

Role of Extinction Rebellion in Influencing UK Environmental Policy: A Case Study Approach

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Abstract

This is a case study-based research to analyze the impact of specific campaigns and interventions on legislative and policy changes, while also attempting to understand the role of Extinction Rebellion (XR) in the UK environmental policy arena. It examines the shifting interplay between XR as a grassroots advocacy movement and government responses, and how these actions impact the making and adaptation of policy. Drawing from interviews and secondary sources such as policy documents and media articles, this analysis provides a broad perspective on XR strategies and their success. The research also highlights that the non-violent and disruptive tactics of a group such as XR, are a demonstration that not only captures public and political attention, but also prompts a variety of responses on the part of policymakers, ranging from recognition to hostility. The new research features a combination of content and discourse analysis, scrutinizing the political landscape against which XR's actions resonate, and how this, in turn, galvanizes public opinion and changes policy priorities. It serves to underscore the contentious national and local-level politicking that XR is facilitating over environmental issues, something that is nudging these crucial debates forward by placing them at the very top of the political agenda. These results show that XR's tactics of direct action, alongside bold demands for rapid transition, contribute importantly to the shaping of the UK environmental policy. Comparing this case to prevailing beliefs about environmental politics, the study underlines the promise of grassroots movements to bring about serious policy changes, offering insights into the broader consequences of democratic procedure and policy-making in environmental governance. The research findings are useful in shedding light on the effectiveness of environmental activism when it comes to policy decisions, and provide insights into the strategic interaction between activist movements and governmental bodies.

Keywords: Extinction Rebellion, political process theory, climate activism, environmental policy, climate crisis

1. Introduction

Due to the current increasing climate change crises and activism concerning the same, the planet should be moving towards decarbonization. Despite the many international agreements, government policies, and public discourses on growing greenhouse gas emissions, it appears that efforts towards decarbonization are continually diverted or stalled (Hinks & Rödder, 2023). Thus, it can be comprehended that people have tried to solve the climate crisis, but those efforts have not generated strong results in their deliverables. There is no way forward in tackling climate change without social movements, or in this case, climate movements. As the 6th Assessment Report written by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) points out, such social movements grounded in local-level work yield foundational, organization-building work towards wider societal transformation, as people act collectively (Hinks & Rödder, 2023). Grassroots climate activism in the UK has a strong legacy. One of the most hotly tipped organizations and consequently, one of the most in the news in the last few months, is Extinction Rebellion (XR). XR is a global organization or movement, which uses non-violent direct action to force the government to act on the climate emergency, as traditional methods (signing petitions and voting) have not worked (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2022). Regardless of the somewhat unorthodox means necessary to get there, just transition and the

movements behind it are solely focused on pushing the government to implement the changes required as soon as possible. XR calls for the following at a minimum: Every institution agrees that the climate danger is real and urgent, and is willing to talk about it, the solution must be ready to drastically cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025, and build a culture of transparency, fairness and participation (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2022). Education and transparency about climate change should be as high a priority as merely to emphasize public acknowledgement of the crises. The second demand also appears to be oriented around democratizing climate decision-making within the organization. On a bigger scale, the movement hopes to make the government more responsible, and make the necessary changes that are visible and have tangible results. Building upon this tentative insight, the study aspires to gain a rounded account of the impact achieved by Extinction Rebellion in influencing UK environmental policy via mobilizing public protest, seeking expert advice, and employing non-violent direct action. Some of the questions this research intends to answer are how successful have Extinction Rebellion's strategies been in having an impact on policy events and decisions, and how responsive has the UK government been to the demands of the movement as per organizational reports. Analyzing how these forms of activism influence democracy and policy in the practice of environmental governance by looking at policy and purpose. For this purpose, the

following research objectives need to be met:

1.1 Research Objectives and Question

Research Objective 1: To look at specific campaigns and actions by Extinction Rebellion and see how they directly impact laws and policies about protecting the environment and climate action in the UK.

Research Objective 2: To assess the interaction between Extinction Rebellion's activities and government responses, focusing on how these dynamics shape policy formulation and adaptation.

Research Question: How effectively does Extinction Rebellion influence UK environmental policy through its strategies of civil disobedience and public engagement?

