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Is civil society activism necessary to defeat climate change?
A reading through the lens of the movement "Extinction Rebellion".

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Introduction

"We are in a planetary emergency."

Professor James Hansen, Former Director NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies

"Based on sober scientific analysis, we are deep within a climate emergency state, but people are not aware of it."

Professor Hans Schellnhuber, Founding Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research

"There is sufficient evidence to draw the most fundamental of conclusions: now is the time to declare a state of planetary emergency. The point is not to admit defeat, but to match the risk with the necessary action to protect the global commons for our own future."

Professor Johan Rockstrom, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research

Since the late 1800s, the planet's average surface temperature has increased by 2.12 degrees Fahrenheit (1.18 degrees Celsius), primarily due to higher carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere and other human activities. The last 40 years have seen the most warming, with the last seven being the warmest, especially in 2016 and 2020 (NASA Official). In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a special report stating that achieving a path compatible with restricting anthropogenic warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial averages will necessitate a 45 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (IPCC, 2018).

As a result, humanity will only have 12 years to make a significant change in how natural resources are used and distributed to prevent dire consequences, including rising sea levels and widespread ecosystem destruction. Following the release of this report, a narrative centered on this 12-year deadline began to emerge and was picked up by international organizations, corporations, media, and governments. However, this is not the only narrative which is present in the public consciousness in recent years. Since there is no policy-making organization at the national or international level with other priorities and obligations to address climate concerns, particularly decarbonization activities, pressure from outside the policy-making is required.

Such pressure must come from below, as history has shown, and must incorporate grassroots activist groups as part of the process. According to Keohane and colleagues (1996), grassroots pressures in an industrialized democratic environment are a variable that has a more remarkable ability to influence the course of environmental policies than the international decision-making process. During the last two decades, civil activism has shown a great effort to fight climate change. The number and range of social movements can vary across the world, from local to international. They also vary regarding the role they influence, from local authorities to institutions or corporate actions.

Various social movements are involved in climate change action and various stages that social movements can undergo in their development. However, this research project focuses on one group that significantly impacts the climate's awareness: Extinction Rebellion (XR). Through the lens of a sociological perspective, this project aims to understand why and how XR, as a civil society movement, can generate and spread knowledge on the danger of anthropogenic climate change and foreshow new ways to re-organize a low-carbon society.

The task of achieving a transition to sustainability, a transition that will allow people worldwide to live free from fear without jeopardizing future generations' ability to do so, is perhaps the greatest challenge of our time. "*Dissatisfaction often turned into despair as even the most advanced climate science seemed unable to turn the tide on the unsustainable extraction and use of fossil fuels and other natural resources, and on climate change and natural degradation … These years of relentless struggles by environmental activists, the growing scientific evidence and the deepening despair at the urgency of the existential threat have perhaps combined to give rise to new environmental movements* (Ines Smyth & Lucy Walters 2020) ."

It is this sense of constant anxiety about the future that prompted me to explore this topic. After starting my university studies, I realized how little I was aware of the seriousness of climate change. Consequently, I developed this perception that society is not doing as much as possible to circumvent humanity's biggest problem. For this reason, I got closer to environmental awareness, trying to understand which social actor was doing more. I took part in all the "Friday for Future" events, and I felt even more, the anguish and fear that unites all my peers. Finally, due to my Erasmus experience in Edinburgh, I became aware of this group called "Extinction Rebellion."   I had the opportunity to attend several live meetings and question myself on this very issue: Will civil society movements save us from climate change?

Indeed, this paper aims not to repeat the case for strategic narratives as a climate change communication or coordinating tool. This has been accomplished in the past. It is also not its goal to provide a simple explanation for the effectiveness of a particular strategic narrative to help forecast its future effectiveness. There is not enough evidence to back up such claims in the climate change literature, and the communication environment is complicated enough to make future projections. Instead, the paper aims to propose new keys to examine how this new generation of storytellers presents a solution to climate change. Although Extinction Rebellion was born in the UK, the critical message is understanding how and why it has managed in recent years to include such a large number of activists, then analyzing its dynamics and characteristics to ask whether the whole world can benefit from such a movement.

Given the ambition of the present paper, the methodology that will be employed is mostly from literature studies. The data is obtained from books, articles in scientific journals, official documents, and internet sources. However, both quantitative and qualitative data will be used within the main body as a general notion. For the most part, a descriptive-qualitative analysis is going to be used. The data are collected to help the writer to explain and discuss the argument of the thesis. Furthermore, tables and graphs will be used to summarize or schematize different focus points of different paragraphs. These are direct extrapolations from the literature on which the present thesis is based, with the original author being adequately accredited.

The thesis is articulated in three chapters. In the first, a general and theoretical reflection will be proposed. Firstly, through the lens of sociological authors such as Fabio De Nardis (2020), Weber (1978), Herbert Kitschelt (1986), Alberto Mellucci (1985), and others more, the aim is to identify the characteristic of social movements directed for this thesis. Then, a brief discussion on why environmental, social movements were born, citing the main books that influenced them, such as Barry Commoner's The Closing Circle (1971). Next, the focus will be on British Environmental, Social Movements through the works of McCormick (199), C. Miller and A. Routes (2000), Rawcliffe (1998), and others. Lastly, the analysis of civil, non-violent disobedience is deemed necessary to grasp why Extinction Rebellion chooses to use this strategy.

The second chapter, which represents the hearth of the following research project, will be devoted entirely to Extinction Rebellion. The movement was founded in 2018 by several environmental activists who were tired of society not doing enough to stop anthropogenic climate change. First of all, the analysis will be on the movement's demand in the UK, namely: "Tell the truth," "Act Now," and "Go beyond Politics." The former demand stresses the need for governments to accept that

climate change is happening now and needs to be faced and make citizens realize and endorse its gravity by spreading scientific knowledge most effectively.

The second claim proposes a revolutionary alternative to the reformist one deemed necessary due to the world's dire crises. The alternative that XR proposes is the organization of non-violent civil protests with acts of civil disruption. As Jasmine (XR's Scotland) declares, simple protests are not enough anymore to catch governments' and people's attention. Although a bit of personal sacrifice is understood, everyone must participate because there is no more time. The last demand that XR proposes is a new way to organize a low-carbon future society democratically. This can be achieved by creating a civil assembly where citizens, no matter age, race, sex, can, after having the chance to listen to experts, deliberate on what they regard most fair for society.

In the second part of the chapter, XR's principles and values will be analyzed because they represent what all the activists who joined the movement endorse. Then, the focus will be on its organizational structure, defined to be decentralized and autonomous. Finally, the last part is dedicated to the activists who have decided to join the movement. I consider this to be the most moving and exciting part because, from all the testimonies, one perceives anguish and fear for the future.

In the third and final chapter of this thesis, the analysis will focus on the main criticism the movement faces, thus asking whether the criticism outweighs the movement's efficiency in society. The second and third parts are complementary and necessary to conclude with this thesis by asking whether non-violent civil movements can be the answer to achieve social change and conclude with trying to understand whether this social change can be seen as a global vision.

Chapter I: Overview of Environmental Social Movements: What are they? When were they born?

1.1 What is a social movement?

Before engaging the analysis into environmental, social movements and emphasizing the extinction rebellion movement's role, it is necessary to analyze the theoretical framework of social movements because it is relevant to explore how they can influence and spread the knowledge on climate change and how they can be a significant source of communication and action. As history shows, significant changes have happened with civil movements: a group of people coming together, fighting for the exact cause, and winning it.

Over the years, the nature of social movements has transformed. While during the nineteenth and most of the twentieth century, the labor movement dominated the political scene, new collective action mechanisms have arisen after the second half of the twentieth century. Fabio de Nardis (2020:345) states that members' identity was shaped in new terms, and the actors objective was no longer linked just to the capitalist/labor conflict which has occupied previous centuries, but it has expanded to all aspects which pervade human life, such as the environmental issue. Furthermore, the actors involved in creating and fighting for a collective action cause tend to create their own social-political identity, which is recognized as a part of a social transition phase. "*All this takes place within dynamic societies where conflict pervades every aspect of social life. Social conflict becomes one of the keys to understanding contemporary societies*" (Ibid). Each sociological scholar offers a distinct definition of collection action. For instance, one of the classical authors of sociology, Weber, focuses on "charisma" as a potential source of class mobilization (Ibid, pp. 346), distinguishing two collection action categories. The first one is linked to daily life, and it presents itself in forms of associative action to achieve material interests (Weber 1978), while the second one is linked to the charisma of the leader who can detach people who are part of the movement, from the ordinariness of the daily habits to something new and innovating.

"*Various movements have emerged over the past few years, enough to prompt some to talk about "movements society" to describe western societies*" (Neidhardt and Rucht 1991). After massive social movements expansion in the 1960s, these scholars have started to doubt that the classical sociological approaches, Marxism and structural functionalism, were not enough to explain their new features and how they affected and changed society. Indeed, new theoretical and research questions were mainly developed from the critics of the United States' structuralism approach and the neo-Marxist approach in Europe. Today, although it is not easy to find an agreement among

scholars and academics on social movements' meaning for several reasons, it is feasible to identify the four strands which theorize social movements: collective action, resource mobilization, political process, and the new social movement theory (Fabio De Nardis, 2020:357).

For this research project, the focus will be on similar characteristics that these theories share in order to provide a working description and definition aimed at characterizing environmental, social movements.

First of all, a social movement is described as a collective type of social activity mobilized explicitly for political action and as a process or method of human resource mobilization to effect political change. Social movements in order to achieve a political cause use what Herbert Kitschelt called political opportunity structure: *"Political opportunity structures are comprised of specific configurations of resources, institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social mobilization, which facilitate the development of protest movements in some instances and constrain them in others*" (1986:58). There is often the misconception that protests or all types of direct action that the movement uses to express and manifest its cause are the acts that form the movement itself. However, all the acts that make up the movement need to connect in several ways and be linked to an organized program. This linkage across the movement creates a sense of collective identity. Alberto Mellucci and Alain Touraine have been the leading exponents of collective identity studies.

According to Alberto Mellucci (1985:789-816), identity is a central element when analyzing social movement because it means that an individual recognizes to be part of a wider community and behaves following the community's ideas. The concept of collective identity for Mellucci is linked to what social movements are: "action systems." On the one hand, the action's stability and consistency would not be possible without individuals' interdependence and integration. On the other hand, social movements are action systems because their structure is built upon beliefs, aims, ideas, and decisions operating in a systemic field. "*A collective identity is nothing else than a shared definition of the field of opportunities and constraints offered to collective action: "shared" means constructed and negotiated through a repeated process of "activation" of social relationships connecting the actors.*" (Id, pp. 794). To consider a social movement an action system is crucial because it would be treated as an empirical phenomenon. A social movement is a "system of action" because it is formed by establishing a relation between plural orientations and meaning. Only by examining all the different analytical elements is it possible to understand how they are joined together by the organizational structure and how the collective identity is built through an intricate system of exchanges, negotiations, decisions, and orientations (Ibid, pp 795).

A second element that almost all the theories and research on social movement share is acknowledging that they are more than simply political events. As Jurgen Habermas described, they require some communication process or "communicative action" (Habermas J., 2015:6). However, there is a disagreement on the cultural or communicative aspects of social movements among scholars. Some emphasize the role of framing and the cognitive approach, while others focus on passion and emotions. On the one hand, the cognitive approach is based on the belief that culture includes a value structure and lifestyles, practices, behaviors, and abilities that can affect a social action plan.

On the other hand, according to Eyerman and Jamison (1998), the movement experience is also a cognitive practice that involved a constant reproduction of cultural codes. Indeed, in their book titled "Music and Social Movements," they focus their attention on culture's role, but especially on the role that music and songs play in the formation and resemblance of social movements. The concept of framing is also linked to the cognitive approach. Fabio de Nardis (2020:358) states that by frame is meant a complex system of perceptions and expectations that give meaning to collective action:

"[A frame is] a general, standardized, predefined structure (in the sense that it already

belongs to the receiver's knowledge of the world) which allows recognition of the world,

and guides perception [...] allowing him/her to build defined expectations about what is to

happen, that is to make sense of his/her reality". (P.R. Donati 1992:141–142)

For this reason, to prove the effectiveness of the protest or direct action organized by the movements, a "frame alignment" must occur between the exponents of the movement and the people who join it. A movement that wants to remain cohesive and obtain a certain consensus must follow the following framing dynamics (De Nardis, 2020:359):

• "Frame bridging": to highlight the "common elements" between otherwise isolated frames.

• "Frame amplification": to amplify a frame offering a clear worldview.

• "Frame extension": to extend this scheme by creating a harmony between the concerns of the movement's potential base and the general objectives.

• "Frame transformation": the frames can be further transformed in such a way as to make them more similar to the cultural codes of important sectors of public opinion.

On the other hand, some scholars focus their attention on passions and emotions, often neglected in the past. Indeed, in social mobilization, factors that cannot always be traced down to a logical dimension, such as desires, thoughts, and the utopian dimension, are the product of the union of "reason" and "passion" that gives collective action significance and must be considered (De Nardis on Mellucci 1989).

