

The Recipe for Engagement in a Direct-Action Climate Movement for the Future of Humanity

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The Recipe for Engagement in a Direct-Action Climate Movement for the Future of Humanity

An Exploration of Personal Motives for Involvement in
Extinction Rebellion

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Abstract

Climate scientists have sounded the alarm for decades, making increasingly frightening predictions about the coming effects of climate change, yet world leaders have largely failed to address the climate change crisis. As the real time effects of climate change are starting to be felt around the world, citizen activists are increasingly taking matters into their own hands, adding pressure on governments to act swiftly and forcefully. Climate change is arguably the single largest threat humanity has ever faced. Given the severity of the issue, the number of people actively involved in the climate movement is fewer than one might expect. To get a better understanding of why some people decide to become climate activists, while most do not, this study examines what motivates first-time activists' involvement in Extinction Rebellion (XR), a system-critical direct action climate and environmental movement using non-violent civil disobedience as their primary method to bring attention the severity of the climate crisis. By analyzing semi-structured interviews with XR activists in Sweden it was found that the main motivating factors for the activists' involvement in XR, grouped in themes, are *'Having Real Impact'*, *'Transforming Anxiety to Action'*, *'Finding Community'*, and *'Doing the Right Thing'*. The themes are presented and discussed using previous research and relevant theory to provide a better understanding of what motivates radical climate activism in XR, and discussed in relation to the wider direct-action focused climate movement, with implications for mobilization and movement growth.

Keywords: Extinction Rebellion, Motivation, Social Movements, Climate Activism, Climate Justice, Climate Emergency, Civil Disobedience, Collective Action, Emotions, Social Identity

Populärvetenskaplig Sammanfattning

Vad är det som gör att vissa blir klimataktivist, medan de flesta inte blir det?

I studien undersöks vad som ligger bakom motivation till klimataktivism i den radikala klimat- och miljö rörelsen Extinction Rebellion (XR), samt klimataktivisters syn på civil olydnad som förändringsmetod. Genom en analys av inhämtat intervjumaterial framträdde ett antal olika motivationsfaktorer som presenteras och diskuteras mot tidigare forskning och teori, i syfte att öka förståelsen för motivation till klimataktivism i XR, samt för att ge ledtrådar till vad som behövs för att fler ska ta steget till att engagera sig aktivistiskt i klimatrörelsen.

Valet av ämne motiveras av att mer aktivistiskt klimatengagemang behövs för att trycket på beslutsfattare ska bli så stort att de tvingas till att agera snabbt och kraftfullt så att uppsatta klimatmål ska ha en chans att kunna nås. En översikt av XR som rörelse ingår i uppsatsen för att ge en ökad förståelse för aktivisternas val att engagera sig just i XR, samt för att placera in rörelsen i en större samhälls kontext.

Aktivisternas motivation till klimataktivism i XR kunde efter en analys sammanställas i följande övergripande teman:

'Ha reell påverkan' - om att vilja göra konkret skillnad i en aktionsfokuserad radikal organisation som använder fredlig civil olydnad som främsta metod. Respondenterna ser civil olydnad som en nödvändighet för att uppnå tillräckligt snabb förändring i det krisläge vi befinner oss i.

'Omvandla ångest till handling' - om behovet att hantera svåra känslor genom att göra något konkret, och gärna tillsammans med andra, för att må bättre genom att minska eller bli av med klimatångest.

'Hitta gemenskap' - om behovet av att finna ett sammanhang med likasinnade, att känna sig starkare tillsammans, och att få stöd och känna sig förstörd av andra i rörelsen som också insett hur allvarligt läget är.

'Göra rätt', med underteman 'altruism', rättvisa och ansvar' samt 'personlig integritet' - om motivation som drivs av kärlek och respekt för allt levande, solidaritet, ansvarskänslor, plikt, och behovet att veta att man har gjort sitt bästa.

Det framkom även hur olika motivationstyper samverkar med varandra, och att känslor av hopp och en tilltro till den egna och gruppens förmåga att skapa förändring är nödvändiga förutsättningar för att vilja engagera sig klimataktivistiskt.

Sammanfattningsvis visar studien att motivation för klimataktivism kan stärkas av att klimatlägets allvar tydligt kommuniceras samtidigt som man visar att det ger ökat hopp att agera tillsammans; av att använda beprövat effektiva metoder som civil olydnad; av relationsbyggande och känslor av identifikation med de andra i rörelsen; av att visa på vikten av göra det moraliskt rätta oavsett resultat; samt att känslomässigt och praktiskt stöd från rörelsen kan öka engagemang och hjälpa aktivister att gå in i ett produktivt 'nödlägestillstånd'.

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1. Introduction

According to a recently published study conducted in Sweden and 25 other countries, climate change is considered the single largest threat (The Pew Research Center, 2019). In the yearly survey 'Climate Barometer' in Sweden, it was similarly found that climate change and environmental degradation worried the public the most in 2019, taking precedence over terrorism, military conflicts and war (WWF, 2019).

As increasingly dire reports are being published about the climate crisis, including the IPCC special report *Global Warming of 1.5°C* (2018), and non-binding international treaties to reduce emissions fail to make a meaningful difference, new environmental movements have been gaining influence, indicating growing social and political momentum for climate action (Cook et al., 2019).

Some of the more prominent movements around the world are *Skolstrejk för klimatet* (School Strike for Climate) and *Fridays for Future* (fridaysforfuture.org), *Plan B* (planb.earth), *The Climate Mobilization* (theclimatemobilization.org), *The Sunrise Movement* (sunrisemovement.org), *The Peoples Climate Movement* (peoplesclimate.org), *Zero Hour* (thisiszerohour.org), and *Extinction Rebellion* (rebellion.earth).

Climate and intergenerational justice are widely recognized in these newer movements, although mobilized to varying degrees within different movements (Cretney & Nissen, 2019). These newer movements are part of the Climate Justice Movement (CJM), which joins with and builds on a legacy of activism and political engagements primarily led by Indigenous movements and communities in the Global South (Featherstone, 2013). The interconnected relationship between unequal social and environmental relations is highlighted in the CJM, while those accounts of climate change that treat it as primarily a carbon emissions issue to be solved through individual responsibility or initiatives like carbon trading and offset programs are being contested (Featherstone, 2013). With these newer movements there has also been an increase in emergency climate messaging to draw attention to the severity of the climate crisis, and increased demands for governments to treat climate change as an emergency (Klein Salamon, 2019).

These new climate movements are pushing for urgent and wide ranging social and political change using a variety of tactics, including direct-action and civil

disobedience, to put pressure on governments and major corporations to commit to rapid and deep decarbonization to end the era of fossil-fuel based capitalism, and to acknowledge and compensate for the unjustly distributed effects of climate change (Cretney & Nissen, 2019; Thomas, Cretney, & Hayward, 2019).

One of these newer movements that has risen to prominence and quickly gained notoriety for its disruptive direct actions is Extinction Rebellion (XR), a leaderless, decentralized, self-organizing mass movement open to anyone who wants to take climate action in non-violent ways (Extinction Rebellion Global, 2020; Knights, 2019a). XR views climate change and ecosystem collapse as the end results of an unsustainable system that must be transformed (Extinction Rebellion Global, 2020). XR hopes to spur a massive, non-violent uprising via widespread and sustained acts of civil disobedience, viewed as the only possibility left to avoid total climate catastrophe. By causing societal and economic disruption in capital cities, the intention is to compel governments to act now to avoid climate tipping points, loss of biodiversity, and avert the risk of social and ecological collapse (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2020a; Gunningham, 2019). XR has been successful in getting the message out to the public that we are in a climate and ecological emergency, prompting climate emergency declarations by national and local governments around the world (Climate Emergency Declaration, 2019; Gunningham, 2019).

XR has in less than two years become established in 68 countries (rebellion.global). Despite the early success and quick growth since 2018 it is still urgent for XR - and the wider climate movement - to mobilize a larger segment of society (Cook et al., 2019). There are still relatively few people who actively participate in the climate movement, and more citizen activists engaging in more collective climate action are needed to put intense pressure on governments and the biggest direct polluters to enact the policies and practices that can stabilize the climate (Cook et al., 2019; Delina, Diesendorf, & Merson, 2014; Gunningham, 2019). This sentiment is echoed in the words of journalist-activist Naomi Klein: “Only mass social movements can save us now” (2014, p. 450).

This thesis examines novice climate activists’ motives for being involved in XR. As the movement these new activists join is both radical and new, it is a good example of the new iteration of the climate movement and an interesting case to examine, not in a small part because the XR activists - or rebels as they are also called - are positioned on the frontlines in the struggle to pressure governments and the biggest direct polluters to take drastic action to avert catastrophic climate change.

1.1 Purpose of the Research

To date there has been limited research on XR. There is research into different aspects of the new climate movements that discuss XR as one of the emerging movements (see e.g. Almeida, 2019; Cook et al., 2019; Cretney & Nissen, 2019; Gunningham, 2019), but not yet research focusing on the level of the individuals that make up XR. There is, however, ample research on motivation in connection to collective action, social movements, the climate movement, and the more radical direct-action climate movement, which I draw upon for this thesis.

Despite having access to the same information about the imminent threat of climate change, only some people are motivated to take climate action. The reason for inquiring about activists' motives for involvement in XR is to inform our understanding of why some people are motivated to become climate activists and take radical climate action, while most people are not. By better understanding activists' personal motives for engaging in XR, clues are provided to the motivational forces at play for engagement in more radical climate action, which may carry strategic implications for movement growth in XR and in the wider action oriented climate movement at this critical point in time.

The rationale for specifically examining the motives of first-time climate activists is that the process of going from a potentially interested but still uncommitted never-before activist to deciding to join a radical movement like XR is of special interest for two reasons: the step for them to take is bigger than for seasoned activists, and movement growth in XR as well as in the wider climate movement will likely be mostly made up of inexperienced activists if the movement aims to mobilize a larger part of the population.

