

T.C.
DOKUZ EYLÜL UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROGRAM
MASTER'S THESIS

**YOUTH VOICES IN GLOBAL CLIMATE
GOVERNANCE: A STUDY ON CONTEMPORARY IGO-
NGO RELATIONS**

Buse Mina TÜMKAYA

Supervisor
Assist. Prof. Dr. İlkim ÖZDİKMENLİ ÇELİKOĞLU

İZMİR-2024

YÜKSEK LİSANS
TEZ ONAY SAYFASI

Üniversite : Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi
Enstitü : Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü
Adı ve Soyadı : Buse Mina TÜMKAYA
Öğrenci No : 2021800817
Tez Başlığı : Youth Voices In Global Climate Governance : A Study On Contemporary
Igo-Ngo Relations
Savunma Tarihi : 19/11/2024
Danışmanı : Dr.Öğr.Üyesi İklim ÖZDİKMENLİ ÇELİKOĞLU

JÜRİ ÜYELERİ

<u>Ünvanı, Adı, Soyadı</u>	<u>Üniversitesi</u>	<u>İmza</u>
Dr.Öğr.Üyesi İklim ÖZDİKMENLİ ÇELİKOĞLU	- Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi	
Prof.Dr.Müge AKNUR	- Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi	
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ABSTRACT

Master's Thesis

Youth Voices in Global Climate Governance: A Study On Contemporary IGO- NGO Relations

Buse Mina TMKAYA

Dokuz Eyll University

Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of International Relations

International Relations Program

The evolving relationships between youth environmental movements and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) within the framework of global climate governance are complex. Focusing on movements such as Extinction Rebellion (XR), Fridays for Future (FFF), Last Generation (LG), and Just Stop Oil (JSO), this dissertation examines how these groups leverage contemporary tactics and mass mobilization to influence policy and public opinion. Utilizing the theoretical framework of Tana Johnson, this research categorizes and analyzes the intricate relations between these movements and IGOs through the 4Cs Taxonomy. While trying to determine which category these relations fall into (cooperative, co-optative, competitive or conflictual), the study also traces the shifts between categories over time and their reasons.

Keywords: Youth Environmental Movements, Intergovernmental Organizations, Non-governmental Organizations, Climate Change, Global Climate Governance

ÖZET

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Küresel İklim Yönetişiminde Gençliğin Sesi: Hükümetlerarası Kuruluşlar ile

Sivil Toplum Örgütleri İlişkileri

Buse Mina TÜMKAYA

Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Uluslararası İlişkiler Anabilim Dalı

İngilizce Uluslararası İlişkiler Programı

Küresel iklim yönetişimi çerçevesinde çevreci gençlik hareketleri ile hükümetlerarası kuruluşlar (IGO'lar) arasındaki ilişkiler karmaşık bir yapıya sahiptir. Extinction Rebellion (XR), Fridays for Future (FFF), Last Generation (LG) ve Just Stop Oil (JSO) gibi hareketlere odaklanan bu tez, bu grupların politika ve kamuoyunu etkilemek için çağdaş taktiklerden ve kitlesel mobilizasyondan nasıl yararlandıklarını incelemektedir. Tana Johnson'ın kuramsal çerçevesini kullanan bu araştırma, bu hareketler ile hükümetlerarası kuruluşlar arasındaki karmaşık ilişkileri, Johnson'ın 4C Taksonomisi aracılığıyla kategorize ve analiz etmeyi amaçlar. Bu çalışma, bu ilişkilerin hangi kategoriye (işbirlikçi, kooptatif, rekabetçi veya çatışmacı) girdiğini belirlemeye çalışırken, zaman içinde kategoriler arasındaki değişimlerin ve bunların nedenlerinin de izini sürmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çevreci Gençlik Hareketleri, Hükümetlerarası Kuruluşlar, Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları, İklim Değişikliği, Küresel İklim Yönetişimi

YOUTH VOICES IN GLOBAL CLIMATE GOVERNANCE: A STUDY ON CONTEMPORARY IGO-NGO RELATIONS

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ABBREVIATIONS

9/CMP	Decision 9 of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
AWG-KP	Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol
AWG-LCA	Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention
BTRs	Biennial Transparency Reports
CAN	Climate Action Network
CBDR	Common but Differentiated Responsibilities
CBIT	Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CEF	Climate Emergency Fund
COP	Conference of the Parties
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists
EFA	The Greens/European Free Alliance
ENGO	Environmental Non-Governmental Organization
EPP	European People's Party
ETF	Enhanced Transparency Framework
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FFF	Fridays for Future
G-7	Group of 7
G-77	Group of 77
GCOS	Global Climate Observing System
GDA	Global Decarbonization Accelerator
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund

INC	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
JI	Joint Implementation
JSO	Just Stop Oil
LG	Last Generation
LII	Legal Information Institute
MPGs	Modalities, Procedures, and Guidelines
NAMAs	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIA	New Interdependence Approach
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
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S&D	Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
U.S.	United States
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCED	UN Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
Ver.di	Vereinte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft (United Services Trade Union)
WCC-1	World Climate Conference - 1
WCC-2	World Climate Conference – 2
WCRP	World Climate Research Programme
WEF	World Economic Forum
WIM	Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage Associated with Climate Change Impacts
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
XR	Extinction Rebellion

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INTRODUCTION

The urgency of addressing the climate crisis has catalyzed several transformations in global climate governance, with non-state actors playing increasingly central roles. Among these, youth environmental movements have emerged as critical drivers of change. Movements such as Extinction Rebellion (XR), Fridays for Future (FFF), Last Generation (LG), and Just Stop Oil (JSO) have not only raised public awareness but have also pressured intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) to adopt more ambitious climate policies. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the UN, admits that “Climate change is the fight of our lives – and young people have been on the frontlines leading the charge for climate justice.” (United Nations, 2019a)

Recognizing the unique role of youth as catalysts for action and as formidable political actors in climate governance, this thesis focuses on understanding how these movements influence, interact with, and challenge global climate governance structures. By analyzing their interactions with IGOs, the study aims to highlight their potential to transform climate politics and offer insights into the ever-changing dynamics of global governance. The study particularly aims to reveal if there exists significant variations in how youth environmental movements engage with IGOs., ranging from cooperation to conflict. Each movement has had a notable impact on public discourse, though their scale, focus and tactics differ. While disruptive tactics help some groups attract greater media attention and increase their visibility in the global political arena, it might deprive them of greater opportunities for formal dialogues with IGOs and lead to a dismissal of their demands. It is thus another aim of this study to examine the extent of the role of those differences in shaping their relationship with IGOs. In this way, the study aims to provide a foundation for future research on the factors that may lead to different relationships between NGOs and IGOs. As youth movements continue to grow in influence, their role in shaping climate policy will remain a critical area of discussion.

This research aims to explore how the varying tactics and approaches of youth environmental movements influence their relationships with IGOs and impact their legitimacy within the global political arena. These dynamics are explored through the lens of Tana Johnson’s 4Cs taxonomy—cooperation, co-optation, competition, and

conflict—which serves as the primary theoretical framework. This taxonomy allows for a nuanced categorization of the complex relations between youth movements and IGOs.