A third and final element relevant to include, and almost all the theories share, is that a social movement is not a political party or an established institution. Different theories have tried to differentiate social movements from organizations, institutions, and political parties, especially Alberoni in 1984 (Jamison 2010, Volume 1). Although social movements are different and more informal than political parties, they must have an organizational structure solid to manage and play a significant political role. "*The definition of an organizational model is a strategic opportunity for social movements, in order to avoid falling into spontaneism, typical of some forms of rebellion that, apart from the effervescence of the initial phases, hardly lead to politically incisive outputs*" (Fabio De Nardis, 2010:362).

A Social Movement Organization (SMO) is a complex structure that coincides with the movement's preferences and aims; it goes from finding the monetary resources to recruiting activists and planning voluntary work to control and replace inadequate members. Usually, a solid social moment depends on the internal solidarity that it has developed.

For this essay's purposes, social movements are identified as political protests that unite human, financial, and cultural capital in networks that connect individual participants and organizations in the pursuit of a common goal. As a core part of their work, they create spaces in the broader community for new knowledge-making and socio-cultural learning.

1.2 Historical development of environmental, social movements with focus on UK's environmental social movements

In the academic and social discussion on the dangerous effects of climate change and the transition from a carbon-intensive society to a low-carbon society, a critical gap is missing, which should underline the importance of social-environmental movements and civil activism that play a decisive role in impacting people's minds on the effects of climate change. Furthermore, their analysis can be a compelling resource for society because by highlighting all the different approaches and

organizational structures they use, it is feasible to find out which of them is most effective in spreading the message and utilizing it to mobilize society towards climate change's fight.

One of the many aspects of an 'environmental crisis' that led to the rise of environmental, social movements in the 1970s was climate change, which was described as a potentially crucial public issue that needed to arouse concern. Like other social movements born during the 1960s and '70s, the environmental ones were harsh critics of how information was created in society and how students were informed and educated (Jamison 2010:813). The majority of the active members were university and high school students, and most of their action was focused on collaborative learning about environmental issues and how to cope with what became known as the "environmental crisis." The environmental movement's cognitive praxis focused on a structural holism paradigm or cosmology drawn from systems theory and popularized in books including "Barry Commoner's The Closing Circle" (1971), "A Blueprint for Survival," "Just One Earth," and the influential writings of American ecosystem ecologists Eugene and Howard Odum (Id, pp-814). Within this knowledge and cognitive praxis, the firsts environmental movements recognized that climate change is a potential threat to human existence. For instance, Barry Commoner's book highlighted the "four laws" of ecology, which played a crucial part in analyzing carbon dioxide's role in the greenhouse effect. These four laws, namely:

everything is connected to everything else,

everything must go somewhere,

nature knows best,

there is no such thing as free lunch,

provided a set of basic assumptions for all the social and environmental movements rising during the 1970s.

It is essential to study and show how environmental and social movements affected and influenced climate change because they have been since the 1960's the main channels of communication of this issue. Mainly because, as Berry Commoner explains (1971:300), the environmental crisis is essentially a social issue. Its solution lies in societal and systemic reform brought on by citizen activism. Climate change is not different. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recognizes the importance of civil society in compacting climate change, defining civil society as "*the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interest, purpose and values*" and it also points out that "*the climate change movement influences climate change policy through*

three actions: policy advocacy, providing policy research, and opening political spaces for new political reforms" (Dunlap and Brulle 2015:2/3, on IPCC 2007:708-713). Most importantly, contrarily to the state's sphere of action and the market, which both have fundamental imperative to meet, the civil society sphere is not constrained in the same manner. Through voluntary association with one another, citizens can identify and advocate for their collective interests, and with this independence, they can generate an effort to achieve social change (Dunlap and Brulle, 2015:3).

Britain's environmental climate activism is one of the earliest forms. *'Britain has the oldest, strongest, best-organized, and most widely supported environmental lobby in the world'* (McCormick 1991:34). Though McCormick's argument could be debatable, a still-strong trend in the 1980s became much more robust in the 1990s. By 1997, the eleven largest British environmental activist organizations (EMOs), whose membership statistics are released regularly in the official government journal Social Trends, had a total membership of nearly 5.3 million individuals (Rootes, C., & Miller, A. 200:1). This data demonstrates that almost twenty percent of the Britons were engaged in climate activism when acknowledging the problem was at its early stage, showing how the population has been proactive regarding climate change awareness. Furthermore, according to Rawcliffe (1998:13), these characteristics are the product of processes that have influenced the British environmental movement since its origin in the nineteenth century as a romantic and utopian reaction to the changes brought on by the industrial revolution in Britain.

Four distinct phases can be identified of the British environmental movements (Rootes, C., & Miller, A. 200:2). Each of them had seen an expansion of the environmental agenda due to the increasing public support for environmental issues, bringing diversity in the movements' composition and focus. These expansions also contributed to strengthening the movements, which increased thanks to the diversity of the people involved, from amateur naturalists and utopian radicals to professional scientists, who widened the environmental philosophy and practices within the movements (Rawcliffe 1998:15).

The first lasted from the mid-1880s to 1900 and saw the birth of organizations such as the RSPB, National Trust, and the forerunners of the Town and Country Planning Association and the Wildlife Trusts. The second, which spanned the interwar years, saw the emergence of new environmental organizations, such as the Councils for the Protection of Rural England, Wales and Scotland, the Ramblers' Association, and the Pedestrians' Association which drew on a growing foundation of environmental interest. The third period lasted from 1960 to the late 1970s and is widely regarded as the beginning of the new environmental movement. This phase was an era of intensified organizational creativity and the proliferation of international environmental organizations; the

WWF, Friends of the Earth (FoE), and Greenpeace founded organizations in the United Kingdom during this time. Furthermore, it was also a time in which environmentalism became a massive concern, and its form of action extended and embraced new forms of direct action. Finally, Rawcliffe (1998:16) claimed that there is also a fourth phase that started in the 1980s and has been a period of impressive growth of environmental movements, especially in the number of people joining the movements.

Although the range of British environmental, social movements is relatively high, they differ for various reasons. For instance, assuming environmentalists believe the human decline is neither imminent nor desirable, views on what can be done to avert harmful climate change can be divided into two theory-inspired dimensions (P. North 2011:10).

	Large-scale technological change	Smaller scale appropriate technologies
Policy reform, developing prefigurative practices	NGO-led large-scale demonstrations aimed at achieving policy reform, persuading elites to act	Carbon Rationing Action Groups, transition towns, low-carbon communities, prefigurative practices at climate camp
Challenge unsustainable practices	Large-scale demonstrations aimed at forcing elites to act through construction of a mass movement	Mass and elite direct action: climate camp, Plane Stupid, Leave it in the Ground

Figure 1. Repertoires of contention (P. North 2011:10)

The horizontal axis engages with the well-known green thought divide between scientific optimists, who, while not cornucopian ecological modernizers, are broadly sympathetic to the possibility of vast technical solutions built in a diverse environment and ecocentrics, who are more skeptical (Ibid). The latter favor smaller-scale, locally produced "relevant innovations" that are more in tune with what they see as important cultural and economic activities and livelihood choices if human civilization thrives within ecological limits while leaving room for other animals. They do not want a low-carbon form of capitalism that they see as inhumane, high-tech, and exploitative (Ibid, pp. 1).

Instead, the side axis comes from Alberto Melucci's work (1989: 60-69) on social movement identity, which explains that social movements need to take different strategies according to the aims they want to reach. In this case, it is shown that generally, the British environmental movements are divided between those who advocate for policy change of what they see as a pluralist polity or the advancement of prefigurative practices, or on the other side those who

advocate for challenging unsustainable and unjust power system (P.North 2011:10-11). The first bifurcation on this axis is between those who organize mass demonstrations calling for policy reform (SCC) and those who concentrate on building a mass movement to demand and implement change, such as civil rights, peace, or antiglobalization movements (CACC). According to the CACC activist Jonathan Neale (2008), the politics of climate change should demand significant–scale change. If elites do not listen because they focus on maintaining an unsustainable system supported by a capitalist structure where economic growth is the only aim, then there is the need to replace them with someone who will demand this change. The second ramification is between those who argue for marches and those who focus on direct action. In general, anarchist-inspired climate activists have no confidence in mass protests to petition or persuade elites to change their minds. Therefore, it is possible to distinguish between those who are openly organized and expand the participation to all those who want to fight for the exact cause, for instance, in climate action camps. On the other hand, those groups such as Green Peace, "Keep it in the Ground," and "Plane Stupid" are characterized with an "exclusivist" (Ibid) direction action plan, executed only by the inner circle of activists.

As demonstrated, there has always been a vibrant diversity of environmental, social movements in the UK. The following fundamental question is analyzing which tactic, over the broad range of contention's spectrum, is the most effective in implementing the movement's goals.

1.3 Civil, Non-Violent, Disobedience.

Over the broad range of tactics that a movement can utilize to prove its case, one that definitively stands out is "non-violent civil disobedience." The term "civil disobedience" goes back to almost two and half centuries, when Henry David Thoreau, in 1848 in his essay, described his refusal to pay the state tax poll adopted by the US administration to prosecute a war in Mexico and to enforce "Fugitive Slave Law" (B. Kimberely 2017). In his essay, Thoreau studied and observed that only a few people, such as martyrs, patriots, reformers, heroes, have served the society with their consciences and have reached a significant change, with the drawback of being treated as enemies by society. For his part, Thoreau spent almost all his life in prison due to all his organized protests. However, many people after him have proudly labeled their protests as an act of civil disobedience, and their communities have regarded them, often briefly, sometimes permanently, as rivals (ibid).

Acts of civil disobedience have helped in the re-evaluation of society's moral constraints throughout history. The Boston Tea Party, the feminist movement, Gandhi's resistance to British rule in India,

and Martin Luther King's US civil rights movement, the resistance to apartheid in South Africa are examples of how civil disobedience was an essential mechanism for social change. As a result, the concept of "civil disobedience" has been widely studied. Indeed, the philosophical reflection in the Anglo-American tradition began in the 1960s, against the backdrop of Civil Rights and anti. Vietnam war protests, with exponents such as Hugo Bedau, Richard Wasserstrom, Carl Cohen, Michael Walzer, and, most prominently, John Rawls (C.Delmas 2016:1). According to Rawls' seminal account, civil disobedience is a conscientious, public, politically motivated, non-violent violation of law carried out to convince the majority of a nearly just, legal society to alter a law or policy. Furthermore, in their appeals, agents of civil disobedience must refer to the community's shared sense of justice, and they must show their general "fidelity to law" by acknowledging, or even finding out, the legal implications of their acts (Rawls, 1999:322).

Civil disobedience should be distinguished from other forms of political action such as lawful protest, conscientious objection, armed rebellion, and revolution. Both lawful protest and civil disobedience attempt to change policy or laws, but civil disobedients try to accomplish their target by unlawful methods. (C. Delmas 2016:2). Civil disobedients and conscientious objectors alike have a conscientious moral conviction that is, according to Brownlee (2012:1), "*a sincere and serious, though possibly mistaken, moral commitment that [they are] willing to both articulate to others and to bear the costs for holding*." The disobedient civil agent argues for legal reform and change and differ, in most cases, from both armed resistance and revolution in terms of attitudes, aims, and methods. Civil disobedients are thought to pursue legal reforms merely, use only non-violent and public tactics or strategies, and accept punishment as a sign of general respect for the legal system. Violent, armed resistances and revolutions, in contrast, are expected to have radical goals, lack respect for the legal system and be open to the use of covert, coercive and violent tactics (C. Delmas 2016:3-4).

Among the several features that civil – disobedience owns, one that emerges is "conscientiousness." This characteristic points out the seriousness, sincerity, and moral conviction with which the civil disobedient breaches the law. For many disobedients, breaking the law is needed out of self-respect and moral consistency, and their perception of society's interests. Using disobedience, they draw attention to the laws or practices they feel need to be reassessed or rejected (B. Kimberly 2017). The other two aspects that mark civil disobedience are "communication" and "publicity" and can be contrasted with each other. The former, thanks to the communicative aspect, aims to draw attention to the issue and instigate a change in law or policy, while the latter aims to spread the message to all the community. According to Rawls (1971:366), civil disobedience is never done in secret covert or

behind closed doors; instead, it is only done publicly, openly, and with fair notice to legal authorities.

However, the most striking and significant element to consider is "non-violence." Cesar Chavez said, *"we can change the world if we do it nonviolently; if we can show people how they can organize nonviolently, we cannot fail. Non-violence has never failed when it is tried*." When a movement or any political action decides to adopt the strategy of civil disobedience, it certainly advocates the principle of non-violence. Non-violence, which is neither violent nor passive, is a force for change, peace, and the well-being of all. It is a powerful tool for confronting and overcoming aggression without resorting to violence, creatively shaping and resolving conflict, and promoting just and peaceful alternatives. According to Rawls, acts of violence that are likely to cause harm are incompatible with civil disobedience as a method of protest; indeed, Rawls (1971:266) says that "*any interference with the civil liberties of others tends to obscure the civilly disobedient quality of one's actions."*

Recent studies have shown that non-violent strategies are twice as effective as violent ones. As Raz observes (1979:267), non-violence prevents the immediate damage that violence cause, and it does not promote violence in other contexts where it might be wrong, something which the justified use of violence instigate to do. Furthermore, non-violence does not bear the same risk of alienating potential allies or confirming an opponent's animosity as violence does. Besides, non-violence does not divert public attention, and it is unlikely to provide officials with an excuse to use violent retaliation against disobedients.

