource policy decision making... the ability to dive beneath the surface to uncover multi-layered relationships, perspectives and meanings of place. (p. 146, emphasis mine)

This understanding of marine space as not only a material, ecological space but as a deeply human space resonates with the perspective of Peters and Steinberg (2019, p. 13) of 'the ocean in excess,' as a space that extends far beyond its liquid materiality, that in turn requires a 'more-than-wet' mode of thinking

that demands we “not take it [the ocean] as an abstract set of coordinates within which resources can be found, but as a space of life that we must engage with sustainably and responsibly.” What would it mean for the ocean to be governed as ‘a space of life,’ as a deeply *felt* space that extends beyond its watery margins and into human hearts?

In Quartile C, then, there is a dramatic increase in *more-than-human* and *cold-water euphoria* as these themes reach their peaks in Snorkel #5 and #6, respectively. These correspond with two events (more on these to follow) that are, for me, turning points in the snorkelling timeline: a profound, almost spiritual more-than-human encounter in Snorkel #5; and a sudden shift in my attitude towards the cold water, from deep aversion and dread to genuine exhilaration and eager anticipation, in Snorkel #6. Finally, in Quartile D, there is a sharp decrease in *cold-water euphoria*, and a drop followed by an increase in *more-than-human*, *social bonding*, and *weather conditions*. This reflects the extreme cold²⁸ of the late October water, which went beyond euphoria and into physical pain; another deeply meaningful more-than-human encounter; and the pre-snorkel picnic and tea we had as a group to warm up (and to psych ourselves up for a freezing swim).

Thus, by accounting for the temporal dimension of autoethnographic data, it is possible to track how perceptions and emotions – and *emoceans* – change over time, and what factors might be driving these changes, whether environmental conditions, social relationships, profound personal experiences, or any other number of things that might contribute to shifts in one’s consciousness. Further, this temporal perspective emphasised the importance of understanding emotional connections – and *emoceans* – as dynamic, relational, constantly-evolving processes, which has bearing on how they may be perceived by and integrated into marine governance.

“The ecological crisis,” writes DesRoches (2010, p. 141, emphasis mine), “is about the way we think and act; it is a crisis of the mind and soul, of *our very consciousness*.” The challenge of governance, then, lies in addressing an ecological crisis that is at the same time a crisis of consciousness. What is needed, argues DesRoches (2010, p. 30), is “a deep shift in our own consciousness based on a new story, one based on a sense of reverence and awe rooted in our connected relationship with the planet.” Tracing emotions over time in an autoethnographic, reflexive manner may give us a deeper understanding of what triggers shifts in consciousness (and when). While there are issues around decontextualising and generalising autoethnographic data, such an understanding may help us find – or create – new stories for ourselves.

²⁸ And my woefully inadequate 2mm shortie wetsuit; and the gloves and hood that, while very generously lent to me, were, on the whole, more hole than neoprene.

Writing on the need to look beyond accepted forms of knowledge to imagine different governance futures, Peters (2020) writes:

Undertaking this work creates space to see or make visible other organizations of governance. This can occur through *a tracing of stories, a listening to new narratives*, an openness to future scenarios, built through an array of data including official records, archives, mind maps, interviews, oral histories and other qualitative as well as quantitative data sources, including modes of scenario formation to imagine oceans differently through time. (p. 6, emphasis mine)

The importance of stories in marine governance, then, should not be overlooked (see Chapter 5 for work on storytelling, for example Harris, 2022 and Wiebe, 2019). Tracing the emotions shifting across existing stories may point us in the direction of new stories and different futures.

6.4. Findings: The 2nd Listen

The 2nd Listen (see Table 6 above) involved listening for self, for how I spoke about myself on my own terms, in my own body, and for the different voices in which I wrote the reflections. While I had a straightforward plan for the 2nd Listen, it didn't unfold according to plan, and left me with more questions than answers. In this sub-section I reflect on the challenges and opportunities for reflection that the 2nd Listen presented, and on my approach to constructing voice poems that reflect these complexities.

6.4.1. Tracing insider/outsider voices; or, “What *are* you?”

When I was creating the analysis protocol for this chapter, my plan was to conduct the 2nd Listen as I did in Chapter 4, by tracing voice statements and constructing voice poems as a way of accessing an individual's (in this case, my own) sense of self. Very quickly, however, I realised that I would not be able to conduct the same in-depth analysis of voice as I did in Chapter 4. This is because, as I set out on the 2nd Listen, highlighting voice statements and coding them in a spreadsheet, I began to notice that the overwhelming majority of the voice statements were the singular first-person ‘I’ – not surprising for autoethnographic reflections, but nevertheless something I hadn't taken into account when planning the LG analysis protocol.

Initially I categorised the use of the ‘I’ into three and distinct voices: *own voice*, *researcher voice*, and, when it was too difficult to distinguish between the two, *own & researcher voice*, which initially resonated with the concepts of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ in ethnographic research (Jabiri, 2023). As I moved through the analysis, however, it became clear to me that my subjective experiences and emotions were in fact

deeply entwined with my positionality, and my position was a constantly shifting one. This made me pause and ask myself, “Just because I *can* separate these voices, does that mean I *should* separate them? And the answer was very clearly, “No.” After Snorkel #6, for instance, I use this ‘I’ voice write about a deeply personal change within myself:

I changed on the beach in full view of the public walkway (in my towel, of course). When I first started snorkelling, I was extremely private about changing, always scurrying off to hide behind piles of rocks or dripping all over the inside of D's van to change; I couldn't bear the thought of changing in front of others. But somehow, over the weeks, this has faded away. Now I just hold my towel up around myself, holding the corners together in my mouth as I change out of my swimsuit back into dry things. I don't know if it's because I feel more comfortable with the people in the group, or because I feel more comfortable in my own body the more I swim, but something has changed and I don't feel as scared anymore.

Am I writing about my bodily experience in *own voice*, through an ‘insider’ perspective? Or am I using *researcher voice*, an ‘outsider’ perspective, to reflect on my fieldwork experience? Is there a difference – and is there perhaps an alternative? My understanding of the insider/outsider binary has been shaped by intersectional feminist literature (in line with the feminist ethic of care in this thesis), as well as my own lived experience of always living in the liminal spaces in between. Traditionally, ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ have been used as categories to indicate one’s position of difference or similarity in relation to a field or subject of ethnographic research. More recent work has critiqued this view, however, claiming that positionality is a highly nuanced and constant “negotiation of shifting positions” that goes beyond simplistic notions of difference and similarity (Dinçer, 2019; Griffin 2015, p. 16). Further critique has argued that “the insider/outsider dichotomy is nothing more than a reframing of the power relationship between researchers and research participants in terms of subject/object and self/other” (Jabiri, 2023, p. 79). Reinforcing asymmetrical power relations is not the only risk posed by this binary. By reducing the identities of researchers and research participants along inside/outside terms, this dichotomy also risks erasing the complexity of individual identities, as well as homogenising the collective identities of groups of highly heterogeneous individuals (Jabiri, 2023).

In the context of this research, it was vital to recognise that while all the individuals involved in the campaign shared a common desire to *do* something, they were a highly heterogeneous group. Indeed, while most of my research participants had been involved in the campaign, viewing myself purely as an outsider and them as insiders would have erased the rich, varied, and often conflicting opinions and perspectives of campaign members on different issues. Membership in the campaign did not automatically mean that different individuals shared the same views, or experienced the same emotional

connection to the marine environment, just as non-membership didn't mean that non-members didn't share similar views or emotions as members. Beyond personal views and emotional attachments, however, my research participants were insiders and outsiders in a variety of ways, to which my position was more similar or different. For instance, some participants were Irish, and some were not; some had been living in West Cork all their lives, while others had recently moved from another city in Ireland or a long time ago from abroad; some had families, some lived on their own; some were younger, some were older (see more on this heterogeneity in Chapter 5).

There were many points of similarity between myself and each individual, as well as many points of difference. In some ways, having lived in Ireland (and in County Cork in particular) for years, being familiar with local mannerisms, social norms, expectations, and linguistic particularities, I am an insider. In other, more visible ways, however, I am an outsider: my accent, my dark complexion and facial features, my ethnic background all instantly mark me as 'not from here.' At best, this prompts friendly curiosity and well-meaning but misguided comments ("Oh my god, I love your tan!"); and at worst it manifests in racist ("But you don't *look* Jewish!") and dehumanising ("What *are* you?") remarks. The lines between insider and outsider, then, are not so easy to draw. There is a third position, however; something that is neither one or the other but both at once; the position that straddles the middle ground, the space in between insider and outsider (Anzaldua, 1987; Dinçer, 2019; Jabiri, 2023).

As a multicultural, multi-ethnic, multilingual person, this in-between space is where I have sat, in many ways, all my life; it is a position constantly shifting in response to a situation or person, a liminal chameleon state of being. So what am I? I'm half-Greek and half-Turkish (which is not Cypriot, as many people automatically assume). But my Turkish side is actually Sephardic Jewish, so technically, while I have Turkish nationality, that side is ethnically Jewish and not Turkish (although trying to categorise these in terms of ethnicity is contentious in and of itself, especially because these specific categories have often been co-opted for nationalistic purposes, which is a can of worms I will not open here). The Greek side of the family, then, is Greek Orthodox and ethnically Greek, but my mother converted to Judaism before I was born; and being ethnically Greek without being Greek Orthodox is highly unusual. So, growing up in Turkey was kind of weird. I looked Turkish and sounded Turkish; but when, in elementary school, we were taught history, and learned that the Greeks had been our enemies for centuries, it felt like a rupture. I clearly remember the childhood crisis these history lessons caused; I remember coming home crying, genuinely believing that I was my own enemy. I've often been told the story of the time my Greek grandmother came to visit us in Istanbul, and I refused to talk to her, because I had discovered that Greeks

were the enemy. Spending time in Greece was just as weird: I was a little too Turkish to count as a real Greek. And moving away to the USA when I was nine was the weirdest of all. Sure, I attended a Jewish school; but these were all Ashkenazi Jews, with songs, foods, and customs so different from those of my family that, rather than making me feel included, only alienated me further. And on top of that, I looked different, too: I was a short, hairy, dark little girl in a sea of blond, light-skinned, hairless American children. I shaved my arms for years because a boy at this school called me a monkey. Now add moving to the Netherlands, then to Germany, then finally settling down in Ireland to the mix; and you can begin to see why someone might feel that it is appropriate to ask, “What *are* you?”

Childhood bullying and weird comments aside, what I mean to say is this: occupying the ‘in-between’ position, that is at the same time insider and outsider but also somehow neither, is not a theoretical exercise, or a position that I have adopted solely for the purposes of this project. It is the space I have occupied, and continue to occupy, all my life. Because of this lived and very much embodied experience it feels natural to not think in terms of insider and outsider. When considering the voices I use in my written reflections, then, whether *own voice*, *researcher voice*, or *own & researcher voice*, I do not attempt to separate them. Indeed, as Murray et al. (2025) write on moving beyond a binary insider/outsider conception of positionality in ocean literacy research,

using positionality as a reflexive practice to understand, as a researcher, how your worldviews and privilege can impact the research process can help to mitigate oppressive practices and ensure the research is honouring different knowledge systems. Being critically aware of our positionality can facilitate research environments that are more reciprocal and collaborative, giving space to participants to share their stories with openness and mutual understanding rather than enforcing knowledge frameworks that do not respectfully capture the complexities of different realities and ways of knowing. (p. 71)

This entire research has been a process of dwelling in the in-between space, of finding ways to sit with the discomfort of being neither one thing nor another (see ‘positionality statement’ in Chapter 3), and of following that discomfort down interesting paths. In this chapter, one such path has been poetry.

6.4.2. I-poems

For this 2nd Listen, due to the lack of ‘polyphonic’ voices (‘I,’ ‘you,’ ‘we,’ ‘they’) emerging through the analysis (as was the case in Chapter 4), I collated I-poems solely from the I-statements in my reflections. The first poem is from early on in the snorkelling timeline (Snorkel #3); the second, halfway through (Snorkel #5); and the third is from the final snorkel (Snorkel #8). The I-poems reflect the overarching shift in focus from describing my immediate bodily sensations, to making sense of these sensations within a

broader context, and finally to viewing myself and my body as embedded within webs of social, political and environmental relations.

Snorkel #3

I feel less apprehensive
I know it'll be cold
I also know
I'll feel amazing
I feel safe in company
I struggle against the surge
I clamber atop the rock

Snorkel #5

I'm not afraid to admit
I was dreading
I couldn't think
I wanted to do less
I was expecting

I was going to do it

I could do it

I did do it

I swam
I walk begrudgingly
I climb up
I am warm and dry
I feel as if
I'm edging towards something
I don't know exactly what

Snorkel #8

I don't know
I will bring myself
I strip down
I quickly put on
I walk down
I have a hard time putting on my fins
I call T over to help me
I can't help laughing
I topple backwards
I don't have to struggle
I dive fully
I swam
I had
I like to think
I've gotten used to the cold
I can think about
I swim over
I paddle over
I yell across the water
I'm heading back out
I turn around
I look down and see a shark
I shout over
I can't find them
I think
I lost them
I feel like
I am just waking up from a spell
I swim rapidly to shore
I am so cold
I need J's help
I strip down
I get the towel around me
I don't even feel it anymore
I finally get dressed
I accept gratefully
I climb
I have an hour to kill
I find a restaurant

I come home

I think about the sharks still

6.4.3. I-poems: another path to reflexivity?

As I mentioned above, due to the lack of ‘polyphonic’ voices in my reflections, I constructed poems using only the autoethnographic ‘I,’ thus reverting from voice poem back to I-poem. Coming to see the value of these I-poems has been challenging; I have been judging them like I judged the voice poems I created for the LG 1, in terms of their ability to communicate something about the data. While they certainly represented my subjective experiences as a researcher in ‘the field,’ I didn’t feel that the poems were communicating something in a new way. Perhaps this was because my snorkelling reflections were already in the form of creative writing, and these I-poems felt like a repackaging of this writing that didn’t particularly add value or emotional weight to what I had already written. Leggo (2012, p. 143, emphasis mine) writes about poetic inquiry: “I no longer ask, Is this a *good* poem? I ask, What is this poem *good for*?” I did not feel that this was ‘good’ poetry in the traditional sense (Hawkins, 2020; Jaeger, 2025; Madge, 2014).

However, I continued to reflect on this question, returning always to the question, ‘What are these poems *good for*?’ I didn’t feel that they were good for communicating information (in this particular instance), but they must have been good for *something* – but what? And then it clicked: only by tracing the autoethnographic ‘I’ and constructing the poetry did I come to the realisation that I was writing in different first-person voices (*own voice, researcher voice, own & researcher voice*). This led me to the conclusion that I shouldn’t be separating these voices, and, in turn, allowed me to reflect more deeply on my insider/outsider/in-between positionality as a researcher and as someone who has always dwelled in this in-between place. It was the process of creating the poems that enabled me to be more reflexive about my positionality and how this has shaped my approach to this research (Smith, 2020). The poems, then, were *good* for something. They were good not for communicating data but rather in a methodological sense, in that they led me to a connection I hadn’t consciously made until then. Rather than thinking about whether these poems were ‘good’ or ‘bad’ art, then, such insight helped me deconstruct my binary assumptions about what art should do, which is in line with the broader relational approach of this thesis. Indeed, Chisanga et al. (2014, p. 33) write that “[p]oetic inquiry is a research approach towards knowledge creation that relies not only on the transmission of information, but also on the deeper issues of the poetic.” In this unanticipated way, the poems became part of the broader reflexive approach of this thesis as well as the subsequent autoethnographic ‘listens’ of the adapted LG in this chapter.