2. Literature Review

2.2 The Role of Strategic Non-violence in Social Movements

Movement organizations mitigate the gap between movements and policies. Social movement organizations (SMOs) employ tactics, such as defining a founding purpose and group identity, which align with the aims and identity of prospective supporters that can increase agitation and participation (Heyes & King, 2018). An SMO not only shows its intentions directly, but also achieves the vital support system of fellow believers by specifying its goals. This type of strategic communication builds a committed base of high-value stakeholders with a common cause, and improves the power to mobilize and create social change. Fundamental for these strategies is that they reshape both individual and societal changes, in terms of public perception and investment (Heyes & King, 2018). It is the SMOs that maintain the unique presence, helping to bring together diverse individuals united in shared identity, commitment, and interest. This group identification marks out the group and what counts and does not count as in-group members, creating mutual in-group solidarity essential for sustained collective action. The use of non-violent or confrontational tactics indicates the values and strategic orientation of the SMO, drawing individuals who are prepared to adopt these strategies. Such alignment of the organization's tactics with the personal beliefs of the supporters, is crucial to motivate continuous support in the long run, retain the spirit and nature of the movement, and prevent its dilution.

The redefinition of "radicalism" in political action has been particularly among young environmental activists, from groups such as Extinction Rebellion and Fridays For Future. This new radicalism involves a steadfast commitment to non-violent, peaceable political action, which these groups consider essential for achieving the necessary societal change in climate issues (Pickard et al., 2020). This reimagined understanding of the relationship between violence and "radicalism" reframes the concept from a position of

accomplishment and propagation in activism, wherein gains are measured by how much public and government attention can be granted without resorting to physicality. This represents an enlightened understanding of the media's attitude toward public opinion, implying that peaceful change might generate favorable news attention and thereby, appeal to the public. In choosing non-violence, these activists set an example for others to follow, standing above the usual protest behavior that turns away potential allies. This tactic has been employed to help them keep the moral high ground in the court of public opinion, pushing forth the narrative that their activism is a net positive for society, not a scourge upon it. Their work is driven by a sense of urgency, crisis, and eco-anxiety, which is an urgent puncture in the existing order to instigate creative community action, fostering solidarity and public awareness amid austerity and perceived political inaction. (Pickard et al., 2020). The urgency encourages the creation of alternative methods of protest, and the anxiety of our ecological situation transforms fear and concern into a new driving force for activity, motivating activists to engage wider audiences with innovative protest methods. This urgency incites creativity, bringing forth imaginative forms of protest that leverage mass media to reiterate the issue in our public and societal discourse.

2.2 The Strategic Role of Social Movements in Environmental Change

The collective actions of people and stories of survival reveal a shift in environmental activism, away from individual responses to climate crises, and towards a collective identity that binds their social fabric. This coherent process not only magnifies their voice, but also fosters a supportive group to assist with moral and physical help, thereby increasing the sustainability and reach of their projects. Solving climate change necessitates a cultural re-wiring developed from practical, evidence-based solutions. Climate activists, whether involved in actions that some might see as extreme, tend to be highly policy-literate and very supportive of scientific solutions to climate challenges, combining trust in science with a call for rapid, widespread change. (Corry & Reiner, 2020). This combination of systemic institutional change and adherence to scientific knowledge, reflects a pragmatic model of activism that tempers radical goals with practical, achievable solutions. It is an attempt to rewire the climate conversation; to show that radicalism and rationalism need not be incompatible and can, together, animate an environmental policy that is more politically potent. Hence, the promotion of evidence-informed policy advocacy stands to provide a connecting point between otherwise grassroots initiatives and formal political mechanisms, potentially increasing the success and scalability of such efforts, both within the sphere of public and political influence. This purposeful mix of protest and policy engagement recasts activism, keeping it out of the realm of pure activism, and instead, embedding it as a tool of the policy-making output. While climate activists distrust governmental and corporate systems, they have trust in

the effectiveness of political action, and engage in targeted protests aimed at influencing policy change on new climate policy issues (Corry & Reiner, 2020). They use both social critique and practical strategies, linking local struggles to bigger battles for social justice and against capitalism. The process of selecting specific infrastructural projects to pressure greater social changes, demonstrates impressive tactical gameplay, using concrete issues to underline systemic defects, building a wider social coalition and pushing large-scale policy change.