Four NGOs —XR, FFF, LG, and JSO—are chosen as cases for their diversity in tactics, scale, and approaches to influencing climate governance. Extinction Rebellion employs civil disobedience and disruptive tactics to demand immediate action. In contrast, Fridays for Future exemplifies large-scale global mobilization through peaceful demonstrations and institutional engagement. The Last Generation, while smaller, uses a mix of tactics, including direct action and formal political approaches, such as running for the European Parliament elections. Just Stop Oil focuses on targeted protests that highlight specific failures of existing policies. These cases collectively represent a spectrum of strategies, providing a robust basis for analyzing their interactions with IGOs. An additional criterion for selecting these movements was their impact, represented by their media visibility. To analyze this, a comparative analysis using *Europresse* was conducted, focusing on the frequency of their mentions in newspapers and other media outlets. For each movement, keywords corresponding to each group’s names were searched and their media presence was compared to other prominent topics like “COVID-19”. The focus IGOs of the study are the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU). These IGOs were selected for their central roles in global climate governance and their normative influence on international politics.

This study employs qualitative analysis, drawing on these four cases to explore the interactions between youth movements and IGOs. Given the dynamic and evolving nature of these movements, qualitative methods allow for a deeper understanding of their strategies, demands, and outcomes. The study relies heavily on news articles, especially for movements like LG and JSO, due to a lack of extensive academic literature so that recent developments are accurately captured. While this approach allows access to up-to-date events and relevance, it also underlines a critical gap in academic coverage, highlighting the need for future research.

The organization of the thesis is as follows. The first chapter provides a literature review of IGO-NGO interactions, exploring key theoretical frameworks and historical developments. Chapter two focuses on the role of IGOs in addressing climate

change. Chapter three examines four youth environmental movements— Extinction Rebellion, Fridays for Future, Last Generation, and Just Stop Oil— defining their objectives, and tactics, and providing a timeline of their major operations. The final chapter examines their varied strategies and interactions with IGOs, employing Tana Johnson's 4Cs taxonomy as a framework for analysis; and synthesizes the findings, addresses the research questions, and offers recommendations for future research and policy considerations.

Lastly, the study has several limitations. The reliance on news articles limits the scope of this research, as these sources may lack the depth of academic texts. Also, the focus on formal interactions with IGOs excludes a detailed analysis of informal or behind-the-scenes engagements due to restricted access to such records, which limits the scope of the study's exploration of IGO engagement.

In sum, this thesis situates youth movements as central players within the broader landscape of climate governance, analyzing their roles, tactics, and influence to reveal the intricate dynamics of their relationships with IGOs. Through this analysis, it aims to illuminate the transformative potential of grassroots activism in addressing one of the most urgent challenges of our time.

CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Global governance has evolved significantly over the past century with the increasing prominence of non-state actors alongside traditional state mechanisms. Among these, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) have become integral to addressing transnational challenges, ranging from climate change to humanitarian crises. Their complex interactions reflect a dynamic interplay shaped by historical developments and evolving global norms.

This chapter explores the theoretical underpinnings and historical evolution of NGO-IGO relationships, providing a foundation for understanding their roles within the broader framework of global governance. It begins by defining these actors and tracing their development, before delving into key theoretical approaches that illuminate their interactions. By synthesizing insights from prominent scholars, the chapter aims to contextualize the multifaceted nature of these relationships and their implications for contemporary governance.

1.1. A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON IGO-NGO RELATIONS

Non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations are integral components of contemporary global governance. Their roles, structures, and functions differ significantly, but both contribute to addressing transnational issues that no single state can resolve independently.

NGOs are typically defined as non-profit, voluntary organizations that operate independently of government influence. They advocate for a range of societal, political, and environmental issues. As Gordenker and Weiss (1995) observe, NGOs often navigate the intersection of local and global governance, involving the community in international decision-making processes. Historically, the role of NGOs gained prominence in the mid-20th century, particularly in response to global challenges that traditional state mechanisms struggled to address. Narain (2012: 52) highlights that NGOs emerged as critical players during the post-World War II period, leveraging their advocacy and service delivery capacities to fill governance gaps. Their

flexibility and focus on specific issues, such as human rights, environmental protection, and humanitarian aid, allowed them to adapt to rapidly changing global needs.

Technological advancements and political globalization further accelerated the growth of NGOs in the late 20th century. Reimann (2006: 46) emphasizes that NGOs became central actors in promoting democratic values and advocating for marginalized communities, filling the void left by state and intergovernmental systems.

In contrast, IGOs are formal entities established through treaties among sovereign states to facilitate multilateral cooperation. Examples include the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). These organizations serve as platforms for collective decision-making and policy implementation on issues that transcend national borders. The historical roots of IGOs can be traced back to the creation of the League of Nations, the first major attempt to institutionalize multilateralism. Following its dissolution, the establishment of the United Nations in 1945 marked a new era in global governance (Badie, 2023: 12). IGOs like the UN were designed to address challenges such as peacekeeping, economic development, and human rights, acting as intermediaries for state cooperation.

Both NGOs and IGOs play complementary yet distinct roles in global governance. NGOs, with their grassroots connections, provide expertise, advocacy, and localized solutions to global problems. IGOs, on the other hand, offer institutional legitimacy and the capacity to mobilize resources on a larger scale. As Narain (2012: 50) explains, the interaction between these entities is crucial for addressing complex global challenges. While IGOs often set the agenda and provide funding, NGOs bring innovation, accountability, and community engagement to the table.

The rise of NGOs as influential actors in global governance is a direct result of historical, political, and technological transformations that redefined the traditional state-centric system. Their emergence is deeply tied to the structural and ideological shifts of the late 20th century, particularly the expansion of political globalization and the promotion of pro-NGO norms.

1.1.1. Historical Roots of NGO Proliferation

NGOs began to gain prominence in the post-World War II era, when the global governance landscape underwent significant changes. The establishment of the United Nations in 1945 created new opportunities for non-state actors to engage in multilateral decision-making processes. Gordenker and Weiss (1995: 554) note that the UN's consultative status mechanism provided a formal avenue for NGOs to participate in discussions on global issues such as human rights, development, and environmental protection.

Reimann (2006: 47) argues that the proliferation of NGOs was not a purely bottom-up process but was facilitated by the deliberate efforts of IGOs and donor states. These actors promoted the creation and expansion of NGOs to fill critical governance gaps, particularly in areas where state institutions were unable or unwilling to act. For example, donor states often provided funding and technical support to NGOs, enabling them to operate across borders and advocate for policy changes on a global scale.

Political globalization also played a pivotal role in the rise of NGOs by creating an interconnected system of governance that transcended national borders. As Reimann (2006: 62) explains, the diffusion of democratic values and the increasing emphasis on civil society participation encouraged the growth of NGOs in developing nations.

Furthermore, the late 20th century witnessed a revolution in information and communication technologies that transformed the operational landscape of NGOs. Digital platforms and communication tools enabled NGOs to build transnational advocacy networks, raising their voices on global issues. Reimann (2006: 50) and Narain (2012: 54) emphasize that these networks allowed NGOs to engage with a broader audience, mobilize resources, and influence policymaking processes more effectively. For instance, NGOs leveraged digital tools to raise awareness about issues such as climate change, human rights violations, and public health crises. These platforms facilitated real-time communication and coordination among NGOs operating in different parts of the world, creating a unified front to address global challenges.

The establishment of pro-NGO norms in the 1980s and 1990s further accelerated the growth of NGOs. These norms, as discussed by Reimann (2006: 59), promoted the inclusion of NGOs in governance processes and legitimized their role as key stakeholders. Donor states and IGOs actively encouraged the adoption of these norms, creating an enabling environment for NGOs to thrive.

Overall, the emergence of NGOs as significant actors in global governance is the result of a combination of historical, political, and technological factors. Their rise has redefined the traditional state-centric model of governance, creating a more inclusive and participatory framework for addressing global challenges (Reimann, 2006: 60).