1.2 Research Questions

The inquiry into personal motives for involvement in XR is centered around the following research questions:

What motivates climate activism in Extinction Rebellion for individuals without prior experience with non-violent civil disobedience?

What significance do they ascribe to non-violent civil disobedience as a means of movement success in XR?

1.3 Delimitations

The present research did not include the perspectives of more seasoned activists in XR, or of those who have decided not to be involved in XR, or the perspectives of people who were previously involved in XR but have left the movement. The choice to exclude the above categories of potential respondents was consciously made to limit the scope of this thesis. Further, the choice to only include the perspectives of XR activists in Sweden was made to make possible meeting in person to conduct interviews. See the Method Discussion (2.4) for more on this.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

In Chapter 2, I will describe my methodological approach, explain my chosen research method, the process of my data collection, and reflect upon the limitations of my method of choice.

In Chapter 3, I will give a background to social movements, non-violent civil disobedience as a means to affect change, the climate movement, the climate justice movement, and the climate emergency movement, before laying out the case of Extinction Rebellion.

In Chapter 4, I will present the theoretical framework used to analyze and discuss the interview data. This includes theory on motivation in general, and on motivation for participation in collective action and in social movements.

In Chapter 5, I will present significant motivational themes that emerged from the interviews with climate activists in XR.

In Chapter 6, I will discuss the results using the theoretical framework and relevant previous research, to provide answers to the stated research questions.

In Chapter 7, I will summarize and conclude the thesis and explore avenues for future research.

2. Methodological Approach

2.1 Qualitative Method

My point of departure is constructivist as I understand reality as a product of human intelligence interacting with experience in the real world, and I assume my access to reality is only through social constructions such as shared meanings and language. Constructivism accepts reality as a construct of human mind, meaning that reality is perceived to be subjective (Myers, 2008). My approach to the present research is thus interpretive, as I believe that an important and unavoidable part of qualitative research is the researcher's unique interpretation of the gathered data. I will interpret elements of the study based on my understanding of the world, thus integrating parts of myself into the study. The interpretivist approach rejects the objectivist view that meaning resides within the world independently of consciousness (Myers, 2008).

To better understand what motivates activists to join and be part of XR and to answer my research questions, I have chosen a qualitative research approach, as qualitative research places emphasis on the individual's own experiences, perceptions and views (Ahrne & Svensson, 2011; Bryman, 2016), which is the focus of this exploratory study. Qualitative research does not aspire to numerical generalization. Its strength lies instead in the analytical generalization 'using theoretical concepts to enable a more general perspective on specific qualitative patterns' (Halkier, 2011, p. 787). Patterns may be generalized through ideal-typologizing data patterns into a relatively limited number of descriptions which underline particular characteristics (Halkier, 2011). Rather than quantitatively describe a phenomenon based on testing preconceived hypotheses or using survey questions, the aim of the present study is to understand phenomena through the personal accounts of activists. My research questions are answered through inductive analysis, where I immerse myself in the data to discover patterns, themes and connections. Inductive reasoning moves from specific observations to broad generalizations, which is fitting for the aim of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

2.2 Data Collection

Motivation can be observed and measured scientifically through behavior, level of engagement, brain activity, psychophysiology, and self-report (Reeve, 2015). The focus of the present study is on the respondents' self-reported motivation to join XR.

2.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

The data was collected using semi-structured interviews, as they are open ended while still adhering to a set of prescribed topics. By allowing the progression of the interview to follow the responses, this method can provide the interviewer with knowledge of what the respondent considers relevant and important, which is desirable in qualitative research (Bryman, 2016).

An interview guide with open questions was used, with follow-up questions used as needed based on the respondent's answers. I interviewed first-time activists in XR using questions centered around their motives for initial and current involvement in XR, and their views on non-violent civil disobedience as a means for movement success. See Appendix A for the interview guide. A test interview was performed with a member of XR to verify the relevance of the interview questions.

The interviews were conducted between 26 February and 9 April, 2020. The interviews lasted between 31 minutes and 64 minutes, with an average duration of 45 minutes. Some of the interviews took place in person, while the rest were conducted through video calls. All interviews were recorded. The in-person interviews took place in respondents' homes or workplaces, making sure the environments were quiet and with no other people present. Video interviews took place from my home and from respondents' homes or workplaces, also taking care to ensure quiet environments with minimum disturbance.

2.2.2 Sample

I interviewed first-time climate activists, defined as not having previous personal experience with non-violent civil disobedience. Respondents were recruited on XR's discussion forum on Mattermost, which is the primary communication channel for people engaged in the movement. I sent out information about my project and a request for interview participants, and the sample obtained consisted of volunteers who

responded to my message. The sample consisted of ten individuals, five women and five men, ranging in age from 26 - 73 years, with an average age of 50. See Appendix B for details.

All interviewees had academic backgrounds, and two had immigrant backgrounds. They had been involved in XR between two to nine months at the time of the interviews, with an average involvement of six months. Their experience with participating in actions and action planning in XR ranged from one action to fifteen, with an average experience of seven actions. They dedicated between two and twenty hours per week to the movement, averaging nine hours per week, being involved in activities like action planning, writing, outreach work, research, and choir practice.

2.3 Thematic Analysis

I transcribed the recordings and translated significant passages and quotes from Swedish to English, altering them slightly when necessary to make them more readable, without changing the original meaning. I used thematic coding to extract the underlying themes from the interview data. In thematic coding, the researcher frequently begins with a list of themes known or anticipated to be found in the data (Ayress, 2008). In the present study some initial direction and ideas came from a review of the literature, allowing me to identify tentative key themes in the interviews. Through immersing myself in the interview material, I identified salient quotes and passages, and coded them by identifying recurring words and categories. The codes were renamed, reorganized, merged, or separated as the analysis progressed. It was through repeated reviewing and coding of the data that links between various codes were made and the relationships among categories appeared and the final themes emerged.

Table 1. Codes, Corresponding Sub-Themes and Themes

CODES and <i>Sub-Themes</i>	THEMES
Effect, impact, influence, hopeful about method, civil disobedience necessary, group-efficacy	Having Real Impact
Climate anxiety, transformation, taking concrete action, taking action with others	Transforming Anxiety to Action
Community, connection, group-efficacy, energy, belongingness, lighter work, emotional support, relationship building, positive affect, movement identification	Finding Community
Solidarity, love, respect, care for life, altruistic values, biospheric values (<i>Altruism</i>)	Doing the Right Thing
Guilt, climate justice, social justice, responsibility (<i>Justice and Responsibility</i>)	
Duty, peace of mind, integrity, honor, virtue ethics, persistence, self-respect (<i>Personal Integrity</i>)	

2.4 Method Discussion

The limitations in using qualitative research techniques also reflect their inherent strengths: small sample sizes can allow the investigation of research problems in a comprehensive and in-depth manner, but small sample sizes also undermine opportunities to draw generalizations or make broad recommendations based upon the findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The study certainly could have benefitted from a larger sample for more generalizable results, and perhaps from a mix-method approach to gathering data for corroborating the results or potential additional perspectives.

My initial plan was to conduct all interviews in person, and consequently respondents were recruited from XR Stockholm, as I am myself based there. As the threat of the new Coronavirus took hold in March 2020, I had to adapt and the remaining interviews were instead conducted remotely through video calls. This opened up for respondents from other XR local groups in Sweden to participate in interviews, which added some geographic breadth to my sample. Being separated by

screens may likely have meant a lesser experience of ‘report’ between the respondents and the interviewer as compared to face to face interviews, but it is my hope that this did not affect the data significantly. Lo Iacono, Symonds & Brown (2016) examined the merits and disadvantages of conducting qualitative interviews using technologies such as Skype. The researchers argue that it opens new possibilities by allowing us to contact participants worldwide, thus increasing the variety of our samples. The downside is that the use of Skype affects the areas of rapport and non-verbal cues. They conclude that although video-call mediated interviews cannot completely replace face to face interaction, they work well as a viable alternative.

XR has been criticized for failing to connect with marginalized communities, and for the activists overwhelmingly being white, middle class academics (see eg. Sharam, 2019; Steinberger, 2019). As to the demographic makeup of my sample, the respondents did indeed live up to the notion of activists being fairly homogeneous. I did not actively try to influence the demographics of the sample, instead I took a ‘first come, first served’ approach to interview respondents, accepting anyone who were interested in participating as long as they had not been involved in non-violent civil disobedience before joining XR. Granted, the sample is small, and its composition may simply be coincidental and not a reflection of the activists in XR Sweden. It would certainly have been interesting to get the perspectives of a more ethnically and socially diverse sample of activists in XR.

I have myself participated in one XR action, and I am familiar with a few people in XR. I am generally positive to the methods used by the movement, and I believe it helped respondents relax and increased our report when it became clear that I am overall sympathetic to XR and “on the same page” as the respondents when it comes to my values about what needs to be done about the climate crisis. The result may have differed had I not demonstrated any sympathy for the movement’s mission and methods.

2.5 Ethics Discussion

In an interview study it is important that the interviewer has obtained informed consent from the interviewees, where the individuals participating are informed that they are participating in a scientific study (Esaiasson et al., 2012). The prospective respondents were informed about the nature and purpose of the study in the recruitment message published on XR’s forum on Mattermost. Further, individuals

have the right for their personal lives to remain private and they must not be subject to mental or physical harm, humiliation or violation (Bryman, 2016). Before the interviews, the respondents were informed about confidentiality, that their participation is voluntary, that they have the right to end the interview at any time, and that they have the right to retract any information they have provided at any time. The respondents' identities are kept confidential by using pseudonyms and by excluding any potential identifying factors that may inadvertently have been provided during the interviews. The study is not considered to have any significant ethical dilemmas that have not been addressed by the above measures.