The selective engagement with certain scientific outputs, and the direct political action advocated by the activists exemplify a multifaceted understanding of the political landscape, where strategic interventions are used to drive broader transformations. This approach not only pressures governments, but also educates and mobilizes the public, leading to a potentially more sustained and widespread support for environmental causes. Policymakers use the expertise of social movements and SMOs for declining the uncertainty about how well policies will work (Ganz & Soule, 2019). This shows the pragmatism in movements that utilizes scientific and technical information, not only for advocacy but also for lawmaking, and for increasing the trust and effectiveness of their policy recommendations. The reliance on SMOs for their expertise, highlights a deeper legislative need for specialized knowledge to promote transparency and the legitimacy of governance. This positions SMOs not just as protestors but as experts central to policy-making. Social movements influence policy by showing policymakers the preferences of a large group of voters, using entropic information to focus on important legislative issues (Ganz & Soule, 2019). This strategy shows tactical intelligence, where movements turn grassroots energy into political power, suggesting that movements are good at navigating complex political systems to align their goals with legislative priorities.

3. Theoretical Framework: Political Process Theory

In this study of Extinction Rebellion's influence on UK environmental policy, Political Process Theory helps to discover how the movement operates within the political system, to bring about change. Political Process Theory labelled that a social movement's ability to create change, rests in repertoires of collective action (collective action frames and targeting), and its political opportunities as in existing political alliances and shifts (Pildes, 2021). Analyzing the movement's capacity to frame political openings, to strategically communicate and to align with a broader public sentiment, this theory can be used to explain how Extinction Rebellion wins a critical mass, to push for climate action policies that are more ambitious. This theory connects movement resources and framing to their ability to access the political system, and allows them to channel their views and reshape legislative priorities and policies through government information filters driven by normative politics (Pildes, 2021). This approach also helps to analyze the effectiveness of the

movement, in terms of influencing the policy debates, and in the responses of policymakers in changing the legislative priorities in favor of more sustainable and environmentally oriented outcomes. According to the Political Process Theory, movements more likely emerge when political opportunities expand, and for addressing the complex environments for social movements (Goodwin & Jasper, 1999). The concept of "political opportunities" explains this. Although this may appear to be circular thinking that assumes changes in the political situation are needed for external instruments to bring about social movement (Goodwin & Jasper 1999), it also incorporates structural elements like mobilizing structures and cultural framing. The theory demonstrates how XR may utilize existing political opportunities, while generating new ones through its activism. This theory could help explain the relationship between the mobilization of XR and the political opportunity structure, by testing whether shifts in political openness or the degree of elite alignment predict variations in the success of XR campaigns.

By taking account of the role played by mobilizing structures and cultural framing, in supporting the emergence and continued growth of XR, the study may begin to unpack how the movement is impactful on public discourse and policy debates around environmental issues. It also will provide a more in-depth examination of how grassroots advocacy can interact with policy development, with an emphasis on the circumstances under which XR's activism results in major policy gains. Political Process Theory is, for the most part, an approach of analysis that explains how judicial review can go some way towards making politics safe for democracy, particularly where political processes simply do not safeguard minorities, or carry out democratic governance very well (Gardbaum, 2020). This theory allows that limited role — protecting majority rule itself from majorities that oppress minorities, protecting minority rights, or ensuring that democratic processes work in the first place. Courts are expected to contain these failures of democracy and give to all voices, especially those of minorities, the opportunity to enter into the shaping of political outcomes (Gardbaum, 2020). While Political Process Theory (PPT) usually studies judicial interventions in democratic failures, the same principles can be used generatively to understand the impact of XR on environmental policy, within this atypical area of judiciary focus. This theory provides a framework for identifying systemic barriers where political processes might stifle minority voices or environmental concerns, similar to how judicial reviews protect minority rights. The examination of how XR's actions may encourage the government to adopt stronger environmental policies, contributes to understanding the role of XR in changing political opportunities and legislative dynamics. In addition, the theory can also analyze possible institutional partners in the political system, thereby reinforcing XR's strategic capacity. Consequently, this tactic may demonstrate that the advocacy of XR not only disrupts, but also modifies the political narrative around

environmental policies, emphasizing the voices of others and the calls for radical policy measures.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Collection

The qualitative research method tends to focus on a few cases and to explore, in more detail, the impact that these campaigns have had on policy, or legislative change. The aim is also to learn from the contribution of, for example, Extinction Rebellion to UK environmental policy. This has been illuminating for exploring the complex relationship between civil society action and government action. Hence, it has also allowed a deep examination of how the strategies of Extinction Rebellion have translated into political outcomes. Qualitative data has been collected from different secondary sources that includes news articles, policy document, official government website as well as the website of Extinction Rebellion UK.