6.5. Findings: The 3rd Listen

The 3rd Listen (see Table 6 above) involved listening for social and ecological relationships, whether to particular people and places, to the natural environment, or to the more-than-human; a listening that offers the opportunity to ‘take stock’ of the many diverse forms of relation involved in a ‘marine-space assemblage,’ which may in turn give us a better sense of what it is that we are actually governing. This resonates with the notion of the ‘ocean in excess’ (Peters & Steinberg, 2019) discussed in Section 6.3. above: what is the extent of the ocean we are governing, in ecological, social, *emotional* terms? And in what ways can we *sense* this extent?

As I progressed through the 3rd Listen, I began to notice that the things I was highlighting and coding were the things I was sensing and becoming attuned to; the things that made enough of an impression on me that I felt I had to write them down on paper; the things that were alive to me. To address the question at the core of the 3rd Listen – “What relationships am I embedded within?” – I had to first answer the question, “What is alive to me, and why?” To answer this, I had to examine why I cared about certain relations, and, what was much more difficult, why I didn’t care about other things. And what was more, I had to think deeply about the systemic and structural factors that might be influencing how and why I care about something (or not). The 3rd Listen, then, became a way for me to trace my own relational sense-making processes – *what* is alive to me, as well as *why* and *how*.

Inspired by Hahn’s (2021) ‘recipes’ for sensory experience, and lisahunter’s (2019) textual sensory autoethnography of ‘seaspacetime,’ I want to understand what my sense-making processes reveal about the marine governance regimes in which they are situated. In this sub-section, then, I reflexively examine these processes, and attempt to turn this reflexive gaze back to the regimes of governance that govern the marine-space assemblage in which I was, for a brief time, located. I am drawn back to Puig de la Bellacasa (2017, p. 39), who writes that “exposing how things are assembled, constructed, is not to debunk and dismantle them... to exhibit the concerns that attach and hold together matters of fact is to enrich and affirm reality by contributing further articulations.” By shedding light on the oft-hidden sensory dimensions of generating meaning and emotional attachment, I hope to ‘contribute further articulations’ to thinking about emotions in marine governance.

6.5.1. What is alive to me?

As I went through the 3rd Listen for each reflection, I highlighted elements of the social and ecological relations that stood out to me at the time. At the end of each reflection, I considered the question, “What is alive to me?” I then put all the things I highlighted into a list, and this became an answer to this question for each reflection. Table 8 below shows the list I made for each reflection during the 3rd Listen.

Table 8. List of themes in each autoethnographic reflection addressing the question, “What is alive to me?”

Reflection	What is alive to me?
#1	The water, the motion & movement of everything underwater, what it means for a new perspective, a watery perspective
#2	The natural scenery, the water, the algae, the underwater light, the meaning of all of it for my own shifting perceptions
#3	The waves, the kelp, the seagrass, the mountains, the cormorants
#4	The water, the kelp, the fish, the vivid relationships with others that are beginning to emerge
#5	The terrible weather, the strengthening social ties, the immense presence of the water, the shag
#6	The other people, the strengthening social ties, the cold water, the shark, the changes within myself
#7	The other people and their actions, strengthening social ties, the multi-sensory experience of snorkelling
#8	The extreme cold of the water, strengthening social ties, the other people and their actions, sharks

It is evident from this table that the vast majority of what is alive to me is the natural environment around me. However, there is a slight shift in focus in the second half of the reflections, as my relationships with other individuals in the group develop. Why is it that I take note largely of the natural environment, and less so of people? Why only certain things in the natural environment as opposed to others? Why are these the things I sense, and what do they say about how I care for the issues facing the marine environment?

6.5.2. Why are these things alive to me?

As someone with chronic health issues, I have a somewhat fraught relationship with my body. Physical activity on land is complicated by fatigue and tricky joints; it is rare for me to find a form of high-energy movement that makes me feel physically powerful and energised. Put me in water, however, and I am a different being. I become fluid, limber; I can swim for hours without stopping; I can move in ways that are a dream on land; I feel strong, I feel powerful, I feel unstoppable. Moreover, because of my multiple neurodivergences, my sense of proprioception – the feeling of where my body is in space – is different.

On land I often don't feel my body in a physical sense; I don't know how else to explain this, except that it feels like I am simply floating in space; and this makes it hard to feel like I am a person inhabiting a body. Foley and Kistemann (2015, p. 160) write on the effects of swimming on differently-abled bodies: "bodies of difference can be explicitly enabled in blue space, in part through immersion within water... or through a more mental immersive engagement with an environment that takes one outside oneself." Swimming, as a both physical and mental immersion, can be a life-changing, body-affirming practice. Indeed, when I move through the water, and feel its pressure on my skin and its resistance against my body, I am able to sense my body, all of it, and to know where it is in space; and then I feel like a person fully inhabiting their body and knowing where they are located in the world; and then I feel like *myself*.

Foley (2015, p. 224, emphasis mine) regards the practice of swimming as "a great leveller and can at times *transform* the unhealthy land body into a healthy sea-body." Setting aside the nuances and complexities of the healthy/unhealthy dichotomy, this is at the heart of why being in water is, for me, literally a transformative experience: because *I become a sea-body*. And this, I think, is part of the reason why so many of the things that are alive to me are watery things: the water, the motion and movement of everything underwater, the underwater light, the waves, the kelp, the seagrass, the fish, the cold temperature, the sharks. Because *I am a sea-body among sea-bodies*. "To be oriented in a certain way," writes Ahmed (2010, p. 235), "is how certain things come to be significant, come to be objects for *me*." Because I am so keenly attuned to my own self and my own body in the water, I am oriented to the things in the water around me; they are alive and sensitive to me *because* I am sensitive to them: we are, for a brief time, sea-bodies sense-making in 'seaspacetime' together (lisahunter, 2019).

This sense of attunement, of becoming sensitive to bodies and places outside ourselves, is not irrelevant to governance processes. The way we make sense of and become sensitive to the places around us, "the sensory feeling of place," is an important component of connection to a place (Markuszewska, 2022, p. 42). Indeed, Markuszewska (2022, p. 34) argues that "including both emotional attachment to a place and sensory perception of a landscape in the planning process can be the antidote to conflicts and, at the same time, can enhance the sense of procedural justice." However, autoethnographically tracing my own experience as a sea-body, and understanding how this shapes my sense-making processes, has shown me that sensory perception is a process shaped by many different factors, at the individual as well as the societal scale. This has only led me to further questions about how and why certain 'sensory feelings of place' are seen as more valid and legitimate than others. Who gets to count as a sea-body? Which bodies, which emotions – indeed, which *emoceans* – count in the count of marine governance?

This brings me to the politics of swimming. Swimming, as well as other watery leisure activities, such as surfing, are not neutral activities; they are political ones with race, class, gender, and dis/ability dimensions (Britton et al., 2019). It is a social and economic privilege to have the means to access swimming infrastructure and to finance swimming classes. In a study of social inequalities in swimming participation, Hastings et al. (2006, p. 899) assert that “the higher the levels of economic and social development, the more likely the presence of middle and upper classes with individuals who have the discretionary time, disposable resources, and desire for participation in sport programs.” Beyond a question of recreation and leisure, however, knowing how to swim often means the difference between life and death, and unequal opportunities for swimming participation equate to unequal proportions of deaths from drowning. Indeed, Hastings et al. (2006, p. 895) unequivocally state that “Black Americans are literally drowning in inequalities; they are disproportionately victims of accidental drowning.” It is important, then, to apply an intersectional lens to better understanding the things that are alive to me. While dis/ability is an important dimension of sense-making, its intersections with race and class, and the implications of these for how we come to sense things, should not be ignored.

6.5.3. Language as a sense-making tool

Something that I continually remark on throughout the 3rd Listen was the way in which I used language to describe and illustrate the social and ecological relations in which I felt myself embedded. I gleaned much insight into these relations by closely noting not only which relations I write about, but also *how* I write about them – in what tone of voice, in what style of writing. Language, then, emerged as a central tool for sense- and meaning-making, and tracing my use of particular linguistic styles and devices became yet another way of addressing the question, “What is alive to me?” The power of language to make meaning, particularly in the context of place-making, is well-documented. “Words,” writes Tuan (1991, p. 686), “have the general power to bring to light experiences that lie in the shadow or have receded into it, and the specific power to call places into being.” They bring things into the light; they make things visible. And this capacity to make things visible – “the right to speak and be heard, the right to name and have that name ‘stick’” – is shot through with power (Tuan, 1991, p. 685). Whose concerns are made visible, and for whom? There is a politics of visibility in marine governance that hinges on the use of specific language to make some things visible and not others. Because the entire focus of the 4th Listen is on tracing emotion through language, I will not further elaborate on language and its political power here. I do, however, include it here to demonstrate how the Listens might appear neat and stepwise separated in the analysis protocol (see Table 6 above) but then leak into and through each other as they unfold, pointing to the

organic messiness of the LG methodology, and of deep listening in emotional governance work more broadly.

6.6. Findings: The 4th Listen

The 4th Listen involved listening for emotional context, for not only what is said but *how* it is said – for the *feel* of the words. As I mentioned earlier in the chapter, because this was wholly written data with no audio counterpart, I was not able to listen aurally to how things were said; instead, I listened to how things were written by attending closely to language. In particular, I traced my use of specific linguistic devices as well as my use of overall style and tone of voice when writing on various matters. Through this examination, and bolstered by the findings from the 3rd Listen that language is central to my personal sense-making processes, I began to notice that each device and shift in tone *did* something, whether conveying a particular emotion, making sense of an experience, or making visible something previously obscured. My writing process, then, was not only a way to make sense of my reality but indeed worked as an epistemological process of *shaping* that reality. Reflecting on writing as an epistemological tool, as a process of ‘coming to know,’ Chawla and Rodriguez (2008) write:

I believe that our notion of selfhood and personhood is inextricably bound up with the world and each other. *To therefore speak of our relation to writing is to speak to our relation to the world, each other, and our own humanity.* As such, to be estranged from writing is to be estranged from the world and from each other. Thus in striving to embody writing differently, I am striving to embody a project that fundamentally alters our ways of being and understanding the world. (p. 20, emphasis mine)

They regard autoethnography as one avenue into interrogating one’s writing epistemologies (Chawla & Rodriguez, 2008). Becoming attuned to my writing practice through this autoethnography, then, is yet another way of becoming attuned to my position within the world around me. This practice of looking inwards to my own writing has made more visible the power of language, sometimes overt and sometimes subtle, in marine governance regimes. “Like an ecology,” writes J. Anderson (2020, p. 77), “writing is web-like. It draws interconnections between audiences and a concern.” The way language is used in technical documents draws together audiences and concerns in particular ways to achieve particular end goals (J. Anderson, 2020). For instance, the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF), recently released by Ireland’s Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2021), is framed as follows:

Marine spatial planning is a process that *brings together multiple users of the ocean* to make informed and coordinated decisions about how to use marine resources sustainably. It is a process by which the relevant public authorities analyse and organise human activities in maritime areas to achieve ecological, economic

and social objectives. A marine spatial plan – in Ireland known as the NMPF – is the outcome of that process. The NMPF is a national plan for Ireland’s seas, setting out, over a 20-year horizon, *how we want to use, protect and enjoy our seas*. (p. 9, emphasis mine)

Here, language draws together humans and oceans into relation by positioning humans as ‘users of the ocean,’ an ocean that they ‘want to use, protect and enjoy.’ This highly utilitarian language portrays the ocean as a passive entity that lacks agency, that is there to be used. Such wording does subtle yet powerful ontological work: it forms the basis for the way the marine environment is defined and in turn managed. Indeed, Conde et al. (2022, p. 329, emphasis in original) write that “[t]his ontological question is therefore paramount. Understanding and framing *what* is being governed is a vital precursor to defining *how* planning and, ultimately, policy implementation, will occur.” By autoethnographically interrogating how certain things become visible to us, then, and how some may be obscured, we might better grasp the ontological power of language and the epistemological power of writing. Attending to the complex politics of language may make visible the subtle yet potent framings that give shape to how we do things, and may in turn shed light on how we might do things differently. If language has the power to rend asunder, then it also has the power to knit together again.

6.6.1. Linguistic devices

Table 9 on the next page is a list of the linguistic devices I use throughout my reflections, along with an explanation of what each device does and an example from the data for illustrative purposes.

Table 9. Linguistic devices used in autoethnographic reflections.

Device	What does it do?	Example
Asyndeton ²⁹	Speeding up rhythm after long, slow pacing	...the food eaten, the tea drunk, nothing remains now but to...
Simple sentence	Abrupt halt in rhythm, calling attention to something	And my God, the cold.
Imagery	Bringing environment to life	Under the water it was relatively bare; mostly rocks and sea spaghetti and wrack, and everything covered by a dusty yellow film of algae.
	Evoking an intangible atmosphere or feeling	A lonely farmhouse at the foot of the mountain; door open to let in the last of the autumn light and warmth. A table spread of fresh-baked scones, tea, cheese, bread. Laughter and conversation around the table. The gentle warmth radiating from an ancient Stanley stove.
	Highlighting contrast between two things	We form a circle around the picnic table laden with treats: P has brought cashew energy balls, her cousin apples and a basket of thermoses filled with hot water and tea; D has brought flaky Danishes and apples from their garden, and T ham and cheese sandwiches; my offering is a humble loaf of brown soda bread and sliced cheddar. We huddle closer, our backs to the wind, enjoying hot tea and company. I don't know how I will bring myself to go in the water today.
	Conveying multisensory experience	...swim for a moment into the warm wrack to enjoy the slick, stringy feel of it on my skin...
Listing	Emphasising abundance of something	...the mountains, the bogs and fields and strands...
Metaphor	Conveying subjective experience/perception	...a subtle structure under the waves of my consciousness.
Polysyndeton ³⁰	Slowing down pacing to savour or dwell in a particular moment	Then they swim off, and we lift our heads out of the water and look at each other in awe.
Punctuation	Conveying dynamic movement through or within a landscape or seascape	...when there is water coming down from the sky and water coming up from the sea and you are all there is keeping the masses and masses of water from meeting.
	Strong emphasis on something	The water was 16 C today!
Repetition	Abrupt halt in rhythm	Hungry Hill: Cnoc Daod, hill of the tooth, in Irish.
	Emphasising an intangible feeling	I simply was. My whole focus was, my whole being was...
	Emphasising a natural phenomenon	The wind is biting today, piercing, whipping; it is finding its way...
Simile	Emphasising an action	I was going to do it. I could do it. And I did do it.
	Conveying subjective experience	...[the fins] let me slice through the water like some diving shearwater.
	Making imagery more vivid	...the skylight above letting out the rising steam like a kettle.
	Conveying intangible atmosphere	I feel like I am just waking up from a spell.
Rhyming	Just for fun	An overcast, breezy day; a rocky beach on Dunmanus Bay.
Wordplay	Just for fun	...all astir and all a-swaying...

In addition to using linguistic devices on their own, I frequently combined them in my writing. While at the time of writing I didn't write these combinations of linguistic devices with a particular intention or purpose (aside from the sheer pleasure of the writing of it), their presence does serve to add emotional weight to a given subject matter. Table 10 below is a list of these combinations, along with explanations and examples.

Table 10. Combinations of linguistic devices used in autoethnographic reflections.