3. Social Movements: From NGOs to Extinction Rebellion

To get a better idea of where Extinction Rebellion finds its roots and where the movement is situated in society, this chapter will provide an overview of social movements, the climate movement and its developments into the climate justice movement and the climate emergency movement, before presenting Extinction Rebellion as a new radical climate movement that embraces both climate justice and climate emergency as core parts of its movement identity.

A large number of social, political and cultural changes have been brought about by ordinary people, through their organized efforts in social movements, even when they have failed in the short term (Oberschall, 2001). A social movement is defined by Tilly (1999) as actors or organizations seeking to alter power deficits and to effect social transformations through the state by mobilizing regular citizens for sustained political action. Social movements typically derive their effectiveness from their willingness to disrupt established institutional routines (McAdam, 2017). Formal social movement organizations, including nonprofits and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), depend on their legitimacy and financial survival from their embeddedness in the established organizational structure of society. As such, they are typically unwilling to jeopardize their standing by engaging in the forms of sustained disruptive action that are the hallmark of successful social movements (McAdam, 2017). Non-formal social movement organizations are called radical social movements by Pianta (2001), and are associated with bottom-up, rather than top-down decision making. Radical movements involve people in direct actions and empower them with the capacity to bring about change (Pianta, 2001).

To cause societal disruption using civil disobedience is a common tactic among radical movements, with the aim to leave elites disoriented, startle bystanders and break with routines (Tarrow, 2011). The act of disobeying civil law has quite a prominent place in the social movements of the 20th century, and it has shown to be effective during times of repression where the majority has treated the minority inhumanely

(Forij, 2010). Civil disobedience can be defined as a public, nonviolent, and conscientious act contrary to law, usually done with the intent to bring about change in the policies or laws of government (Rawls, 2009). Rawls argues that civil disobedience is civil because it not only acts with society's best interest in mind, but also in that activists both expect and accept arrest, which shows respect for legal procedures. Civil disobedience can be seen as a democratic act when a discussion about a particular issue or topic is re-ignited, resulting in the public re-engaging with the issue and taking a stand (Smith, 2011).

The idea that the majority in a democracy is right is dangerous, according to Forij (2010), and he argues that acts of civil disobedience can challenge those in power and make the voices of minorities heard. However, a counter argument is that civil disobedience may in fact undermine representative democracy, and that there is a risk that civil disobedient actions will reduce political equality or even that the minority tries to replace the the majority will with their minority will (Månsson, 2004). Those opposing civil disobedience argue that those who practice civil disobedience act in violation of the principle that every adult citizen of a state should have equal political power (Månsson, 2004).

Part of what makes civil disobedience powerful is its potential to cause disruption in society. Kolb (2007, p. 74) states that the "political power of mass disruptions stems from its ability to destroy the normal functioning of institutions". In addition, disruption caused by a movement can both serve as a proof of the movement's determination in the eyes of the authorities, as well as effectively draw the media's and the public's attention to the issues being contested (della Porta, 2007). Breaking laws with non-violent civil disobedience to promote a better and more moral society is, however, a balancing act and there is a risk of undermining public support if a movement engages in actions that are considered immoral by the public (Bain & Bongiorno, 2020; Uba, 2019)

3.1 The Climate Movement

The climate movement traces its origins back to the late 1980s, when climate scientists and environmental NGOs started to push international organizations and nation states to take action based on meteorological and atmospheric studies that showed a global warming trend and its likely negative consequences (Almeida, 2019). Climate change

is abstract, complex, and ‘wicked’, it affects everyone, and there is no single enemy to hold accountable (Hulme, 2009). Because of this, the climate movement is different from other social movements in history. Relative to other issues, climate change is not ‘owned’ by a particular group, the way the civil rights movement was ‘owned’ by the African Americans and the women’s rights movement was ‘owned’ by women (McAdam, 2017). Climate change also has an extended time horizon compared to other issues, so as long as it seems like the worst effects of climate change lie in the future and that there is still time to fix the problem, any fear of climate change will likely be more of an intellectual nature than of the more acute fear that catalyzes action (McAdam, 2017). There has also been a general absence of strong emotions regarding climate change, which to a large part accounts for the general lack of climate change activism up until more recently (McAdam, 2017). But, we may well be on the cusp of a lot more climate engagement and activism going forward, as the new climate movements are leading the way in awareness raising, more people are getting mobilized, and the weather is getting noticeably more extreme every year, making the issue more salient than ever before.

3.1.2 The Climate Justice Movement

The Global Justice Movement took off in the late 1990s as a response to neoliberal capitalism with its emphasis on free trade and deregulations of social protections (Almeida, 2019). The movement ‘spilled over’ into the climate movement in the mid-2000s, after seeing the potential to frame climate change in a broader scope of systemic problems (Hadden & Tarrow, 2007). The joining of forces from the global justice movement and a formerly rather small climate movement injected new energy into the climate movement, evolving it toward an inclusive and justice-oriented global climate justice movement (Almeida, 2019). The movement came out in full force for COP15 in Copenhagen in 2009 (Wahlström et al., 2013).

The Climate Justice Movement (CJM) puts climate change within a global social justice framework, showing how the impacts of climate change disproportionately affect underprivileged or marginalized populations in low- and middle-income countries, as well as vulnerable populations globally by exacerbating already existing social, economic, and demographic inequalities (Vandepitte et al., 2019; Watts et al., 2017). The CJM also recognizes that climate change will unfairly impact future generations (Cretney & Nissen, 2019). The CJM argue that fair and just climate

solutions must recognize issues of equality, human rights, collective rights and historical responsibility for climate change and that climate solutions do not place unreasonable burdens on the Global South and disadvantaged populations (Boom et al., 2016).

The Paris Agreement became the first international agreement to explicitly incorporate the concept of 'Climate Justice' (Boom et al., 2016). The IPCC followed, and its report from 2018 also acknowledges the unequal effects of climate change (Booth, 2019). The CJM tend to engage in disruptive actions, such as occupations and blockades, often aimed to fundamentally transform contemporary fossil fuel based capitalism (Martinez-Alier et al., 2014). In 2018 the CJM gained new momentum with the rise of movements like Extinction Rebellion and Fridays for Future, organizing and promoting hundreds of actions across the globe (Almeida, 2019).

3.1.3 The Climate Emergency Movement

The most recent development of the climate movement is sometimes referred to as The Climate Emergency Movement (Klein Salamon, 2019). A strong emphasis is put on facing up to the reality of climate change by telling the whole truth about the catastrophic consequences of not taking immediate far-reaching action. They believe that awakening people by shocking them into action is the only way forward, as more hopeful climate and environmental messaging has not been effective. Climate change is commonly referred to as 'climate crisis' or 'climate emergency', and there is an ongoing multi-year campaign to get governments to declare a state of climate emergency (Klein Salamon, 2019; theclimatemobilization.org).

The first climate emergency declarations were made by Australian local governments in 2016 (Cedamia, 2019). Aided by XR and the youth climate movement, the Climate Emergency Movement picked up steam in 2018 (Cedamia, 2019) with hundreds of new declarations of climate emergency being made by local and national governments and institutions around the world. The UK became the first national government to declare a climate emergency in May 2019, and by November the European Parliament had done the same (theclimatemobilization.org). As of May 2020, Ireland, Portugal, France, Argentina, Malta, Spain, Maldives, Canada, Italy, Bangladesh, and Austria had all made climate emergency declarations. Currently about 800 million people live in places that are officially declared to be in a state of climate emergency (theclimatemobilization.org). While the declarations are largely symbolic

gestures at this time, a declaration of climate emergency puts a government on record in support of taking emergency action to reverse global warming, and there are cases where the declarations have become jumping-off points for real action (Calma, 2019).

Due to the efforts of XR and the wider Climate Emergency Movement, the terminology used around climate change has changed significantly since 2018. The use of “climate emergency” has increased sharply, and by September 2019 it was over 100 times as common as it had been 12 months previously, earning the position of Oxford Word of the Year 2019 (Oxford Languages, 2020). The Oxford Word of the Year shortlist featured terms like ‘climate action’, ‘climate crisis’, ‘eco-anxiety’, ‘ecocide’, ‘extinction’, and ‘global heating’, demonstrating an overall increased awareness of the state of the world.



Extinction Rebellion activists in London, April 2019. Image source: Klein Salamon (2019)

3.2 Extinction Rebellion

Extinction Rebellion was founded in May 2018 in Stroud, a small town in England by veteran activists, including Roger Hallam, Gail Bradbrook, and Simon Bramwell from the activist group Rising Up! (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2020a). They devised a name for their new group that would be alarming on purpose to jar people out of complacency. They chose the extinction symbol for a logo: an hourglass inside a circle

representing Earth, symbolizing that time is running out (Eels, 2020). XR was created because, according to the founders, some 30 years of climate activism had achieved very little and the existing repertoire of tactics used clearly had not worked, leaving no other option than civil disobedience (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2020a).

XR makes demands for system change and climate justice and has adopted an emergency messaging to communicate the urgency of addressing climate change, to break complacency and shock governments, organizations, and individuals into action (Farrell et al., 2019). An example of XR's rhetoric around climate change: "We are facing an unprecedented global emergency. Life on Earth is in crisis: scientists agree we have entered a period of abrupt climate breakdown, and we are in the midst of a mass extinction of our own making." (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2020b). According to XR, a fundamental reshaping of globally dominant economic and social systems is required to effectively address climate change (Cretney & Nissen, 2019). A mobilizing message is that it is everyone's duty to rebel against a system that is destroying life on Earth. The Indian scholar, author and environmental activist Vandana Shiva writes in the Extinction Rebellion manifesto *This Is Not A Drill* (Farrell et al., 2019, p. 7): "It is a moral imperative to rebel against a system that is driving extinction, exterminating species and cultures."