4.2 Data Analysis

For data analysis, the study has utilized the method of qualitative content analysis. This method has enabled to know about the major campaigns of the organization, alongside its effectiveness. The effectiveness has been judged on the basis of its effects on public mobilization, and how it may have triggered policy amendments. The data has been selected from relevant sources that were accessible in the public domain. This uncovered how some campaigns were more effective than others, in terms of their effects on the government policymaking mechanisms. As a result, a complex case has been attempted to be simplified, to present a broader picture about the functioning of XR, along with its impacts on governance. This may be significant to comprehend the role of social movement organizations to deal with trending issues at large.

5. Case Study Analysis

5.1 The Big One

XR has organized various campaigns and programs since its inception and continues to do so. One of its past campaigns has been named as “The Big One”, which occurred for four days in the month of April, 2023. In the course of this campaign, various organizations, including Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, alongside other movements, gathered around Westminster and the Houses of Parliament (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2023b). It can be understood that this campaign called for a collaborative protest against the lack of climate action. The major goal of the campaign was to advocate for a just society that is robustly based on a citizen-led democracy, for ending the usage of fossil fuels (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2023b). Thus, through such a form of democracy and cooperative efforts, an effective framework of environmental governance can be positioned. Echoing global climate goals to end the fossil fuel era, the campaign emphasized that global actions begin with local movements, and that mobilizing communities with

mass participation can achieve real and sustainable environmental change. The protest marked a major tactical shift, featuring a call for mass participation and non-violence, rather than previous disruptive tactics, attracting around 60,000 people and becoming one of the largest environmental protests in the UK (Limb, 2023). XR's reconsideration of its strategic shift in this direction, suggests a fresh conception of mass participation and nonviolence as tools of public and political engagement. By moving away from disruptive tactics, not only did the movement find wider social relevance, but also created an environment of inclusion that made their cause more accessible to a more diverse audience. This approach is thought to help create a more sustainable and effective advocacy in the fight against climate change. Despite the UK government's failure to meet the response deadline, XR and supporting organizations, including Greenpeace UK and Global Justice Now, plan to intensify their efforts (Limb, 2023). This indicates a broader narrative that informs future activism, proving they are willing to stretch their influence through an encompassing coalition. XR seeks to bring pressure to bear on policymakers by using a broader set of experiences and methods. This strategy indicates an evolution of tactics for the movement, shifting based on the political environment to maximize its power, and potentially move for greater systemic transformation.

5.2 Criticisms of Activities by XR

The activities by XR have also faced various criticisms. Extinction Rebellion has engaged in some of the most disruptive protest methods, blocking major city junctions and gluing its activists to structures, resulting in hundreds of arrests and considerable disorder (BBC, 2022). These moves created headlines and changed the narrative, but it also led to backlash. It challenges the protest discipline of ‘de facto’, and forces the climate urgency into the public and its logical political dimensions. The activists had been accused of being ‘crusties’ by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, and the protests faced criticism in the press and from those whose day-to-day lives were disrupted (BBC, 2022). The polar responses highlight how both society and policy are torn between the urgency of the climate challenge and discomfort with the upheaval, effectively finding themselves caught in a broader societal pincer movement, which reflects a broader tension in reconciling short-term inconvenience with long-term environmental impact. Earlier, the UK Parliament declared an Environment and Climate Emergency, a national first, inspired by the activism of Greta Thunberg and influenced by David Attenborough's film “Climate Change: The Facts” (Turney, 2019). At the surface level, this marked an increase in the level of commitment to harnessing climate change. The passing of this trillion-dollar infrastructure package reflected a change in national policy, with a great deal of pressure put on legislators by climate activists, and the salient and increasingly consistent narratives environmental documentaries and the environmental community have presented. The move to declare an Environment and Climate Emergency, fuelled by mass protests by

Extinction Rebellion, pushed forward the national-level goals of carbon emissions reductions by 2030, through widespread renewable energy and sustainable housing projects (Turney, 2019). Although any single campaign by XR did not show direct impacts regarding policy changes, it created more pressure on the government, due to the growing awareness among the people regarding climate activism. This highlights, first, the important role that public mobilization and the media can play in influencing policy change and second, how it can help in expediting the policy responses of the government to the urgent nature of the challenges thrown at us by climate change.