Combination	What do they do?	Example
Imagery + polysyndeton + simile + metaphor	<i>Polysyndeton</i> = movement through long and winding coastal road <i>Simile + metaphor</i> = comparison for illustration	...all along the coast, past hidden bays and rivers running down to the sea to the west of Ballylickey and Snave, and the Mealagh valley rising to the east; past little humps of land dotted with trees rising hedgehog-like out of the water along Glengariff; then long stretches squeezed between sea on one side and bog on the other, past Trafrask and 'round Adrigole Harbour; and Sugarloaf Mountain and Hungry Hill looming dark and stony over us the whole time, giants sleeping under the land.
Imagery + wordplay (alliteration) + simile	<i>Imagery</i> = bringing something to life <i>Wordplay</i> = just for fun <i>Simile</i> = comparison for illustration	Tangles of wrack are wrecked on the half-moon shore like a coiled wet braid.
Polysyndeton + metaphor	<i>Polysyndeton + metaphor</i> = slowing pacing down to bring attention to and dwell in one specific moment	...and a shag perches on the ridge next to you, and you come closer and closer, expecting it to fly off, but it remains on the ridge until you are just inches away, looking into its ocean eyes.
Repetition + punctuation (exclamation)	<i>Repetition + punctuation</i> = emphasising excitement	A shark! A real live shark right in front of me! A small-spotted catshark... a shark nonetheless!
Simile + repetition + polysyndeton	<i>Simile</i> = comparison <i>Repetition + polysyndeton</i> = emphasis on effects of cold water	...the water feels like a reset button, or a saving grace, or a second wind, again and again and again.

Whether on their own or in combination with one another, these linguistic devices serve to represent and communicate intangible emotional experiences and subjectivities through four overarching writing patterns: emphasis (i.e., listing, punctuation, repetition); illustration (i.e., imagery, metaphor, simile); play (i.e., rhyming, wordplay); and rhythm (i.e., asyndeton, polysyndeton, simple sentence). These patterns

²⁹ Omission of conjunctions such as “and,” “or,” “for” and “but.”

³⁰ Repetition of aforementioned conjunctions.

appear in different configurations when communicating and listening to emotion through spoken, as opposed to written, word. For instance, emphasis in speech might be conveyed through modulating one's voice, whether through an increase in speaking volume, a shift in tone, or an alteration in vocal quality (e.g., a trembling or wavering voice). Rhythm in spoken speech may be achieved by speeding up or slowing down the pace at which one speaks, and stopping or starting suddenly.

While there are different versions of the same pattern in both written and spoken word, there are also significant patterns that may be present in one that may be absent in the other. For instance, there are particular stylistic elements, such as rhyming and wordplay, that often require some forethought and deliberation before being included in writing. I include them often in my writing, not to convey a particular emotion or aspect of a subjective experience, but rather for the sheer satisfaction I derive from creating a complicated alliterative line or a well-crafted rhyme. My technique for rhythm in writing is particular, too; it is heavily influenced by my favourite authors, the ones I come back to again and again, whose sentences, filled with commas and semi-colons, run on for so long that by the time I reach the conclusion of one, I have forgotten its beginning, and must read it once more to apprehend and savour its full meaning. And the pleasure of writing this way, of slowly and deliberately casting long lines of words across a page, is deep. But there is pain there, too, when I get caught in my own lines, entangled in a net of perfectionism that cuts deeper the harder I struggle; and it takes my entire being to stop fighting and to find peace through the stillness of letting go. As such, the process of writing itself is deeply emotional for me: if I'm not careful I can easily lose my way and myself; but if I remain centred, then words become the compass by which I find my way to myself and orient myself within the world.

Chawla and Rodriguez (2008, p. 20) write that to "speak of our relation to writing is to speak to our relation to the world, each other, and our own humanity." Perhaps my description of my writing process above reveals something about how I relate to myself and to others. Right now, as I write these sentences, I see the truth in this. And, reflecting on the power of language to make things visible, I see that this is not the only way to be. But *being* differently, and doing things differently, starts with reflexivity, with an awareness and interrogation of our positionality and how this shapes and is shaped by the world around us (Levi & Peters, 2024). Such emotional reflexivity is relevant not only at the individual scale but also at the scale of governance. Indeed, Levi and Peters (2024, p. 72) argue that a reflexive approach to emotion "allows for an attunement not only to the presence of emotion but also to the structural facets that determine whose emotions count in marine governance." This is in line with the 'affect as methodology'

approach (Åhäll, 2018) discussed in Chapter 2, whereby using an emotional lens may reveal insights otherwise invisible or hidden, whether politically or otherwise.

6.6.2. Tone of voice

Moving through the 4th Listen, I noticed trends not only in my use of specific linguistic devices but also in the overall tone of voices that I used to write on different matters (see Table 11 below for an overview of the different tones of voice, along with explanations and examples). For instance, I often write in evocative language to bring to life the natural environment around me; occasionally, however, due to my training in coastal processes and physical geography, I slip, without realising it, into highly technical language to describe water conditions or geographical features. I take an informal, conversational tone when writing about the more mundane details of fieldwork, such as logistics; and shift into a more formal academic tone when making sense of the snorkelling experiences within a 'bigger picture' or context.

Table 11. Tones of voice used throughout autoethnographic reflections.

Tone	When is it used?	Example
Formal academic tone	Making sense of an experience and reflecting on its place in a 'bigger picture'	Perhaps this is what it means to be more-than-human: when we exceed our 'normal' boundaries and capacities, when we allow ourselves to become differently oriented, what might we learn from such an "altered state of embodiment"? What happens when the body is made unfamiliar... What are we left with?
Evocative language	Making sense of subjective experience	I start to feel run down on the weekends, after long weeks of fieldwork, and the water feels like a reset button, or a saving grace, or a second wind, again and again and again.
	Describing natural scenery	Clumps of kelp rise up from the silt like apparitions and sink back down into the gloom.
Informal tone	Reporting on general context	My original plan was to take the Local Link bus from Kilcrohane to Bantry the next morning, and I would be around half an hour late, but that was no problem for me.
	Reporting on highly personal things just for me	When I first started snorkelling, I was extremely private about changing... But somehow, over the weeks, this has faded away... something has changed and I don't feel as scared anymore.
Matter-of-fact tone	Writing about other individuals	J has brought his didgeridoo... D, T, M and I go out towards the reef... P enjoys the sun on the beach; J and the children search for hidden treasure in the wrack. J goes out... M gets cold and heads back...
Technical language	Describing water conditions & geography	...perhaps because I was expecting the cold, perhaps the total lack of wave action due to the highly sheltered nature of the harbour...

The most striking contrast is in how I write about the natural environment as opposed to how I write about other individuals. The style I take when writing about the natural environment is evocative, extending into long and winding passages of rich imagery and detailed description. In contrast, my writing on other

individuals is consistently limited solely to action verbs and matter-of-fact descriptions (e.g., “*J has brought... P enjoys... J and the children search... M gets cold...*”). I have spent a long time reflecting on why this might be the case. Perhaps due to my decades of experience in writing nature poetry I feel I have a certain capacity as well as a license to ruminate on and romanticise nature; but if I wrote about people in the same way as I did nature, I would feel I was taking liberties by making assumptions about people’s thoughts and feelings – other people’s lived realities are not mine to ruminate on and romanticise. Perhaps my intersecting neurodivergences play a role as well, in particular because I take people at face value, and don’t wonder whether their external actions align with and reflect their internal motivations: I simply assume that they do. And when they in fact do align, things make sense; when they *don’t* align, however, nothing makes sense: it’s difficult to conceive that an action might not always reflect a motivation. It may also be shaped in part by the hegemonic ‘Western’ worldview in which I have grown up, which views nature and people as separate domains with separate ways of relating and knowing and feeling, requiring separate languages to describe these. Kimmerer (2017) writes of learning a ‘grammar of animacy’ with which to speak about – and *with* – the living world:

A language teacher I know explained that grammar is just the way we chart relationships in language. Maybe it also reflects our relationships with each other. Maybe a grammar of animacy could lead us to whole new ways of living in the world, other species a sovereign people, a world with a democracy of species, not a tyranny of one; with moral responsibility to water and wolves, and with a legal system that recognizes the standing of other species... But imagine the possibilities. Imagine the access we would have to different perspectives, the things we might see through other eyes, the wisdom that surrounds us. We do not have to figure out everything by ourselves: there are intelligences other than our own, teachers all around us. Imagine how much less lonely the world would be. (p. 133)

Paying attention to the language I use, then, has given me a glimpse into the way I chart and navigate the relationships in which I am embedded; in this case, the research relationships, as well as research about a tense and emotive place at the precipice of potential change through extractive industry. At the same time, it has also given me a glimpse into the myriad possibilities of charting these relationships otherwise. How might the world around me look if kelp was not an *it* but a *they*? If Bantry Bay was not a dead noun but a living verb – if, in Kimmerer’s (2017, p. 131, emphasis in original) words, “to *be* a bay – releases the water from bondage and lets it live”? Words act as compass for many things: for orienting ourselves within a living landscape; for finding our way back to ourselves; and for making a home in which to weather these strange times.

6.7. Discussion and conclusions

In this chapter I have explored the emotional, embodied, sensory dimensions of marine governance through a novel application of the Listening Guide (LG) method to autoethnographic reflections collected during the immersive component of my fieldwork, which consisted of participating in a snorkelling club run by campaign members. This chapter contributes to the overall drive of the thesis not only by understanding the relationship between emotion and governance (here emotional connections between researcher and ‘the field’), but also by contributing practically to this agenda by building a toolbox of techniques other scholars can use when seeking to research emotion in marine governance settings. Indeed, this chapter addresses the third aim of the dissertation, namely, (c) **exploring and making sense of various configurations of emotional connections to the oceans and their relevance to marine governance**. In Chapter 4 I developed a methodology for *how* we might listen for others’ emotions in marine governance, and in Chapter 5 I demonstrated the value of this methodology by considering *what* we might learn about others’ emotions through this deep listening approach. In this chapter, I continued to build on the LG method by adapting it and applying it to a different context, unit of analysis, and format of data. In doing so, I broadened our understanding of both *what* kinds of emotions are relevant in emotional governance (not least our own emotions as researchers ‘producing’ knowledge in this discipline) as well as *how* we listen for these emotions.

The three-fold aims of this chapter were: first, **to explore to potential of the LG method as a tool for autoethnographic analysis**; second, **to contribute, and to provide empirical evidence to demonstrate the value of, autoethnographic research to the field of marine governance**; and third, **to highlight the importance of listening, while broadening the scope of what it means to listen – for *how* we listen – in attending to the emotional dimensions of marine governance**. In this concluding section, I summarise the findings gleaned through this novel application of the LG to autoethnographic textual data, and discuss the relevance of these findings to the marine social sciences.

6.7.1. Summary of findings

The autoethnographic snorkelling reflections, which I had originally written with no other purpose but to keep a record of (and make sense of) my immersive fieldwork experiences, evolved over time into a dataset which I explored using an adapted LG protocol tailored for textual data. Through this novel application of the LG, I was able to engage in a mode of ‘deep listening’ to my own reflections, which allowed me to attend more closely to my emotional and deeply embodied immersive marine encounters.

Significant themes emerged through the 1st Listen, including meaningful encounters with the more-than-human world, the evolution of bodily and emotional responses to repeated cold-water immersion, and social connections with snorkelling club members developing over time. Significantly, a temporal perspective revealed how these themes have shifted over time, pointing to the evolving entanglements between the individual, the collective, and the environment. This temporal perspective emphasised the importance of understanding marine governance as an ongoing, dynamic, relational and emergent process rather than a static set of regulatory frameworks. Then, in the 2nd Listen, reflexive reflections on my shifting insider/outsider positionality pointed to the complex, multifaceted nature of identity and voice in research contexts. Moreover, the process of constructing I-poems offered yet another pathway into reflexivity, demonstrating the potential of poetry not only for communicating data or serving as ‘good’ poetry but also for eliciting nuanced methodological reflection.

In the 3rd and 4th Listens, then, I delved into the more relational and linguistic aspects of emotion and sense-making in marine contexts. In particular, by considering the role of sensory perception in shaping emotional connections to the ocean, I discussed the politics of sensory perception, and posed critical questions about whose experiences and emotional connections count (and, conversely, whose don’t count) in marine governance processes. Further, I conducted an in-depth analysis of the use of linguistic devices and tone of voice throughout my autoethnographic reflections, pointing to the implications of linguistic choices, and the politics of language more broadly, in thinking about how language shapes how marine space is perceived, defined, and governed.

6.7.2. Relevance of findings to the marine social sciences

In this chapter I have demonstrated that, in order to better understand and eventually incorporate emotion into marine governance processes, there is a need to first learn how to reflexively *listen to* and make sense of emotion when researching it. Indeed, Levi and Peters (2024, p. 69) develop a practice of reflexivity for listening to emotion, arguing that being reflexive “is a means of addressing the question of why certain emotions are present and made to matter” in marine governance contexts. They discuss why emotional reflexivity matters for marine governance, and how it might be used in future research:

Rather than being an irrational force in the face of technocratic decision-making, emotions permeate governance processes, practices, and arenas. Understanding them, and whose emotions matter, is vital for potentially fostering greater equality and justice in marine governance, not least where structural dimensions may limit the voices heard and perspectives held. To this end, future work could springboard

from this paper to consider in greater detail the embeddedness of emotions in governance, using reflexivity as a tool or framework for guidance. (Levi & Peters, 2024, p. 75)

Resonating with “the question of why certain emotions are present and made to matter” (Levi & Peters, 2024, p. 69), in this chapter I have responded to this call to use reflexivity as a tool in research by critically examining *whose emoceans are present and made to matter in marine governance*. In doing so I have contributed to emerging work on ‘emoceans’ in the marine social sciences literature.

Building on the work of Brennan et al. (2019), recent scholarship in the marine social sciences has broadened the scope of ocean literacy and highlighted the importance of incorporating emotion into ocean literacy frameworks. In particular, McKinley et al. (2023, p. 1) propose ten dimensions of ocean literacy: “knowledge, communication, behaviour, awareness, attitudes, activism, emotional connection, access and experience, adaptive capacity and trust and transparency... in a bid to ensure that ocean literacy encompasses diverse knowledges, values and experiences.” The authors argue that emotional connections to the oceans, which they term ‘emoceans,’ “should be recognised as a central component of ocean literacy, recognising its role in behaviour change, experience and memory making and how this might influence ocean connections” (McKinley et al., 2023, p. 7). Since the introduction of *emoceans*, several studies have called for further research into the role of emoceans in ocean literacy, in particular highlighting the need to develop methodologies to better understand emoceans (McRuer et al., 2024; Sherlock et al., 2024; Whyte et al., 2024). McRuer et al. (2025, p. 2, emphasis mine) argue that such research on ocean literacy dimensions, including on emoceans, and on “their collective influence on fostering motivation, opportunities, and capabilities for behavior change across scales is essential. This work can better inform *evidence-based, locally-contextualized* policies and practices that support adaptive and effective marine conservation measures aligned with global sustainability targets.” Such work demonstrates the relevance of emoceans not only to the realm of research but also to the realm of marine governance.