1.1.2. The Nature of IGO-NGO Relations

The interdependence between NGOs and IGOs has grown in the context of globalization. Farrell and Newman (2014: 335) describe this dynamic as the “New Interdependence Approach” where domestic and international governance structures influence each other. NGOs rely on IGOs for legitimacy and access to global platforms, while IGOs depend on NGOs for expertise, implementation, and public engagement. This interdependence is important for fostering equitable and transparent relationships, ensuring that both actors can contribute effectively to global governance.

The relationship between NGOs and IGOs faces challenges that hinder its full potential. Structural inequalities, divergent objectives, and the complexities of global governance are at the root of these difficulties. Addressing these challenges is crucial for fostering more effective partnerships that leverage the strengths of both actors.

A prominent barrier to NGO-IGO collaboration is the imbalance of power. IGOs frequently dominate critical resources, decision-making platforms, and agenda-setting processes, leaving NGOs in subordinate positions. As Reimann (2006: 63) notes, this dynamic often forces NGOs to depend on IGOs for funding and legitimacy. Such dependency, while enabling NGO growth, often comes at the cost of their autonomy, pressuring them to align with IGO priorities. This alignment is shaped by donor-driven funding structures and significantly influences NGO strategies

(Reimann, 2006: 48-61), potentially limiting their capacity to address grassroots needs independently.

The bureaucratic rigidity of IGOs poses one of the biggest issues. These organizations are bound by procedural complexity and state-centric governance models, and are often slow to adapt to emerging issues. In contrast, NGOs have a more localized focus and adaptive approaches, and are better suited to respond to urgent challenges (Reimann, 2006: 59). This clash of operational styles frequently hampers effective collaboration, creating a need for smoother processes within IGOs to better accommodate the agility of NGOs.

Geographic and structural inequalities further exacerbate these difficulties. NGOs from the Global South often encounter barriers such as limited funding, restricted access to decision-making platforms, and lack of recognition by IGOs. As Farrell and Newman (2014: 333-336) observe, these disparities mirror broader systemic inequalities, with power and resources concentrated in the Global North.

Accountability and transparency issues represent another critical area of contention. IGOs often hesitate to collaborate with NGOs that lack robust governance structures or mechanisms for measuring impact. Conversely, NGOs frequently criticize IGOs for opaque decision-making processes and insufficient responsiveness to civil society concerns (Gordenker and Weiss, 1995: 553). Building mutual trust requires both parties to prioritize transparency, engage in open dialogue, and commit to shared objectives (Gordenker and Weiss, 1995: 555).

Despite such challenges, emerging trends such as globalization and digital technology are reshaping NGO-IGO interactions. Reimann (2006: 48) highlights the transformative potential of these trends, as NGOs increasingly leverage their advocacy networks and grassroots connections to drive policy innovation.

1.1.3. Emerging Trends and Challenges in IGO-NGO Collaboration

The dynamic between NGOs and IGOs continues to evolve, influenced by emerging trends such as globalization and technological advancements. These forces have redefined their interactions, enhancing opportunities for collaboration while introducing new challenges. Reimann (2006: 48) highlights the transformative role of

NGOs, describing them as drivers of change that leverage advocacy networks and grassroots connections to foster policy innovation. As mentioned before, NGOs have made significant contributions to global governance across several domains. Their campaigns often highlight the concerns of marginalized communities, pressuring IGOs to adopt more ambitious policies (Badie, 2023). Simultaneously, NGOs monitor the actions of IGOs and state actors to expose inefficiencies, corruption, and abuses. This oversight enhances the legitimacy of global governance institutions by ensuring accountability to the public (Gordenker and Weiss, 1995: 548). Moreover, NGOs contribute localized expertise and implementation capacity, particularly in humanitarian aid and public health, complementing the strategic oversight provided by IGOs during crises (Gordenker and Weiss, 1995: 553).

Emerging trends have reshaped these relationships, creating both opportunities and challenges. Digital platforms, for instance, have strengthened the voices of NGOs, enabling them to reach broader audiences and engage in transnational advocacy campaigns. Reimann (2006: 50) highlights the role of these platforms in fostering transnational networks, which allow NGOs to coordinate efforts across borders and enhance their collective impact. A notable example is the global climate strikes led by youth activists, where NGOs played a pivotal role in organizing events, mobilizing participants, and disseminating information worldwide.

Globalization has further strengthened NGO-IGO interdependence, as Farrell and Newman (2014) observe. NGOs now act as bridges between local communities and international institutions, expanding their activities to influence both domestic policies and global frameworks. Additionally, shifts toward inclusive governance reflect a growing recognition of NGOs as indispensable partners in multilateral efforts. Badie (2023: 20) highlights the adoption of more participatory frameworks, where NGOs contribute to decision-making and policy implementation, embodying a broader movement toward inclusive global governance.

These emerging trends in NGO-IGO collaboration come with both opportunities and challenges. Although they are empowering, the reliance on digital tools raises concerns about digital divides that disproportionately affect NGOs from less technologically advanced regions. Moreover, the expanding scope of NGO activities often creates overlaps and tensions with IGOs, particularly in areas of

intersecting mandates. These dynamics showcase the need for shared values and distinct resource bases to foster collaboration, as emphasized by Johnson (2016: 744-751). Addressing these challenges will require innovative approaches and mutual commitment to ensure equitable and effective partnerships.

As global challenges grow increasingly complex and interconnected, the partnership between NGOs and IGOs remains a cornerstone of effective governance. By embracing emerging trends and addressing structural barriers, these actors can work together to build a more inclusive and sustainable system of global governance.

1.2. THE ROLE OF IGOS AND NGOS IN CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is one of the most urgent and complex challenges facing humanity today. It necessitates coordinated action at multiple levels of governance with both IGOs and NGOs playing pivotal roles. While IGOs like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) provide institutional frameworks for multilateral cooperation, NGOs contribute through advocacy, technical expertise, and grassroots mobilization.

The interactions between these actors are dynamic and multilayered. On the one hand, NGOs leverage their agility and localized knowledge to complement the bureaucratic capabilities of IGOs. On the other hand, disagreements over priorities and approaches often lead to conflict. These relationships are further complicated by the broader challenges of climate governance, including power asymmetries, resource constraints, and the need for inclusive decision-making processes.

This section explores the distinct yet interconnected roles of IGOs and NGOs in climate governance, drawing on examples from key international frameworks and transnational movements.

1.2.1. IGOs' Role in Climate Governance

IGOs have been instrumental in shaping the global response to climate change. By providing institutional frameworks for cooperation and facilitating dialogue among states, they play a central role in coordinating multilateral efforts to address this

pressing issue. The establishment of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 marked a critical moment in global climate governance. As a central platform for negotiating international climate agreements, the UNFCCC has facilitated milestones such as the Kyoto Protocol (1997) and the Paris Agreement (2015), which represent collective commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote sustainable development (Lieubray, 2024: 3). Through these agreements, IGOs aimed to set global standards, mobilize resources, and monitor compliance.

In addition to the UNFCCC, other IGOs such as the World Bank, contribute by financing climate projects and advancing scientific research. The World Bank, for instance, has supported sustainable development initiatives and climate resilience projects, showcasing the need for IGOs to bridge the gap in funding and implementation (Keck and Sikkink, 1998).

However, IGOs face significant challenges in addressing the complexities of climate change. One of the primary criticisms is their state-centric structure, which often prioritizes the interests of powerful member states over global equity (Badie, 2023: 14). As Fisher (2010: 11) notes, the negotiation process within IGOs tends to marginalize smaller states and non-state actors, limiting the inclusivity and effectiveness of climate governance.