An exciting study by Maria I. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth (2008:7-44) shows that major non-violent campaigns have achieved success 53 percent of the time, compared with 26 percent for violent resistance campaigns. According to this study, non-violent resistance may have a strategic advantage over violent resistance for two reasons. First, repressing non-violent campaigns may backfire against its originators. This is because repression of non-violent campaigns has a higher internal and external cost than the repression of violent ones. Backfire causes a power shift by increasing the internal solidarity of the campaign, generating dissent and tensions among the opponent's supporters, increasing external resistance campaign support, and decreasing external opponent support. Second, since they do not endanger the lives or well-being of members of the target regime, non-violent movements tend to be more open to negotiation and bargaining. Indeed, regime defenders are more likely to strike deals with opposition movement which do not harm their comrades.

All these studies reported above show how civil, non-violent disobedience can be a powerful tool to exploit if a movement or political action aims at a societal change. The next chapter will focus on a social, environmental movement called "Extinction Rebellion." Born in the UK out of the climate and ecological emergency, this movement endorses the civil non-violent disobedience strategy.

Chapter II: Extinction rebellion, the case of "Non- Violence" and "Civil Disobedience

2.1 Historical Overview of Extinction rebellion and its Demands.

"I am a mother of two boys, I spent my life feeling a bit like I was not really in the right place.. Trying to be a scientist as a woman of the working class [...] I know what it feels like, to feel like someone else know what is happening [...] Working people have trouble meeting their ends and they do not have a choice in conventional politics. The current democracy no longer works; it is deeply flawed. It is normal for lobbyists, who have billions to spend on solving certain problems, to be constantly with the government to lobby, preserve their interest, and make more money, but not to defend the interests and needs of ordinary people. I think it is a deeply toxic system! It has got this machinery based on the idea that we have to have constant economic growth, but you cannot have constant economic growth on a finite planet. The Mother of all crisis means that 97% of life may disappear and probably, in my children's lifetime, all life on Earth. So the question is not "What needs to happen" or "What the problems are"; but "How do We change things?". With these words, the co-organizer and activist Gail Bradbrook (Extinction Rebellion UK 2019) uncovers the heart of Extinction Rebellion.

Gail Bradbrrok, Simon Bramwell and Roger Hallam, and other activists from the advocacy group "Rising Up!" launched the movement in May 2018, after a call to action was published (The Guardian 2018). The most outstanding reason that brought the establishment of the movement was accepting the fact that society was not doing enough to stop the acceleration of the anthropogenic climate change and acknowledging that without rebellions and a revolutionary transformation of our cultures and politics, society will not change at the required pace (Roger Hallam 2019:7). Roger (2019) argues that it is a matter of introductory structural sociology that institutions have limits to how fast they can change, and they must be replaced by new social policy structures, practices, and cultures to achieve rapid change.

The movement has three demands in the UK:

1) ***Tell the truth*** *= government must tell the truth by declaring a climate and ecological emergency, working with other institutions to communicate the urgency for change.*

2) ***Act Now*** *= Government must act now to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2025.*

3) ***Go Beyond Politics*** *=Government must create and be led by the decisions of a Citizens' Assembly on climate and ecological justice"* (Extinction Rebellion Official).

2.1.1 Accept the truth.

The first step required in this transformation is accepting the truth. The biggest challenge for acknowledging climate change and environmental activism is that *"people rarely seem to talk about empirical reality"* (Roger Hallam 2019:15).

Gail (Extinction Rebellion UK 2019) emphasizes, "*Sometimes, I try to talk to another parent about this, and their answer is usually the same: do not talk to me about it*." The dilemma is that society is not aware of how critical the situation is. Most of the time, campaigners do not internalize the information emotionally, but they passively process it, leading to personal protectionism and denial (Dan Kahan 2010). Consequentially, climate change's topic becomes taboo, prompting the community's inaction beyond basic recycling activities.

The biggest problem is the divergence between scientists' and nonscientist's understanding. Generally is not enough to give and publish data as the one reported by the IPCC in October 2018, advising for a reduction in the emission of carbon dioxide levels to avoid the earth temperature elevation by 2 degrees Celsius. Climate change is already here, with just 1°C of global warming, and it is wreaking havoc on communities and habitats all over the world. Any tenth of a degree of additional warming would intensify these effects while also increasing the likelihood of irreversible tipping points. If society does not act drastically and immediately, things will get a lot worse in the coming decades (Emily Grossman 2020:12). To begin with, understanding climate change as a set of physical phenomena in interaction with their human causes and effects is inherently complex. Furthermore, nonscientists' view is being influenced by an ongoing battle to enforce conceptual frames on climate changes as a policy issue, in which a well-founded and structured campaign has succeeded in promoting frames that are at odds with the scientific evidence and the growing scientific consensus (Weber, E. U., & Stern, P. C. 2011:317).

The name "Extinction Rebellion" comes from the need and the urgency to mobilize society towards a Rebellion against the existing system. According to the movement's founders, there is no time to adopt the traditional western reformist standard. According to this structure, society can change through small steps by making small demands and "small asks from the supporters" (Roger Hallam 2019:20). Although the logic of a reformist approach displays some level of little change, the problem is that not all contexts display signs of reformist structure. A conventional view would argue that the revolutionary approach of Extinction Rebellion, "Tell the truth and act like the truth was real," would lack credibility; however, people join the movement because it endorses what

many think and proposed a pathway to action (ibid). Generally, it is inevitable for reformists to speak the truth just to the degree people can handle it and act on it to the extent it is feasible to win.

However, another road needs to be taken to avert the effects of climate change. Governments are not only failing to do everything possible to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions following the Paris Agreement, but they are also encouraging further increases in emissions (Emily Grossman 2020:109). It is essential to underline the contradictory role that governments follow with an example. The economic crisis of COVID-19 due to confinement restrictions led to a global decrease in CO2 emissions. The total change until the end of April is estimated to be equivalent to a -8.6% decrease over January-April 2019 (Le Quéré et al., 2020). During the previous economic crisis, the decrease of CO2 emissions was followed by a severe rising, as in 2009, where the CO2 declined by -1.4% but immediately followed by +5.1% in 2010 (ibid). The short mat of this pandemic demonstrated again that the G20 government, instead of supporting investments in clean energy, allocated at least $151 billion to the Fossil fuel economy (Koop 2020). This trajectory has been confirmed by the hijacking of the Hydrogen strategy put forward by the EGD, where the commission in charge met 151 times with lobbies and just 29 with representatives of public interest. The EU green deal prioritizes carbon trading allowing pollution to grow instead of stopping it (Belanyà 2020).

More specifically, although UK emissions have fallen more than 30% over the last 30 years, these have been almost entirely due to a reduction in the power sector. Also, in the power sector, transitioning to renewable energy sources does not result in a complete reduction in emissions. In reality, the primary explanation for the pollution reduction is the shift from burning coal to primarily burning gas over the last few decades. In the last decade, gas usage dropped by 20%, and coal-burning has gone down by almost 80%. Although these dates are good news, progress is dramatically slow. Emissions need to be reduced through all the sectors, including land, transport, buildings, aviation, and shipping, and they must fall by far more than they are currently doing (Emily Grossman 2020:117). In addition, it is essential to consider the imported or embossed emissions from trade. The UK's official carbon accounting does not acknowledge them, while they are crucial because between 50% and 80% of fruits, vegetables, and food are imports.

Furthermore, the Office for National Statistics announced in October 2019 that the UK had eclipsed the US and Japan as the largest net importer of carbon dioxide emissions per capita in the G7 community of wealthy nations due to purchasing products produced elsewhere. According to a World Wildlife Fund survey, emissions released abroad account for nearly half of the UK's carbon footprint (Emily Grossman 2020:118-19).

2.1.2 Act Now!

These data demonstrate the urgency of rushing to find a solution to combat climate change. The movement, therefore, proposes a revolutionary alternative to the reformist one deemed necessary due to the dire crisis the world faces. For this reason, if the government does not respond to the first demand and does not accept the truth of the climate and ecological emergency and therefore declares an ecological crisis, then the second demand ("Act Now!) enters into action.

The starting principle of the plan is simple: move into an open space of Rebellion. All resources should be confined to a single time and space, from trained activists ready to be arrested and tents to sleep if the event goes beyond a day to the musicians and street artists who create a positive atmosphere (Extinction Rebellion Official). This increases the chances of maximizing the movement's political power to reach its demands. Any compromises with the "corrupter political class" (Roger Hallam 2019:27) will not be accepted. Politicians must choose between agreeing with the demands or repress the actions and protests and accept the risks that more people will join the Rebellion and take the streets. "*Our aim then is to gather enough resources to reach this critical point where we force the hands of the politicians to make a choice; agree to give up power or repress us*" (Ibid).

The period preceding a significant act of civil disobedience must be carefully prepared for several reasons. People will become overwhelmed if there are too many build-up acts, and they will lack trust if there are too few. These movement-building activities aim to train Affinity Groups[1] on the front lines. Three points must be made (Roger Hallam 2019:29) :

1. Build-up actions and event dates must be scheduled in advance so that people worldwide can mark them on their calendars.

2. People must also be informed of the start date of the main civil resistance event, and they must congregate at pre-determined locations and remain there "for as long as it takes." After that, people should take time off work, inform their families, and plan for arrest and imprisonment. Commonly, the most significant roadblock to mobilization is not giving

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[1] Affinity groups are made up of 8 to 12 individuals who work together and support one another on the day of the event and when planning it. They will contact the leading working group and have one or two people who will not be arrested. They get together before actions and decide on a joint activity (R. Hallam 2020:29).

people enough time to ensure they can attend the key dates after they have agreed to violate the law.

3. It would be advantageous to the Rebellion if people were arrested before the main civil resistance event to generate national attention. People can do this by engaging in regular acts of non-violent civil disobedience and then reading out statements as soon as they reach court, oblivious to the judge and court workers. This will almost certainly result in the arrestee being found in contempt of court and being put on remand or sentenced to jail. The length of the remand or punishment would be a dilemma for the authorities. People will be released soon if their sentences are short and they continue non-violent civil disobedience. On the other hand, if the sentence is long, it will spark a national storm, feeding into a general rebellion.

As Roger Hallam (2019) explains, civil disobedience has to include disruption. It is not enough to organize a protest with thousands of people present. Numbers are not enough (Non-Violent Direct Action - Method or Madness?). As Jasmine (XR's Scotland) explains, when she attended the largest protest in British history against Tony Blair's decision on the Iraq war, the numbers and the scale of the protest did not change anything. If there is no disruption, it easy to be ignored or co-opted by the government. For instance, a usual proposal by the authority could be signing a proposal by a hundred thousand people, and then the matter can be discussed in Parliament. However, the discussion does not imply taking action towards that request. Probably it is not going to lead anywhere. It is important to be disruptive to bring greater attention to bear on the particular subject that the movement is trying to seek change for (Non-Violent Direct Action - Method or Madness?). Disruption, *"the action of preventing something, especially a system, process, or event, from continuing as usual or as expected"* (Cambridge Dictionary), does force the government's hand. It can be alienating, but people will respect this action over time if it is done peacefully and with dignity.

It is widely understood that a level of personal sacrifice is beneficial because when the population is in the non-violent struggle, it is often against an opponent, such as the state, which can use violence, whether through the police or the army. If the state intervenes, then the population may not win on material grounds; therefore, it has to win on emotional and intellectual battlegrounds. Maintaining non-violent discipline for extinction rebellion is crucially important because it is improbable that victory will be reached using violence. Lasting successful change is without violence ("Act Now" | Extinction Rebellion).

Indeed, a proactive approach towards the police is an effective way of enabling mass civil disobedience in the present context. This means welcoming police officers as soon as they arrive and emphasizing two points: "This is a non-violent peaceful action" and "we respect that you must do your job here." It is shown that these words and actions calm the police and are usually a way for civil interaction. This engagement will begin before a specific action is started. Face-to-face meetings with law enforcement officers are more successful because they can see that the people they interact with are reasonable and open.

Furthermore, before any action is taken, it is possible to establish specific informal procedures with the police and action liaison officers. This technique will provide predictability, which is something that all parties want. This allowed Extinction Rebellion to predict that by splitting into five groups, they could block five bridges in London in 2018, and these predictions were proven correct in the most recent Rebellion in April 2019 (Roger Hallam 2019: 32-33). There are other two advantages worthy of consideration when engaging proactively with the police. The first one is that thousands of new people who undertake direct action can have a positive experience and feel reassured and willing to do more for the first time. In contrast, the second one allows the organizers to establish different zones with the liaison officers depending on the likelihood of the arrests (ibid).