However, while ‘emoceans’ has been proposed as one of multiple dimensions of ocean literacy, ‘emoceans’ itself is a complex concept consisting of multiple dimensions that have only just begun to be investigated. The findings in this chapter, revolving around embodied, immersive encounters, the temporal dimension of emoceans, the shifting nature of insider/outsider positionalities in emotion research, and the role of sensory perception and language in shaping emoceans, nuance the concept of ‘emocean’ and what it encompasses, and offer methodological ‘entry points’ into further research on the role of emoceans in ocean literacy. In this chapter, then, I have continued the work of building on a

methodology for listening to emotion, and hence *listening to emoceans*. However, while this has led to insights that nuance the emerging concept of ‘emoceans,’ it has also led me to further questions about how and why certain emotions are seen as more valid and legitimate than others. Indeed, this is a challenge of researching others’ emotions, particularly in the context of an autoethnographic study. What is visible to me – *what is alive to me* – is my own embodied, sensory experience of snorkelling in a particular place at a particular time. What remains hidden is the embodied, sensory experiences and emotions of other snorkelling club members. This place, which to me is a ‘field site,’ is, to many, *home*: a place constituted by stories, dreams, fears, and a multiplicity of relations. Our bodies may be immersed the same waters but we are each of us inside our own ocean.

How we come to sense things shapes how we come to feel about them. This begs the question: are all emotions created equal? In fact, are all *emoceans* created equal? Who gets to count as a sea-body? Which bodies, which emotions – indeed, which *emoceans* – count in the count of marine governance? The work of this chapter – and of this dissertation more broadly – is to *listen to emoceans*. While the impact of this resists being quantified and measured in numeric terms, listening is a political action with political consequences. “Listening with care,” writes Puig de la Bellacasa (2017, p. 58, emphasis mine), “is *an active process of intervening in the count of whom and what is ratified as concerned*; it affects the representation of things, adding mediation to mediations.” Listening, then, is a way of making things count – and in this research, it is a way of making particular emoceans count.

6.7.3. Concluding thoughts

This chapter has made both conceptual and methodological contributions to understanding how emotional, embodied, sensory, immersive experiences shape and are shaped by marine governance. By applying an adapted LG method to textual autoethnographic reflections in a novel way, it has added to the methodological ‘toolbox’ contained within this dissertation, and has highlighted the need for inclusive, reflexive, and nuanced approaches to researching emotional marine governance. The findings gleaned from this novel LG application call for greater consideration of emotional (and sensory) literacies in marine governance, particularly in light of recent calls to study emotion and the ocean (*emocean*, following McKinley et al., 2023, McKinley et al., 2024a) and the global spotlight on ocean literacy more broadly (Brennan, 2019; McKinley, 2024; McRuer et al., 2024; McRuer et al., 2025; Poto & Vita, 2025).

Moreover, the findings point to the importance of acknowledging and including sensory and emotional knowledge into governance decisions. Further, the findings highlight the potential of reflexive, autoethnographic methodologies for investigating the subjective, embodied knowledges and experiences

that more traditional, technocratic forms of governance may overlook. Murray et al. (2025) argue that such reflexive methodologies hold promise not only for individual introspection but for building community (see Chapter 5 for work by Murray & Poto, 2024 on building oceanic ‘communities of care’). Indeed,

learning to situate ourselves in relation to the Ocean and to feel an emotional connection to its complex lifeworlds and importance in our everyday lives, from the water we drink to the air we breathe, can build a community that stands up for the Ocean and promotes a healthier planet. (Murray et al, 2025, p. 65)

Finally, by becoming *attuned to* the entanglements between the human and more-than-human worlds through sensory, emotional encounters, I hope to make space for further articulations of attunement to these relational entanglements. The chapter that follows is one such attunement to these entanglements, through an art-science collaboration that led to a community musical performance entitled *Wrack ‘n’ Roll – a musical exploration of seaweed*.

Chapter 7: Listening-with seaweed

How can we listen collectively through art?

7.1. Introduction

As discussed more fully in Chapter 2, arts-based research (ABR) is a legitimate mode of inquiry for researching emotions in marine contexts, and holds tremendous potential for deepening our understanding of the relationship between emotion and marine governance (Ahiagba, 2024; Boyd, 2022; Harder, 2022; Lin et al., 2024; McKinley et al., 2024a; Paterson et al., 2020; Vicente & Lucas, 2022). By foregrounding emotion, embodiment, and multispecies entanglements, ABR makes space not only for understanding the complex relationships between people and the oceans, but also for challenging, interrogating, and resisting dominant paradigms and power relations, as well as making space for (re)imagining alternative presents and possible futures (Ghirardello & Isetti, 2023; Jung et al., 2022). As Lin et al. (2024, p. 44) note, “ArtScience is a means to explore uncertainty, not through the examination of probability but through the lens of possibility.” Moreover, ABR has the capacity to render emotion visible, particularly in terms of making emotional connections to the oceans visible both figuratively and politically (Brennan, 2018; Mammola et al., 2025). As Harder (2024), Matias et al. (2023) and McKinley et al. (2024a) argue, ABR doesn’t just bring emotion to light; it can also render scientific information more emotionally resonant, accessible, and relatable to audiences. Key to this emotional resonance is local relevance and context specificity; rather than one-size-fits-all solutions, the most effective ABR initiatives and collaborations emerge from particular places and communities, and are attuned to their unique socio-political, environmental, and emotional landscapes (Harder, 2024; Matias et al., 2023; Strand et al., 2022).

In this chapter I build on burgeoning art-science work on oceans (see for example McKinley et al., 2024a, Whittaker, 2024, and Whittaker et al., 2024) by reflecting on an art-science collaboration that emerged organically in the 2024 fieldwork period (more on this in Chapter 3), and on the musical performance in which it culminated (entitled *Wrack ‘n’ Roll – a musical exploration of seaweed*, held on August 2nd 2024 as part of the Resonate Festival in Skibbereen, Co. Cork). Through these reflections, I aim to shed light on the messiness and organic unfolding of creative processes and collaborations, which can feel daunting for

budding artist-scientists interested in exploring creative ways of approaching their research. This builds on a growing body of art-science work levelled at ocean environments, and particularly on the role of art-science collaborations in bridging the gap between people and oceans (Bennett & Roth, 2019; Brennan, 2018; Jung et al. 2022; Whittaker, 2023; Whittaker et al., 2024). In breaking down my own creative process, I hope to take away some of that daunting feeling for others, so that they might see that, with care, time, and commitment, weaving together art and science can lead to unexpected and beautiful conclusions as well as to new and interesting questions for making sense of and *making visible* the presence of emotion in governance – “to make our oceans heard” (Whittaker et al., 2024, p. 5). This supports the overarching drive of the thesis to better understand the place of emotion in marine governance, in the hope that embracing, rather than eschewing, emotion (in this chapter through the medium of art) will enable us “to imagine – and in turn build – different governance futures” (Peters, 2020, p. 8). In particular, this chapter addresses the objectives of this thesis **b) to build on a method for analysing emotions through a deep listening approach** and **c) to explore and making sense of various configurations of emotional connections to the oceans and their relevance to marine governance**.

This chapter begins in Section 7.2. with a timeline of events outlining the process by which the poetry transformed into a musical performance through an art-science collaboration. This is followed in Section 7.3. by an account of the brainstorming sessions at the very beginning of the collaboration. Then, Sections 7.4. and 7.5. discuss the initial ‘familiarisation period’ and the subsequent ‘collaborative rehearsal’ stages of the collaboration, respectively. Section 7.6., then, describes the musical performance itself. Lastly, Section 7.7. concludes with reflections on how this collaboration fits into the overarching aims of this research, as well as into the literatures in which this thesis is situated.

7.2. From poetry to performance: timeline of events

As I discussed in Chapter 4, a central component of my data analysis method involved constructing ‘voice poems’ from research participants’ interviews as one avenue to understanding their inner thoughts and feelings. These poems, once constructed, I did not have a clear idea of where to put or how to take further; so they sat neatly in their folder and in the back of my mind for months. I returned to Bantry in the spring of 2024 to catch up and check in with my interlocutors, in line with ethical research practice to not simply leave the field but to transition from it, ensuring that those who have given of their time and knowledge know how to stay in touch as well as staying in touch with them to share research outputs. Indeed, in conversation with one of my interlocutors, I mentioned that I had this stack of poems with which I knew

I wanted to do *something*; poems that deserved to be seen and heard, if only to amplify the voices of the individuals therein. This interlocutor, an artist themselves, put me in touch with a musician so that we might see if we could bring the poems into conversation with musical elements, and in this way to communicate them, and the emotions suffusing them, to a broader audience through the medium of art.

Table 12 below outlines the timeline of events from the initial discussion with my interlocutor on 15/03/2024, where we brainstormed very broadly about potential artistic interventions, up to the musical performance at the Resonate Festival on 02/08/2024.

Table 12. Timeline of events of art-science collaboration culminating in musical performance.

Date	Location	Description
15/03/2024	Virtual	First brainstorm with interlocutor
17/04/2024	Private residence (Glengarriff, Co. Cork)	Second brainstorm with interlocutor
03/05/2024	Virtual	Introductory call with Kevin
15/05/2024	Gamelan Room, (Department of Music, University College Cork, Cork, Co. Cork)	Introduction to gamelan with Kevin
22/05/2024	Skibbereen Community and Family Resource Centre (Skibbereen, Co. Cork)	Gamelan session #1
29/05/2024		Gamelan session #2
27/07/2024		Gamelan session #3
31/07/2024		Gamelan session #4
02/08/2024		Final musical performance

7.3. Idea development

There were several idea development sessions between myself and my interlocutor, and then myself and Kevin, with the aim not to come up with a concrete plan but rather to exchange ideas and ask questions together. As part of the methodological ‘trail of evidence’ strand of this thesis, Figure 21 on the next page contains a collection of photographs of notes I took during these brainstorming sessions with my interlocutor and with Kevin.

The first brainstorming session between myself and my interlocutor came about because both my interlocutor and I agreed that the creative strand of my dissertation could be taken further; we didn't know what that would look like from the beginning, but we met to bounce around ideas. In this first informal chat on 15/03/2024 (held over WhatsApp video), we kept coming back to the voice of the kelp (Figure 21A): how to channel it, how to translate it in musical terms, how to listen to it, how to sing back to it. It was in this first chat that my interlocutor made me aware of the existence of the gamelan, its local presence in West Cork, and its potential for bringing in the voice of seaweed (Figure 21A). During the second brainstorming session on 17/04/2024, I met my interlocutor in person on their private patch of land on the outskirts of Glengarriff. We went for a walk through a quiet wood down to the sea and back to the top of the hill again, all the while turning over the poems in our minds and thinking of ways in which to bring the gamelan, as both a musical ensemble and a community group, together with the poetry. The embodied experience of walking together is reflected in the flow of our conversation and the organic emergence of our ideas:

Our discussion goes deep, contracts into specific times and places; it expands to consider time, place, the sea, what it is to be a woman; contracts and expands again, pulsing; each pulse drawing things closer together. We both have ADHD and it shows in the way we talk: ideas spark tangents, which branch off into more tangents. The shape and flow of the day is as water flowing from a river into an estuary, splintering off into smaller and smaller tributaries; as current meets the sea; as vapour rises into the sky; as rain comes down to earth and flows once more as water into sea...

Field diary entry, somewhere on the outskirts of Glengarriff, Co. Cork, 17/04/2024

Shortly after this meeting, my interlocutor introduced me to Kevin over e-mail. Kevin and I then set up an online meeting, and met on 03/05/2024 for an introductory call and to see whether our creative approaches and thinking aligned. We pondered the question of how to integrate the voice of seaweed with that of the gamelan; it would be a question not of simply combining sounds but of negotiating the distinct yet interdependent autonomies and agencies of the gamelan and of seaweed; and of making musical and curatorial decisions reflective of this negotiation (Figure 21B). As an expert in ecocritical music practice, Kevin told me about the capacity of listening to bring about alternative ways of organising society, and the potential for sonic ways of knowing to foster participation, and in turn empathy, and in turn resonance (McNally, 2022) (see notes from this meeting in Figure 21B). He also told me about the musical ensemble, Gamelan Spréacha Geala (GSG), of which he is a part; their approach to music; and some considerations for working together with them. For instance, they like to organise public performances to showcase their work to the community. This was not something I intended myself; I

hadn't set out with a performance as an end goal in mind; but as was important for the GSG, we began to think about the logistics and feasibility of a performance, including possible venues, budget, dates, particular festivals to which we could attach ourselves, and elements, such as the voice of seaweed, to incorporate into the performance (Figure 21B). At the end of our discussion, we agreed to meet in person in the Gamelan Room at the Department of Music at University College Cork (UCC), so that Kevin might show me the gamelan in person and so that we might start to think about how to collaborate together. This pre-collaboration stage was crucial in getting us 'on the same page' about the ethics and objectives of the possible collaboration, underscoring the importance in arts-based research not only of conceptualising creative interventions and collaborations but also of devoting time and care to the preparatory phase leading up to them.

Kevin and I met in the Gamelan Room on 15/05/2024. After Kevin showed the various parts of the gamelan and recounted the story of how it came to be at UCC, and I shared with him the various poems on different themes, we began to think of elements of a potential performance, including musical representations of the natural world, of our emotional connections to the natural world, and of the story of the campaign (Figure 21C). We asked ourselves: *How might we make the audience feel like they have had an encounter with seaweed? How might seaweed become present in that encounter?* (Figure 21C). Indeed, how might we think about this marine governance issue differently through this creative configuration? At the end of the meeting, Kevin invited me to a gamelan practice session, where I would have the opportunity to introduce myself and to get to know the gamelan group. After the meeting, I reflected on the powerful and commanding, yet inviting and playful, presence of the gamelan:

I feel the powerful presence of the gamelan; it structures the way my body moves about the room; I am having to move with care and that makes me feel more reverent towards it somehow, as if it demands respect. Musical instruments – and music as a whole – are always embodied, but there is something different about being completely surrounded by and indeed within one musical instrument; you feel like one small part of it. But at the same time there is an overwhelming sense of joy at the vast array of sounds and components – I almost felt like I was in a playground, and I wished I could spend the whole day going from one instrument to the next and making sounds just for the pleasure of it.

Field diary entry, Gamelan Room, Department of Music, University College Cork, 15/04/2024

7.4. Gamelan sessions #1 – #2: becoming acquainted with the poems & with each other

The GSG meets every Wednesday evening at the Skibbereen Community and Family Resource Centre to play the gamelan. The first time I joined them on 22/05/2024, the session began with musical warm-ups that created space for people to arrive and tune into the instruments and the different sounds produced when playing them individually or together in harmony. Once everyone settled into their places, I introduced myself and my research, and shared the ideas Kevin and I had worked on during our meetings. It was important for me to approach this introduction from a place of humility, openness, and curiosity; and to communicate clearly that I was coming to them with a possibility of exploring, collaborating and creating together, rather than a request to work with me to support *my* ideas, *my* objectives, *my* research. I therefore emphasised to them that I did not have any expectations for particular outcomes; instead, I wanted to focus on exploring the poetry together and allowing things to emerge organically. The poetry might resonate with people; it might not; and either way would be okay. Once I made these intentions clear, the group happily agreed to collaborate together.