XR debuted publicly on 31 October 2018, when activists, including Greta Thunberg, gathered in front of some 2,000 people at the UK Parliament and issued a "Declaration of Rebellion" as a response to the continued inaction after the release of the IPCC report 2018 that stated humanity only has 12 years to stop catastrophic climate change (Eells, 2020; Extinction Rebellion UK, 2020a). They had three demands: First, that governments tell the truth about how serious the situation is by declaring a climate and ecological emergency. Second, that the government commit to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse emissions to net-zero by 2025. And third, that a democratic Citizens' Assembly is to be established, free from corruption and special interests, to best decide how to deal with the threat of climate change (Extinction Rebellion Global, 2020).

The movement uses the "civil-resistance model": forcing change by peacefully breaking the law through acts of civil disobedience. The rationale is that to be taken seriously, activists must be willing to get arrested. Further, the protest must go on over an extended period to cause civil disruption to raise awareness among the public, and economic disruption to shake the political system. To sustain prolonged protest, the actions need to be fun for the activists and inviting for the public to avoid alienating the people the movement depend on in order to grow (Hallam, 2019a). The strategy

is built on the research by Chenoweth and Stephan (2012) that demonstrates that history's most successful mass uprisings, from the civil rights movement to the suffragettes to the Arab spring, had features in common: they were absolutely non-violent, people broke the law and were willing to get arrested and go to prison, and they involved a critical mass of people causing disruption in a capital city where the media and power reside. According to their analysis, the tipping point for movement success happens when 3.5 % of the population rise up through active and sustained participation in non-violent civil resistance (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2012).

Following the declaration of rebellion in October 2018, activists blocked traffic at five major bridges for a week, used 'swarming' to temporarily block roads, and did performances like tree-plantings and gluing themselves to the gates of Buckingham Palace (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2020b). Then followed months of movement building in preparation for the 'International Rebellion' that started on 15 April, 2019: massive protests in London where tens of thousands of people helped lock down central locations throughout London for more than a week, causing economic and social disruption (BBC, 2019). Activists glued themselves to the London Stock Exchange, held 'die-ins' at central locations, debated, held assemblies, and did performances (Knights, 2019b). There were over 1000 arrests, many thousands of new sign-ups to the movement, and the rebellion had spread around the world with actions taking place simultaneously in 80 cities in 33 countries (Mohdin et al., 2019). On May 1st, the UK Parliament had given into their first demand and declared a climate emergency, becoming the first nation to do so (BBC, 2019). Another major international "Autumn Rebellion" launched in October 2019 in London and again in dozens of other cities around the world. This time the rebellion did not have the impact of the April rebellion; the shock value was gone, the police shut down protests more effectively, and there were no tangible results emerging from the protests (Knights, 2019b). The next major international rebellion planned for spring 2020 was cancelled as the restrictions put in place following the spread of Covid-19 put an end to large gatherings.

XR Sweden first appeared to the public on the first "Rebellion Day" in Stockholm on 17 November 2018, when activists blocked an intersection in Stockholm (Hallgren, 2018). The blockade was followed by many other blockades and actions around Sweden, for example: actions at a Vattenfall heating plant in January 2019, "Flood the Streets" action in August 2019, "What Have We Done" action in tandem with XR Sweden receiving the Martin Luther King price in January 2020, "Pengarna eller livet" ("The money or life") action at major banks in February 2020,

blockade of the Parliament in April 2019, blockade at Sturup Airport in July 2019, and protests at the Preem refinery in March 2020 (Extinction Rebellion Sweden, 2020a; Gordon Hultsjö, 2019; Lundin, 2020). A noteworthy example of what XR Sweden has achieved so far is a pamphlet called “When the Climate Crisis Comes” (Extinction Rebellion Sweden, 2020b), that got distributed to Swedish politicians and got the attention of the parliament. An interpellation was made about the pamphlet, recommending that a modified version be distributed to Swedish households (Holm, 2020).

XR is a decentralized leaderless movement, organized in local chapters. To take action in the name of the movement individuals and groups need to follow ten guiding principles and values (Extinction Rebellion Global, 2020). As of May 2020, XR is active in 68 countries, in 1178 local branches (Extinction Rebellion Global, 2020). In Sweden, there are in May 2020 ten local XR chapters (Extinction Rebellion Sweden, 2020c). To get an idea of the social reach of XR, I looked at the movement’s social media presence. The main XR social media accounts had at the time of writing 660 000 followers on Instagram, 386 000 followers on Facebook, 355 000 followers on Twitter, and 54 000 followers on YouTube. XR Sweden had 6800 followers on Instagram, 9500 followers on Facebook, and 5000 followers on Twitter. In addition, local branches often have their own social media presence.

4. Theoretical Overview

In this chapter, motivational concepts and theories are outlined that are drawn upon to discuss the motives of first-time activists in XR. There are a multitude of concepts and theories on motivation in general, and on motivation for collective action and social movement participation, out of which those are selected that are especially relevant to answer the research questions of the present study.

The study of collective action and social movement participation is interdisciplinary and has intrigued social psychologists, sociologists, and political scientists for decades, producing numerous explanations for why people engage in collective action for a cause (Cook et al., 2019). I will be using a social psychological lens as a point of departure, as the present study is centered at the level of the individual in a group setting. Social psychology is interested in the actions, thoughts, and feelings of people and how they are influenced by social context (Klandermans, 1997; Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). A social psychology of protest is about trying to understand why people who are seemingly in the same situation respond so differently - why some individuals participate in social movements while others do not, or why some individuals decide to quit while others stay involved (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). The social psychological answer to these questions is given in terms of typical psychological processes such as motivation, cognition, identity, and emotion (Klandermans, 1997; Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). The focus in the present study is on motivation, the rationale being that to participate in social protest, individuals need to feel motivated to do so. While in the present study the focus is on motives, in reality motivation, identity, cognition, and emotions are interdependent and are all useful to explain why individuals decide to become climate activists in XR (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2010).

4.1 Motivational Foundations

Motivation is the "why" behind human actions, and can be defined as the force that initiates, directs, and sustains goal-oriented behaviors (Cherry & Morin, 2020). Motivation is an internal experience of a drive or need born either out of deficiency or need for growth that desires a change, either in the self or the environment (Reeve, 2015). Social contexts and external events act as antecedents to motives that cause or trigger motivational states (Reeve, 2015). Motivation is influenced by needs that are *physiological*, like needs for food, water, sleep, and sex; or *psychological*, like needs for belonging, integrity, purpose, autonomy, competence, and achievement. In addition, people are motivated by *cognitions*, like moral values, beliefs, norms, and goal attainment, and desires to experience specific *emotional states*, like flow or positive affect, associated with a certain activity or goal (Reeve, 2015).

As for different sources of motivation, a distinction is often made between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation, where intrinsic motivation are internal driving forces of behavior inherent to the activities undertaken, that is, the activities themselves being interesting, enjoyable, and meaningful (Levesque et al., 2010). Intrinsic goals include personal growth, emotional intimacy, and community involvement (Vansteenkiste et al., 2004). Intrinsic motivation can be driven by curiosity, linked to a desire to know, or come from a need to control our environment (Levesque et al., 2010). Extrinsic motivation is driving forces that are external to the activities, like getting a reward, avoiding punishment, or meeting a deadline (Levesque et al., 2010). Extrinsic goals include social recognition, image, and financial success, and pursuing them does not lead directly to the satisfaction of innate psychological needs but is contingent on the response of others (Vansteenkiste et al., 2004). Intrinsic motivation is often experienced as more immediate and potent than extrinsic motivation (Reeve, 2015).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is concerned with the motivation behind choices people make without external influence and interference (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT posits that intrinsically motivated behaviors represent the height of *self-determination*, and that intrinsically motivated behaviors have greater long-term outcomes because they satisfy needs for autonomy and competence, which increase the likelihood of repetition (Ryan & Deci, 2000). That said, extrinsically motivated behaviors can become internalized over time and performed willingly even when they are not intrinsically enjoyable or interesting. Instead, people become motivated

because they identify with and endorse the values underlying the behavior, which is often the case with pro-environmental behaviors (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

4.2 Motivation for Collective Action

People participate in protest to express anger or moral outrage stemming from perceived injustice or relative deprivation (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). Although many members of the public may share the outrage or feelings of injustice and sympathize with the goals of collective actions, often only a small proportion of the public join movements or participate in protest (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). The reason as to why some people become activists while most do not is in a large part due to *efficacy*, or lack thereof (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). *Self-efficacy* is a related concept to self-determination and refers to the belief people have about their ability to successfully complete a task or reach a goal (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy is important for motivation because higher levels of self-efficacy positively affects the level of difficulty of tasks or goals a person is willing to attempt, and the amount of effort and persistence put into accomplishing them (Bandura, 1997). *Group-efficacy* refers to the belief that group-related problems can be solved by collective efforts (Bandura, 1997). To believe in the possibility of political change, people need to perceive the group to be able to unite and fight effectively for the issue (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013).

A theoretical distinction is often made in research about protest and collective action between *instrumental* motivation - acting in order to achieve something external to the action itself, like a particular political goal, and *expressive* motivation - acting to express oneself, regardless of the expected outcome of the protest (Klandermans, 2004). For instrumental action, the goal is external to the action and the motivation to act is therefore extrinsic. For expressive action the meaning of the action does not lie in the achievement of a result, but in carrying out the specific type of action for its own sake, meaning that the motivation to act is intrinsic (Walgrave et al., 2013).