The point of the build-up strategy is to reduce the chances of the police shutting down the civil disobedience action until it reaches a critical mass of media attention. Moving a large group of citizens without police intervention necessitates a high level of coordination that will be difficult to achieve. If this is achieved, namely, thousands of people, as it is explained above, will protest into capital cities at a specific date and time, then the government is forced to negotiate as the authorities lose their power to suppress mass mobilization (Extinction Rebellion Official).

At this point, then, what is the crucial demand that Extinction Rebellion requests?

2.1.3 Go Beyond Politics.

"A citizens' assembly provides us, the people, with a way to request a radical change. Such a request gives the government legitimacy to act and allows for cross-party support. To carry on failing to act is no longer an option. Therefore, it is time for a citizens' assembly."

Sarah Lunnon, External coordinator of Extinction Rebellion's political circle

"The Citizens' Assembly showed that if you structure the debate around information, discussion, questions and answers, and allow citizens to thrash things out with expert advice, very often people will shift their positions."

Sadhbh O Neill, an expert adviser to the Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change, Ireland

The third demand of Extinction Rebellion is for the government to establish and lead a citizens' assembly on the environment and ecological justice. *Deliberative democracy* is a mechanism in which ordinary people make democratic decisions. Citizens' assemblies are one type of deliberative democracy. In Australia, Belgium, Canada, India, Ireland, Poland, and the United Kingdom, public hearings have changed policymaking, ranging from citizens' juries of fewer than twenty participants to citizens' summits of more than seven hundred (Extinction Rebellion Citizens' Assemblies Working Group Version 1.1, 25 June 2019). Among these examples, it is particularly relevant to analyze the Irish Citizens' Assembly's abortion referendum case. Citizens were asked if they wanted the Eighth Amendment, which prohibits abortion in almost all cases while acknowledging the unborn's universal right to life, to be replaced with a clause allowing the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament) to control pregnancy termination by statute. All constituencies except Donegal voted in favor of repealing with a 64 percent turnout. This case showed how 99 ordinary citizens could help break years of political deadlock and reach a consensus on this highly polarizing issue (Michela Palese 2018).

Extinction Rebellion argues that the British people should have a say in how the country reacts to the current crisis. A Citizens' Assembly on Climate and Ecological Justice will empower citizens to take the lead and follow with less fear of political backlash. Citizens' Assemblies represent society with particular attention paid to hearing from those who have no representation or voice in our current political systems. They can address structural inequality and consider how to mitigate the impacts of climate change on the most vulnerable people (Extinction Rebellion Citizens' Assemblies Working Group Version 1.1, 25 June 2019).

Members of a citizens' assemblies are a randomly selected group of people. The assembly organizers use demographic quotas to ensure that it is inclusive in terms of a range of factors, for example, gender, age, ethnocultural heritage, education level, sexual orientation, disability, and geography. Once members have been selected, the process includes four key phases: listening, learning, deliberating, and deciding. Finally, the selected people are brought together in a conference room, and they will hear the opinion of experts and stakeholders invited by the coordinating group, which is in charge of organizing the assembly, and conducting random

selection. Their independence from those funding the process is safeguarded by a series of checks and balances, such as the oversight panel.

Extinction Rebellion argues that a citizens' assembly will help resolve issues with our existing parliamentary democracy that have resulted in inaction on the climate and environmental crisis (Extinction Rebellion Citizens' Assemblies Working Group Version 1.1, 25 June 2019). According to the movement, since the problem first became a source of public concern over 30 years ago, successive UK governments have struggled to respond to the rising crisis of climate change. The five-year electoral cycle discourages governments from attending to long-term issues like climate breakdown. Democratic representatives are influenced by powerful companies, seek sympathetic media attention, and base their strategies on possible media and public responses as measured by opinion polls. As a result, politicians often feel reluctant to propose the bold reforms needed to solve the crisis (ibid).

Instead, a citizen's assembly on climate and ecological justice will break political deadlock because it gives politicians access to public judgments that have been reached in a fair and informed way. This will encourage politicians to commit to a transformative program of action justified by the citizens' assembly's mandate, reducing the risk of public opposition at the polls. Citizens' assemblies are free and open to the public. Due to dynamic facilitation, all assembly members have an equal chance of being heard. In addition, many of the information and materials provided to asse mbly members are made available to the public (Roger Hallam 2019:63). As a result, educated and democratically legitimate decisions are made. Where difficult trade-offs are needed, citizens' assemblies may be used. Experts could, for example, recommend proposals for meeting a 2025 goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions, and the assembly will then choose which one they prefer, such as mitigating the impact of any changes in economic policies on those with low incomes (Extinction Rebellion Citizens' Assemblies Working Group Version 1.1, 25 June 2019).

By all means, before the citizens' assembly starts, it should be clear how and when the government will respond to the recommendations. Recommendations that obtain a certain percentage of approval from the citizens' assembly may be considered binding. For instance, the government might commit to putting recommendations into action if 80 percent of assembly members support them. On the other hand, Parliament may be expected to discuss recommendations with less support within a set time limit (for example, a month) and explain why the suggestion was approved, changed, or rejected (Extinction Rebellion Citizens' Assemblies Working Group Version 1.1, 25 June 2019).

Finally, the citizens' assembly demand is not just one time to discuss one problem related to the climate and ecological emergency. Instead, as Roger (2019:64) explains, the post-revolutionary plan needs to be plan perfectly with a new constitutional arrangement that contains a permanent National Citizens' Assembly. Citizens' Assemblies would be the last genuinely democratic opportunity for humanity to escape the worst consequences of climate change. A future that is honestly run by the people for the people, with everyone's well-being as the core principle.

2.2 Extinction Rebellion: Principles and Values

One striking aspect of Extinction Rebellion is the "non- definition" of a statement. Unlike other movements that have clear and delineate statements that define principles and values that people must adhere to be part of them, XR (Extinction Rebellion) does not have one. Indeed, it encourages every person to have its vision or statement. Some of them will be shared, others not. This decision was taken because to save the planet, there is no need to own the same ideas and values; instead, every perspective can be a powerful source of knowledge and discussion.

Nevertheless, Extinction Rebellion offers a general vision statement as one attempt to bring everyone together with a shared perception. This attempt is summarized in ten points, called "principles and values," that, although not binding, can be a valuable point of departure to grasp which principles the majority of the people who decided to be part of this *family (*Extinction Rebellion official 2019) endorse. For this reason, in this second part, the most meaningful principles and values of XR will be analyzed and understood in detail.

The movement endorses the following principles and values (Extinction Rebellion UK 2019):

"1. we have a shared vision of change = Creating a world that is fit for generations to come.
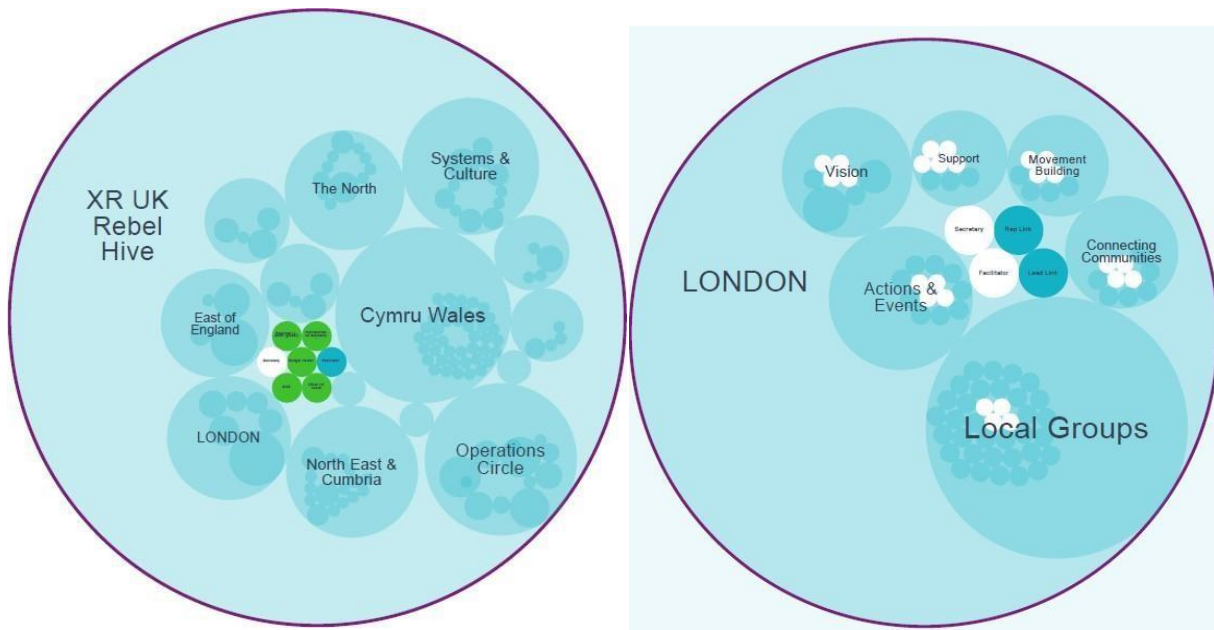
2. we set our mission on what is necessary = Mobilising 3.5% of the population to achieve system change – using ideas such as "Momentum-driven organizing" to achieve this.

3. we need a regenerative culture = Creating a healthy, resilient, and adaptable culture.

4. we openly challenge ourselves and our toxic system = Leaving our comfort zones to take action for change.

*5. **we value reflecting and learning** = Following a cycle of action, reflection, learning, and planning for more action and learning from other movements and contexts as well as our own experiences.*

*6. **we welcome everyone and every part of everyone** = Working actively to create safer and more accessible spaces.*

*7. **we actively mitigate for power** = Breaking down hierarchies of power for more equitable participation.*

*8. **we avoid blaming and shaming** = We live in a toxic system, but no one individual is to blame.*

*9. **we are a non-violent network** = Using non-violent strategy and tactics as the most effective way to bring about change.*

*10. **we are based on autonomy and decentralization** = We collectively create the structures we need to challenge power. Anyone who follows these core principles and values can take action in the name of Extinction Rebellion."*

Out of the list of principles and values, the movement's organizational structure is of utmost importance. Thanks to the Self Organizing System (SOS), Extinction Rebellion can reach its message worldwide while still keeping its wisdom and remaining agile and able to respond quickly to emerging situations. The structure of the movement is decentralized, it enables the organization of small groups around the world, and at the same time, these groups are connected in a complex web that evolves as it grows and learns. The ground on which this network stands is on the relationships between its participants. Therefore, the movement will work every day to build trust, respect, and reciprocity among all participants. The figures below show the structure of the Extinction Rebellion. The first describes the organization through the UK, while the second focuses on the London area (Extinction Rebellion 2019, Self-Organizing-System).

Figure 1 & 2 – Extinction Rebellion Official Website "Glassfrog" Interactive Visualization of the working Groups

People are assigned to positions with specific responsibilities. Under that mandate, they have full power to make decisions and take action. People can obtain advice from the experts in the field while they decide which concerns their position. As demonstrated in the pictures, each circle has its mandate and can define and refine its roles. This circle structure widens to the Anchor Circle, which contains all circles. Consent and linking reduce the negative aspects of a hierarchical system by ensuring that no person has control over another. Power is decentralized because a collaborative decision-making mechanism is used to distribute authority into positions and circles. Each role is given the authority to make organizational decisions due to its mandate. If a member presents a proposal to address a problem or a tension, each circle member can object or approve. Objections are welcomed because they provide valuable details that can be used to strengthen the plan before it is approved or rejected. The goal is to develop something workable that will enable moving forward and not creating a deadlock movement. The decision can constantly be revised later. In addition, radical transparency must be a central prerogative of the organizational structure. Roles and circles should be visible and available to all. This helps each member to learn about the process and contact whomever they need while making day-to-day decisions. Minutes, projects, and other related records should be transparent so that the whole organism is transparent (Extinction Rebellion 2019, Self-Organizing-System).

Furthermore, the role that cultural change plays is crucial among the other principles and values. For a long time, the power of direct action has been emphasizing the disruption of crucial economic

infrastructures or other material structures. Although these tactics have proved efficient, disruption can be seen as a countermeasure without the wanted effect. Indeed, it is not closing down a power station the pathway to success. Instead, the Rebellion needs to be a cultural one. The movement needs to impact people's hearts and minds. Direct action needs to conquer people's ideology because they must understand why the movement uses non-violent civil disobedience. The means need to justify the ends, and for doing so, the Rebellion needs to engage at many different cultural levels with art, fun, music, feeling, and discussion. Usually, onlookers tend to see conventional direct action as something which is already seen or judge negatively because the launched action was too aggressive. For instance, material disruption must be structured to elicit a transformative national dialogue and discussion about the climate emergency and crisis and change people's attitudes. Therefore, tactics such as "Locks-on"[2] The public does not widely appreciate them. The simplistic idea to avoid, then, is that by closing down the country, "we will win" (Roger Hallam 2019:40). Instead, the most crucial aspect is for people to fully grasp the message that Extinction Rebellion tries to transmit and embrace cultural change (Roger Hallam 2019:38,42).