The declaration of a climate emergency has not yielded further outcomes. Despite the UK Parliament declaring a "climate emergency" in response to the 2019 protests, XR believes that subsequent government actions have failed to deliver meaningful change, necessitating the group's continued activism through additional rebellions (Stuart, 2020). While the UK Parliament declaring a climate emergency may have been monumental, it was a largely symbolic move that has not been followed up with a fully-fledged policy response. However, it does go on to show that no matter how much the politicians talk the talk on climate change, only a select few are willing to walk the walk and take those tough policy decisions. Extinction Rebellion's protests in the aftermath of the climate emergency, showcases a stark shortcoming in the reality of saving the environment, which shows that such promises have to be met with acts that are written into unassailable law, to be able to spark some real climate policy change. Alongside their primary demands, XR is fostering a secondary agenda, aimed at forming a regenerative culture that prepares for future challenges with a resilient and hopeful approach (Stuart, 2020). As a result, change and uncertainty can be seen as opportunities for positive transformation. Extinction Rebellion, together with a coalition including Greenpeace, has issued a stern ultimatum to the UK government, demanding an end to new fossil fuel projects, and the creation of citizens' assemblies to democratically navigate the transition from the fossil fuel era (Cumiskey, 2023). This is crucial as it represents a pivotal moment for democratic involvement in environmental decision-making. By demanding an end to new fossil fuel projects and the establishment of citizens' assemblies, the coalition seeks to empower ordinary people to have a direct say in shaping a sustainable future.

5.3 The Climate and Ecology Bill

The Climate and Ecology Bill is a result of XR's campaigns. The Climate and Ecology Bill 2019-21, championed by Caroline Lucas and backed by Extinction Rebellion, demands more urgent action than the UK's existing 2050 net zero target, proposing a 2025 deadline to mitigate severe climate and ecological impacts (Ares, 2021). The move marks a significant step up in climate activism, from general awareness campaigns to serious legislative activity, driven by Extinction Rebellion's persistence. The truth is that this

legislative push, is bringing into sharp focus, the reality of the dire steps, which must be taken to address ecological breakdown, worsened by climate change more seriously. They highlight the growing power of bottom-up political pressure in guiding policy and pushing governments towards stronger, more immediate and meaningful environmental action. The bill mandates the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State to establish clear objectives and strategies, in collaboration with a newly formed Citizens' Assembly (Ares, 2021). This could accelerate the country's environmental efforts, reflecting a direct response to the growing climate crisis. However, there have been certain criticisms about XR's methods of protest. In 2019, Extinction Rebellion's significant protests in April and October immobilized central London, resulting in substantial operational costs for the Metropolitan Police, totaling £37 million, more than double the annual budget of London's violent crime task force (UK Government, 2023). The huge cost to the public's purse by Extinction Rebellion's protests, in this case £37 million in policing costs, raises broader questions about the economic realities of mass mobilization at such a scale. Questions arise about the costs of using public resources for protesting. This is not surprising, but it does provide an idea of what policing would look like if deployed towards neighborhood beats, expecting violence as normal to society. This serves as a shorthand for the broader societal trade-offs anticipated in overseeing vast and troubling public civic actions during this period, as society contemplates the strategic deployment of resources in response to public protests. The extensive police deployment for crowd control during these events required additional resources from other forces, and led to the arrest of thousands of activists, reflecting the considerable impact and controversy stirred by these climate-focused demonstrations (UK Government, 2023). The need to deploy extra police to manage the crowds, which gathered during the Extinction Rebellion's protests, does not only reveal the significant logistical impact of such large-scale demonstrations, but also the considerable pressure they can place on police resources, leading them to be less able to sustain the good order and safety in other areas. However, the arrest of thousands of activists serves to illustrate the extent to which pro-environment protagonists are dedicated to their cause, as it prompts a national conversation on the utility and implications of the recourse to civil disobedience, as a means of achieving environmental justice.