The first and second practice sessions, then, became containers for a mutual exploration of the poetry, the presence of seaweed, and the resonances between the voices of the seaweed and the gamelan. We started with the poetry; I first described the poems' themes, and as a group we selected the ones that felt most resonant and full of possibilities for creative expression. Then, Kevin invited us to respond, through improvisation, to the poems by playing the instruments in front of us, without fear of sounding bad or not keeping up with the other instruments (see Whittaker, 2024 for a deeper exploration of creative improvisation responding to ocean science). While one of the group members slowly read aloud the selected poems, and Kevin introduced ethereal ocean-inspired sounds to carry³¹ the words, the rest of us began to experiment with our instruments. Short, muffled, hesitant sounds at first, as raindrops dripping, chimes tinkling; then lengthening into strings of notes climbing high, then low; the deep resonance of the

³¹ Kevin took time out of his own life to experiment with the gamelan and to digitally produce beautiful, ethereal, haunting sounds evocative of a seascape abounding with singing whales, keening seals, rushing currents, streams of burbling bubbles, distant motors, crashing waves. At our meeting on 15/05/2024, Kevin had explained to me that the gamelan is not only its own melody but can work to create moods and atmospheres, becoming context and carrier for a larger narrative. This is precisely the effect his sounds had on the poetry; they bore the words along without overwhelming them, while still retaining their own distinct identity. For his time and creative energy I am deeply grateful.

gongs a counterpoint to the light plinking of the metallophones; now rising all together in volume, meeting at the peak of the wave, hovering there for a brief moment in co-presence; then subsiding, each softly receding back into their own rhythm, finding their own way back into silence.

We continued thus for the first and second sessions; the collective improvised response to each poem unfolding like a wave, slowly increasing in tempo and volume, cresting and then falling; deeply resonating with, and evocative of, the subject matter (the underwater world) in a different variation with each new poem. As we experimented and played with different sounds and different instruments, we began to be drawn to particular sounds that felt more resonant with particular poems. For instance, a poem describing the experience of being underwater would be played in slow, mellow tones to represent the quiet peace of the experience; a poem about the campaign would play out in louder, more discordant tones to suggest an atmosphere of conflict; while a poem about the fragmented state of marine governance didn't find a place among the sounds and was therefore discarded. Through this process of trial and error we settled on five pieces (composed of a combination of poetry, live gamelan music and Kevin's digitally-produced music) that coalesced into a clear narrative. Over the weeks that followed, the gamelan group met each week to continue practising, while Kevin, during his spare time, worked on finetuning the flow of the narrative and translating this flow into a coherent performance structure³².

7.5. Gamelan sessions #3 – #4: rehearsing for the performance

The performance date was set for the 2nd of August, 2024; it was to be part of the Resonate Festival, a small, community-oriented festival nestled within the larger annual Skibbereen Arts Festival. We devoted two gamelan sessions solely to rehearsing for the performance: the first on the regular Wednesday evening slot on 27/07/2024, and an additional, longer session, two days before the performance, on 31/07/2024.

While I was away, one of the group members had been reading the poetry out loud during the practice sessions, but now that I was back, it was my turn to take over this task. It's one thing to present a conference presentation or an academic talk, and another thing altogether to perform something. Hence why, seasoned as I was in public talks and presentations, my voice shook as I first began to read out the

³² From the end of May until the end of July 2024, I had a very intense period of attending multiple conferences abroad and was therefore away from Ireland, in the time period between gamelan practice sessions #2 and #3. During this time, the gamelan group continued to meet and practise the pieces every Wednesday evening, and Kevin continued to work on the technical and logistical aspects of the performance. I am awed by and deeply grateful to them all for their enthusiasm, commitment, free-spirited creativity, and sense of community.

poetry to the group. I didn't feel like 'the expert'; I felt utterly vulnerable. And yet, when I paused to slow down and breathe, and looked up and saw warm faces and encouraging smiles, I felt myself held, and my own vulnerability met and matched by that of the others in the room. So I kept going; and soon my words were carried by the sounds of the instruments; and thus we went through each piece until we collectively arrived at a tempo for the gamelan and a tempo for the words that felt right and that was balanced, where neither the words took up too much space, overshadowing the agency of the gamelan, nor did the gamelan overpower the sparse subtlety of the words and the agency of the voices therein. With such a balance struck, and, through playing music as one entity, having reached a flow state described by McNally (2022, p. 138) as "a feeling of group flow in which individuals lose their sense of subjectivity and merge with a distributed subject," we were immensely satisfied; and we agreed to meet again in two days' time for a final run-through immediately prior to the performance, so that all the different sounds and words would stay fresh in our minds.

7.6. Musical performance

On the day of the performance, I arrived early to the Skibbereen *Community and Family Resource Centre*. I write in my notebook, "*I'm so glad it's dark + gloomy + raining – totally adds to the atmosphere!*"

Kevin and I have had an ongoing conversation about atmospheres of affect and how these bear upon, and are brought about by, the performance. With very limited time and budget, as well as venue constraints, however, we haven't been able to do much in the way of set design. The gloomy weather has worked in our favour, then; it has brought a material watery darkness that we enhance by lowering the window blinds of the room. Still, I want to do something more to bring in a marine atmosphere. With ample time on my hands before the final run-through, I dash to a hardware store and return with warm lightbulbs. While I consider what to do with these, several members of the group file into the room. One has brought blue plastic bags and seashells from home; another carries in a tub full of pungent seaweed foraged just that morning from the beach; yet another comes with driftwood, fragments of coral, a feather. As I search for the words to thank them, I am handed a green knitted scarf that looks like a fishing net.

Then everyone arrives and begins to set up the gamelan; Kevin sets up the technical equipment, carefully paying out the long wires and cables like so much cordage around the room; and I am left to figure out what to do with all these sea-things. With the help of one of the members, we fill up jugs and carafes and a big mixing bowl with water, and then fill them with seaweed. I lay out the fishing-net-scarf and poke plastic bags through the holes; then I place the driftwood and the seaweed-filled vessels on the scarf, and

strew seashells and corals and pebbles over the whole thing. Finally, I string the bulbs around the scarf, placing them strategically under the plastic bags and among the seaweed. It looks like an altar to a sea-god (Figure 22 below). It may at first glance appear simple or slapdash, but once we turned the overhead lights off, and the seaweed smell began to waft around the room, and the rain softly pattered on the windows, there was something of a marine atmosphere in the air.



Figure 22. Photograph of decorative elements of musical performance.

Once we finished setting up, we rehearsed the pieces one last time, our satisfaction and sense of accomplishment growing as we heard each piece coming together so tightly after weeks of practice. As the time for the performance drew near, and the audience began to fill the room, we headed to the kitchen at the back of the community centre, gathering around a table for a final huddle. Our excitement and anticipation was palpable in the air; we were ready. “There are no mistakes,” Kevin reassured us, “only different notes.” And on that positive note, we went out to play.

We entered the room and took up our positions facing the audience, with me sitting in the centre, the instruments and players forming a semicircle around me, and Kevin amongst his equipment off to the side between the audience and the players. The audience settled in, the lights were dimmed, and Kevin and I welcomed the crowd. He introduced the GSG and the gamelan, and discussed the important role of art in times of planetary crisis, stating that, as artists, “*it’s our business to get people to care.*” I took the mic and briefly discussed my research and how I came to be part of the performance, and expressed my gratitude towards the gamelan group and their warm welcome. Kevin then described the structure of the performance and the overall flow of the pieces. Finally, to open the performance and invite the audience to a kelpy state of mind, I read aloud one of my own original poems:

Laminaria Hyperborea I

Your Latin name tells me something

of your broad brown leaves and your

affinity for the cold clear waters of the north

but it is your common names – tangle, cuvie,

redware, sea-rod, mayweed, slat mara –

that fill my mouth with sea-water and

tell me more of who you really are

and all the ways in which you are

loved.

Taking the final word of the poem as their cue, the group launched into *Ladrang Asmarandana*, a highly-structured piece weaving together traditional Javanese rhythms and fragments of poetry about the campaign. We had selected this as the opening piece to set a two-fold intention for the performance: to immerse the audience in a traditional Javanese soundscape, and to immerse them in the story of the campaign. The second piece, unstructured, longer and slower, was a collective improvised response to text about the experience of being underwater, the quieter, gentler, ethereal sounds inviting the audience to imagine being underwater with them. The third piece was more structured, a recitation of ‘I statements’ from different individuals borne along on the current of a steady polka rhythm as a way of bringing the focus back to the voices of the campaign. The fourth piece was another collective improvisation, this time to *Seaweed*, a poem about swimming in kelp, that evoked the deeply sensual, intimate, sensory experience of encountering the materiality and agency of kelp in its natural habitat. Lastly, the fifth piece, *Dúlaman*, was a Javanese gamelan cover of a popular Irish folk song of the same name about seaweed, blending together poetic fragments about humans’ relationships to nature in the verses with the traditional Irish lyrics to *Dúlaman* in the chorus. Familiar in its lyrics and melody yet wholly new in the way it sounded on the gamelan, this last piece was a hit with the audience members, who clapped and sang along with the players until the very last note. We all stood up together and bowed to the applause, then dispersed to mingle with the audience members, one of which, approaching me, exclaimed, “If your point was to get me to have feelings, mission accomplished!” Our performance, then, did what it set out to achieve – it got people to *feel*, to become *attuned* to something greater than themselves.

A sense of attunement was not limited to audience members, however. We, the players, were becoming attuned to each other as we played together. Indeed, performing part of an ensemble was vastly different from performing alone in front of an audience. The lines between playing *with* and playing *for* one another blurred; we were each of us performers and listeners at once, keenly attuned to each other’s physical and sonic cues and modulating our own in response. In this experience of interconnection and attunement, of being co-present in sound together, I felt like I was one node among many in a mesh composed of “lines of flow or lines of becoming” (McNally, 2020, p. 46). “During the performance I didn’t feel nervous,” I reflect in my field diary after the performance, “because I didn’t feel alone – I felt that I was held by the group, the sounds, the ensemble.” One of the other players in the ensemble, with a big smile on their face, described a similar feeling afterwards: “It felt like we were playing as one organism!” The performance, then, was a site where multiple configurations of attunement emerged and enmeshed. It was also a site of experimentation, a temporary pocket of time and space in which to play with other ways

of feeling, being, and co-existing together; a pocket in which there existed a chance, no matter how fleeting, to participate in the ‘possible becomings’ of things (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017).

7.7. Concluding thoughts

In this chapter I have methodically charted the journey through which a folder of interview poetry transformed into a generative art-science collaboration which culminated in a live musical performance. In doing so I have also traced how arts-based research (ABR) can be used both in researching emotion and in communicating that emotion through the medium of art. Indeed, the collaboration (and eventual performance) emerged as a way of working *with* and *through* emotion, and hence contributes to thinking not only about *how* we research emotion but also how we *share* emotional work in marine governance fields (and beyond conventional academic ‘outputs’ such as journal articles). In this way, this art-science collaboration is in line with the objectives of this thesis to develop and build on methodologies for researching emotions in marine contexts, and to explore various configurations and expressions of emotions and their role in shaping our connections to the ocean.

What began as curiosity around how these poems (and the emotions therein) might be transmitted and heard, grew into a collaborative practice of *listening*, not only to the poems but to each other as well as to the musical agency of the gamelan itself. Through the organically-unfolding process of experimenting, improvising, practicing and performing together, we became *attuned* not only to one another but also to the more-than-human world – the rhythm of the ocean, the aural textures of water and currents and kelp – and to the possibilities of being-with and feeling-with (and *thinking-with*, to follow Åsberg et al., 2020) kelp otherwise. The exclamation of an audience member – “*If your point was to get me to have feelings, mission accomplished!*” – points to the potential of artistic approaches for fostering connections between people and complex ecological or political phenomena in ways that are more accessible and more emotionally resonant than conventional scientific outputs (Kihia et al., 2023; Matias et al., 2023; McKinley et al., 2024a; Strand et al., 2022). As Chapter 2 notes, ABR can render visible the emotional connections (and *emoceans*) that are frequently overlooked in decision-making, as well as (re)humanising environmental issues by centring on these emotional connections (Brennan, 2018; Ebbin, 2020; Harder, 2024; Strand et al., 2022; Tremblay & Harris, 2018; Whittaker, 2023). Indeed, while the pieces we performed focused on seaweed, the performance was also a musical narration of the story of the campaign; this was an intentional choice that sought to render visible not only the kelp forests of Bantry Bay but also the hard work of the people who made it possible for those kelp forests to remain intact. I

reflect on this sentiment in a field diary entry from 02/08/2024: “*Performance is starting to feel less about seaweed itself and more about what it took to protect it – an ode to the defenders that fought for it tirelessly.*” The performance, then, worked to make emoceans visible and, in doing so, to humanise the ocean.

Further, as Chapter 2 discusses, a key component of ABR is local relevance and context specificity (Harder, 2024; Matias et al., 2023). ABR initiatives and art-science collaborations resonate with audiences most when they are grounded in the intertwined emotional, historical, and socio-political contexts of particular places and communities (Kihia et al., 2023; McKinley et al., 2024a; Strand et al., 2022). In the case of *Wrack ‘n’ Roll*, we addressed the matter of local relevance and specificity in a number of ways. Kevin and I had discussed from the beginning of the collaboration that a public-facing performance was an important goal for the GSG to work towards. Due to budgetary, time, and logistical constraints, rather than holding a stand-alone performance, it felt more pragmatic (and indeed fitting) to align ourselves with one of the many local festivals taking place every summer in West Cork. When thinking about the kind of audience we wanted to speak to, the kind of audience that would come to the performance with an open mind (and an open ear) to something that was slightly more ‘out there’ than a standard musical performance, we felt drawn to Resonate Festival, a community-oriented ‘festival within a festival’ nested within the larger annual Skibbereen Arts Festival. The festival’s focus on community and place was an important factor in how we addressed local relevance. Indeed, the festival’s webpage (MusicAlive, n.d.) describes the festival’s ethos as follows:

Resonate is a celebration of community, born out of a desire to create spaces for people to unite and engage with others in arts and cultural activities. The festival aims to create experiences for participants to slow down, engage with a practice and connect with place, the self and the community in a shared experience. It's all about wellbeing, creativity, community, and the Irish language! (para. 1)

In addition to the choice of festival, we selected to hold the performance in the Skibbereen Community and Family Resource Centre (also the location of our practice and rehearsal sessions), an important pillar of the community in Skibbereen that was both physically and socially accessible for a wide audience. Lastly, beyond logistical considerations for local relevance, we also incorporated the melody and lyrics of a traditional Irish folk song, *Dúlaman* (arguably the most popular Irish song about seaweed), to make the performance more relatable and more emotionally resonant. With the familiar lyrics and melody transposed into a new and unfamiliar instrument and musical scale, the piece was instantly recognisable yet different enough to engage the attention of the audience. Thus, through a combination of intentional

decisions on venue, audience, and content, we addressed the question of local specificity, which, as Chapter 2 notes, is vital for “remembering and imagining, or reimagining, ways in which people relate to and care for the ocean and coast” (Strand et al., 2022, p. 12).

Ultimately, *Wrack ‘n’ Roll* was a small yet significant site of experimenting with different possibilities for being with, ‘thinking-with’ and feeling-with seaweed and with the oceans. In embracing the messiness of this collaborative experimentation, in this chapter I have shown how arts-based research holds potential for research on emotion and marine governance in multiple ways, from serving as a legitimate mode of inquiry to rendering hidden emotions visible, from communicating scientific information to humanising ecological issues, from negotiating challenging presents and reimagining different futures. I close this chapter with concluding remarks from Kevin’s doctoral dissertation (McNally, 2022) on the powerful potential of community music practice:

If a person can cultivate the ability to be deeply affected – to be enchanted – by a gong, by the atmospheres of a space, by a bird’s song, then not only will that person’s life be richer for the meaning they derive in everyday encounters, they are also making room in human politics for the agency of nonhuman entities. Attuning to the other via sound is a particularly effective way of placing one into an ethical position of relationality, which is vital for a politics and ethics of the Anthropocene.