Bureaucratic inertia and the need to accommodate diverse state interests also constrain the ability of IGOs to take decisive action (Badie, 2023: 16-17). For example, the incremental nature of commitments under the Paris Agreement has been criticized for failing to match the urgency of the climate crisis (Lieubray, 2024: 8). Additionally, the reliance on consensus-based decision-making often results in watered-down agreements that lack the ambition needed to drive significant change (Badie, 2023: 20-21).

Power asymmetries within IGOs also hinder equitable climate governance. Wealthier nations often dominate negotiations, favoring policies that disproportionately benefit their interests while overlooking the concerns of developing countries. This dynamic is particularly evident in climate finance, where commitments to support vulnerable nations most frequently fall short of expectations (Cassegård, 2023: 580-581). Efforts to address these disparities have included the establishment of

mechanisms that aim to provide financial assistance to developing countries. However, the effectiveness of such initiatives is limited by inadequate funding and the lack of accountability in resource distribution (Badie, 2023: 18-19).

1.2.2. NGOs' Role in Climate Governance

NGOs have also been key players in the fight against climate change by leveraging their agility, advocacy, and grassroots networks to promote environmental justice. Unlike IGOs, which operate within state-centric frameworks, NGOs have the flexibility to mobilize diverse stakeholders and act as intermediaries between local communities and global institutions. Their roles in climate governance bring advocacy, policy expertise, and implementation, making them prominent actors in addressing the diverse challenges of climate change.

NGOs take the lead in raising awareness and mobilizing public opinion on climate issues. Through campaigns, protests, and digital advocacy, they help raise the voices of affected communities and pressure governments and IGOs to adopt stronger climate policies. Keck and Sikkink (1998: 135) emphasize the role of advocacy networks in creating transnational linkages that hold powerful actors accountable. For instance, Greenpeace's global campaigns have drawn attention to deforestation and fossil fuel dependency, prompting policy shifts and corporate accountability. Youth-led movements have further demonstrated the mobilization power of NGOs. These movements highlight the intersection of advocacy and grassroots engagement, showing how NGOs can catalyze action on a global scale (Lieubray, 2024: 6).

Additionally, NGOs contribute technical expertise to climate governance processes, exchanging knowledge between scientific communities and policymakers. They provide research, draft policy recommendations, and participate in IGO conferences as observers or stakeholders. The participation of NGOs in UNFCCC negotiations, for example, has shaped discussions on emissions reductions, adaptation strategies, and climate finance. They also play a crucial role in representing marginalized groups that are underrepresented in IGO processes. By advocating for climate justice, they ensure that climate concerns are integrated into global climate policies (Nulman, 2023: 190-193).

At the local level, activists and community groups play a crucial role in fostering resilience by engaging in initiatives such as ecological farming, community building, and skill development for a low-energy future. While these efforts are often grassroots-driven, they share the values and concerns of broader movements toward adapting to climate challenges, particularly in regions most affected by ecological loss (Cassegård, 2023: 586). These initiatives not only address immediate needs but also empower communities to contribute to long-term solutions. NGOs' ability to operate across multiple levels of governance makes them unique in bridging the gap between local action and global frameworks.

Although contributing significantly to climate justice, NGOs face several challenges in climate governance. Resource limitations are one of the main obstacles that hinder their ability to increase their activities, particularly in developing countries where funding is scarce. Furthermore, their reliance on donor-driven funding can create pressures to align with external agendas, resulting in compromising their independence (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 148).

1.2.3. IGO-NGO Collaboration for An Effective and Inclusive Climate Governance: Potentials and Challenges

The relationship between IGOs and NGOs in climate governance is often dynamic, consisting of collaboration, tension, and interdependence. These interactions are shaped by shared goals, resource constraints, and differing approaches to addressing the climate crisis. While NGOs and IGOs often work together to implement policies and mobilize resources, their relationships can also reflect deeper structural and ideological conflicts.

For instance, UNFCCC has established mechanisms to involve NGOs in its processes, including observer status at Conferences of the Parties (COPs). This collaboration enables NGOs to contribute with research, influence negotiations, and advocate for ambitious climate commitments (Lieubray, 2024: 9). However, although there are possible opportunities for collaboration, NGO-IGO relationships face tensions. IGOs may prioritize the interests of member states over those of civil society, limiting the influence of NGOs. Fisher (2010) highlights how this dynamic played out

at COP15 in Copenhagen, where NGOs faced significant barriers to participation and felt sidelined in the negotiation process. NGOs, in turn, may criticize IGOs for their perceived lack of ambition or inclusivity. For instance, environmental NGOs have frequently challenged the UNFCCC for prioritizing incrementalism over bold climate action, accusing it of failing to meet the urgency of the crisis (Nulman, 2023: 191).

Advocacy networks play a critical role in bridging the gap between NGOs and IGOs. Keck and Sikkink (1998: 144) emphasize the importance of transnational advocacy networks in creating linkages between local communities, NGOs, and IGOs. These networks enable NGOs to coordinate their efforts, share resources, and push for systemic change within IGO frameworks. One example is that coalitions of environmental NGOs have lobbied IGOs to adopt more inclusive policies and influence decision-making by leveraging advocacy networks (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Cassegård, 2023).

As climate governance evolves, new dynamics are emerging in NGO-IGO relationships, with NGOs playing an increasingly prominent role in shaping global discussions and decision-making frameworks (Cassegård, 2023; Badie, 2023). However, these advancements also highlight ongoing challenges. Resource disparities between Global North and Global South NGOs can exacerbate existing inequalities, limiting the inclusivity of these interactions. Addressing these issues will require both IGOs and NGOs to prioritize equity in their collaborations. To sum up, the relationship between IGOs and NGOs in climate governance shows the complexity and potential of their relationship. Both actors have unique strengths in addressing the global climate crisis: IGOs offer institutional legitimacy, coordination, and resources, while NGOs contribute advocacy, expertise, and grassroots connections. However, this relationship has its own challenges. Power asymmetries, bureaucratic rigidity, and conflicting priorities often jeopardize effective collaboration. While NGOs push for ambitious and transformative action, IGOs are frequently constrained by the competing interests of their member states. These tensions show the need for more inclusive and equitable governance frameworks that prioritize the voices of marginalized communities and regions.

Emerging dynamics, such as the rise of digital advocacy and transnational networks, offer new opportunities to enhance NGO-IGO interactions. These

advancements have the potential to bridge gaps in representation and inclusivity, empowering NGOs to engage more effectively with IGOs. Nevertheless, addressing persistent disparities in access and influence remains critical to ensuring that climate governance reflects the interests of all stakeholders.

In the following section of this chapter, the theoretical framework of Tana Johnson's 4Cs taxonomy will be employed to analyze the nuanced relationships between IGOs and NGOs. This framework will provide a lens through which to examine the interactions of youth environmental movements with IGOs in the environmental context, offering insights into their transformative potential.

1.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: TANA JOHNSON'S 4C TAXONOMY

Tana Johnson's 4Cs taxonomy—Cooperation, Co-optation, Competition, and Conflict—offers a comprehensive approach to analyzing the dynamics between IGOs and NGOs. This framework is particularly relevant for studying how these actors interact within climate governance, where competing interests and resource constraints often create nuanced and complex relationships.