5.4 Citizens' Assembly

Another major campaign was the Citizens' Assembly. The call for a Citizens' Assembly on Climate and Ecological Justice, represents a move towards inclusive and equitable decision-making, proposing a method where diverse groups collaboratively explore solutions to environmental crises, guided by expert insights and structured discussions (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2023a). This campaign aimed to offer an alternative to divisive, party-centric electoral politics, rooted in a revisionist view of history from an antiquated system.

Such historical structures can inhibit collaboration and hamper addressing modern challenges efficiently. Citizens' assemblies are unique because they promise to end political gridlock, and promote fairness by incorporating ordinary people directly into the decision-making process, resulting in policy prescriptions that are more reflective of a broader array of opinions and concerns (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2023a). The initiative stands as a paradigm shift in governance, particularly in the context of environmental policy. The campaign is a further effort to reach beyond traditional party divides. These types of assemblies empower regular citizens to become the focal point of policy creation, utilizing a microcosm of the society. As such, this approach may be democratic in nature and thereby, provide for more sustainable and acceptable solutions. It revives democratic engagement and makes decisions that are more legitimate and accountable, which could serve as a blueprint for how to deal with other complex global challenges through a more participatory and empathetic process. Extinction Rebellion (XR) maintains that systemic changes, rather than individual actions, are essential to achieve the significant environmental goals set for 2025, arguing that placing blame on individuals detracts from addressing the broader 'toxic system' that governs societal norms and economic policies (Stuart, 2022). XR's systemic change approach reflects a profound understanding that, though individual actions are important, they are constrained by current economic and social systems. This framing moves away from an individual focus on responsibility and towards more structural changes needed at the societal level, in the context of how these resources are valued and managed. Since their overarching purpose is the change of the system, many XR activists live low-carbon lives themselves, emphasizing the sincerity of their cause as they call for state-led solutions to the climate crisis (Stuart, 2022). The 'no blame, no shame' policy promotes inclusivity and reduces the alienation that can often accompany environmental activism, making the movement more accessible to a broader demographic. XR aims to broaden its sphere by shedding the stigma around individual lifestyle choices, to show collective action to transform the system, rather than using shame and blame to tear the community apart. The hypocrisy charge levied against XR activists, based on their behavior from the environmental movement itself, showcases a difficult area of advocacy; the expectation that those who advocate must live out the ideals they espouse to perfection. This criticism showcases that there are differences in the climate advocacy put forth by the organization, when compared to the personal life practices of the people of this organization. Moreover, a Citizens' Assembly was also launched by the six Select Committees of the British Parliament in June 2019, for analyzing the public perspectives on the net-zero greenhouse gas emission targets of the country, to be met by 2050 (Climate Assembly UK, 2023a). Hence, it can be noted that there has been, at least, a symbolic change in terms of greater inclusion in climate governance, due to widespread engagement of

citizens who will be directly affected by policy changes.

The concept of citizens' assembly has been put forth, in order to advocate for policies that are created by thorough deliberations, and are scientifically informed. Moreover, these policies will also be based on public understandings of the same, as a result of which, societal changes, caused by climate policy changes, can be understood from multiple perspectives (Climate Assembly UK, 2023a). Such discussions can garner greater support among the community for long-term climate actions, increasing legitimacy of policies and causing better compliance. It shows the need for global issues to be addressed by institutions representing shared decision-making and responsibility. Climate Assembly UK members recommended that the UK's net-zero target should be pursued through a combination of natural greenhouse gas removal methods: extensive reforestation, peatland restoration, the use of wood in construction, and enhancing soil carbon storage (Climate Assembly UK, 2023b). The focus on natural solutions such as forests and peatlands, underlines a growing realization of the nexus between climate action and the conservation of relatively intact environments. This can address carbon reduction, which combines with enhancing the natural landscape, central to ecosystem resilience and public well-being. The conditions that the assembly placed on implementing these actions, for example, that tree planting should be right, and the land should be used to work in the local area, highlight the requirements for effective and informed environmental policy planning. These requirements are meant to produce near-term results that enable benefits to be enjoyed for decades into the future by current and future communities. These methods were chosen not only for their effectiveness in reducing greenhouse gases, but also for their additional benefits, such as flood prevention, biodiversity promotion, and enhanced public access to natural spaces (Climate Assembly UK, 2023b). This emphasis on farmer welfare and even land use is a thoughtful approach to economic loosening, since the switch to net zero could have far-reaching unemployment implications. Ensuring that farmers are supported, suggests a move towards a just transition, where all sectors are aided in adapting to new practices that align with environmental goals, thus promoting a harmonious shift rather than a disruptive one.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The conclusions from the case studies may be explained by referring to the basic assumptions of the Political Process Theory. Here, Political Process Theory draws attention to the need for movements like XR, to take, or sometimes, create political opportunities. The theory predicts that movements are more successful when they can work within a supportive environment, or when they can seize opportunities through their actions. For example, the "The Big One" campaign, a broad coalition around clear and impactful demands, would have had the effect of opening or expanding political opportunities to