Extinction Rebellion emphasizes the need to create *a regenerative culture that is healthy, resilient, and adaptable (*Extinction Rebellion 2019). At its core, it has the concern for the Earth and the acknowledgment that a prosperous future for humanity needs to be ensured. On all levels, including people, societies, land, water, and air, regenerative culture means making incremental changes year after year, taking small steps to heal and change. It is more than a network of activists; it creates a shared sense of cultural living. It is about supporting self-care, action care, interpersonal care, community, and planet care. As a result, reflecting and learning are central to the new regenerative culture. Action, reflection, learning, and preparation for further action are all part of the process. It must be encouraged to learn from other movements and backgrounds. Because it is difficult to predict what will happen, the movement welcomes every new possibility to see new results through ongoing questioning, learning, and reflecting. This is a dynamic and evolving process that requires time and feedback from individuals and organizations to consider what has gone right or what could be done differently in the future. (Extinction Rebellion Official 2019) (Roger Hallam 2019:38-39).

For this reason, another one of the movement's prerogative is accepting everyone. Extinction Rebellion is committed to fight for the right to life and the future of the world's children. In order to make a difference, the first step is to change how relationships are usually constructed with those

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[2] Individuals use locks on to make it more difficult for police to remove them from the scene of an event. This may include using bike locks or glue to secure themselves in buildings (Roger Hallam 2020:39).

who collaborate or align with the movement. More specifically, multiply hierarchies of ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, and other factors are currently defining the planet. For the better part, the current community is unsafe for those at the bottom of these hierarchies. To make the space safer, the movement is constantly working at understanding how these hierarchies work to increase inclusion by making them feel welcomed and safe in the big family universal the group is pushing to create. Discrimination is not condoned and accepted, from physical violence to online word abuse. Indeed, an elevation of self-awareness towards others is gladly appreciated by Extinction Rebellion.

Another essential principle is that shaming and blaming need to be avoided. Everyone lives in a toxic environment, but no one is to blame. An environmental campaign can illustrate an institution's dangerous position, including individuals who serve for that institution. However, according to XR, there is no point in blaming or shaming because this toxic system in which society lives has harmed everyone. For this reason, people may point out unhelpful, exploitative, or oppressive behavior and refuse to accept it, but they do not give away support by accusing and shaming. This applies to interpersonal and group dynamics and the group's self-relationship (Extinction Rebellion Official 2019).

The other two points which can be considered focal for XR's strategy are non-violence and the mobilization of 3.5% of the population to achieve a systematic change. Although the concept of non-violence has already been illustrated and will be repeated in the following sections, it is worth repeating that XR sponsors non-violence as the most effective way to bring about change. According to Fiona Mansfield (2020), Chenoweth and Stephan's work was vital in developing XR'S strategy. Indeed, this specific research convinced Extinction Rebellion to follow these strategies. The researchers have identified key characteristics underpinning a sustainable movement after studying social movements worldwide from 1900 to 2006. First, non-violent campaigns were two times more effective than violent campaigns due to greater social acceptability and sympathy from the general public (Erica Chenoweth 2013) (Fiona Mansfield 2020:4.4). Second, non-violence helped protests gain credibility and support from security forces and officials, while sustained action and civil disobedience campaigns rooted in capital cities maximized disruption and led to progress. Lichbach (1998) had previously proposed that mobilizing 5% of the population was necessary to achieve social and political change. However, Chenoweth and Stephan claim that mobilizing only 2–3% of the population is often enough. They found that if 3.5 percent of the population had actively and consistently participated in a movement, it could not fail (Erica Chenoweth 2013).

2.3 Extinction Rebellion: People's testimonial through the main organized protests.

From the movement that XR declared "A Rebellion" in October 2018, thousands of people have decided to join and be part of the movement, bringing many academics, media, and critics to question why these people have made this choice. Thanks to the massive people's participation that allowed a wide variety of actions to occur after the declaration of Rebellion on 31 October 2018 at Parliament Square in London, not only in the UK but also in the USA, Australia, and elsewhere.

Starting from 17 November 2018, in what is called "Rebellion day," when around six thousand people took part in a coordinated operation to close London's five essential river Thames bridges: Southwark, Blackfriars, Waterloo, Westminister, and Lambeth (M. Taylor and D. Gayle 2018), for several hours, causing significant traffic disruption and leading to more than 70 arrests. Among them, there was Robin Stott, a retired physician, medical director, and site dean of Lewisham University Hospital (Robin Scott 2019). Robin explains how for more than 30 years, he was pushing for action on global heating. However, despite copious efforts from activists and individuals, science has been ignored, which has led to ecological devastation since then. According to him, politicians have been incapable of implementing the requisite transformation action; instead, they have followed their electoral imperative and personal interests. Robin (2019) decided to take action occupying Whitehall road in London for all these reasons. In this statement letter that he decided to write to express his feeling during the arrest, he underlines how he remained vividly surprised by the many people, without the same privileges as him that still decided to take part in the action and to fight for such vital cause: "*Like an old, affluent, white, middle-class man, I have greater reason to act responsibly now and less to lose from being arrested than do many other groups of people. I have enormous respect for those working activists for whom arrest might carry much more serious consequences*" (Robin Scott 2019).

Another striking aspect about the people participating in these civil disobedience acts is that, contrary to what most people think, all age groups participate in the Rebellion. Not only students or adolescence, but also families and pensioners. On the same day that Robin Scott was arrested, Jenny Jones, a member of the Green party, joined the protest on Westminster bridge (M. Taylor and D. Gayle 2018). During her interview, she emphasized the need for the government to start listening to climate change because the world is arrived up to a point where there is no fast action, the life - support system that humans need to survive will be wiped out. In addition, she openly supports the tactics that XR utilizes, because as she said, "*conventional politics has failed, it has even failed to*

be, and I am part of the system, so people have no other choice, they must do this, it is peaceful, there are arrested for their beliefs, it is like the suffragette all over again."

Along the timeline of Extinction Rebellion acts, one which was particularly significant for its duration and the massive number of people who joined the blockade was April 2019. It started Monday, 15 April 2019, and lasted for almost ten days. The number of disruptive actions taken was numerous: from activists fixing a pink boat named after the murdered environmental activist Berta Cáceres (BBC 2019) in the middle of one of the busiest intersection between Oxford Street and Regent Street, to activists climbing onto the roof of Docklands Light Railways train at Canary wharf Station (Richard Hartley-Parkinson 2019). To get people thinking about climate change, members and advocates of XR have been bringing transportation networks to a halt. The aim is to establish a moment when society comes to a pause and fully considers the magnitude of the harm society has caused and what it is about to cause to life on this planet (Richard Hartley-Parkinson 2019).

The April Rebellion is considered the most prominent civil disobedience campaign seen in the UK for generations. More than two thousand people were arrest during these ten days. From first-time protesters, husbands, and wives, climate scientists, their stories shed light on how XR has developed into one of the UK's most potent protest movements in recent years, as well as the broader battle towards climate justice. As stated above, many people who took to the streets in April 2019 were not young or long-term environmentalists, which surprised many observers (Matthew Taylor 2021). Instead, the large number of older citizens, often retirees or grandparents. For instance, Stephanie Howlett, a retired NHS psychotherapist and a former probation officer from Sheffield, was arrested, receiving a six-month conditional charge and £105 fine. She declared that, although she did not want to join the Rebellion for the much trouble and disruption that this would cause to ordinary citizens, she felt the impellent need to act in the face of the catastrophic future that her grandchild will face (Matthew Taylor 2021).

Eve Merral (25 years old) represents one of the thousand young student activists who joined the Rebellion. She is a zoology master's graduate from Sheffield who was also arrested in Parliament Square in April 2019. "*I am not talking about future generations; people are suffering and dying now ... if we keep silent and do not act, then we are complicit in their deaths,*" she told the court (Ciara Nugent 2020). She emphasized the need to fight for everything that "we" love, that this was an excellent opportunity to show how it is possible to fight for a better future and show the world that it is possible to respect life and share resources sustainably and evenly.

Some of those who ended up in court had been active in the environmental movement for years, and a number of them had already been convicted. However, this was their first run-in with the law for the vast majority – and in some cases, their first protest. Several of them have spent years working on the climate crisis as scientists, academics, or campaigners. However, their testimony reveals that they were frustrated that little had changed after years of signing petitions, attending marches, and writing to their MPs. For instance, James Ryle, a 53-year-old university project manager from Bristol, had spent more than fifteen years working on environmental issues, from a conservation volunteer to serving as "sustainability advisor" of corporations, states, and the UN (Matthew Taylor 2021). He added that he joined the XR protests when he started doubting the lack of government action to address climate change. As Stephanie Howlett, he was opposed to the disruption and all the trouble and consequence that it was causing. However, when he listened to the speeches and testimonies in front of Pink Boat (J. Watts and D. Gatle 2019) of climate refugees, mothers, nurses, and young people who were living in fear for their future, he said he felt an instant connection with the millions around the world who were already suffering climate breakdown. In this movement, he realized he needed to break the law (Matthew Taylor 2021).

Tim and Sue Ponton, who recently celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary, were arrested twice – once on Waterloo Bridge in April 2019 and again outside the private jet center at London City airport later that year during another XR protest. Both have expressed concern for their grandchildren and family members as the world temperature is rising. Incredibly Tim, a former orthotist with the National Health Service, felt profoundly saddened by the fact that over 200 specifies go extinct every day, permanently destroying the vital ecological balance and many possible solutions to human problems. Furthermore, he felt perplexed that educated people in high-ranking government and corporate positions continue to ignore scientific facts conducting their business as usual (Matthew Taylor 2021).

As it turns out, in the last two years, since the movement was founded, there have been hundreds of protests organized by extinction rebellion. There were just over three thousand people at the beginning, but as time went on, hundreds of thousands of people joined the initiatives proposed by XR. Even if the actions are disruptive and create chaos for all citizens involved at the protest's site, they must make people understand how urgent the fights against climate change and the ecological crisis are. Through the testimony of these people and just as many like them, it is possible to perceive the sense of inadequacy that our society is creating. This sense of emptiness and fear for the future has brought thousands of people of every possible background to join Extinction Rebellion as a last "resort" or "solution" to save this world.

CHAPTER III: Are environmental social movements and civic activism necessary to save us from anthropogenic climate change?

3.1 What are the leading critics that these movements face?

As stated above, Extinction Rebellion is seen by many people as a last resort to raise awareness of climate change's catastrophe. Nevertheless, although the movement is just a positive phenomenon for the majority, it has been facing several critics that have led to questioning its effectiveness, while on the other hand, they have helped XR constantly improve. Therefore, the analysis will be on the three most significant ones.

3.1.1 Leaderless Organization

The first critics XR faces is its leaderless organization. Being leaderless is a political stance for many movements because they feel exploited by their political class (Western 2014:675). However, it may pose difficulties. Despite their ability to accomplish established short-term goals, spontaneous, leaderless movements often fail to retain momentum to achieve long-term goals (Western, 2014). Some claim that this is not an issue in and of itself because all of these campaigns tend to raise awareness rather than make long-term political changes (Gerbaudo, 2012). On the other hand, social movements such as XR, which does not aim only to increase public knowledge, can fail. Without fully implementing democratic procedures, the result could lead to evasive behavior, confusion, and abdication of responsibility, jeopardizing its political and organizational objectives (Fotaki, M., & Foroughi, H. 2021).

In order to elucidate this issue better, Fotaki, M., & Foroughi, H. (2021)'s study represents the perfect illustration. This study aims to see how a leaderless organization perceives leadership centered around XR's organizational structure. The focus has been during and after two XR's critical events: "Canning Town Tube action" and "Hammering glass window at Department of Transport." The authors decided to focus on these two events because they inflamed an open debate on the leadership concept through the XR activist community. In the first event, Gail Bradbrook, the co-founder of XR, hammered a glass window at the Department of Transport's London Office. This action was seen as a violation of non-violent direct action by XR activists who identified Gail as the figure of a movement leader. Indeed, despite differing opinions on whether breaking a glass window was violent, there was genuine disagreement among the movement's participants over who had the authority to carry out such actions.

Critics were particularly concerned because an XR executive team member carried it out. They wanted leaders to be more tactful and mindful of their decisions on the rest of the party. They believed that leaders should not participate in any activity that is not endorsed by the movement's main body or is incompatible with the organization's values. Although the XR website does not mention leaders by name, the movement's founders are widely regarded by both the membership and the media. This raises the question of how one becomes a leader in a leaderless organization, how much authority is gained, for example, by being a founding and dedicated member (Rahmouni Elidrissi, 2019), and what accountability mechanisms are in place, which will be discussed with the second event analyzed.

The second action took place on the 15th of October 2019, when an announcement advertised a planned action to disrupt the London Underground 2 days later. Despite widespread resistance from the main body of the movement, the event was promoted on XR's official website, which shocked most activists who were worried about safety and damaging effects. "*I am a bit worried about the tube action in rush hour. We will surely lose people's support if we start doing that. Also, attacking public transports, it is a bit paradoxical as they are sort of greenish options people have to commute* (participant 26) (Fotaki, M., & Foroughi, H. 2021)".