To further distinguish between types of motivation in protest participation, Van Stekelenburg (2006) first makes the distinction between instrumental and expressive motivation, then divides expressive motives into *identity motives*, *ideological motives*, and *group-based emotions*. People with an identity motive participate because they identify with the others involved and want to act as members of that group; people

with an ideology motive participate because they want to express their values or principles; people with a group-based emotions motive participate because it helps them to regulate the emotions tied to the situation; and people with an instrumental motive participate because they see it as an opportunity to change a state of affairs with which they are unhappy, be it their own circumstances or to influence the social and political environment (Van Stekelenburg, 2006). Instrumental and expressive motivation are not exclusive but complementary, and most people would be motivated by both to varying degrees depending on the issue at hand (Walgrave et al., 2013).

4.3 Motivation for Social Movement Participation

A social movement can be defined as a form of collective action, rooted in *collective identity* (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2010). People may want to join and participate in a social movement to become part of a community, to feel connected to something larger than themselves, thereby satisfying the fundamental need for belongingness (Means, 2014). *Social Identity Theory (SIT)* proposes that people strive for and benefit from positive social identities associated with their groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). According to SIT, identification with others is accompanied by an awareness of similarity and shared fate with those who belong to the same category. The redefinition from an 'I' into a 'we' makes people think, feel and act as members of their group and transforms individual behavior into collective behavior (Turner, 1999). SIT also posits that identification with a movement increases perceived group-efficacy and intensifies emotions attached to the issue(s) being protested, both working to increase instrumental and expressive motivation to take action (Simon et al., 1998; Van Zomeren et al., 2008). Consequently, the more people identify with a group the more they are inclined to protest on behalf of that group, and their group-identity is reinforced the more they take action on behalf of their group (Van Zomeren et al., 2008). This perpetuation of motivation to take action provides a partial explanation for continued movement participation and collective action in the name of a movement (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2010).

Stürmer and Simon (2004) propose that when people identify very strongly with the members of a movement, they have a powerfully shared perception of collective injustice, needs and goals. They also share behavioral intentions, trust and like one another, and are collectively influenced by group norms. These effects are so powerful

that group motivation eclipse personal motivation, facilitating future action also in the absence of any external rewards (see also Drury & Reicher, 2009).

Further, to want to join a specific social movement organization, people would need to identify with the organization itself (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009). The cognitions people attach to their social environment are susceptible to *meaning construction* by others, and social movements play a significant role in the diffusion of ideas and values by the information they disseminate (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009). Social movements 'frame' how they interpret a social, political or economic situation and what should be done to affect change in ways that are intended to inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization, mobilize potential activists or members, and garner bystander support (Benford & Snow, 2000). The more individual orientations, values and beliefs resonate and align with the activities, goals and ideologies of a social movement organization, the greater the level of shared meaning and the greater the commitment to the movement (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009).

5. Results

In this exploratory research into what motivates individuals without prior experience with non-violent civil disobedience to engage in climate activism in Extinction Rebellion, it has become abundantly clear how motives are very much interconnected. The respondents all have several motives for their activism in XR, determined by combinations of interrelated motivational factors. However, through analyzing the interview material using thematic analysis, overarching themes emerged. The themes obtained from the interviews are presented in this chapter. The respondents' fictive names are Anna, Bastian, Cecilia, Diana, Eva, Frank, Georg, Helene, Ivan, and Jesper.

5.1 Having Real Impact

The first theme around motives to engage in XR to emerge from the material is perhaps the least surprising - wanting to have political impact by taking concrete action in a radical direct-action movement. The respondents expressed in different ways how the use of civil disobedience as the movements' primary method adds to the perception that XR is an action-oriented organization where your participation matters and having real political impact seems to be within reach.

George initially got involved in FFF, and still is, but felt that "You can have more impact as an individual in XR." When Eva first heard about XR, her reaction was: "God how exciting, this feels like they are doing something extra, something that has a greater impact or faster effect." For Ivan, the focus on action drew him in: "I wanted to do something, not just talk. Here there are people who are willing to do things, that mean business... so that was the immediate motivation for 'okay, let's try this'." The perception that XR "means business" attracted Jesper, who was at a stage in his life where he had internalized the severity of the climate crisis and how far politics were from taking the needed action, and realized that the biggest difference he could make was to get involved in activism and civil disobedience. He decided XR was the right movement for him, because:

It is one of the few movements that is pushing for radical change, with a clear timeframe and goal to work towards. What has made me hopeful is that you actually see that XR has succeeded with its first goal, at least in other countries, that it has had some kind of effect.

Jesper also said that he is hopeful that if XR gets a clear message out and there are enough people who are willing to make sacrifices, then it should be possible to get support from a large part of the population. Diana also talked about how XR's methods gave her hope, as mobilization and peaceful civil disobedience have often worked in the past.

That civil disobedience is the central tactic in XR is, unsurprisingly, a significant motivator for the respondents to want to be involved in the movement. It is perceived as having more impact than other methods, and all but one of the respondents see civil disobedience as a necessary last resort, as other methods have failed to bring about the changes needed to curb climate change. Frank does not believe that civil disobedience is necessary as such but thinks it can be justified under the right circumstances. He sees a dilemma in breaking the law for a good cause, as it might inspire others with less noble motives. Despite his hesitation, he said: "I felt that I was curious about where the line for me would go regarding non-violent civil disobedience. I have been curious about the consequences of it." Ivan, who is politically active in a major party, shared his perspective on civil disobedience, saying:

That it is absolutely necessary, because... I am party politically active, and it is not enough to raise an issue. Unfortunately, it is still business as usual so civil disobedience to raise an issue to the national level is the only way between elections.

According to Bastian, his attitude towards the use of civil disobedience came down to that "You have to have realized that it is a crisis situation to sympathize with more radical methods." Cecilia similarly said that this is an extraordinary situation that requires extraordinary methods, and "Without civil disobedience, India might still have been a British colony, women would not have voting rights, and blacks in the United States would still ride segregated buses." That time has run out for other methods was a realization that Helene came to, saying that:

When something is important enough, like this, then I think it is the only right thing, it does not work through the democratic system, it takes too long. A year

or so ago I did not have that opinion, then I thought that the politicians would be able to act strongly enough, but I have realized that it is difficult for them to do, they don't dare.

Eva similarly sees civil disobedience as a method to “help” politicians make decisions:

I think that peaceful civil disobedience is really the only way to really make an impact. We know that there is an inertia, a cowardice among the politicians, and they actually want to do a lot, but they do not do everything they want because they are loyal to their party and they want to win the next election.

It is also seen as a good method to get the attention of the public and the politicians, as exemplified by Eva: “Civil disobedience attracts attention. It is a means of pressure, and it has been shown to have made a difference.” The respondents were clearly motivated to join XR to take matters into their own hands, to try to create the change that they believe would not happen otherwise. In the words of Diana:

Someone has to lead the way, and I feel completely fearless... There is some kind of culture of silence and people really want to change things but they do not dare. So, we are the ones who dare and then everyone will follow.

In sum, the respondents want to have an impact and achieve political change, and were motivated to join and be involved in XR based on the direct-action focus and the methods used in the movement.

5.2 Transforming Anxiety to Action

Another theme for respondents to join XR that emerged from the material was for reasons of emotion management. The anticipation of feeling better from taking action and joining in with others for a better future was strongly motivating for a majority of the respondents. Some respondents expressed that what they needed was to do something concrete to deal with their emotions, whereas for others it was specifically taking concrete action together with others that was the key to handling their negative emotions. In both cases, the respondents wanted to transform their negative feelings by getting involved in XR and taking concrete action. According to Eva, a psychology researcher and one of the respondents: “It is something that psychologists try to tell

people, if you feel bad, find a context, a community and do something so you know you have contributed.”

The most prevalent emotions that the respondents needed to deal with were feelings of climate anxiety, sadness, or dread when reflecting about the future for themselves, their children, their grandchildren, or the children of loved ones, as well as sadness over the harm humans are causing to life on Earth.

Several of the respondents expressed how taking action in XR decrease or even remove their climate anxiety, at least temporarily. For Bastian, taking action provides a temporary relief from feelings of emptiness and bleak future prospects:

I have a really hard time seeing how my life will develop, the further into the future I am, the more society will collapse around me. So, I guess it's kind of an anxiety to feel that the opportunities are pretty limited to have a planned future. As long as I'm in the middle of doing something and working on something, I kind of lose that feeling, but then it can come back even stronger when I come home after an action or when I'm supposed to take time off from XR.

For Cecilia, joining XR has decreased her feelings of climate despair as she feels better by doing something concrete. According to Diana, the key is to take action with others. She expressed how she feel less climate anxiety now that she is taking concrete action in XR, and said: “If the downfall comes it is better to go down together.” For Anna, involvement in XR is a win-win, saying that “To work and do something together is not only the solution to the world problems, it is the solution to your own problems many times as well.”

Based on the respondents' answers, it seems clear that taking concrete action or taking concrete action together with others serves the therapeutic purpose of managing and diminishing climate anxiety and other difficult emotions, as exemplified by Jesper who sums up this theme in his statement: “It feels like XR is very much based on people taking the climate anxiety that many have sat with alone and turning it into constructive action instead. It has done that for me anyway.”

5.3 Finding Community

The importance of finding a community of like-minded people was another theme that emerged from the interview data. This theme is about identifying with others, feeling connected, understood, and supported, and thus stronger and more efficacious together, as exemplified by Eva's exclamation: "Together we are strong!" Included in this theme is an identification with XR's message of climate emergency, because of the need to be with others who also 'get it'.

Ivan said that he gets energy from organizing with others in XR and sleeps well knowing he did something worthwhile. For Helene, it is:

The thing about meeting others... and also the joy in XR, you do something together, not in a whiny way, you are active and engaged and happy... and I believe a lot in the power of song. It makes it feel easier and more powerful at the same time.