Johnson's taxonomy illuminates the spectrum of interactions between NGOs and IGOs, from collaborative efforts to confrontational dynamics. By categorizing these relations, the framework provides a means of identifying patterns and mechanisms that shape global governance outcomes. This study adopts the 4Cs framework to explore the interactions between IGOs and youth environmental movements, offering insights into their transformative potential in addressing the global climate crisis. Cooperation occurs when IGOs and NGOs align their objectives and pool resources to achieve common goals. This dynamic is often driven by shared priorities, such as advancing sustainable development or responding to humanitarian crises. NGOs contribute grassroots expertise, advocacy, and implementation capacity, while IGOs provide institutional legitimacy, funding, and access to decision-making platforms. Johnson (2016: 742) highlights how IGOs and NGOs collaborate to pool resources and achieve shared objectives, leveraging NGOs' localized expertise to enhance governance outcomes.

Co-optation reflects a dynamic in which one actor, typically the IGO, subsumes the agenda of another actor, such as an NGO, to maintain control or legitimacy. While co-optation can lead to increased visibility for NGOs, it comes at the expense of their autonomy and ability to challenge dominant narratives. Johnson (2016: 752) highlights instances where IGOs co-opt NGO activities to align with institutional priorities, sidelining more radical or transformative agendas. For example, NGOs involved in the UNFCCC process have occasionally adjusted their strategies to gain greater access to negotiation platforms which limits their ability to advocate for more ambitious climate policies (Fisher, 2010).

Competition arises when IGOs and NGOs fight for resources, legitimacy, or public influence. This dynamic is particularly visible in cases where their roles overlap or where their objectives diverge. For example, NGOs may compete with IGOs for public attention, framing themselves as more effective or accountable alternatives to institutional approaches. Johnson (2016: 744) notes that oftentimes, competitive dynamics arise due to resource scarcity and conflicting strategies. Competition can create friction, particularly when resources are limited or when their strategies conflict.

Conflict occurs when fundamental disagreements over values, priorities, or strategies lead to open confrontation between IGOs and NGOs. This dynamic is often derived from the grassroots orientation of NGOs, which may challenge the perceived inadequacies or failures of IGO responses to global challenges. Environmental NGOs, for example, have frequently criticized IGOs like FAO for not prioritizing sustainability (Johnson, 2016: 746). Similarly, youth movements like Extinction Rebellion and Just Stop Oil have openly clashed with IGOs over the perceived lack of urgency in addressing climate change. These conflicts highlight the inherent tensions between institutionalized governance and activist advocacy. In this study, conflict is a central theme, particularly in examining how youth movements challenge the status quo of IGOs. By disrupting traditional governance processes, these movements push IGOs to address their shortcomings and adopt more ambitious climate policies.

Tana Johnson's 4Cs framework provides a robust analytical lens for understanding the interactions between IGOs and youth environmental movements. By categorizing the dynamics of these relationships, this framework allows for a deeper exploration of how youth movements navigate and influence climate

governance. This study applies Johnson’s taxonomy to analyze the interactions of four prominent movements: Fridays for Future, Extinction Rebellion, Just Stop Oil, and Last Generation.

Table 1: Johnson’s 4Cs Taxonomy

Dynamic	Description of the dynamic
Cooperation	IGOs and NGOs align objectives and pool resources to achieve shared goals, leveraging NGOs' expertise and IGOs' legitimacy, funding, and access to decision-making.
Co-optation	IGOs subsume NGO agendas to maintain control or legitimacy, increasing NGO visibility but limiting autonomy and transformative advocacy.
Competition	IGOs and NGOs compete for resources, legitimacy, or public influence, often due to resource scarcity or diverging objectives.
Conflict	Fundamental disagreements over values, priorities, or strategies lead to open confrontations between IGOs and NGOs, often caused by NGOs' grassroots challenges to IGO responses.

1.4. APPLYING THE 4CS TO YOUTH MOVEMENTS: HYPOTHESES AND METHODOLOGY

Johnson’s 4Cs taxonomy offers a structured way to analyze the varied relationships between youth movements and IGOs. The 4Cs taxonomy will be used in this study to classify the interactions between IGOs and each of the four youth environmental movements studied, Extinction Rebellion, Fridays for Future, Last Generation, and Just Stop Oil, respectively. By categorizing these interactions, the study will highlight the dominant dynamics shaping each relationship and identify overlaps or shifts between categories over different contexts.

The decision to focus on Extinction Rebellion, Fridays for Future, Last Generation, and Just Stop Oil was driven by their distinct influence and approaches to addressing climate change. Research was conducted using Europresse and provided a

comprehensive analysis of these movements across over 7,000 newspaper sources (excluding self-published materials by these groups). This research revealed the significant media attention each movement has received since its formation—18,971 articles for FFF and 39,889 for XR since 2018, 8,936 for LG since 2021, and 12,653 for JSO since 2022. These figures point to rapid attention in the media, with movements usually achieving this level of coverage within just two years of their formation. This substantial visibility in addition to their varying protest tactics justified their selection as case studies for this research.

Each movement provides a distinct lens for examining the 4Cs in action, offering insights into how grassroots advocacy shapes, and is shaped by institutional frameworks. This study positions the environmental context as a critical case for understanding the transformative potential of NGO-IGO interactions.

The hypotheses of the study are as follows:

(1) Fridays for Future exemplifies cooperative dynamics with IGOs. As a movement that prioritizes global advocacy and education, it often aligns with the objectives of IGOs like the UNFCCC to raise awareness about climate change. The involvement of youth activists in COP meetings demonstrates a collaborative approach, where both parties aim to amplify the urgency of climate action.

(2) Fridays for Future also provides a strong case for analyzing co-optation. While the movement has shown a more interactive relationship with IGOs, instances where its demands are not met by the IGOs created tensions between the two parties in the past.

(3) Last Generation's confrontational style highlights the competitive dynamics that arise when grassroots advocacy clashes with formalized governance. The movement competes with IGOs for public attention and legitimacy in the political arena, particularly in running for the European Parliament Elections.

(4) Extinction Rebellion and Just Stop Oil exemplify conflict-driven dynamics, particularly in their challenges to the perceived inadequacies of IGO responses to climate change. The movements' provocative tactics and direct criticism of IGOs show the tensions between conventional climate governance and activist-led advocacy.

This study draws on multiple sources to analyze the interactions between IGOs and youth movements, including (1) official IGO documents (e.g., reports from

UNFCCC and related bodies), (2) statements and materials from youth movements (e.g., press releases, protest strategies, and speeches), (3) media coverage to capture public narratives and perceived dynamics, (4) scholarly analysis to contextualize findings within broader trends in NGO-IGO relations.

The 4Cs framework will guide the examination of these materials, with each interaction mapped onto one of the four categories. Patterns and shifts will then be analyzed to uncover recurring themes or unique dynamics specific to the climate governance context.

By situating the study within the Climate Change context, the analysis will offer insights into the unique challenges and opportunities of environmental governance. For instance, the Paris Agreement negotiations provide fertile ground for examining cooperation and co-optation dynamics, as youth movements engage with IGOs to push for more ambitious targets. Similarly, the confrontational tactics of Extinction Rebellion, Just Stop Oil and Last Generation highlight the competition and conflict inherent in challenging institutional inertia.

CHAPTER TWO

IGO RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE PAST AND PRESENT

The 1950s witnessed the emergence of global concern for climate issues, driven by advances in atmospheric science following World War II. The scientific community gained a better understanding of the large-scale circulation of the atmosphere, initiated new geophysical observations during the 1957 International Geophysical Year, recognized the potential of Earth-orbiting satellites for meteorological observations, and embraced the advent of digital computers (Zillman, 2009: 142).

By the late 1960s, scientific concern grew that human activities might be impacting the Earth's climate on a massive scale, particularly with the rise in carbon dioxide concentrations (SMIC, 1971; as cited in, Zillman, 2009). In 1974, the United Nations General Assembly, recognizing the need for action, called on the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to study climate change, leading to the establishment of the Executive Committee Panel of Experts on Climate Change (Zillman, 2009: 143).