The tuning in that happens when we make music with the sounds of nature forms the basis of a new and difficult economic and political system, one in which every living thing is enfranchised, and the definition of a living thing stretches to breaking point. If rivers were represented in government, if forests could vote, what kind of policies would our public representatives pursue? What kind of regulations would corporations have to abide by? If whales and dolphins were constituency, wouldn't we think twice about jamming their only means of communication with the noise of speed boats, seismic blasts, and oil drills? (p. 167)

Chapter 8: Conclusions (and Beginnings)

8.1. Introduction

At the very start of this project, I had no inkling as to the kind of research I should be undertaking to fulfil the project brief, not only in terms of how to understand the place of emotion in marine governance, but also how to actually do *the work of researching emotion*, with which tools, for which purposes – and for whom. It was as much a methodological challenge as it was an empirical one. When I expressed my concerns to my supervisor during one of our early supervisions, she gave me a simple piece of advice: “Write the thesis you would want to read right now to help you with this project.” While I didn’t consciously follow this piece of advice to conduct this research, I now look back on it knowing that’s precisely what I did. Lacking a methodological toolkit to *do the empirical research* needed to respond to the question, “Whose emotions come to matter in marine governance?” – I made one. Indeed, this thesis is both an empirical foundation for understanding how particular emotions matter in marine governance, and a methodological foundation for researching how those emotions come to matter.

“Listening with care,” writes Puig de la Bellacasa (2017, p. 58), “is an active process of intervening in the count of whom and what is ratified as concerned; it affects the representation of things, adding mediation to mediations.” Listening, then, is a way of making things matter. Through listening, the work of this thesis has to been *to make emotions (and oceans) matter* – to ‘intervene in the count of whom and what is ratified as concerned’ – in marine governance. Indeed, the overarching aim of this thesis has been **to better understand how emotions matter in marine governance**, through the following objectives: to a) **develop a methodology for researching emotions in marine contexts**; b) **build on a method for analysing emotions through a deep listening approach**; and c) **explore and making sense of various configurations of emotional connections to the oceans and their relevance to marine governance**.

The methodological and empirical contributions of this research are so deeply intertwined that it is difficult to summarise the empirical findings without also discussing the various modes and methodologies of listening that led to these findings. Rather than discussing methodologies and empirics separately, in this chapter I integrate the traditional concluding ‘summary and contributions of findings’ components into holistic ‘modes of listening’ in Sections 8.2. (Listening Guide #1), 8.3. (Listening Guide #2), and 8.4. (art-science collaboration). In Section 8.5., I discuss challenges of this research and opportunities for

future research. Finally, in Section 8.6., I conclude this dissertation with closing remarks and end on a hopeful wish from one of my research participants.

8.2. Listening to community: Listening Guide #1

The Listening Guide (LG), also known as the Voice-Centred Relational Method, is a feminist mode of qualitative data analysis that focuses on listening to individuals' voices and stories (Gilligan & Eddy, 2017, 2021; Gilligan et al., 2003). It consists of successive rounds of listening to interview audio, approaching the data through a different perspective with each 'listen,' and enabling deeper access to an individual's subjective and emotional world than is afforded through other methods (Paliadelis & Cruickshank, 2008). For this reason, it has been used predominantly in research that requires a sensitive approach and a commitment to deep listening, including healthcare, education, gender-based violence, social work, and armed conflict. To date, however, it has not been employed in a marine governance or natural resource context. In Chapter 4 I developed and employed the Listening Guide methodology to explore *how* we might listen for emotion in marine governance. This novel application of the LG to an emerging field of research (emotional marine governance) and to a novel case study (marine resource extraction) addressed the first objective of this dissertation, namely, **to develop a methodology for researching emotions in marine contexts**. Building on this methodology for *how* to listen to emotion, in Chapter 5 I demonstrated the practical value of this methodology by considering *what* we might learn about emotion through this deep listening approach. I thus responded to the second objective of this dissertation, namely, **to build on a method for analysing emotions through a deep listening approach**.

Indeed, the 1st Listen of the LG – *listening for story* – revealed insights into the relationship between physical and emotional proximity, and explored the complexities of 'insider' and 'outsider' identities and emotional connections to the ocean, which may be shaped by physical proximity, sensory perception, recreational practices, and spiritual experiences. These emotional connections, whether formed earlier or later in life, were crucial in motivating individuals to join and remain involved in the campaign, and point to the entanglements between emotional and physical proximity and the role of these in environmental activism. The 1st Listen also shed light on the extent of research participants' concerns around the proposed kelp harvesting, concerns that extended beyond localised impacts to encompass environmental degradation, impacts on livelihoods and sense of community, and flawed systems of marine governance, pointing to the trans-scalar social and political implications of resource extraction. In addition, the 1st Listen traced the emotionally-charged processes of conflict, negotiation, and solidarity within the

campaign, which allowed individuals to deepen their connections to each other and to their communities, to increase their technical and embodied knowledge of the marine environment, and to enhance their capacity for community organisation and self-governance. The most significant finding, however, was the political power of emotions – and emotions – both in moving people to take political action as well as in empowering communities to reclaim epistemic and emotional agency. The findings of the 1st Listen underscored the fact that natural resource conflicts are fundamentally about emotion at their core (Sultana, 2011, 2015).

The **2nd Listen** – *listening for a relational self* – illustrated how individuals use a plurality of voices to speak on matters of care, articulate a sense of belonging, communicate subjective experiences, and negotiate emotional proximity to a given issue. In particular, first-person voices used by participants may act as articulations of identities – identities which are not bounded or static but complex, fluid, and mobilised in relation to specific matters of care; and attending to first-person voices may enable a deeper understanding of how participants position themselves in webs of (more-than)human relations. The second-person voice was often used to describe subjective experiences in more tangible terms, as well as to create emotional distance between oneself and a particularly sensitive topic. The second-person voice may thus function not only as a means of translating subjective, emotional knowledge, but also a way to negotiate emotional proximity; and tracing the use of this voice may shed light onto the processes by which emotions are communicated and transmitted. Lastly, the third-person voice was often used to create emotional distance between oneself and a group or phenomenon to which one felt they didn't belong. Tracing this voice may further nuance our understanding of how governance processes are negotiated by communities in emotional terms, particularly in contexts where NIMBY labels are used to condemn deeply complex community responses to proposed developments.

The **3rd Listen** – *listening for structure and context* – delved into the entangled social, political, historical, and geographical contexts shaping the research participants' stories and lives. The 3rd Listen revealed that it was not structures but *infrastructures* that emerged as structuring devices shaping marine governance and emotional connections, and traced several of these 'affective infrastructures' through history. For instance, the Foreshore Act 1933, the piece of legislation that is used to govern seaweed in Ireland, was developed in the highly turbulent political context of the 1920s. The legislative process through which the Act developed was suffused with the emotional tensions already circulating in the social and political landscape; this emotionality shaped *why* the legislation governing the foreshore emerged as it did. Levi and Peters (2024) recognise emotion as a driving force behind *why* marine governance emerges as it does,

as something that both structures and is structured by governance processes. Interrogating “the broader (and often hidden) conditions and infrastructures in which a particular mode of governance is situated, and from which particular displays of emotion emerge – or rather, are *legitimised* and *allowed* to emerge” is critical for understanding the specific ways in which emotions come to matter, for “whose emotions become political matters *is* a political matter” (Levi & Peters, 2024, p. 69, emphasis in original).

Employing the LG in this way, then, has made **both methodological in-roads and empirical contributions to research on emotions and marine governance**. Indeed, for the marine social sciences, this research has built on the emerging concept of ‘emoceans’ by exploring how emotional connections to the ocean may be shaped by physical proximity, sensory perception, recreational and spiritual practices, shifting ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ positions, conflicts and solidarities emerging from environmental activism, and historical emotions and governance processes. For Feminist Political Ecology, by highlighting the entanglements between emotional and physical proximity to the ocean, the trans-scalar nature of resource emotions, and the political work that emotions *do* in mobilising communities to take action and reclaim epistemic and emotional agency, this research has offered an oceanic, ‘more-than-wet’ (Peters & Steinberg, 2019) lens to work that emphasises the fundamentally emotional nature of natural resource conflicts (Sultana, 2011, 2015). Further, the LG, as a methodology for deep listening to voice, is a significant methodological contribution to both the marine social sciences and Feminist Political Ecology, in particular due to its capacity to listen for emotions – as well as for *emoceans*. Lastly, the poetic inquiry involved in the 2nd Listen of the LG adds to arts-based research by considering how artistic approaches may be used to explore not only emotional connections to the oceans but also emotional dimensions and experiences of marine governance.

8.3. Listening to self as researcher: Listening Guide #2

Between late July and late October of 2023, I participated in eight snorkelling excursions with the snorkelling club, writing an autoethnographic reflection for each snorkel as a way to record and make sense of the experience. Despite countless explanations in the literature of what autoethnography *is*, there were fewer that provided on guidance on how to *do* an autoethnographic analysis – with only two studies employing the LG for this purpose. However, if Yeo et al. (2023, p. 2) could use the LG as “a powerful and emotive tool for self and mutual exploration” in their feminist collaborative autoethnography, why couldn’t I use it as a tool to analyse the emotions in my own autoethnographic snorkelling reflections? In Chapter 6, I continued building on the LG method by adapting it and applying it

to a different context, unit of analysis, and format of data, analysing my autoethnographic reflections and considering the deeply embodied, emotional, immersive experience of snorkelling and researching emotion in a particular context and from a particular position. In arguing that to understand the varying emotions – and *emoceans* – that matter in marine governance, learning to *reflexively listen to our own voice*, to how what we may write, record, and reflect on as researchers *matters*, Chapter 6 has fulfilled the third objective of this thesis to **(c) explore and making sense of various configurations of emotional connections to the oceans and their relevance to marine governance**. In doing so, it has contributed to the overall drive of the thesis not only in understanding the relationship between emotion and governance (here a researcher's *emoceans*), but also in contributing practically to such an agenda by building a toolbox of techniques other scholars can use for how to reflexively *do* the work of researching emotion.

The **1st Listen** of the autoethnographic LG – *listening for story* – revealed significant themes emerging across the autoethnographic reflections, including meaningful encounters with the more-than-human world, the evolution of bodily and emotional responses to repeated cold-water immersion, and social connections with snorkelling club members developing over time. Because I wrote the reflections over the span of several months, a longitudinal perspective revealed not only *what* themes emerged as significant, but also *when* they emerged as such, pointing to the evolving nature of the entanglements between the individual, the collective, and the environment. Indeed, by accounting for this temporal dimension, it was possible to track how my perceptions, emotions, and relationships to other humans and more-than-humans changed over time. This temporal perspective emphasised the importance of understanding emotional connections – and *emoceans* – as dynamic, relational, constantly-evolving processes, which has bearing on how they may be perceived by and integrated into marine governance.

The **2nd Listen** – *listening for a relational self* – involved listening for how I spoke about myself on my own terms, in my own body, and in my own voice(s). I undertook the 2nd Listen operating under the assumption that, similar to the LG analysing interview data, it would reveal a plurality of voices; voices which I would then pick apart and reflexively discuss. However, it quickly became clear that my subjective experiences and emotions were deeply intertwined with my positionalities, which constantly shifted between insider and outsider, layperson and researcher. Only by tracing the autoethnographic 'I' and constructing I-poems was I able to reflexively examine my shifting insider/outsider/in-between positionality as a researcher and as someone who has always dwelled in this liminal in-between place. Indeed, this poetic process led me to reflexive reflections on the multifaceted identities of the campaign members, who, while driven by a

shared purpose, were a highly heterogeneous group; and that a black-and-white binary view of me as ‘outsider’ and of them as ‘insiders’ would have erased the rich, varied, often conflicting perspectives and unique experiences and lifeworlds of the campaign members. The 2nd Listen, then, was an uncomfortable yet necessary (and highly generative) step in reflecting on the complexities of identity and voice in research contexts. Moreover, the process of constructing I-poems offered yet another pathway into reflexivity, thus further contributing to the toolbox of techniques for researchers seeking to do the *work* of researching emotion, as well as demonstrating the potential of arts-based inquiry not only for communicating science but also for enabling nuanced methodological reflection.

In the **3rd Listen** – *listening for social and ecological relationships* – I continued this process of reflexivity by tracing my own relational sense-making processes – *what* is alive to me, as well as *why* and *how*. Through the 3rd Listen I began to notice that the things I was highlighting as part of the analysis were the things I was sensing; the things that made enough of an impression on me that I had to write them down on paper hours after the fact. Why was I only taking note of certain things in the natural environment and not others? Why were these the things I was sensing – and what did this say about how I cared about the marine environment? To answer these questions, I had to examine why I cared about certain relations, and, what was much more difficult, why I didn’t care about other things. And what was more, I had to think deeply about the systemic and structural factors that might be influencing how and why I come to care about something (or not). Reflexively examining my sense-making processes and sensory experiences revealed the importance of sensory perception in shaping the processes by which we sense (and make sense of) the places around us, as well as the way emotional connections to the ocean emerge. However, it left me with more questions than answers about how and why certain sensory experiences are seen as more legitimate than others. *Which emotions – which emoceans – matter in marine governance, and why?*

Finally, in the **4th Listen** – *listening for emotional context* – I listened not only for *what* was written but also *how* it was written. Because the reflections were wholly written data, I was not able to listen aurally to how things were said; instead, I listened to how things were written by attending closely to language, particularly by tracing my use of specific linguistic devices as well as my use of overall style and tone of voice. Through this close examination of language, I began to notice that each device and shift in tone *did* something, whether conveying a particular emotion, making sense of an experience, or making something visible that was previously hidden. Tracing language in this way enabled me to reflect on the politics of language and visibility in marine governance that hinges on the use of specific language to make some things visible and not others. Indeed, the way language is used in technical documents does subtle yet

powerful ontological work, forming the basis for the way the marine environment is defined and in turn managed. By autoethnographically examining how certain things became visible and how some were obscured through language, in the 4th Listen I attended to the complex politics of language, and considered how language may shape not only how marine space is defined and governed but also how it is *felt*.

Levi and Peters (2024, p. 72) argue that a reflexive approach to emotion “allows for an attunement not only to the presence of emotion but also to the structural facets that determine whose emotions count in marine governance.” Employing the LG in this novel, reflexive, autoethnographic manner has made **both methodological and empirical contributions to research on emotion and marine governance**. Indeed, for the marine social sciences, this novel application of the LG has continued building on the emerging concept of ‘emoceans’ by underscoring the role of sensory perception (and the complex politics of sensory perception) in shaping how and why emoceans emerge as they do, as well as the role of language in how certain emoceans are rendered visible while other may remain obscured. In addition, it has highlighted the importance of accounting for the temporal dimensions of emoceans, how they may emerge and evolve over time, and how they can be integrated into marine governance in light of their dynamic and relational nature. This temporal perspective also contributes to Feminist Political Ecology research, offering a different way of ‘grasping’ emotion, through a longitudinal rather than a ‘snapshot in time’ approach.

Further, the autoethnographic LG is a significant methodological contribution to both the marine social sciences and Feminist Political Ecology, in particular due to its capacity to reflexively listen for emotions and for *emoceans*. In responding to “the question of why certain emotions are present and made to matter” (Levi & Peters, 2024, p. 69), I have emphasised the importance of *emotional reflexivity* as a tool in emotional marine governance research by critically examining the importance of positionality and uneven power relations that shape whose *emoceans* are present and made to matter in marine governance. Moreover, by offering a novel mode of listening for emotion through linguistic analysis of textual data, demonstrating the value of autoethnographic analysis in marine governance research, and utilising poetic inquiry for methodological reflection, I have further contributed to the methodological toolbox for research on emotion and marine governance.