Having the support of others gives energy to carry on, in addition to the added benefit of building relationships in the group. Eva shared how she feels understood and connected to others in XR: "It feels very good to be in a context where you do not need to explain, we know what we think and we know what we need to do, and so we do it!" For Eva "The power of it all is to do it together." Bastian had come to a similar conclusion, saying: "It was very much a kind of powerlessness.... to turn that powerlessness into a position where you have community and at least an experience of power to influence that motivated me." Cecilia described the positive feelings of being among like-minded people who also have decided to become activists, saying that "It is good to meet others who feel the same way and who have crossed the initial threshold and left the comfort zone". This sentiment is shared by Jesper:

It's very nice to be able to spend time with others and not always feel that you are struggling alone or in an uphill battle, but it feels like you have a community in that too, which is very positive.

Since first getting involved, Georg's motivation has increased because of the relationships he has built in the movement, giving him a positive sense of community. He said that he was initially very impressed with the organization of the first action he participated in, and he has since been strongly affected by the regenerative culture and how well people treat each other in XR, all contributing to him wanting to be more

involved and work harder. Similarly, Helene said that she got impressed by the organization in XR when she first joined and was positively surprised about the variety of people that were in the movement, both of which has contributed to her motivation becoming stronger.

The emergency climate message of XR would resonate deeply with people who have awakened or are in the process of awakening to that reality, leading to feelings of identification with the movement and its members. Bastian appreciates that XR do not sugar coat reality, but instead 'says how it is'. He was attracted to XR's rhetoric as it mirrors his sense of reality:

What I found most appealing about the rhetoric was that I felt that someone was talking about the situation in a way that reflected how I viewed it. (...) It was 'there is a crisis, and if we fail we don't know what's going to happen to civilization'.

Ivan got involved in XR after he had a deeper realization of the severity of the climate crisis: "I cared about the state of things, but I had not really grasped exactly how bad it is, I mean existentially, so 2018 was my 'conception' in terms of consciousness for future generations." He also expressed that he appreciates that XR is telling the truth: "Science says that the house is burning, all floors are on fire, and then we have to talk about it as well, and then come up with concrete suggestions." Although Georg had been worried about climate change for many years, he had a deep emotional realization of the severity of the climate crisis when he went to Berlin with XR in for the Autumn Rebellion in October 2019: "It wasn't until XR that I started to feel this climate sadness." Anna expressed that she felt alienated and alone, and needed to connect with people who understood her perspective:

I felt more and more alien to the society where I grew up, and it also gets very lonely when you go around looking at the world like it has lost its mind. When you have come to the realization that this is crazy... When the outside world starts to seem absurd, then you have to find people who... You have to have some context where you are not crazy.

In sum, the respondents expressed in different ways that the community in XR gives energy, a sense of belonging, a perception of increased efficacy, and can serve as a supportive safe haven where strong emotions about the looming climate crisis are

accepted and can safely be explored and expressed in a group of like-minded others, who have also awakened to the reality of a climate emergency.

5.4 Doing the Right Thing

The respondents also had strong ideological motives for their involvement in XR. The motives are about taking a stand in the fight for a better future both for others and for oneself, whether or not this achieves any instrumental goals of climate justice or environmental protection. I have divided the ideological motives into three sub-themes: *altruism*; *justice and responsibility*; and *personal integrity*. These motives are intrinsic and deeply meaningful for the respondents.

One aspect of ‘doing the right thing’ is found in the sub-theme *altruism*, which is about care for others and care for the planet, and expressed through love, empathy, and solidarity. Bastian is motivated by an increased love for life and as a consequence wants to do his part: “I can feel an increased love for life, and we need to start nurturing life in a different way than we do today in a planetary sense”. This is similar to Georg, who said that he is motivated by a love for all living, which has become stronger since joining XR. Another way of describing this love for life is in the way Cecilia talked about “The Goddess”, an entity that all living is a part of: “For me, it is also my religion, I can't let her down, my Goddess. I will not allow her to be trampled on, I just cannot.” Another aspect of altruism is expressed by Helene, who became motivated based on love and care for her adult child who has climate anxiety, in part joining XR because of feelings of solidarity with her child: “One of them was feeling really bad and had real climate anxiety, and then you also feel a strong motivation to help.”

Another aspect of ‘doing the right thing’, is *justice and responsibility*. Concern about and wanting to take responsibility for the negative impacts of climate change on the less fortunate, children, or those not yet born was widespread among respondents. For them, climate change is a justice issue because those who will suffer most have had no part in creating the problem. Frank talked about how moral reasons were fundamental for him in wanting to engage in XR, specifically the fundamental injustice in how climate change affects people unequally and that so little is being done to change that as long as it does not affect the rich in the same way. For him, it is important that we all take more responsibility for the negative effects of our western

lifestyles. Ivan holds a similar view: “We in the rich world, it is us who have to step up and make the change. We have to take the lead because we caused this.” The focus for Anna is more on ‘intergenerational justice’ - wanting to put an end to the overuse of planetary resources for the sake of future generations, whereas for Ivan it is primarily about a responsibility for the children in his life.

Guilt was also expressed over causing harm to others by inadvertently using up their resources, simply by virtue of living in Sweden. Bastian expressed feelings of guilt over contributing to the hardship of others:

I have a hard time justifying my life, that I have earned this abundance when it will hit people who have neither had that abundance before nor will have it in the future either... that aspect is strong, that it affects those who do not deserve it, those who have done nothing to cause the situation.

Similarly, for Jesper “It was a big reason for my own transformation, the realization that my own consumption pattern is negatively affecting not only people in other parts of the planet now, but also future generations.”

A third aspect of ‘doing the right thing’ is for reasons of *personal integrity*. Several of the respondents expressed in different ways the importance of acting in accordance with their moral values. For Bastian, it is important to know he has done the right thing: “Even if it goes to hell, at least I've done the right thing and been one of those who tried to do the right thing.” Acting out of a sense of duty was a prevalent motivation among the respondents. Anna felt that it is a duty to act now on behalf of life on earth, and Cecilia similarly believes it is everyone's duty to do what they can: “For me, it is important to work and make a difference, at least contribute to it. You need to be sure that you do what you can do, there are no excuses not to do what you can.” To do the best one can regardless of outcome is a moral imperative for Cecilia, but also a matter of self-respect. Hope also plays a part: “So far I don't think we have lost hope, but one should still fight even if there is little hope.” But Cecilia also said that “We will be persistent, even if there is no hope.” The bottom line for Cecilia is to “Do what you must, and come what may.” Eva expressed a stoic solution-focused attitude to fighting climate change, where to do ones' part is the key: “I believe that we will find a solution, not deceiving myself, not waiting and see but do my part as best I can, so that's what motivates me.” Ivan sums up the personal integrity theme, saying: “It's about ‘what did you do today’? In 30-40 years when you are going to die, can you see yourself in the mirror? Yes, I can. I tried.”

In sum, the respondents described that they are motivated to do what is right based on feelings of love, care, and respect for all life; their moral values and sense of responsibility for present and future generations; and the dignity that comes from knowing that you are doing your very best.

6. Discussion

In this chapter the motivational themes from the previous chapter are discussed in light of relevant research and the theoretical overview presented in chapter 4. This is followed by a more general discussion about the potential of the present study to provide an increased understanding of how the climate movement can mobilize more people to become involved in climate activism. Finally, XR as a movement is discussed, as well as the current societal context the study is situated in, and suggestions for future research are provided.

For people to engage in radical climate activism, they would need to have internalized the severity of the climate crisis, feel like their participation matters and that change is possible through taking direct action. According to research by Bamberg and Moser (2007), individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to engage in pro-environmental behaviors, whereas individuals with low self-efficacy may still be concerned about environmental issues, but tend to do nothing often due to a sense of helplessness. In general, low efficacy has been shown to be a significant barrier to climate action, manifesting as avoidance and denial, in addition to helplessness (Roser-Renouf et al., 2014). Already by joining XR, the respondents show that they believe in the possibility that change through collective action is possible, and that their participation matters, demonstrating both high self-efficacy and high perceived group-efficacy on the part of XR (Bandura, 1997; Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013).

The activists were motivated by various reasons to be involved in XR. The delineations between the themes that emerged are not clear cut, demonstrating the interconnectedness of the various motives people have. For example, although similar in some ways, a key difference between the themes ‘transforming anxiety to action’ and ‘finding community’ is that in the former the focus is on taking action, rather than on being with others and having support. However, the benefits of joining a social movement like XR, would be that transforming climate anxiety into a positive force for change and wanting to do something concrete in a movement would also almost automatically mean having the support of the community in the movement. Another example is how the themes ‘having real impact’ and ‘transforming anxiety to action’ are connected through the focus on concrete action and hope, as joining XR to manage

climate anxiety without also believing in the possibility that XR as a movement can create political change would unlikely be motivating enough, conversely, without strong emotions attached to the climate issue, it is doubtful that they would have gotten involved in XR. It is the combination of several motives found across the different themes that together make up the motivation to become an activist in XR.

The themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the interviews in the present study roughly correspond to the motivation types identified by Van Stekelenburg (2006). She made the distinction between instrumental and expressive motivation, then further divided expressive motivation into group-based emotions, identity motives, and ideological motives. In the present study, the themes that emerged were 'having real impact' (instrumental motive); 'transforming anxiety to action' (expressive emotion motive); 'finding community' (expressive identity motive); and 'doing the right thing' (expressive ideological motive). The 'finding community' theme include identification with the movement's message (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2009), and aspects like group-efficacy and group motivation that correspond to Tajfel and Turner's (1979) Social Identity Theory (SIT) and research by eg. Van Zomeren et al. (2008). The themes are further discussed below.