2.1. EARLY CONFERENCES AND SCIENTIFIC REPORTS

The early stages of global climate governance were slowly formed by key conferences and scientific reports that laid the foundation for international climate action. From the Stockholm Conference, which first highlighted environmental challenges on a global stage, to the crucial role of the World Climate Conference and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), these early milestones shaped the discourse on climate change. Each of these initiatives reflected growing international recognition of the need for international cooperation, leading the way to subsequent frameworks and policies.

2.1.1. United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Conference)

The Legal Information Institute (LII) defines ‘human environment’ as including ‘the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment’ according to the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (43 U.S.C. § 1331(i)) (Legal Information Institute, n.d.). This comprehensive understanding of the human environment was at the core of the first major international environmental conference.

The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, convened in 1972, is a milestone in the global environmental movement, with far-reaching implications for international climate change negotiations. While the conference primarily addressed broader environmental concerns, its significance in shaping the efforts to address climate change is profound and everlasting (United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1972a).

The preparatory phase of the Stockholm Conference, led by Secretary-General Maurice Strong, involved representatives from 27 countries’ coordinating efforts (Kennet, 1972: 34). The conference’s agenda structured around six subjects distributed among three committees and showcased a holistic approach to environmental issues (Kennet, 1972: 34). Despite not being explicitly focused on climate change, the conference laid the essential groundwork by addressing the interconnectedness of environmental challenges and emphasizing the need for international cooperation (Luomi, 2020).

The Stockholm Conference marked the beginning of international environmental cooperation and set the stage for subsequent agreements and frameworks. A key outcome was the establishment of environmental principles, recognizing the interdependence between humanity and the environment (United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1972a). This recognition formed the basis for subsequent international agreements, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992. The Stockholm conference acted as a catalyst for ongoing discussions within the United Nations and

other international forums (United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1972a).

Furthermore, the Stockholm Conference contributed significantly to raising public awareness and mobilizing civil society on environmental issues, including climate change. This growing awareness and advocacy played a crucial role in pressuring governments to participate constructively in subsequent climate change negotiations (Hirst, 2020). The conference involved NGOs through parallel activities such as the “Environmental Forum” and “Peoples Forum”. These forums provided platforms for civil society to voice their concerns and influence the official conference proceedings. Organizations like the World Wildlife Fund and Friends of the Earth participated in these parallel forums (United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1972b: 3-5). These groups played a crucial role in raising awareness about environmental issues and advocating for the integration of environmental considerations into development planning (United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1972b: 3-5).

The conference recognized the term “human environment” as reflecting common global environmental threats stemming from population increase, rising living standards, faulty economic understanding, and conscious greed (Kennet, 1972: 33). By acknowledging these interconnected issues, the conference highlighted the necessity of an integrated approach to environmental protection. This acknowledgment laid the groundwork for understanding climate change as a global challenge by emphasizing the need for international cooperation, comprehensive policy frameworks, and the establishment of institutions like the United Nations Environment Programme to coordinate global efforts. The principles set forth at the conference highlighted the importance of collective action and shared responsibility in addressing environmental issues, paving the way for future international agreements on climate change (Chasek, 2020: 4).

The conference's proposal for establishing an environment fund within the United Nations was a significant aspect (Kennet, 1972: 38; Chasek, 2020: 5). While there were disputes concerning the financial implications of the fund, the consensus on implementing the ‘Arusha Principle’ and addressing the impact of international corporations in developing countries highlighted the ethical responsibility of rich

nations in promoting sustainable development globally (Kennet, 1972: 35-38). The Arusha Principle is defined as the idea that if there is a special place or thing the world wishes to preserve and the country where it is located does not prioritize it highly, the world as a whole should pay for its preservation. Kennet discusses this principle in the context of international financial support for environmental preservation (Kennet, 1972: 38).

Additionally, Kennet (1972: 39) argues that allowing poverty to justify environmentally harmful practices was unsustainable and emphasizes the need for comprehensive measures to redistribute wealth and control population growth. The proposed middle-ground approach for the international structure, including a “policy review and coordinating unit” within the UN secretariat, reiterated the idea that environmental sustainability is an investment in long-term global well-being (Kennet, 1972: 40). This unit was designed to oversee and coordinate environmental policies across various agencies. It would be led by a strong head and governed by a rotating committee of 20 to 40 member states, balanced between rich and poor countries and different political alignments. Ensuring that environmental considerations are integrated into development plans, it would report to the UN's Economic and Social Council or the General Assembly (United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1972a: 29; Kennet, 1972: 41).

The Stockholm Conference, though not specifically focused on climate change, played a pivotal role in shaping the discourse, principles, and subsequent frameworks for addressing global environmental challenges, including climate change. Subsequently, the UNEP and the World Climate Conference of 1979 extended this commitment by placing a sharper focus on understanding climate dynamics and the potential impacts of changing global weather patterns. Together, these conferences laid the groundwork for acknowledging climate change as a critical issue requiring global attention and collaboration.

2.1.2. World Climate Conference

The First World Climate Conference (WCC-1) in 1979, organized by WMO, issued a declaration urging nations to take full advantage of existing climate

knowledge and improve it significantly. This declaration laid the foundation for the establishment of the World Climate Programme with four components: World Climate Data Programme, World Climate Applications Programme, World Climate Research Programme, and World Climate Impact Study Programme (Zillman, 2009: 143-144).

The concept of the World Climate Conference (WCC) was driven by increasing scientific awareness and public concern about climate change. The first significant attempt was the First World Climate Conference (WCC-1) held in 1979 in Geneva, Switzerland. This conference was organized by WMO and was a landmark event as it brought together scientists from around the world to discuss the growing evidence of climate change. The primary outcome was the establishment of the World Climate Programme and a call for global cooperation in addressing climate change (Bodansky, 2001: 102).

In 1979, the Eighth World Meteorological Congress agreed that WMO should take the lead in promoting studies of climate variability and change, leading to the formal establishment of the World Climate Programme. This program sought collaboration with other UN bodies and the scientific community, recognizing the interconnectedness of climate issues on a global scale. In the following years, the 1985 Villach Conference was held in Villach, Austria, organized by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) (Bodansky, 2001: 24). The conference further emphasized the role of greenhouse gases in climate variations, recommending periodic assessments and consideration of a global convention (Zillman, 2009: 144), raising awareness among policymakers about the potential impacts of climate change (Bodansky, 2001: 24).

The Second World Climate Conference (WCC-2) in 1990 played a crucial role in reviewing the first decade of progress under the World Climate Programme (WCP). It set parameters for the negotiation of the UNFCCC. In response to the WCC-2 Conference Statement and Declaration, the Chairman of the Joint Scientific Committee for the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP) convened a meeting to formulate a prospectus for the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS). Established in 1992, GCOS aimed to provide observational support for all components of the WCP, IPCC, and UNFCCC (Zillman, 2009: 146).

The World Climate Conferences, particularly the WCC-1 held in 1979, played a crucial role in bringing climate change to the forefront of scientific and, eventually, political agendas. Although initial efforts to attract policymakers to the conference were largely unsuccessful, the event was instrumental in consolidating scientific understanding of climate change and emphasizing the need for global coordination (Bodansky, 2001: 23).

The eventual successes of these early efforts were reflected in later conferences and initiatives. For instance, the 1988 Toronto Conference on the Changing Atmosphere, which recommended substantial cuts in CO₂ emissions (Bodansky, 2001: 27), built on the foundational work laid by the WCC-1. The establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 1988 was another significant outcome influenced by the scientific discussions initiated in 1979. The IPCC has since become an irreplaceable institution in providing scientific assessments that guide international climate policy (Rowlands, 2001: 58).