dialogue on climate issues. This broad engagement and large-scale mobilization of diverse groups could help shift public opinion, and put pressure on political actors to consider more drastic environmental policies. The theory also highlights the role of mobilizing structures within movements. XR combined small, localized group actions with much larger ones from the center, allowing for the possibility of a changing constellation of mobilizing structures that would work in different political and social environments. The participation of other prestigious organizations in XR campaigns, such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, acts to give them legitimacy. The framing of the climate crisis as an urgent and deeply ethical issue that demands swift and wide-scale action, is a narrative to which XR appeals, and to which people are receptive. This framing helps to align the public's understanding of the climate crisis with XR's radical but non-violent methods, potentially easing the incorporation of their demands into mainstream political discourse.

Campaigns are also at the heart of climate activism in the UK. These campaigns most likely had both, direct impacts by raising awareness and changing the nature of public discourse, and indirect effects through shaping policy debates and contributing to the UK's declaration of a climate emergency. However, the measures of success of those impacts are contingent on XR's ultimate goals of policy outcomes and emissions reductions. The relationship between XR and governmental bodies seems to be mixed. Some measures influence positively by inspiring dialogue and recognition, for instance, the Climate and Ecology Bill. Some, however, appear to harden opposition in certain political groups or sections of the public, especially given the disruptiveness of XR tactics. By softening their tactics, the organization hopes to increase public and political interest beyond the highly polarizing tactics of the past. Insights from related academic studies that emphasize the necessity of combining grassroots enthusiasm with savvy policy engagement strategy, can deepen the findings of XR's case studies. Studies by Pickard et al. (2020) demonstrate how movements like XR, which link radical social critiques to clear policy demands, can navigate messy political terrain effectively. In conclusion, overlaying the analysis of XR's campaigns with the Political Process Theory and research, that, in particular, the notion of the political opportunity structure illuminates, provides a deeper understanding of how environmental movements can shape policy. This crucial case emphasizes the importance of the interplay of political opening, mobilizing structures, and the fallacy of the problems for substantive environmental action. The analysis should also reflect on how these strategies affect the sustainability of the movement's impact, in the face of evolving political and environmental challenges.

There are some recommendations that can be made based on the analysis. Extinction Rebellion, itself, could take on a more coherent and balanced campaigning and engagement strategy, for better

communication and cooperation. This would mean establishing formal communication channels with policymakers, working together with other environmental NGOs on joint projects, and becoming part of the policy drafting process. Government bodies should similarly welcome co-created approaches, actively soliciting a variety of stakeholders, including movements like XR, to inform the policy-making process. Each party needs to be open and transparent, and share applicable data points, while also having conversations at regular intervals, as trust and common ground are essential elements needed for successful environmental collaboration. Also, it is recommended that comparative research is applied in future studies of environmental activism and policy influence, so that the effectiveness of different types of activism can be better assessed in various political and cultural contexts. It would also be useful to research the role that digital activism might play, and the extent to which technology could widen the reach and appeal of campaigns. Moreover, there must be an investigation regarding the legacy of environmental activism in terms of policy impacts, and how changes in public and policymaker awareness early on, can result in long-term policy changes and environmental benefits. Additional research could investigate underlying psychological and sociological processes, informing how efforts can be honed to have a larger impact on the public, as well as on political responses to environmental activism.

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