8.4. Listening as collective attunement: art-science collaboration

Through the Listening Guide developed to listen to others’ emotions in Chapters 5 and 6, and the modified autoethnographic Listening Guide used to listen to my own voice as a researcher, deep listening emerged

as a critical tool for understanding emotion. Chapter 7, then, built on this listening methodology by charting the journey of an art-science collaboration which emerged as a way of listening *for, with, and through* emotion. In doing so, the chapter addressed the objectives of this thesis **b) to build on a method for analysing emotions through a deep listening approach** and **c) to explore and making sense of various configurations of emotional connections to the oceans and their relevance to marine governance**. In particular, reflecting on this collaboration, and on the musical performance in which it culminated (*Wrack 'n' Roll – a musical exploration of seaweed*), I sought to shed light on the messiness and organic unfolding of art-science collaborations. Through a timeline of events, I traced the evolution of the poetry, which I had constructed as part of the first application of the Listening Guide, into a live musical performance. I then outlined the idea development and brainstorming sessions leading up to the collaboration. Then, I described the gamelan practice sessions, which were a familiarisation period in which we got to know each other and improvise with each other, and the rehearsal sessions, in which we worked together towards a shared goal. Finally, I recounted the musical performance in which this collaboration culminated, and the collective sense of deep interconnection and attunement emerging out of the performance.

This chapter contributes to a growing body of art-science work around people and oceans (Bennett & Roth, 2019; Brennan, 2018; Jung et al. 2022; McKinley et al., 2024a; Whittaker, 2024; Whittaker et al., 2024). In particular, it underscores the importance of local relevance and context specificity in enhancing the emotional resonance and accessibility of art-science projects and collaborations (Kihia et al., 2023; Matias et al., 2023; McKinley et al., 2024a; Strand et al., 2022). It also emphasises the role of arts-based research not only for communicating environmental knowledge and issues but for *humanising* these issues by focusing on emotional connections, building on art-science work which renders visible the emotional dimensions of human-ocean connections (*emoceans*) that are frequently overlooked in decision-making (Brennan, 2018; Ebbin, 2020; Harder, 2024; Strand et al., 2022; Tremblay & Harris, 2018; Whittaker, 2023). Lastly, this chapter adds to art-science scholarship that reimagines social and ecological futures; as Lin et al. (2024, p. 44) argue, “ArtScience is a means to explore uncertainty, not through the examination of probability but through the lens of possibility.” In highlighting the many ways that arts-based research can advance work on *emoceans*, and on emotional connections to natural resources more broadly, this chapter also contributes to the marine social sciences as well as Feminist Political Ecology (FPE). Indeed, in a FPE study employing arts-based methods, Tremblay and Harris (2018, p. 175) note that “there is interest in pushing methodological approaches on these [emotional] concerns forward, including experimenting with alternative research methods, such as storytelling and art, to access and critically

reflect on emotion and subjectivity.” Arts-based research, then, holds much promise for deepening our understanding of emotion, both in fields of research as well as arenas of decision-making around resource struggles (Bennett & Roth, 2019; Brennan, 2018).

8.5. Challenges and opportunities for future research

From the diverse academic literatures engaged to the array of data collection and analysis methods used, from the unique challenges that emerged to the scope and implications of the findings, this thesis has demonstrated the need for a highly interdisciplinary approach to address the highly interdisciplinary question, *‘Whose emotions come to matter in marine governance?’* Accordingly, the opportunities for future research discussed in this section are equally interdisciplinary, and include methodological, theoretical, and empirical research recommendations. In addition, due to the implications of this research beyond academia, there are also several practical recommendations for communities and decision-makers.

The novel application of the Listening Guide methodology to an emerging field of research (emotional marine governance) to a novel case study (wild seaweed extraction), as well as its further adaptation into a novel autoethnographic mode of listening, has made important methodological in-roads into the study of emotional marine governance. While this has had its challenges (see Chapter 4 for a discussion of the challenges of conducting the LG within the time, resource, and logistical constraints of this project), there is also **significant scope for further methodological advancement and experimentation**. For instance, adaptations around the focus of the ‘Listens’ (e.g., a ‘more-than-human Listen’), the perspective of the listener (e.g., ‘listening as a kelp forest’), and what kind of data is being listened to (e.g., archival material, video footage, song) could work to further extend what it means to *listen*. Future studies could also apply the LG methodology to different socio-political and geographical contexts and different research participant demographics (and could potentially be used to compare voices, emotions, subjective experiences across different contexts). In addition, because ‘marine governance’ is not a monolithic phenomenon, applying the LG to different mechanisms of governance (e.g., construction and implementation of Marine Protected Areas, Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning initiatives, or specific pieces of legislation) may help expand our understanding of how emotion matters in different modes of governing the marine. Moreover, while it was beyond the scope of this project, the LG could be used in conjunction with other mixed-methods approaches beyond interviews (e.g., a participatory mapping component could offer an important spatial dimension to listening – *where*

does listening happen?). Lastly, because the focus of this doctoral research has been wholly on the experience of the community and not on the operation of the resource extraction industry, I have not listened to any industry actors. Future work employing the LG could continue developing *how* to research resource conflicts, particularly in terms of who to involve and who to listen to (e.g., industry actors, government stakeholders).

Additionally, there are two further methodological recommendations coming out of the novel autoethnographic LG in particular. First, the autoethnographic LG underscored the importance of reflexivity in how we come to understand the ocean; indeed, as Murray et al. (2025) note,

Ocean Literacy is not only about what we know about the Ocean, but how we come to know the Ocean. Positionality, that is, reflects upon our identities and how we position ourselves in relation to others and to the Ocean, is a self-critical and deliberate exercise of introspection. (p. 3)

Further engagements with reflexive practice in the LG and beyond, then, is critical to a deeper understanding of how our own emotions, as ‘knowledge producers’ in oceanic disciplines, matter. Second, autoethnographically tracing the evolution of my emotions over time (see Section 6.3.) suggests that understanding the temporal dimension of emotions may shed light on how and why emotions shift when they do so. Further research, then, could incorporate longitudinal perspectives to investigate how others’ emotions – and *emoceans* – evolve over time and in response to which factors.

Beyond methodological opportunities, this research has pointed **to several theoretically interesting avenues** that may deepen our understanding of emotional marine governance. In particular, by drawing together literatures on the marine social sciences and feminist political ecology, this study has highlighted the close link between these two fields of research. Further research could continue building on this theoretical foundation to develop the concept of *emoceans* through engagement with extensive literature on resource emotions. In particular, engaging with notions of ‘shadows’ and shadow geographies may shed light on the processes by which certain emotions (and *emoceans*) become obscured and occluded while others remain visible. Further, the findings of the 2nd Listen in Chapter 4 around a ‘polyphony of voices’ highlight a need for more meaningful engagement between emotion studies and literary and media studies in order to nuance our understanding of voices and identities and how these are listened to and incorporated in governance. However, future research engaging with the concept of ‘polyphony’ should take a critical stance when doing so, because a polyphony of voices is never a flat hierarchy. Indeed, not all voices are equally heard: one particularly powerful voice may overpower and drown out many others; some voices may not hold the same resonance as others; and some voices are not even considered

part of the chorus and are thus excluded from interrelating with others. Rather than an inability to listen, for many it is an inability *to be listened to* that is the issue. Thus, engagements with ‘polyphony’ should interrogate the power relations, asymmetries and structures that work to elevate some voices while constraining the possibilities of *being listened to* for others.

Lastly, the findings of the 3rd Listen in Chapter 4 around infrastructures point to the potential of engaging with burgeoning work on ‘affective infrastructures’ (see for example Bosworth, 2023, Knox, 2017, A. Wilson, 2016, 2023, and Zemblyas, 2023) for theorising the relationship between emotion and marine governance through an infrastructural lens. Indeed, while it has been beyond the scope of this project to explore this strand of inquiry, further research could trace the historical emotions that function as infrastructures shaping particular governance mechanisms (see for example the description in Section 4.3. of how the Foreshore Act 1933 developed), and in turn how governance processes may serve as infrastructure for particular emotional experiences and assemblages.

In terms of **empirical research opportunities**, then, there are various promising strands of future inquiry. Across the two applications of the Listening Guide methodology, several novel dimensions of ‘emoceans’ have emerged: the role of self-perception and self-definition in influencing emoceans; the role of sensory perception (and the politics of sensory perception) in shaping whose emotions/emoceans come to matter; the role of language in rendering particular emotions/emoceans visible; the relationship between emotional and physical proximity (and how the concept of ‘excess’ might challenge traditional notions of psychological proximity to an issue); and the relationship between emotional agency and other forms of agency (e.g., epistemic agency) at both the individual and the collective scales. Further, in coming to better understand ocean connections, it is also important to grasp the processes and structures by which ocean connections are obscured, silenced, or erased; and how some emoceans may be relegated to the shadows, and how the complex politics of in/visibility play a role in these contexts. Future research could take up any one of these strands individually for closer examination, or engage with multiple strands at once to grasp the complex relationships between them.

Importantly, in this research I have intentionally stayed away from the NIMBY label when discussing the place attachments and oceanic connections of my research participants, as to do so would have directly contravened their explicit sentiments. There is extensive work on the relationship between place attachment, place protectionism, localism, and NIMBYism, and how these may lead to negative consequences such as skewed decision-making, discrimination, prejudice, and even violence. Indeed, as Ahmed (2004) crucially notes that love is not an inherently positive thing, and discusses how love can

motivate the violence enacted by right-wing fascist groups who act out of love for their nation to demonstrate the fine line between love and hate. This was clearly not the case in the context of this particular case study. However, because such emotional work is highly contextual, further work in this area (and particularly in other contexts) would benefit from a better understanding of the links between emotion and NIMBYism. Indeed, such an understanding would add a nuanced and necessary power dimension to the questions of, ‘Who gets to decide?’ and, ‘Whose emotions come to matter?’ in marine governance.

Finally, there are three **practical recommendations emerging from this research**, due to the focus of this study on a practical governance context. First, while the Listening Guide (LG) methodology has until now been used predominantly in research contexts, there is potential for it to be drawn into the realm of decision-making. In this study the LG method was used as a way of listening deeply to voice and emotion – but could it also be used to analyse how listening itself takes place? Indeed, could it be used to trace how people listen to each other (or don’t) in contexts of collective decision-making (e.g., social and environmental movements) as well as in more formalised decision-making contexts (e.g., ‘stakeholder’ and community ‘consultations’)? Using the LG in this way may shed light on which voices are heard by which actors, and conversely which voices are silenced through which structures. Additionally, there may be interesting links to explore between such an analysis of listening and the complexities of intersecting and shifting positionalities. For instance, in a collective decision-making setting where individuals hold multiple identities, an individual might hold one identity (e.g., local community member) that is willing to listen to someone’s concerns, while simultaneously holding another identity (e.g., industry executive) that is in conflict with them. Thus, exploring how listening – and silencing – takes place may hold potential for enhancing a collective capacity for deep listening as well as for navigating the experience of being silenced.

Second, the findings in Chapter 5 point to the presence of an ‘emotional gap.’ While initiatives such as *Mission Starfish 2030: Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030* acknowledge this gap, and the need for ‘filling the knowledge and emotion gap,’ this is framed through the view that “[t]he general public and our ocean and waters are separated by an emotional gap” (Lamy et al., 2020, p. 18). However, the concerns in Chapter 5 indicate that this emotional gap is not within the realm of ‘the general public’ but rather within systems of marine governance that make no room for emotion. Future ocean literacy and engagement initiatives may do well to shift their focus from targeting ‘the general public’ to decision-makers and other actors with the political power to enact change at the level of governance. Indeed, as one of my participants remarked about a particular judge who ruled against the campaign: “If only _____

had come down and put a mask on and gone snorkelling with us, things might've turned out differently."

The importance of direct, embodied engagements with the marine on the part of governance actors, then, should not be underestimated. Third, parts of this thesis have touched on the importance of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) in evaluating the ecological and social impacts of proposed activities and developments on nature and people. What about a shift to a different kind of EIA – towards an *Emotional Impact Assessment*? It has been beyond the scope of this study to assemble a practical toolbox designed for communities and policy-makers to employ in resource and governance conflicts. However, it is my hope that the methodological toolbox contained herein, and the various modes and tools of deep listening offered, may inspire the future development of practical tools (e.g., Emotional Impact Assessments for individuals, collectives, and movements) that benefit not only researchers (although such an Emotional Impact Assessment could be a novel way for researchers to engage with reflexivity) – but also communities that want to listen and to be heard.

8.6. Concluding remarks

As I've noted throughout this thesis, listening is a way of making things matter. "Listening with care is an active process of intervening in the count of whom and what is ratified as concerned" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 58). Rather than closing this thesis with my own words, then, I listen to the wishes of my interlocutors, and give them the final word.

In response to the last question in my interview with them ("Do you have any final thoughts to add before we wrap up?"), this is what one of my interlocutors wished for me to share with the world:

I suppose, like, for your studies... Ahm... wherever you will go with it, taking it to your university, or taking it to government, or taking it into law, or taking it to wherever, I would wish that... My wish to people, to myself, is that we make peace, and that we actually look at the whole big picture, slowly and properly. Because, our cause, you know, it does come around, in my opinion. I do believe in, my cause is my effect. So I want that, you know, that we make peace and that we find the beauty within our human soul, to do things a little bit more differently, a bit more conscientious, and... Yeah, that, make laws for other things. Let's make healthier laws. Let's make happier laws. That it's not a fight. Yeah.

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Appendix A: Letter of ethical approval



CARL VON OSSIETZKY UNIVERSITY OF OLDENBURG 26111 OLDENBURG

Soli Levi
Professor Dr Peters
Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg

Research Impact Assessment
and Ethics Committee

CHAIR
Prof. Dr.-Ing. Andreas Hein

ADMINISTRATOR
Zentrales Gremienbüro

EXTENSION
+49 (0)441 798 4742

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gremien-ek@uol.de

OLDENBURG, 02/03/2023

CENTRAL OFFICE OF COMMITTEES

POSTAL ADDRESS

26111 Oldenburg, Germany

PARCELS

Ammerländer Heerstraße 114 - 118

26129 Oldenburg, Germany

FAX

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Decision of the Research Impact Assessment and Ethics Committee regarding the application Emotional governance: the place of feelings in marine management

AN: Soli Levi (Lead Investigator), Helmholtz Institute for Functional Marine Biodiversity (HIFMB) – we are a re-search institute aligned with the University of Oldenburg, Ammerländer Heerstraße 231, 26129 Oldenburg. E-Mail: soli.levi@hifmb.de, Tel.: +1 240 330 2333; Prof. Dr. Kimberley Peters (Main Supervisor), Forschungsinstitut Helmholtz Institute for Functional Marine Biodiversity (HIFMB) at the University of Oldenburg. The Institute for Social Science (Fak. I), The Institute for Chemistry and Biology of the Marine Environment (ICBM) (Fak. V) Ammerländer Heerstraße 231, 26127, Oldenburg, Email: kimberley.peters@hifmb.de, Telefonnummer: +49 471 4831 2543 (Drs.EK/2023/006)

Dear Soli Levi, dear Professor Peters,

The Research Impact Assessment and Ethics Committee at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg thoroughly examined the above-mentioned research project during its meeting on 18.01.2023. The Committee has no objections to the implementation of the project.

Committee members who are involved in the research project or whose interests are affected by the research project did not participate in the discussion and decision-making process.