2.1.3. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has emerged as a central and influential player in the global efforts to address climate change. The IPCC, established in 1988, serves as an international body assessing the science of climate change, releasing scientific assessment reports every five years.

The IPCC's establishment in 1988 marked a crucial point in assessing knowledge about climate change (IPCC, 1988). The political factors influencing its formation reveal the complexities of global climate politics and the balance of advocacy positions (Hulme and Mahony, 2010: 706). Unlike alternative institutions, the IPCC's emergence showcased the convergence of factors, including climate framing, environmental politics, and global changes during the 1980s. Despite initial skepticism, the IPCC has become a crucial player in shaping global responses to climate change (Grundmann, 2007: 416; Hulme and Mahony, 2010: 706).

The composition of IPCC assessments has been scrutinized, revealing biases in disciplinary knowledge and geographical representation (Bjurström and Polk,

2010). Critics claimed that the dominance of natural sciences in IPCC knowledge underscores the need for epistemological pluralism (Hulme and Mahony, 2010: 707). Additionally, the persistent skew in authorship towards OECD nations raised questions about the credibility and legitimacy of knowledge assessments (Hulme and Mahony, 2010: 708).

While the IPCC's governance has evolved positively, critiques emphasize the importance of transparency, accountability, and vigilance regarding its influence and legitimacy (Siebenhüner, 2003; Grundmann, 2007). Recent controversies and errors in assessment reports have tested the IPCC's leadership and transparency, prompting calls for a reconsideration of methodologies (Yearley, 2009; Hulme and Mahony, 2010: 709).

The IPCC's pursuit of a scientific consensus on climate change is both a strength and a vulnerability (Hulme and Mahony, 2010: 711). The challenge lies in effectively communicating uncertainties while avoiding criticism for either being too conservative or reaching premature conclusions (Ha-Duong et al., 2007: 11). The diverse approaches to uncertainty within different working groups highlight the importance of balancing quantitative and qualitative measures (Swart et al., 2009).

The IPCC's impact extends beyond its immediate sphere, influencing global climate change discourse and policy development (Gough and Shackley, 2001). The Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the IPCC in 2007 is a symbol for its progressive approach to engaging with environmental change (Vardy et al., 2017: 57). The IPCC's contributions have informed international climate negotiations, including the pivotal role played in the development of the Paris Agreement in 2015 (Vardy et al., 2017: 58).

The IPCC has also increasingly recognized the pivotal role of NGOs in its processes, providing them a platform to contribute to scientific assessments and policy recommendations. NGOs such as Greenpeace, WWF, and Friends of the Earth have participated as observers, actively contributing to the IPCC's reports and special assessments (Sanwal and Wang, 2017: 569-570).

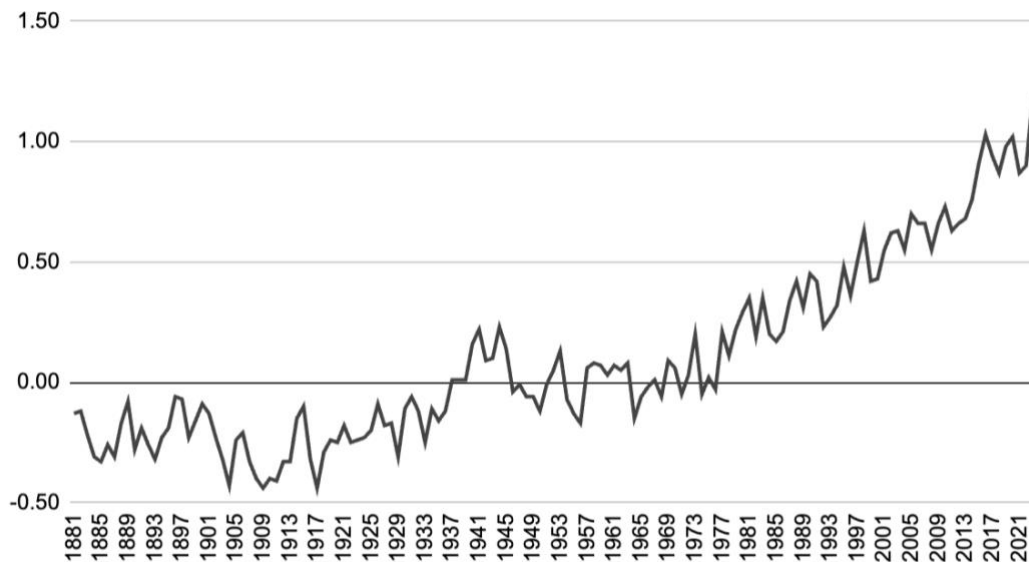
The IPCC's importance in global climate negotiations cannot be overstated. Its role in assessing and synthesizing scientific knowledge, engaging governments, and shaping public discourse has positioned it as a key player in addressing climate change.

Despite challenges, the IPCC's contributions over its 30-year history underscore its significance in bringing consciousness, acknowledging planetary limitations, and understanding the global implications of human actions.

2.1.4. United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit)

By the mid-1980s, scientific understanding had expanded to recognize that other trace gases such as methane and nitrous oxides, in addition to greenhouse gases, also contributed significantly to the greenhouse effect. This realization highlighted the severity of the climate change problem, prompting more comprehensive studies and a reassessment of historical temperature records (Bodansky, 2001: 26), which had been consistently rising since the mid-20th century (NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, 2024).

Figure 1: Global Land and Ocean Temperature Anomalies 1880-2023



Source: NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, 2024

Despite the significant advancements in international environmental law over the past two decades, when climate change became a prominent issue in the late 1980s,

there was a noticeable gap in the legal framework (Zaelke and Cameron, 1990: 249). At that time, existing air pollution treaties only dealt with air pollution in Europe (Magraw, 1989: 32) and the depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer (Magraw, 1989: 37-39). Although customary international law offered general principles applicable to atmospheric pollution, these principles lacked the specificity and clarity necessary to tackle climate change effectively (Magraw, 1989: 8). This led to the necessity of negotiation of a new treaty to address climate change legally.

Adopted on May 9, 1992, during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, also referred to as Earth Summit, UNFCCC stands as a fundamental response to the mounting scientific evidence regarding the perilous consequences of escalating greenhouse gas concentrations (Sands, 1992: 270).

The UNFCCC was initiated in response to concerns raised by the UN General Assembly and its Specialized Agencies in 1988. The creation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in the same year marked a critical step, providing essential scientific guidance for subsequent actions (Sands, 1992: 270). The IPCC's initial report in August 1990 predicted global temperature increases, setting the stage for political deliberations (IPCC, 2021: XI-XXIII).

Negotiations were urged by the November 1990 Ministerial Declaration of the Second World Climate Conference. The UN General Assembly responded to this call and established the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) in December 1990. Over five sessions held between February 1991 and May 1992, the INC opened the way for the Convention's adoption on May 9, 1992. To ensure global participation, the Convention stipulated entry into force 90 days after the fiftieth ratification, anticipated no earlier than 1994 (Sands, 1992: 271; Bodansky, 2001: 32). Signed by 155 States and the European Community at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the UNFCCC was lauded as a compromise package, offering elements appealing to various negotiating states (Sands, 1992: 271). While appealing to many, this approach left none of the parties entirely content (Wiegandt, 2001: 127-128).