6.1 Having Real Impact

The theme 'having real impact' showed that respondents were motivated to engage in XR because the movement appealed to them as it is both action oriented and radical, and perceived as a platform where you can make a real difference and contribute to political change. The respondents wanted to have an impact and feel useful by taking concrete action. The motivation in this case is instrumental as the focus lies on external outcomes in the hope of achieving real results (Klandermans, 2004). Previous movement successes in other countries also contributed to the hope felt by respondents that XR may be a catalyst of significant change. In climate activism, having and sustaining feelings of hope are especially important, as the chances of success are understood to be limited (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017). The use of civil disobedience was seen as both a necessary and effective method, and the only method fitting to the severity of the situation, contributing to the perception of XR as an impactful movement. Quill (2009) discusses commonly invoked reasonings in climate activism to use civil disobedience, which include the reconciliation of one's actions with one's

conscience, and perceiving civil disobedience as an act of necessity defense when no other option is available. This was reflected in the reasonings of the respondents in the present study. Further, politicians were seen by some respondents as often wanting to do good things, but not being able to due to institutional restraints or cowardice. According to the respondents, acts of civil disobedience can function as an instigator of change, forcing politicians to implement changes. Those engaging in civil disobedience tend to see themselves as change agents working to introduce a new and just state of affairs (Amenta et al., 2010), which is in line with the responses from several of the activists.

6.2 Transforming Anxiety to Action

For a majority of respondents to become a part of XR, an important reason was to constructively deal with their uncomfortable feelings about climate change and its implications, making the motivation mostly expressive (Klandermans, 2004) as the focus for the respondents is to feel better. It seemed to work well - they reported decreased climate anxiety since joining XR and felt more hopeful by taking action. According to climate psychologist Dr. Susie Burke at the University of Melbourne (2015):

Taking environmentally responsible action is one potent way to manage and reduce the anxiety and distress about climate change. People feel empowered and more hopeful and optimistic when they take action, or work with others to address climate change.

Kleres & Wettergren (2017) interviewed climate activists in Denmark and Sweden to analyze the roles played by feelings of fear, hope, anger, and guilt. They found that fear, often manifesting as climate anxiety, can be a mobilizing emotion for climate action, despite it being associated with inhibited collective action in the social movements literature. Fear can trigger climate action by making the threat of climate change feel acute, as long as there are also feelings of hope to mediate the potentially paralyzing effects of fear (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017). It was clear that several of my respondents saw climate anxiety as a motivating factor for their activism, in combination with the hope they felt about joining XR, and the hope created by taking action together. Hope can both manage fear and inspire action, and collective action

in turn produce more hope, fueled by the emotional experience of acting collectively (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017; Ojala, 2012). The communal embeddedness in a movement of like-minded people shields against feelings of despair of social movements (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017). In climate activism, compared to activism for other causes, having and sustaining feelings of hope are especially important, as the chances of success are understood to be small (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017). Where hope is precarious, the support and mutual recognition available in groups of like-minded others enable and sustain feelings of hope (McGeer, 2004).

6.3 Finding Community

The respondents clearly got a lot of positive benefits from connecting with others in XR, including increased energy, joy, perceived efficacy, and feeling supported and understood. The need to belong is a powerful fundamental motivation, and being part of a community can satisfy intrinsic needs such as belonging, acceptance, and closeness (Reeve, 2015). According to Social Identity Theory (SIT), group motivation grows from this feeling of belongingness, and also from the sense of purpose being involved can bring, both of which are expressive motives. Group motivation also increases from the perceived increased efficacy of feeling stronger together, which is an instrumental motive as the perceived strength would be put to use to create change (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Building on SIT, Buttigieg and Pace (2013) examined what keeps youth leaders in climate activism organizations motivated to continue their work. Their respondents were motivated by working with others toward a common goal, and by the building of friendships in the group. The relationship building in turn, becomes a motivation to stay within the organization. Although none of the respondents in the present study had been part of XR for very long, this increased group motivation is reflected in the responses of several of the respondents.

XR as a movement is communicating a message of climate emergency, meaning that people getting involved in the movement will have resonated with the ‘emergency frame’ communicated by XR and embraced the truth about the existential threat of climate change, or they would not have joined the movement (see Benford & Snow, 2000). To deal with this realization, people might enter a state of functioning called “emergency mode”, characterized by ‘an extreme focus of attention and resources on working productively to solve the emergency’ (Klein Salamon, 2019). In the words of

Gail Bradbrook, co-founder of XR: “Once you face and feel the shock of what we are facing, if you are willing to face the grief and can process those feelings, there is tremendous energy and a will to do what it takes.” (Taylor, 2018). The concept of emergency mode refers to individuals and groups who function optimally during a crisis, often achieving great feats through intensely focused motivation. (People may also react less optimally, with panic or an inability to act, due to overwhelm from low self-efficacy or lack of support.) Klein Salamon (2019) further discusses the importance of a safe space where people can process the reality and implications of the climate crisis together with others who understand, as people who have awakened to the crisis often feel alienated from mainstream society. For the respondents who talked about personal awakening and previously feeling lonely or alienated, the community in XR is providing that safe space.

According to Van Stekelenburg (2006), people with a group-based emotions motive participate because it helps them to regulate the emotions tied to the situation, that is, they feel supported by the group to better handle their emotions, and/or empowered to fully feel express their emotions in the group context. These mechanisms were evident both in the themes of ‘transforming anxiety to action’ and in ‘finding community’.

6.4 Doing the Right Thing

These motives are deeply meaningful for the respondents. They are intrinsic and self-expressive (Vansteenkiste et al., 2004), and find their basis in psychological needs, like love, integrity, and purpose, and in personal moral values (Reeve, 2015). For several of the respondents, ‘doing the right thing’ is very important, whether or not this achieves any instrumental goals of climate justice or environmental protection. This is ‘virtue ethics’, not judging the worth of one’s actions by their consequences, instead focusing on maintaining one’s moral character (Howell, 2013). Morality has traditionally been understood as actions caring for and preventing harm to others, and promoting fairness and justice (Jansson & Dorrepaal, 2015). In the context of climate change this would mean that people would not harm the climate, since they would see that this also harms others. People would also understand that it is unfair that some individuals and countries profit from emitting greenhouse gases while others have to suffer most of the consequences of the emissions (Jansson & Dorrepaal, 2015).

The motivation for the sub-theme altruism comes from an understanding that we are all one. Jia et al. (2017) assessed moral motives in environmental activists, and among other motives they found that activists had a sense of “biospheric morality”, meaning they cared not only for humans but for other species and for nature as such. This was especially clear in the reverence for “The Goddess” that one of the activists expressed. In research by Koleva et al. (2012), it was found that moral convictions around care, fairness, purity and the sanctity of life were significantly related to support for tougher measures on climate change. This was interpreted to imply that intuitions about care extend to the planet and all life, as well as to future generations, and that nature is held sacred for these individuals. Similar results were found in the present study, both in the sub-theme altruism and in the perceptions of injustice several respondents in the sub-theme justice and responsibility held about how climate change is unequally impacting people around the world, and in their feelings of responsibility for others and for future generations, as well as guilt for inadvertently causing others harm. The solidarity that another respondent expressed with her adult child that initially motivated her engagement in XR, echoes the results in a study by Wahlström et al. (2019), where the motives to participate in a Fridays For Future (FFF) protest were analyzed, and it was found that a majority of the adults participated to express solidarity (unlike the youth protesters who were there to defend their interests to a larger degree).

Wanting to do what one perceives to be right for reasons of duty, honor, and self-respect is important for several of the respondents, as demonstrated in the sub-theme personal integrity. This echoes the findings of Chawla (1999) that a sense of integrity and of living up to personal values motivated environmentalists to carry on their work when they felt like giving up. Part of the messaging of XR is about the importance of being motivated by virtue ethics rather than utilitarian ethics – taking action because it is the right thing to do, rather than because we think it will work (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2020a). According to Roger Hallam, co-founder of XR (2019a), it is both interesting and important to note that the people who are most effective are often the least attached to the effectiveness of their actions, adding that being in love with the principles and the process, and detached from the outcome, can help mitigate against activist burn-out. However, the more people that take action, the more likely it is that the tipping point will be reached where ‘the impossible becomes inevitable’ (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2020a).

6.5 General Discussion

The activists who participated in this study are motivated to engage in XR because it is a direct-action radical movement that stood out from the rest and gave them hope that change is possible. Hoping for concrete results of activism is one part of what motivates involvement, but it is equally important to have a forum where strong emotions and values can be explored and expressed together with others who share the view that the situation we find ourselves in is very serious. To not lose hope but continue to fight for a better future, the activists are a part of XR just as much for therapeutic and social reasons, and to express their values around climate justice, altruism, and personal integrity. Having a community where you feel stronger and more efficacious together mitigates feelings of anxiety and despair, and being able to share the experience of living in this era of increasingly rapid climate change with a community of like-minded people, facilitates continued activism.

The driving force behind most successful social movements, according to Klein Salmon (2019), are people that have entered ‘emergency mode’ and she argues that that the goal of the climate movement must be to lead the public out of ‘normal’ mode and into ‘emergency mode’. The better the climate movement is at providing structures for people’s engagement, that is, directions and emotional support for people who are prepared to take climate action, the more people will be ready to enter emergency mode (Klein Salamon, 2019). In light of this, it would seem that for increased climate activism and a higher chance of movement success, what is needed is for people to get involved in a movement that can provide clear directions, and in which activists feel supported by the community and have a forum to explore and process their difficult emotions tied to the climate crisis. Under these conditions people can, when they are ready, safely enter ‘emergency mode’, and in a focused, sustained, and effective manner take radical climate action.

In addition, implications for successful mobilization in the climate movement, based on the results of the present study, are to clearly communicate the severity of the climate crisis, but show that there is hope and meaning in taking action; to increase feelings of group-efficacy and belonging by providing a strong community and through the use of impactful methods like civil disobedience; finding ways to support and transform strong negative emotions; and framing climate change as a moral issue, thus facilitating the internalization of the importance of taking climate action. Intrinsically motivated behaviors have been shown to sustain themselves and be longer

lasting (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Having strong intrinsic motivations to fight for the climate is likely necessary for sustained climate activism as the chance of success or gaining other external rewards for protesting are small. In addition, having and sustaining feelings of hope, as well as the belief that oneself and one's group can make a difference are necessary pre-requisites for climate activism.