The organization's dedication to a decentralized structure and inferred leaderlessness, as well as a desire for efficient and democratic leadership, were exposed in this discussion. Two other members argued that the "decentralized solution" is ineffective and problematic in and of itself because leaders are not accountable to the majority of the movement because they are not elected. They demanded a formal leadership system in which members could elect leaders (ibid). These members have pointed out that a decentralized system allows leaders to pretend to be working in their own right as individual members rather than as members with specific roles and responsibilities for XR as a whole. They challenged the concept of decentralized leadership or a "leaderless" organization, claiming that it effectively renders those in leadership roles (such as founders) untouchable. They cannot be replaced because they do not hold authority.

Formal roles do not limit co-founders' influence; instead, it is attributed to a mixture of charismatic leadership and an "I was here first" mindset. As the "people who were there from the beginning," they "have the most control over what XR is, over what it says and demands," according to one activist (Berglund, O., & Schmidt, D. 2020:56). Even though XR has evolved significantly since it

was created "in a small English town" by "fifteen people who had learned and researched the way to effect fundamental social change" (Knights 2019), the movement has kept its founding members as influential decision-makers and public figureheads. As a result, XR's self-identification as a "leaderless movement" (XR 2020) is deceptive. In campaigns such as Occupy, Black Lives Matter, and the Yellow Vests movement, the term has been used to describe the lack of institutional leadership (Bray 2018). However, because of their mandate scheme, the word does not entirely refer to XR in this technical context.

Furthermore, the term "leaderlessness" is often interpreted to mean that a movement recognizes no leaders at all. On the other hand, XR has leaders, individuals who take on more responsibility and speak for the movement, articulating the motivations and goals that drive its struggle. Members of the Occupy Movement were quick to point out that they were not speaking for everyone and that they were not ready to be forced to represent the whole movement. In XR, however, this is not the case (Berglund, O., & Schmidt, D. 2020:57).

3.1.2 Is Citizens' Assembly done right?

A citizens' assembly proposal is based on a long history of representative democracy criticism and calls for deliberative democracy to play a more prominent role in governance (Berglund, O., & Schmidt, D. 2020:69). As explained above in the demand section, the government must "develop and be guided by citizens' assembly decisions on the environment and ecological justice" (XR 2019). The citizens' assembly will be charged with seeking solutions to the climate and ecological crises, giving the public "a way to determine what is best for our future, even if it means drastic changes now" (XR 2020).

The alleged ignorance or negligence of ordinary people is a widespread criticism leveled at citizens' assemblies, which XR encounters. It is often claimed that people selected at random are unqualified to make policy decisions because they lack the necessary qualifications, experience, knowledge, or, in harsher terms, cognitive abilities (Van Reybrouck 2016). Weighting various climate change responses necessitate a thorough understanding of climate science, specialized experience in related technology, and policy awareness.

Furthermore, since the decisions made by the citizens' assembly are recognized as indicative of what the community might have agreed if all citizens had taken the time to educate themselves on a subject correctly, the basic principle of a citizens' assembly is intended to be participatory in terms

of political outcomes. Nevertheless, Two components of participatory democracy, mass participation and civic education, are missing from the model. Indeed, only a tiny portion of the population participates in a citizen's assembly; if out of millions of people, just one hundred participate, this hardly represents a democratization of society. (Pateman 1970; Fishkin 2009, Chapter 3). As a result, the educational results related to participatory activities are limited to the few individuals who participate; therefore, citizens cannot take advantage of experience and grow into better people as intended by participatory democracy (Pateman 1970). Indeed, a truly participatory polity requires that everyone is given an equal opportunity to participate and that a significant percentage of the population is involved.

Another important field of research in deliberative democracy theory constitutes genuine deliberation. Within XR, while citizen assemblies are generally thought to be a good idea, in theory, there are widespread doubts about their realistic implementation (Berglund, O., & Schmidt, D. 2020:66). One XR activist expressed concerns about the experts' selection process to provide evidence to citizens and how it can be possible to bring awareness of a very technical, complicated topic into the hands of ordinary people to make a well-informed, sensible decision. This demonstrates that to be viewed as valid, citizens' assemblies must have a well-thought-out mechanism to direct members step by step through the policy-making process (Patriquin 2019, Chapter 2).

Finally, although XR has advanced a program towards the citizens' assembly decision process, it still faces technical criticism. First of all, deliberation can be susceptible to manipulation. Contrary to what discursive theorists like Habermas (1984) claim about "ideal speech conditions," in real-world debates, the strength of the better argument is seldom definitive. Humans are not purely logical creatures, and they are susceptible to deception and manipulation. There are many opportunities for the most educated and rhetorically qualified to influence decisions in their favor (Elster 1998, pp. 1–2).

Furthermore, deliberation does not always end in agreement. Even in the best circumstances, deliberations do not always lead to a convergence of viewpoints or a deeper understanding. On the contrary, they *'can get nowhere and peter out, they can cause people to become even more confused than they were at the outset, 'foster polemics, and generate further bitterness, rancor, and division'* (Geuss 2019-).

Empirical studies testify to the phenomenon of group polarization, in which participants' initial inclinations are likely to change judgments towards more extreme positions as a result of debate

(Sunstein 2000). Moreover, discussions between citizens, especially in divided and polarized communities, often intensify rather than overcome differences (Mouffe 1999; Dryzek 2005). Finally, concerning climate assemblies, decision-making in deliberative bodies is slow, and assembly recommendations have traditionally taken a long time to become law (Fenton 2019).

3.1.3 A Theory of Change

Extinction Rebellion claims that participation equals 3.5% of the population is enough to achieve a successful campaign. According to several critics, this assentation does not stand up from a scientific point of view, and it is not as relevant as claimed by XR towards the fight against climate change. As stated in section 2.2, the claim comes from Erica Chenoweth (2013) in a Ted Talk. However, this claim is challenged by several commentators, such as Ahmed (2019) and Berglund (2019), because it does not appear neither in the book "Why Civil Resistance Works" where a deep analysis and a dataset of Non-Violent Campaigns and Outcomes (NAVCO) is present, nor in the dataset of Chenoweth and Lewis (2013) where they estimated people who took part in civil resistance in a given year.

The population percentage was not a factor included in the original study. To make the 3.5 percent point, Chenoweth is likely to have inserted such a variable in a version that is not publicly accessible, and according to Berglund, O., & Schmidt, D. (2020:85), it is a factual claim to make if the date has not gone through a scientific and social review. As stated by Nafeez Ahmed (2019), the dataset used by Chenoweth shows the cases in the NAVCO where *"political regime change usually followed by absorption into the neoliberal world system driving carbon emissions.* Therefore, the cases studied by civil resistance academics are mainly irrelevant to national and international attempts to compel climate change action.

Following these critics, undoubtedly, one wonders whether Extinction Rebellion is effective in achieving its objectives: from its organizational structure to the call for the creation of a citizens' assembly in charge of finding the proper measures for a better future, to the claim of mobilizing 3.5% of the population to achieve the desired goals. Therefore, many academics and critics wonder: is civil, non-violent disobedience the right strategy to use as a means to combat climate change?

3.2 Why non-violent social movements can be the answer to Climate Change?

To answer this question is fair to say that Extinction Rebellion did not develop the concept of applying civil resistance research to social movements. Instead, the founders, who have been tired of conventional approaches of voting, lobbying, petitions and protest which have failed because powerful political and economic interests prevent change, have decided to form a movement which would impact people's mind and heart and let them develop a sensibility towards the urgency of climate change's fight. For this reason, since its formation two and a half years ago, XR has sought to find the best strategy to use in order to achieve its objectives. Therefore, the choice of using the strategy of non-violent civil disobedience is the result of many people, activists, scientists, and citizens who have worked together in order to seek a change desperately. Thus, it is fair to say that the movement did not just use one academic research, but many.

The ascertainment has also driven the choice of adopting a non-violent civil disobedience strategy that many times throughout history, significant changes have come when people have taken a stand through direct action. Direct action comes in many forms, from religions to revolutions, to abolitions and civil rights movements, independence movements, and suffragettes; none of these changes would have come about without people agitating for change; people are getting out onto the street their bodies on the line. The world we live in today has been shaped by the action of social movements and mass mobilization.

3.2.1 Examples from History

Whenever XR's activists talk about civil non-violence disobedience, they often point out three specific historical events that brought a massive change. The first episode was "the leipzing Monday Demonstrations" (Roger Hallam 2019:41) (Lohmann, S.1994). A pastor was so disillusioned with the government that he mobilized his community to stage a mass protest over the weekend. A total of 6,500 people attended the event. Local security forces initially did not intervene in what they perceived to be a minor Christian demonstration. Encouraged by their progress and the police response, 17,000 people took to the streets the following Monday. The authorities, unsure of what to do, contacted their superiors in Berlin for advice. A message came down the line ordering the protesters to be shoot.

The following Monday, though, there were 60,000 protesters on the streets, and the police could not bear shooting so many people, so they disobeyed their orders. The following weekend, a total of

105,000 people attended. Fear had vanished, and it was at this point that the tide reversed, and the regime fell. The lesson is that the regime was caught off guard by the non-linear rise in the number of demonstrators, and the regime's slow, centralized, top-down decision-making process failed to respond in time. Thousands of people have joined or are considering joining the direct action because of the protest impact of thousands of people peacefully violating the law to compel the government to take meaningful action or stand aside (Lohmann, S.1994).

Another source of inspiration is the 1960s American civil rights movement, which organized a series of highly successful campaigns. The Birmingham, Alabama campaign of 1963 was one of the most well-known. The goal was to use non-violent direct action to desegregate the area. Following Martin Luther King's imprisonment and the resulting difficulties in mobilizing the city's adult black inhabitants, the proposal was hatched to include the city's children and young people in an unprecedented escalation of mass participation civil disobedience. Thousands of students and pupils left school to march illegally through the city center as part of the dilemma action design.

Local radio stations and meetings that advocated civil disobedience tactics were used to spread the word. The start of the mass action was designated as a "D-Day." The authorities chose to repress the protesters, arresting 1,000 on the first day and 3,000 on the second. A classic example of the backfiring effect resulted as a result of this. Thousands of students walked out of class to protest, crowding the jails.

There was no end to the mass demonstration after a week. The authorities had lost control of the situation, and the opposition had crumbled. In a week, decades of segregation laws were reversed. Mass civil disobedience has this kind of force (Roger Hallam 2019: 42).

A third event representing the most recent successful non-violent civil disobedience example is the Jana Andolan II of Nepal (Roger Hallam 2019:43) (Routledge, P. 2010). In 2005, King Gyanendra deposed the government and took complete control of the country, establishing an absolute monarchy. He did so ostensibly to end a ten-year civil war that claimed the lives of 17,000 people in a population of 24 million11. However, multiple social and political groups opposed the King's change, leading to the creation of a new and broad political alliance, which included the most active political party, the Maoist insurgents. As a result, the Maoists agreed to a temporary truce with the establishment of the new coalition. The new coalition then mobilized an estimated 5.5 million Nepalese to participate in civil disobedience and 19-day general strikes across the country. The coalition included lawyers, teachers, engineers, professors, physicians, and journalists from civil society organizations such as the Citizens' Movement for Democracy and Peace and the

Professional Alliance for Democracy and Peace; NGOs; a coalition of four trade union confederations; the Maoists, and a variety of women's groups and peasants. The protests were centered on the cities' paralysis, especially in Kathmandu, the capital (Routledge, P. 2010).

Hundreds of thousands of protestors blocked the city's 27-kilometer ring road in one day, practically encircling it. A return to democracy was one of the protesters' demands, with long-term peace and more inclusion of marginalized groups.

To encourage further participation, the demonstrators used strategies such as arresting high-profile protestors and establishing spaces inside the protests for marginalized communities to speak and be heard. The government retaliated by prohibiting public gatherings, assemblies, demonstrations, cutting telephone, mobile links, and imposing shoot-on-sight curfews. Finally, after 19 days and 15,000 arrests, the King gave in and permitted political parties to resume their activities. This resulted in not only new elections but also a revised constitution that essentially ended the monarchy. In 2007, a Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed, and Nepal was declared a republic in May 2008. Previously marginalized ethnic and caste groups are now seen as more politically and economically included in Nepal. There has been no return to civil war since 2006 (Routledge, P. 2010).

All these examples show that the tactic of non-violent civil disobedience is one of the few remaining solutions to try to get the attention of citizens. Climate change is not only the topic of a school essay but represents one of the biggest problems humanity will have to face. For this reason, the use of this strategy is crucial. When hundreds of thousands of people unite to denounce whatever it is, the authorities lose the ability to stop this mass participation, so they are forced to negotiate. Our planet has reached a point where every citizen needs to understand the seriousness of climate change, so the best way to do this is to draw attention to it through protests and non-violent civil disobedience.