The Committee's positive assessment assumes conditions will remain unchanged.

Please note the following points:

- You must inform the Ethics Committee, immediately and voluntarily, of any changes to the research protocol and to the documents submitted as part of this application. Any serious adverse events that fall within its scope of responsibility must be reported promptly to the Committee.
- The respective researcher remains fully responsible.
- The Ethics Committee may withdraw or change this decision at any time. You will be duly informed of any such decision.
- Please provide a copy of this decision and the documents on which the decision was based to all researchers involved in the project.

Please note that the project is subject to the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). With regard to data privacy and declaration of consent, the following points in particular must be observed in addition to the measures already in place for ensuring data protection:

- a) You must appoint someone to be responsible for data processing throughout the project. If this person becomes the project manager, he or she must nonetheless be explicitly mentioned by name as the person responsible for data processing.
- b) You must publish the name and contact details of the relevant data protection officer (at the University and partner organisation(s)/principle investigator's institution).
- c) Participants in the research must also be made aware of their right to complain to a data protection supervisory authority (state data protection commissioner or national data protection commissioner in the state/country in which the research centre, partner organisation(s) or principle investigator is located). The relevant data protection supervisory authorities must also be mentioned. This information must be adapted for each research/study centre.
- d) The data subjects must be informed of their right to access (including the free transfer of a copy of) their personal data and their right to request that their data be corrected or deleted, if necessary.

For more information regarding your obligations towards research participants, please refer to Article 13 ff. of the GDPR. The Ethics Committee does not verify the accuracy of the information pertaining to the data protection commissioners and the supervisory authorities. For the Ethics Committee, it is sufficient to provide the area for the information concerning the regional data protection commissioner and the supervisory authorities.

I wish you every success in your project.

Kind regards,

signed.

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Andreas Hein

Interview Information Sheet



Prof. Dr. Kimberley Peters (Supervisor)
kimberley.peters@hifmb.de

+49 471 4831-2515

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This study is being carried out by the Marine Governance Group at the Helmholtz Institute for Functional Marine Biodiversity (HIFMB), aligned with the University of Oldenburg and the Alfred Wegener Institute.

Welcome to our study on "Emotional governance: the place of feelings in marine management"! We thank you for your interest in this study. Humans have always had an emotional connection to the sea. This is especially true here in Ireland, where the sea and coast have had a profound influence on the country's culture, history, heritage, and identities. The purpose of this study is to better understand this emotional connection and how it influences (and is influenced by) marine governance and decision-making processes. We have chosen to focus on the case of kelp harvesting in Bantry Bay to illustrate the importance of emotion in this context. By showing how emotions do indeed matter and have very real impacts on people and the environment, we hope that you can start to be taken seriously, and be taken into consideration in efforts to manage our marine environment *eg* forward.

You are invited to take part in this study through an interview. It will last between one and two hours, as agreed between you and the lead investigator (Soll Lev). You will be asked questions about your field of expertise; your connection to the coast and to kelp; and your thoughts and feelings about the matter of mechanical kelp harvesting in Bantry Bay. You may also be asked to draw on a map to indicate locations or activities significant to you, as a way to visually complement your verbal answers. If you have been asked to provide photographs, you may be asked to explain why you took these particular photographs, what they mean to you, and how they represent your feelings.

The interview may be conducted in-person or online. All in-person interviews will take place at a convenient location, date and time arranged with you. Online interviews will be conducted using the university videoconferencing software "Big Blue Button" (BBB). A convenient time and date will be arranged with you and you will be provided with a link to join the online room. A secure code will be provided to ensure the room is secure and private, with no possibility of interruption. Interviews (both in-person and online) will be recorded (audio only). A copy and transcript of your recording will be provided to you upon request.

Please contact the lead investigator if you have any further questions or concerns. If you would like to contact either the supervisor or the institution for any reason, please refer to the information in the box at the top of this page.

Participation in the study is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time before or during the interview without having to give a reason. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer, also without having to give a reason. There will be no negative consequences.

The data and personal information collected as part of this study (described above) will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality. As such, project staff members who have access to your personal data (only the lead investigator, Soli Levi, and the supervisor, Prof. Dr. Kimberley Peters) are bound by professional secrecy. The results of the study will be published anonymously, therefore it will not be possible to identify you from the data. You are free to discuss the process of anonymising with the lead investigator.

The personal data mentioned above is collected and processed at HIFMB using a number and without stating your name. There is a code list (hard copy) which can be used to link your name to this number. This code list is only accessible to the lead investigator and the main supervisor, i.e., only these persons can associate the collected data with your name. The code list is stored in a locked cabinet; once the data has been transcribed, the code list will be destroyed. Your data will then be completely anonymous. As such, it will no longer be possible for anyone to associate the collected data with your name. The anonymous data will be kept for at least 10 years. The code list will not be destroyed until September 1, 2024; you can request that all the data collected about you be deleted until this point in time. Once the code list has been destroyed, however, we will no longer be able to identify your dataset. Therefore, we can only comply with your request to delete your data as long as the code list still exists. The persons responsible for the data are Soli Levi (Lead Investigator) and Prof. Dr. Kimberley Peters (Supervisor).

Christoph Wagner
Data Protection Officer
Alfred-Wegener-Institut
Helmholtz-Zentrum für Polar- und Meeresforschung
Am Handelshafen 12
27570 Bremerhaven
Tel.: +49 (471) 4831-1637
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Declaration of Consent

	Soli Levi (Lead Investigator) soli.levi@hifmb.de +1 240 330-2333 Prof. Dr. Kimberley Peters (Supervisor) kimberley.peters@hifmb.de +49 471 4831-2515 Helmholtz Institute for Functional Marine Biodiversity Ammerländer Heerstraße 231 26129 Oldenburg, Germany www.hifmb.de +49 471 4831-2543 +49 471 4831-2544
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General information for participants about the examination

This study is being carried out by the Marine Governance Group at the Helmholtz Institute for Functional Marine Biodiversity (HIFMB), aligned with the University of Oldenburg and the Alfred Wegener Institute.

Study title: *Emotional governance: the place of feelings in marine management*

I (name of participant in block capitals), _____,

have been informed about the study via an information sheet and verbally before the interview. I consent to participation in the project outlined in the information sheet via my above signature. Any questions I have had about this study have been answered completely and to my satisfaction by Soli Levi or Prof. Dr. Kimberley Peters.

Consent for collection and processing of data

I agree to the described collection and processing of data, which takes the form of an interview. This data is recorded and evaluated at HIFMB, University of Oldenburg, using a number and without stating my name. There is a code list (hard copy) which can be used to link my name to this number. This code list is only accessible to the investigators and the main supervisor, i.e., only these persons can associate the collected data with my name. Once the data has been transcribed, the code list will be destroyed. My data will then be anonymous. As such, it will no longer be possible for anyone to associate the collected data with my name. I am aware that I can revoke my consent as to the storage or retention of this data without this resulting in negative consequences for me. I have been informed that I can request the deletion of all my data at any point in time until September 1, 2024. At this point, the code list will be destroyed, and my dataset will no longer be identifiable and can therefore no longer be deleted, as my data will be anonymous by then. I agree that my anonymised data can be used for research purposes and will be stored for at least 10 years. I have been informed that my name is stated only on this declaration of consent.

Consent for sound recordings

I am informed that sound recordings of the interviews will be made; these recordings will be assigned a number and evaluated anonymously. A code list (hard copy) linking my name to this number will be kept in a separate location and will be destroyed once the data has been evaluated. The code list is only accessible to the lead investigator and supervisor. The sound recordings will be stored in an external hard drive in a locked cabinet. The sound recordings will be destroyed at the latest by September 1, 2024, once the data evaluation has been completed.

There is a very low probability that a person involved in the data evaluation process will recognise me. For this reason, all persons involved in the data evaluation (only the lead investigator, Soli Levi, and supervisor, Prof. Dr. Kimberley Peters) are bound by professional secrecy and may under no circumstances pass on confidential information to third parties. I am aware that I can revoke my consent to the storage or retention of this data without this resulting in negative consequences for me. I have been informed that I can request the deletion of all my data as long as the code list has not been destroyed.

I am completing this consent form for sound recordings voluntarily. I can revoke this consent at any time. If I object or withdraw my consent, I will not be able to participate in the study. However, I will not incur any expenses or be disadvantaged in any other way due to my withdrawal and non-participation.

Consent for use of photographs and excerpts from interview transcripts

I agree that Soli Levi can use my photos and excerpts from interview transcripts, at her discretion, for the purposes of her research. She may only use the photos and excerpts from interview transcripts I have indicated below, and any material she uses will be completely anonymous (unless I specifically ask for credit to be given to me). She may use them in any way that helps to educate people about this study and its message. For example, she may use them in: her dissertation; in book chapters; in a website; in journals; in conference presentations; art projects; photo exhibitions or meetings to be held with communities, schools, funders, government, academic, civil society groups, etc. I have considered my photos and interview transcripts and feel that there is nothing that might cause me or anyone I know harm or embarrassment.

These are the photos and excerpts from interview transcripts that you can use:

☐ All of the photographs I have given to you.

☐ Only the following photographs:

☐ Any excerpt from the interview transcript.

☐ Only the following excerpts from the interview transcript:

Feedback of results

I am interested in learning more about the basic results of the study and would like to receive further information once the data have been evaluated (a process which may take up to two years).

☐ Yes

☐ No

Declaration of consent

I have had enough time to make a decision and am prepared to participate in the abovementioned study. I know that participation in the study is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time during the interview without stating reasons.

I confirm that I have received a copy of the 'Interview Information Sheet' for participants regarding the study as well as a copy of the declaration of consent. The 'Interview Information Sheet' forms part of this declaration of consent.

If I have any further questions or wish to discuss any other matters, I can contact the lead investigator (Soli Levi) or the supervisor (Prof. Dr. Kimberley Peters), whose contact information is in the box at the top of the first page of this form.

Place, date & signature of the participant:

Name of the participant in block letters:

Place, date & signature of the lead investigator:

Name of the lead investigator in block letters:

Appendix C: evidence of enrolment and admission into doctoral programme

Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg / 26111 Oldenburg Frau Soli Levi Acceptance as a doctoral candidate in accordance with Section 9 (3) of the Lower Saxony Higher Education Act (NHG), in conjunction with Section 5 (1) of the Doctoral Degree Regulations of School I, dated 21/04/2020 Your application dated 12th of October 2021 Dear Madame, following the conclusion of the written Supervision Agreement in accordance with the Doctoral Degree Regulations, in my capacity as Chair of the Doctorate Committee, I am writing to confirm your acceptance as a doctoral candidate. The working title of the planned doctoral thesis is: "Emotional governance: The place of feelings in marine management" A copy of the signed Supervision Agreement is attached to this letter. You can now enrol as a doctoral candidate*. Please note that you must also promptly apply for admission to a PhD programme. Kind regards <i>Schulze</i> Chair of the Doctorate Committee ☒ A copy of this letter will be sent to: • Professor Kimberley Peters in her role as academic supervisor • Registrar's Office *in accordance with Section 9 (2) sentence 4 of the Lower Saxony Higher Education Act (NHG): doctoral candidates must enrol as such. Please note: This is an unofficial translation provided for your convenience only and does not have any legal binding effects! Only the German version is legally binding!	Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg / 26111 Oldenburg Frau Soli Levi Annahme als Doktorand/in gemäß § 5 (1) der Promotionsordnung vom 21.04.2020 Bezug: Ihr Antrag vom 12.10.2021 Sehr geehrte Frau Levi, nach Abschluss der schriftlichen Betreuungsvereinbarung der Promotionsordnung und der Nachweise gem. § 7 (1) bestätige ich als Vorsitzende des Promotionsausschusses Ihre Annahme als Doktorand/in. Der vorläufige Titel der geplanten Dissertation lautet: „Emotional governance: The place of feelings in marine management“ Eine Durchschrift der unterzeichneten Betreuungsvereinbarung liegt diesem Schreiben bei. Sie können sich nun als angenommene Doktorand/in immatrikulieren lassen*. Ich weise Sie darauf hin, dass zeitnah auch noch ein Antrag auf Zulassung als Doktorand/in zu stellen ist. Mit freundlichem Gruß <i>Schulze</i> Prof. Dr. Gisela C. Schulze Vorsitzende ☒ zur Kenntnis an: • Frau Prof. Dr. Peters als wissenschaftliche Betreuerin • Immatrikulationsamt * § 9 (2) Satz 4 NHG: Doktorand/innen sollen sich als Promotionsstudierende einschreiben.
Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg / 26111 Oldenburg Frau Soli Levi Your application for admission to a PhD programme at School I Dear Madam, on 27th of April 2022, the Doctorate Committee considered and approved your application for admission to a PhD programme. You have been admitted to the PhD programme*. The working title of your thesis is: "Emotional Governance: The place of feelings in marine management" You received the copy of the signed Supervision Agreement with the admission as a doctoral candidate. We would like to remind you that, in accordance with Section 9 (1) of the Doctoral Degree Regulations dated 21/04/2020, you must submit your application to initiate the doctoral procedure at the earliest one year after admission and at the latest within five years of admission to the PhD programme. Upon request, and in justified cases, these deadlines can be adjusted as appropriate. If the application to initiate the doctoral procedure is not submitted on time, or if it is submitted after the deadline and the period of grace, the application for admission will be deemed to have been withdrawn. Kind regards <i>Schulze</i> Prof. Dr. Gisela C. Schulze The Chair of the Doctorate Committee ☒ A copy of this letter will be sent to Professor Peters in their role as primary academic supervisor A copy of this letter will also be sent to the Registrar's Office. *in accordance with Section 9 (2) sentence 4 of the Lower Saxony Higher Education Act (NHG): doctoral candidates must enrol as such. Please note: This is an unofficial translation provided for your convenience only and does not have any legal binding effects! Only the German version is legally binding!	Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg / 26111 Oldenburg Frau Soli Levi Ihr Promotionsverfahren an der Fakultät I Hier: Ihr Antrag auf Zulassung zur Promotion Sehr geehrte Frau Levi, der Promotionsausschuss hat am 27. April 2022 Ihrer Zulassung zur Promotion zugestimmt*. Die Zulassung basiert auf der Promotionsordnung in der Fassung vom 21. April 2020. Ihr vorläufiger Arbeitstitel lautet: „Emotional Governance: The place of feelings in marine management“. Eine Durchschrift der unterzeichneten Betreuungsvereinbarung haben Sie im Zuge des Verfahrens zur Annahme als Doktorand/in bereits erhalten. Wir weisen darauf hin, dass gem. § 9 (1) der Promotionsordnung der Antrag auf Einleitung des Promotionsverfahrens in der Regel frühestens ein Jahr nach der Zulassung zur Promotion und spätestens innerhalb von fünf Jahren seit der Zulassung zu stellen ist. Diese Fristen können in begründeten Fällen angemessen verändert werden. Hierfür bedarf es eines Beschlusses des Promotionsausschusses nach fristgemäßem Vorliegen eines entsprechenden Antrags der Doktorand/in. Mit freundlichem Gruß <i>Schulze</i> Prof. Dr. Gisela C. Schulze Vorsitzende ☒ Durchschrift gelangt an Frau Prof. Dr. Peters als wissenschaftliche Erstbetreuerin Durchschrift gelangt an das Immatrikulationsamt * § 7a (6) der Promotionsordnung vom 21.04.2020 in Verbindung mit § 9 (2) Satz 4 NHG: Doktorandinnen und Doktoranden sollen sich als Promotionsstudierende einschreiben