The newer iteration of the climate movement (that XR is a part of) is a movement of people taking radical action for their loved ones, future generations, and the less fortunate, growing from the social justice movement that gave new energy and a stronger emphasis on moral values to the climate movement (see eg. Almedia, 2019; Watts et al., 2017). The focus on emergency messaging has further contributed to the climate movement regaining momentum, adding strong emotions and urgency to the more impassionate climate movement of the past (see McAdam, 2017). As a movement, XR builds on a highly emotional and almost apocalyptic climate messaging, virtue ethics, theatrical and attention-grabbing direct actions using civil disobedience, and demands for drastic societal change. It is still too soon to tell whether XR is a long-term successful movement, but it certainly has broadened the contemporary climate movement in terms of methods, narratives and expressions.

XR has also received its fair share of criticism. Among other things, XR has been criticized for not doing a good enough job connecting with and including minorities in the movement (see eg. Sharam, 2019), and for lacking a broad appeal. Spicer (2019) argues that despite XR having successfully injected a sense of urgency and emotion back into the issue of climate change, XR's messaging will appeal to people on the left, leave the centrists indifferent, and alienate people on the right. He further argues that XR's tactics are also likely to push away many potential supporters. Spicer (2019) concludes that to create meaningful and long-lasting change requires of a movement to reach out beyond true believers to connect with potential supporters wherever they might be found on the political spectrum.

As was outlined in the introduction, climate change is considered a growing threat by the general population, and more and more people sympathize with a climate crisis-narrative, in part because of organizations like XR that are leading the way to 'emergency mode'. The results in the present study show that activists joining XR identify with the organization's emergency narrative. Outside the scope of this study but of interest for future research would be to look at how non-XR activists respond to the climate emergency narrative. Other suggestions for future studies could be to investigate the unique perspectives of people specifically from under-represented groups in the movement. Future research could also focus on the perspectives of

veteran activists as compared to first-time activists, or on individuals who have actively distanced themselves from XR, or that were previously involved in XR but left the movement. Their perspectives would be helpful in providing more insight into the barriers preventing people from becoming involved and staying involved in XR. In addition, a comparison between the motives of XR activists in Sweden and in other countries could also be of interest for future research.

The unprecedented measures in place since March 2020 to slow down the spread of Covid-19 have certainly added to the sense of uncertainty and worry about the future. Society wide crisis mode may open up for regressive politics that harm democracy by shutting down opportunities for citizen engagement and participation, which would likely have a larger impact on the vulnerable communities the climate justice movement are advocating for (Cretney & Nissen, 2019). There may also be a conflict between prioritizing climate emergency over climate justice, bringing with it risk of unintentionally contributing to worse outcomes for the already disadvantaged. However, it is also possible that crisis and emergency brings us together and that previously unthought possibilities open up when the status quo has been disturbed. Crisis brings with it the potential to split open space for new engagements with politics and change the social landscape, particularly at the community scale (Cretney & Nissen, 2019).

There is also a risk that activists ‘lose steam’ when they do not get the same social energy and input from other activists if they are not allowed to congregate in groups. Future research will no doubt be examining how action oriented social movements like XR were impacted by the social distancing measures put in place to control the spread of the virus.

7. Conclusions

This research has enabled an exploration of the motives first-time climate activists have for their involvement in Extinction Rebellion (XR). The activists were asked about their motives for climate activism in XR, and what significance they ascribe to non-violent civil disobedience as method for movement success, in semi-structured interviews that were later thematically analyzed. Their motivation for engagement in XR is summarized in overarching themes that reveal the main motives for their climate activism. The themes are: ‘Having Real Impact’ - wanting to have an impact and making a real difference in a movement that is action focused and use civil disobedience to instigate change, seen by the respondents as necessary for movement success; ‘Transforming Anxiety to Action’ - needing to manage and transform difficult emotions tied to climate change into concrete action; ‘Finding Community’ - identifying with a community of like-minded people for emotional support and increased efficacy; and ‘Doing the Right Thing’ - expressing values and emotions tied to notions of justice, responsibility, integrity and altruism. The themes are discussed in light of theory and research about motivation for collective action and social movement participation.

Implications for mobilization efforts in the wider climate movement include the importance of providing emotional support structures for people’s engagement to be sustained, framing climate change as a moral issue, and ways to increase perceived group-efficacy by nurturing community ties in the movement and through the usage of impactful methods. Feelings of hope were interwoven in the themes, as involvement in XR also importantly sustains and increases hope for the respondents. Where hope is precarious, as it arguably is for solving the climate crisis, having the support and mutual recognition of like-minded others is important. Engagement in social movements may be our best hope for the future, as they provide spaces where people can meet and together produce more hope through joint action.

This is an exploratory study with a small sample, and the results are not necessarily generalizable to a larger population. However, the results can give indications as to what motivates activism in a radical climate movement, with tentative implications for the wider climate movement, and hopefully pave the way for more research in the near future.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Guide in English

Before the interview:

-Repeat the aim of the study if the respondent needs to be reminded.

-Go through practical and ethical aspects:

- Inform that the conversation will be recorded.
- Inform that participation is voluntary, and that they can choose to end the interview at any time. Inform that it is their right to decide if they wish for any parts of the interview to not be included in the study.
- Inform that the answers provided will be treated confidentially, meaning that the utmost care will be taken to ensure that privacy is maintained by omitting any responses that could risk giving away identity.
- Give information about how the results will be published and how they can get access to the results.
- Give permission to the respondent to get in touch with any questions or concerns they might have regarding the interview. Get permission from the respondent to get in touch after the interview in case of further questions.

Interview Questions:

1. What year were you born?
2. What is your highest attained educational level?

3. How long have you been involved in XR?

4. How many XR actions have you taken part in, approximately? (Action planning counts)

- Have these involved non-violent civil disobedience?

5. How many hours approximately do you dedicate to your involvement in XR (per week or month)?

6. What is your view on non-violent civil disobedience as a means for movement success in XR?

7. What motivated you to get involved in XR?

(Other potentially motivating factors that can be discussed, depending on the response, see below:)

- A specific experience that led to involvement in XR
- Acquaintances in XR that encouraged or inspired you to join XR
- A need to get involved with others
- Climate anxiety (Has your involvement changed that?)
- That XR gave a feeling of hope
- Moral reasons - i.e. climate justice, future generations, mass extinction of species, the destruction of ecosystems
- The system critical stance of XR
- XR's rhetoric about climate change, including their three demands: Tell the truth; Act now; Beyond politics (Citizens' assemblies).
- Other motivating factors?

8. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Svensk Intervjuguide

Innan intervjun:

-Om deltagaren önskar, repetera vad syftet är med studien.

-Genomgång av praktiska och etiska aspekter:

- Berätta att jag kommer spela in samtalet.
- Informera om att allt deltagande är frivilligt och att informanten kan avbryta när som helst. Informera om att det är deras rätt att bestämma om vissa svar som ges inte får användas.
- Informera om att resultatet behandlas konfidentiellt, vilket ibland medför att inte publicera något som sagts om det finns risk att informantens identitet röjs.
- Ge information om hur resultaten ska publiceras och erbjud informanten att få ta del av resultaten.
- Ge tillåtelse åt informanten att kontakta mig om hen undrar något i efterhand om intervjun. Be om tillåtelse att kontakta informanten i efterhand i det fall jag behöver komplettera med något.

Intervjufrågor:

1. Vilket år är du född?
2. Vilken är din högsta utbildningsnivå?
3. Hur länge har du varit aktiv i XR?
4. Hur många XR aktioner har du varit delaktig i, på ett ungefär? (Planering av aktion räknas)
 - Har dessa innefattat innefattat fredlig civil olydnad?
5. Hur mycket tid ungefär lägger du på ditt engagemang i XR per vecka (eller månad)?
6. Kan du berätta om din syn på fredlig civil olydnad som metod i XR?
7. Vad motiverade ditt engagemang i XR?

(Beroende på responsen så kan fler potentiella motivationsfaktorer diskuteras, se nedan)

- En specifik upplevelse eller händelse som ledde till engagemang
- Bekanta i XR som uppmuntrade eller inspirerade till engagemang
- Ett behov av att engagera dig tillsammans med andra
- Klimatångest (Har ditt engagemang förändrat det?)
- Att XR ingav en känsla av hopp
- Moraliska skäl - som klimaträttvisa, kommande generationer, massutrotningen av djur, förstörelsen av ekosystem etc.
- Att XR har en uttalat systemkritisk hållning
- XR:s retorik, inklusive deras tre krav: tala klarspråk; agera nu (totalt stopp av fossila utsläpp till 2025); bortom politik (medborgarråd).
- Andra motivationsfaktorer?

8. Finns det något annat som du vill lägga till?

Appendix B

List of Interview Respondents

Type of data collection: Semi-structured interviews

<u>Respondent</u>	<u>Birth Year</u>	<u>Date of Interview</u>	<u>Location</u>
1. Anna*	1965	2020-02-26	Stockholm
2. Bastian*	1993	2020-03-04	Stockholm
3. Cecilia*	1947	2020-03-06	Stockholm
4. Diana*	1966	2020-03-11	Stockholm
5. Eva*	1975	2020-03-12	Uppsala, video call
6. Frank*	1952	2020-03-17	Stockholm, video call
7. Georg*	1969	2020-03-26	Lund, video call
8. Helene*	1953	2020-03-30	Gävle, video call
9. Ivan*	1977	2020-04-07	Stockholm, video call
10. Jesper*	1993	2020-04-09	Norrköping, video call

*All names have been changed to preserve the respondents' anonymity.



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