The movement has been criticized for several reasons, as reported in section 3.1, but it is difficult to read them in a critical light when the issue at hand is climate change. Indeed, the shortcomings of XR may create obstacles in the future, such as the lack of a natural leader who takes under control incorrect's behavior by activists, as the blocking of the London Underground. Alternatively, the idea of the town assembly cannot include as many people as participatory democracy would like. However, undoubtedly, these obstacles represent a small slice when one thinks about the seriousness of climate change. Therefore, if the movement succeeds in correcting these obstacles, it will include a larger slice of the population.

As it has been shown by a study by Steentjes et al. (2020), thanks to Extinction Rebellion's action, the people who were not worried about climate change have gone from 38 to 20% since 2016, and those who are very or extremely worried have gone from 19 to 40% of the UK population (p. 14).

3.3. Is it possible to achieve a cohesive global environmental, social movement to face climate change?

The first tough that usually comes to mind when thinking about the international movement's framework around climate change is the United National Framework Convention on Climate change (UNFCCC). Indeed, "*…international movements are generally facilitated by the creation of international institutions designed to govern the issues those movements care about"* (Brulle, R. J., & Dunlap, R. E. 201). However, because the UNFCCC is linked to an intergovernmental panel, it is difficult for NGOs to share their area of influence or have a minute on the negotiation floor; t is almost impossible for smaller, local civil society organizations to be accredited. For this reason, since the battle against climate change was made official, i.e., after the Rio Summit in 1992, many social movements in the world have organized themselves to try to mobilize as many people as possible, showing that the time cannot be wasted, all the voices need to be globally heard.

An outstanding example from 2018\19 is the massive number of grassroots climate movements led by young people, formed to urge the adults in power to address the climate crisis before it is too late (How Young Climate Crisis Activists Changed the World 2019). Indeed, 2019 began with a new surge of support for young people who sued the United States Government over climate inaction in 2015. Juliana vs. the United States was named after Kelsey Juliana and 20 other plaintiffs below 25 years old. Unfortunately, this lawsuit has been prevented from going to court until February 2019, when more than 30,000 people in 11 days sign on for the plaintiff's right to be heard. The push was initiate by a climate action group called "Zero Hour," led by 16 years old Jamie Margolin (Zero Hour Official). In addition, in August 2018, a 15 years old Swedish student started to protest, Greta Thunberg.

These actions led to more than a thousand similar lawsuits filed in the US and around the world. Until the 15th of March, millions of young people worldwide have participated in the world global strike; these protests become known as "Friday for Future" because kids skipped Friday school to protest (Fridays for Future Official). The immense participation of young students meant that even

on social networks, the importance of the struggle these young people attributed to climate change was evident. Indeed, hashtags were created, such as the "ten years challenge" where random spots on Earth have changed in a decade, or "trash bag" where people shoed before and after photos of community cleanups around the world (How Young Climate Crisis Activists Changed the World 2019).

Furthermore, all students around the world started to protest for a different environmental cause; such as the Amazon's fires, shining light on the shocking effect deforestation can have on global air quality, or the Pakistani students whom the Juliana plaintiff inspired sue their government over dangerous level of air pollution (Nishita Jha 2019). In addition, pressure on 2020 candidates was put to discuss climate change on the debate stage, culminating in august 2019 with the most prominent climate statement of the years when Greta Thunberg sailed on an emissions-free yacht across the Atlantic to intervene in the first UN-Climate Youth Summit (Tara Law 2019).

Youth, climate action activism is the perfect example to show it is possible to achieve a global social movement. If people share a standard view on a problem, they are driven by the desire for change and unite to achieve it. For this reason, Extinction Rebellion aimed not only to create a British national group to fight climate change but at the global level (Extinction Rebellion Global). From 2018, XR's groups are spread in 78 countries, with 1186 groups and more than 350 events per month (Extinction Rebellion Global). The power of social media contributed immensely in sharing XR's message; indeed, thanks to its web page and all the people who were filming events through different kinds of web-platform, it allowed people around the world to see what they were doing and the possibility to create their XR's group independently from where they lived (Extinction Rebellion Global).

Consequently, as shown with these above examples, it is conceivable to achieve a cohesive global environmental, social movement to face climate change because, as history shows, significant changes have occurred due to people taking a stand, fighting together, and winning a cause.

Conclusion

"Until you start focusing on what needs to be done rather than what is politically possible, there is no hope. We cannot solve a crisis without treating it as a crisis. We need to keep fossil fuels in the ground, and we need to focus on equity. Moreover, if solutions within this system are so impossible to find, then maybe we should change the system itself."

Greta Thunberg

"We have all the resources we need to deal with this. There is nothing magical about reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. There is nothing magical about the greenhouse effect. We know exactly how to deal with it. We do not have the political or economic will to do this."

Professor Stephan Harrison, Professor of Climate and Environmental Change, University of Exeter, "Climate Change: Current state of the Science," Exeter, 9 March 2019.

This study sought to answer the question: Is civil society activism necessary to defeat climate change? A reading through the lens of the movement "Extinction Rebellion." To this end, descriptive-literary research was carried out, trying to find a possible and concrete answer. Several conclusions can be drawn that will allow us to interpret the results and make projections for the future.

The first conclusion drawn from the project is that governments and international institutions are not doing enough to solve climate change. As professor Stephan Harrison points out, there is nothing magical about reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere because there are all the necessary resources to deal with it. However, governments are still subsidizing fossil fuels. While it is true that some policies have been implemented (Emily Grossman 2020), according to the lasts UN Emissions Gap Report, the government policies in place right now are so "Woefully inadequate" that they do not leave us in a much better position than if we have no policies in place at all (Emily Grossman 2020). According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), "fossil fuels account for 85 percent of all global subsidies," and reducing these subsidies "would have lowered global carbon emissions by 28 percent and fossil fuel air pollution deaths by 46 percent, and increased government revenue by 3.8 percent of GDP (Coady, M. D., Parry, I., Le, N. P., & Shang, B. 2019).

This argument led to the second conclusion that can be drawn from the project. Individual action is not enough to resolve the climate and ecological crises; massive political adjustments away from our fossil fuel-based economy are required. Every sector and segment of society that is reliant on fossil fuels needs fundamental system changes. As Emily Grossman (2020) explains, if each individual in the UK reduces its carbon footprint by 6 tons in the UK, it is undoubtedly essential. However, even this amount is still tiny compared to the 40 billion tons of carbon dioxide emitted globally. The COVID-19 lockdown's recent decline in emissions demonstrates the limits of what behavioral changes can achieve: during the peak of the pandemic, worldwide emissions reduced by only -17% (Coady, M. D., Parry, I., Le, N. P., & Shang, B. 2019) and that was with a near-total shutdown of all travel. This shows that individual action is limited to the millions of things we are not in direct control over, such as large infrastructures, investments, and constructions.

Indeed, each world's citizens need to change behavior to help as much as feasible the environment and ease carbon dioxide emissions. For instance: stopping flying, switching to a plant-based diet, buying organic fruit and vegetables (preferably grown locally or home-grown), taking public transportation, as well as insulating ones homes, switching to a green energy provider, choosing a bank that does not invest in fossil fuels, and reducing the carbon emissions embedded in the products we buy (for example, by buying secondhand clothes, instead of fast-fashion ones). Most importantly, as Extinction Rebellion stated in its principles as values, the behavioral change should be made not just to send a powerful message to governments and businesses. However, it needs to come from acknowledging that everyone is living under a deeply toxic fossil fuel dependent on a system that forces each person to behave in a way that destroys the planet.

For all these reasons stated above, the one plausible solution to seek a change is the one put forward by Extinction Rebellion because being a social movement, as Keohane and colleagues (1996) said, maybe the only possible tool to achieve a change. Through the strategy of non-violent civil disobedience, the movement is increasingly succeeding in mobilizing thousands of people fighting for the exact cause. The most exciting and significant aspect is that all the people taking part in XR's protests and actions were fed up with how the 'climate change discourse and ecological crisis' was dealt with in the past. These are all fed up and anxious about what will happen if society does not act now.

For this reason, It is difficult to criticize if the actions implemented by XR can sometimes cause temporary problems in the chosen location, such as road closures, traffic delays, or damage to

public works. It is also difficult to blame other aspects of XR because, in the face of a problem like climate change, there is no time to ask useless questions, but there is a need to act. Mahatma Gandhi's mass peaceful, non-violent direct action movement inspired Extinction rebellion, encouraged "to be the change you wish to see in the world." This change needs to be embraced by all communities.

Furthermore, another significant result that can be drawn above is the urgency for collective action. This can be achieved by expanding XR's groups and other environmental, social movements towards the mass, conveying the message of the climate and ecological urgency. Collectively, as XR stresses, to adequately solve the climate and ecological crises, everyone must now put pressure on governments to engage with the general public, the media, and all of society, to Tell the Truth, Act Now, and Go Beyond Politics (Extinction Rebellion Official). Indeed, if there is any chance of coping with this crisis, society must move beyond the politics that have so far held the community back and instead listen, dialogue, and act together. This is the purpose of a Citizens' Assembly and why it is Extinction Rebellion's Third Demand. Indeed, citizens and government working together to decide how to confront the climatic and ecological crises is the only way to achieve substantial change.

"*It is not enough to simply pray for a better environment; you have to stand up and take action*."

Falun Khalid, Founder of Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Science

Voting, lobbying, petitions, and protests have all failed because significant political and economic interests stand in the way of change. "It is time to participate in non-violent political movements wherever possible," argues Christiana Figueres in her new book The Future We Choose: Surviving the Climate Crisis. It is not known whether Extinction Rebellion will persist in the future or whether it will have such an impact on everyone's lives. What is certain is that at present, through the tactic of non-violent civil disobedience. It may be one of the only solutions left to make society understand the future that awaits us if we do not act now.

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Summary

"Noi siamo in una situazione di emergenza mondiale", afferma il Professor James Hansen, ex direttore dell'Istituto Goddard della NASA per gli studi spaziali. L'allarme lanciato dal professore e dal centro studi NASA riguarda il cambiamento climatico e la precarietà ambientale. Dalla fine del 1800, la temperatura media della superficie del pianeta è aumentata di circa 1,18 gradi Celsius, principalmente a causa delle maggiori emissioni di anidride carbonica nell'atmosfera e altre attività umane. Negli ultimi 40 anni si sono registrate le più calde temperature, specialmente nel 2016 e 2020, anni durante i quali si è raggiunto il picco massimo del riscaldamento (NASA Official). Nel 2018, il Gruppo intergovernativo sui cambiamenti climatici (IPCC) ha pubblicato un rapporto speciale in cui si afferma che il raggiungimento di un percorso compatibile con la limitazione del riscaldamento antropogenico a 1,5°C rispetto alle medie preindustriali richiederà una riduzione del 45% delle emissioni di gas serra entro il 2030 (IPCC, 2018).

Di conseguenza, l'umanità avrà solo 12 anni per apportare un cambiamento significativo nel modo in cui le risorse naturali vengono utilizzate e distribuite per prevenire conseguenze terribili, tra cui l'aumento del livello del mare e la distruzione diffusa dell'ecosistema. Successivamente all'uscita di questo rapporto, una narrazione di 12 anni incentrata su questa scadenza ha cominciato a emergere ed è stata raccolta da organizzazioni internazionali, aziende, media e governi. Tuttavia, questa non è l'unica narrazione presente nella coscienza pubblica negli ultimi anni. Vista l'inesistenza di un'organizzazione politica con altri obblighi e priorità che faccia fronte alle preoccupazioni climatiche e in particolare alle attività di decarbonizzazione, è necessaria una pressione esterna alla politica.

Come la storia dimostra, è inevitabile che tale pressione venga dal basso e che la partecipazione di gruppi di attivisti sociali sia parte del processo. Secondo Keohane e colleghi (1996), le pressioni sociali in un ambiente democratico industrializzato rappresentano una variabile con una più significativa capacità d'influenzare il corso delle politiche ambientali rispetto al processo decisionale internazionale. Durante gli ultimi due decenni, l'attivismo civile ha mostrato un grande sforzo per combattere il cambiamento climatico. Il numero e la portata dei movimenti sociali variano nel mondo. In base alla loro estensione, locale o internazionale, influenzano le autorità locali, internazionali o aziendali.

Ci sono vari movimenti sociali coinvolti nell'azione contro il cambiamento climatico e diversi stadi che possono attraversare nel percorso di sviluppo. Questo progetto di ricerca si concentra su un

gruppo che sta avendo un impatto significativo nell'espandere la consapevolezza dell'urgenza climatica: Extinction Rebellion (XR). Attraverso una lente di prospettiva sociologica, questo progetto mira a capire perché e come XR, in quanto movimento civile, può generare e diffondere la conoscenza sul pericolo del cambiamento climatico e prefigurare nuovi modi per riorganizzare una società a basse emissioni di carbonio.

Il compito di realizzare una transizione sostenibile, che permetta alle persone di tutto il mondo di vivere senza paura, senza mettere in pericolo le generazioni future, è forse la più grande sfida del nostro tempo. "*L'insoddisfazione si è spesso trasformata in disperazione quando anche la climatologia sembrava incapace d' invertire la tendenza sull'estrazione e l'uso insostenibili dei combustibili fossili e di altre risorse naturali, e sui cambiamenti climatici e il degrado naturale ... Questi anni di lotte incessanti da parte degli attivisti ambientali, la crescente evidenza scientifica e la crescente disperazione per l'urgenza della minaccia esistenziale si sono forse combinati per dare origine a nuovi movimenti ambientali* (Ines Smyth & Lucy Walters 2020) .*"*

È questo senso di costante ansia per il futuro che mi ha spinta a esplorare questo argomento. In seguito all'inizio dei miei studi universitari, mi sono resa conto di quanto poco fossi consapevole della gravità del cambiamento climatico. Di conseguenza, ho sviluppato la percezione che la società non stia facendo il possibile per aggirare il più grande problema dell'umanità. Per questo motivo, ho cercato di incrementare la mia consapevolezza e sensibilità ambientale nel tentativo di capire quali attori sociali stessero agendo maggiormente. Ho partecipato a tutti gli eventi di "Friday for Future", e percepito ancora di più i sentimenti di angoscia e paura che accomunano tutti i miei coetanei. Infine, grazie alla mia esperienza di Erasmus a Edimburgo, sono venuta a conoscenza di questo gruppo chiamato "Extinction Rebellion". Ho avuto l'opportunità di partecipare a diverse riunioni dal vivo e d'interrogarmi proprio su questo tema: i movimenti civili ci salveranno dal cambiamento climatico?

Questo documento non mira a ripetere il tema delle narrazioni strategiche come strumento di comunicazione o di coordinamento del cambiamento climatico, in quanto già stato fatto in passato, e neppure è suo obiettivo fornire una semplice spiegazione dell'efficacia di una particolare narrazione strategica per aiutare a prevedere la sua efficienza futura; non ci sono prove sufficienti per sostenere tali affermazioni nella letteratura sul cambiamento climatico e l'ambiente della comunicazione è fin troppo complicato per azzardare proiezioni future. Invece, l'articolo mira a proporre nuove chiavi per esaminare come questa nuova generazione di narratori presenti una soluzione al cambiamento climatico. Pur essendo il movimento di analisi nato nel Regno Unito, il messaggio critico è capire come e perché XR sia riuscito negli ultimi anni a includere un così

grande numero di attivisti, analizzando poi le sue dinamiche e caratteristiche per chiedersi infine se tutto il mondo potrà beneficiare di tale attività.

Data l'ambizione del presente lavoro, la metodologia impiegata è per lo più tratta da studi di letteratura. I dati sono ottenuti da libri, articoli di riviste scientifiche, documenti ufficiali e fonti internet. Come nozione generale, tuttavia, sia i dati quantitativi che qualitativi sono stati utilizzati all'interno del corpo principale. Per la maggior parte, è adoperata un'analisi descrittiva-qualitativa. I dati sono stati raccolti per aiutare la scrittrice a spiegare e discutere l'argomento della tesi. Inoltre, tabelle e grafici sono utilizzati per riassumere o schematizzare punti focali di diversi paragrafi. Si tratta di estrapolazioni dirette dalla letteratura su cui si basa la presente tesi, con l'autore originale adeguatamente accreditato.

La tesi si articola in tre capitoli. Nel primo è proposta una riflessione generale e teorica. In primo luogo, attraverso le lenti di autori sociologici come Fabio De Nardis (2020), Weber (1978), Herbert Kitschelt (1986), Alberto Mellucci (1985) e altri ancora, questa tesi si ripropone di individuare le più importanti caratteristiche dei movimenti sociali. Ciò seguito da una breve discussione sul perché sono nati i movimenti sociali ambientali, citando anche i principali libri che li hanno influenzati, come The Closing Circle di Barry Commoner (1971). Il focus è incentrato sui movimenti civili ambientali britannici attraverso le opere di McCormick (199), C. Miller e A. Routes (2000), Rawcliffe (1998) e altri. Infine, l'analisi della disobbedienza civile e non violenta è stata necessaria al fine di capire le motivazioni secondo le quali Extinction Rebellion ha scelto di utilizzare questa strategia.

Il secondo capitolo, che rappresenta il cuore del seguente progetto di ricerca, sarà interamente dedicato a Extinction Rebellion. Il movimento è stato fondato nel 2018 da diversi attivisti ambientali stanchi che la società non facesse abbastanza per attenuare il cambiamento climatico. Innanzitutto, l'analisi verterà sulle richieste del movimento nel Regno Unito, ovvero: "Tell the truth", "Act Now" e "Go beyond Politics". La prima rivendicazione sottolinea la necessità che i governi accettino che il cambiamento climatico sta avvenendo e deve essere affrontato ora. Inoltre, l'urgenza che i cittadini si rendano conto, attraverso la diffusione della conoscenza scientifica, della sua gravità.

La seconda rivendicazione propone un'alternativa rivoluzionaria a quella riformista ritenuta necessaria a causa dell'imminente crisi planetaria. L'alternativa che XR propone è l'organizzazione di proteste civili non violente con atti di distruzione civile. Come dichiara Jasmine (attivista scozzese di XR), le semplici proteste non sono più sufficienti per attirare l'attenzione dei governi e

della gente. Anche se un po' di sacrificio personale è compreso, tutti devono partecipare perché non c'è più tempo. L'ultima richiesta avanzata da XR è un nuovo modo di organizzare democraticamente una società futura a basse emissioni di carbonio. Questo si può ottenere dando vita ad un'assemblea civile dove i cittadini senza distinzione di età, razza, sesso possano deliberare su ciò che considerano più giusto per la società dopo aver avuto la possibilità di ascoltare gli esperti.

Nella seconda parte del capitolo, i principi e i valori di XR sono analizzati perché rappresentano ciò che tutti gli attivisti aderenti al movimento approvano. L'attenzione si concentrerà sulla sua struttura organizzativa, definita come decentralizzata e autonoma. Infine, l'ultima parte è dedicata agli attivisti che hanno deciso di unirsi al movimento. Questa è quella che considero più commovente ed emozionante perché, da tutte le testimonianze, si percepiscono l'angoscia e la paura di tutte queste persone per il futuro.

Nel terzo e ultimo capitolo di questa tesi, l'analisi si concentra sulle principali critiche che vengono rivolte al movimento per poi offrire un approfondimento in merito alla validità di quest'ultime. La seconda e terza parte, complementari e necessarie per fornire una conclusione all'elaborato, contengono interrogativi circa la validità dei movimenti civili non violenti come mezzo per l'ottenimento di un cambiamento sociale e la loro possibilità di estensione verso le comunità del mondo.

Infine, con il presente studio è stato possibile trarre conclusioni volte a interpretare i risultati ottenuti e sviluppare proiezioni per il futuro. Come primo punto, i governi e le istituzioni internazionali non stanno facendo abbastanza per combattere il cambiamento climatico. Come sottolinea il professor Stephan Harrison, non c'è niente di magico nel ridurre l'anidride carbonica nell'atmosfera, perché ci sono tutte le risorse necessarie per affrontarlo. Tuttavia, i governi continuano a sovvenzionare i combustibili fossili. È vero che alcune politiche sono state implementate (Emily Grossman 2020), secondo l'ultimo rapporto delle Nazioni Unite sull'Emissions Gap, ma sono così "tristemente inadeguate" che non ci lasciano in una posizione molto migliore da quella esistente (Emily Grossman 2020). Secondo il Fondo Monetario Internazionale (FMI), "i combustibili fossili rappresentano l'85% di tutti i sussidi globali", e ridurli "avrebbe abbassato le emissioni globali di carbonio del 28% e le morti per inquinamento atmosferico da combustibili fossili del 46%, e aumentato le entrate del governo del 3,8% del PIL (Coady, M. D., Parry, I., Le, N. P., & Shang, B. 2019).

Questo argomento ha portato alla seconda conclusione che si può trarre dal progetto. L'azione individuale non è sufficiente per risolvere la crisi climatica ed ecologica; sono necessari massicci

aggiustamenti politici per allontanarsi dall' economia basata sui combustibili fossili. Ogni settore e segmento della società che dipende da essi ha bisogno di cambiamenti di sistema fondamentali. Come spiega Emily Grossman (2020), se ogni individuo nel Regno Unito riduce la sua impronta di carbonio di 6 tonnellate, è senza dubbio essenziale. Tuttavia, anche questa quantità è ancora minuscola rispetto ai 40 miliardi di tonnellate di anidride carbonica emesse a livello globale. Il recente calo delle emissioni del COVID-19 dimostra i limiti di ciò che i ognuno di noi possa fare. Durante il picco della pandemia, le emissioni mondiali si sono ridotte solo del -17% (Coady, M. D., Parry, I., Le, N. P., & Shang, B. 2019) e ciò è avvenuto con un arresto quasi totale dei viaggi, dimostrando quanto l'azione individuale sia limitata rispetto alle milioni di cose su cui non sia ha il controllo diretto, come le grandi infrastrutture, gli investimenti e le costruzioni.

Ogni cittadino del mondo dovrebbe cambiare atteggiamento al fine di aiutare il più possibile l'ambiente e ridurre le emissioni di anidride carbonica. Alcuni esempi: porre fine alle attività aviatorie, adottare una dieta a base vegetale, acquistare frutta e verdura biologica (preferibilmente coltivata localmente o in casa), utilizzare i trasporti pubblici, così come isolare le proprie case, passare a un fornitore di energia rinnovabile, scegliere una banca che non investe in combustibili fossili e ridurre le emissioni di carbonio incorporate nei prodotti che compriamo (per esempio, comprando vestiti di seconda mano, invece di quelli di fast-fashion). Soprattutto, come Extinction Rebellion ha dichiarato nei suoi dieci principi, il cambiamento personale non solo è finalizzato ad inviare un messaggio potente ai governi e alle imprese, ma deve essere scaturito dalla consapevolezza comune di vivere a contatto con un combustibile fossile profondamente tossico, dipendente da un sistema che costringe le persone a comportarsi in un modo che distrugge il pianeta.

Per tutte queste ragioni, l'unica soluzione plausibile per ottenere risultati è quella proposta da Extinction Rebellion perché essere un movimento sociale, come hanno detto Keohane e colleghi (1996), forse è l'unico strumento possibile per far sì che il cambiamento avvenga. Attraverso la strategia della disobbedienza civile non violenta, il movimento sta riuscendo a mobilitare sempre più persone che lottano per la stessa causa. L'aspetto più eccitante e significativo è che tutte le persone che partecipano alle proteste e alle azioni di XR hanno abbastanza di come il "discorso del cambiamento climatico e della crisi ecologica" è stato trattato in passato. Questi attivisti richiedono che il tema sia affrontato ora e con serietà.

Per questo motivo, è difficile criticare se le azioni attuate da XR anche se possono talvolta causare problemi temporanei nel luogo prescelto, come la chiusura di strade, ritardi nel traffico o danni alle opere pubbliche. È anche difficile biasimare altri aspetti della XR perché, di fronte a un problema

come il cambiamento climatico, non c'è tempo per le domande inutili, c'è necessità di agire. Il movimento di Mahatma Gandhi ha ispirato Extinction rebellion, incoraggiando ad "essere il cambiamento che vuoi vedere nel mondo". Questo cambiamento deve essere abbracciato da tutte le comunità.

Inoltre, un altro risultato significativo che si può trarre è l'urgenza dell'azione collettiva. Questo può essere raggiunto espandendo i gruppi di XR e altri movimenti ambientali e sociali verso la massa, cercando di trasmettere il messaggio dell'urgenza climatica ed ecologica. Collettivamente, come sottolinea XR, per risolvere adeguatamente la crisi climatica ed ecologica, tutti devono fare pressione sui governi per impegnarsi con il grande pubblico, i media e tutta la società, per "Tell the Truth", "Act Now" e "Go Beyond Politics" (Extinction Rebellion Official).

Infatti, se c'è qualche possibilità di far fronte a questa crisi, la società deve andare oltre la politica che ha finora trattenuto la comunità e ascoltare, dialogare e agire insieme. Questo è lo scopo dell'assemblea cittadina, ovvero terza richiesta di Extinction Rebellion. Cittadini e governo che lavorano insieme per decidere come affrontare la crisi climatica ed ecologica è l'unico modo per ottenere un cambiamento sostanziale.

"Non basta semplicemente pregare per un ambiente migliore; bisogna alzarsi e agire", ha dichiarato Falun Khalid, fondatore della Fondazione islamica per l'ecologia e la scienza ambientale.

Il voto, il lobbismo, le petizioni e le proteste hanno fallito perché significativi interessi politici ed economici ostacolano il cambiamento. "È tempo di partecipare a movimenti politici non violenti, ovunque sia possibile", sostiene Christiana Figueres nel suo nuovo libro The Future We Choose: Surviving the Climate Crisis". Se Extinction Rebellion persisterà e avrà un impatto significativo sulla vita di tutti non è dato sapersi. Quello che è certo è che al momento, la tattica della disobbedienza civile non violenta è vista come una delle uniche soluzioni rimaste per far capire alla società il futuro che ci aspetta se non agiamo ora.