Surpassing the scope of the 1985 Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer (Sands, 1992: 271), the UNFCCC established commitments

encompassing the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations, emission limitations for developed countries, financial mechanisms, subsidiary bodies, guiding principles, and innovative implementation and dispute settlement mechanisms (Sands, 1992: 271; Bodansky, 2001: 205-207).

The negotiation process illuminated diverse interest groups, with developed countries exhibiting disunity. The U.S. opposed specific targets, while Germany and Japan viewed the Convention as a means to gain competitive advantages through technological development. Developing countries, including oil-producing, industrializing, and vulnerable nations, presented a spectrum of interests and concerns during negotiations (Sands, 1992: 271-272).

The Convention explicitly outlined the commitment of Annex II Parties (developed countries) to assist developing nations particularly vulnerable to climate change in meeting the costs of adaptation. This commitment was considered a crucial acknowledgment of responsibility for causing climate change, establishing a framework for developed nations to support the adaptation efforts of their developing counterparts (Sands, 1992: 275).

The Convention also highlighted the requirement for Parties to consider the specific needs and concerns of developing countries, including least-developed countries, small island nations, and those highly dependent on fossil fuels, which is called the “common but differentiated responsibilities” (CBDR). Annex II Parties were obligated to take practical steps to promote, facilitate, and finance the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries. This commitment emphasized the immediate significance of sharing knowledge and capabilities to address climate change, with a short-term dedication of financial resources for technology transfer (Sands, 1992: 275). The principle of CBDR became the backbone of the UNFCCC, acknowledging all states have a shared obligation to address climate change but are not equally responsible. However, while countries agreed “developed countries should take the lead”, they disagreed on whether this was because of their historical responsibility or their stronger capabilities, or both (Biniaz, 2016: 40; as cited in Luomi, 2020: 3).

The establishment of institutional mechanisms, including the Conference of the Parties, Secretariat, Subsidiary Bodies, and Financial Mechanism, showcased the

Convention's comprehensive approach to implementation and review. The transparency and governance of the Financial Mechanism, with interim operation by the Global Environment Facility, were particularly noteworthy (Sands, 1992: 275-276; Bodansky, 2001: 33-34).

The Convention provided for a multilateral consultative process for implementation questions and outlined dispute settlement mechanisms, including arbitration and recourse to the International Court of Justice. These mechanisms necessitated and aimed to ensure a structured approach to addressing issues and disputes, fostering cooperation among Parties (Sands, 1992: 276; Bodansky, 2001: 202). The convention went through several adoptions and amendments of Annexes and adoption of Protocols. Additionally, withdrawal conditions for Parties emphasized the commitment of Parties to long-term participation and allowed for flexibility in adapting to evolving circumstances (Sands, 1992: 276; Bodansky, 2001: 212).

The final assessment acknowledged the end of unlimited atmospheric emissions for developed countries, despite the Convention having limited specific commitments (Bodansky, 2001: 208). Despite some drafting issues, the Convention was recognized for its important contributions, including principles in Article 3 and the commitment to assisting vulnerable countries (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1992, Article 3). The tensions between economic development and environmental protection were acknowledged, providing a basis for ongoing dialogue and negotiation (Sands, 1992: 276).

The Convention is positioned as a significant step toward integrating environmental considerations into central economic activities. It was seen as a potential forum for the development of international legislation on environmental and economic matters, marking a foundational step toward radical changes in resource use (Sands, 1992: 276).

The comprehensive and collaborative nature of the Convention highlighted the nuanced negotiations, diverse interests, and the commitment of the international community to address the pressing issue of climate change. Although lacking concrete targets, the Convention's long-term impact was envisioned as transformative, signaling a significant shift in the global approach to environmental and economic matters. Later, in 1997, the Kyoto Protocol built on the groundwork laid by the UNFCCC,

marking a significant step forward by introducing binding emission reduction targets for developed nations.

2.2. LANDMARK TREATIES

Over the decades, landmark treaties have formalized global commitments to addressing climate change, building on the groundwork of early conferences and reports. Agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol, Copenhagen Accord, and Paris Agreement, reflect a sense of evolution of international climate governance. Additional frameworks like the Talanoa Dialogue and Glasgow Climate Pact underline the ongoing efforts to adapt and strengthen global strategies for tackling the climate crisis. While their effectiveness and outcomes remain a topic of debate, they continue to exemplify the efforts towards progress, ongoing disputes, and evolving challenges within climate governance.

2.2.1. Kyoto Protocol

The adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 marked a critical milestone in climate governance through the creation of the first international climate treaty (Luomi, 2020; Seo, 2017: 4). Representing a pivotal international agreement designed to address the pressing issue of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and their impact on the global climate, under this treaty, developed countries committed to legally binding emission reduction targets, aiming to reduce their emissions to 1990 levels by 2000.

A fundamental contribution of the Kyoto Protocol lies in its establishment of legally binding emission reduction targets for developed countries. Article 3 of the Protocol outlines the commitments of Annex I parties, specifying quantified emission limitation and reduction objectives (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1998). This commitment to tangible targets set the stage for a collective effort to curtail emissions through shared responsibility among industrialized nations to address the environmental consequences of their economic activities (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1998).

The Kyoto Protocol introduced innovative mechanisms such as emissions trading, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), and Joint Implementation (JI), also referred to as Decision 9/CMP.1 (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1998; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2006). While emissions trading allowed countries with surplus reductions to sell allowances to those needing them, optimizing economic efficiency, the CDM enables developed countries to finance emission reduction projects in developing nations, promoting sustainable development and technology transfer, and JI facilitates bilateral projects between countries with binding targets, leveraging comparative advantages for cost-effective reductions (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1998). Despite the Kyoto Protocol emerging from a complex political process rather than a strict cost-benefit analysis, the flexibility inherent in these market-based mechanisms has influenced subsequent climate agreements (Sand and McGee, 2022: 270).

The Kyoto Protocol exemplifies the necessity of multilateralism in addressing global challenges. The negotiation process leading to the Protocol's adoption involved intense diplomatic efforts, requiring nations to find common ground despite differing economic priorities and levels of development (Bodansky, 2001; Seo, 2017: 5). The conclusion of the agreement showed the potential for international cooperation in confronting shared threats, setting an example for future climate negotiations (Bodansky, 2001: 12).

The Kyoto Protocol faced challenges, including the exclusion of developing countries and the refusal of the United States (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1998; Luomi, 2020). Critics argue that the Protocol's approach to setting targets and timetables for emission reductions is seriously flawed (Böhringer, 2003, p.459). Delays in implementation, delayed ratification by Russia, and the refusal of the United States to ratify have further dampened the Protocol's efficacy (Bodansky, 2001, p.12; Böhringer, 2003: 458-461).

The Kyoto Protocol was both a groundbreaking achievement and a partial failure, as it established the first international framework for reducing global emissions, yet it struggled with significant exclusions, flawed targets, and limited participant commitment, ultimately leading to its limited effectiveness and the

withdrawal of key nations. However, despite its imperfections, it serves as a valuable starting point for climate policies, with future challenges including incentives for developing countries to participate and the development of credible sanction mechanisms (Böhringer, 2003: 455).

The Kyoto Protocol holds immense importance in global climate negotiations as a pioneering agreement that established binding emission reduction targets, introduced innovative market-based mechanisms, and fostered international cooperation. Its legacy and the lessons learned contribute to ongoing efforts to create effective and equitable solutions for mitigating climate change on a global scale.

2.2.2. Copenhagen Accord

The post-2012 climate regime, the period following the Kyoto Protocol's entry into force in 2005, faced important questions regarding its extension or the adoption of a new comprehensive agreement under the UNFCCC (Bodansky, 2010: 230). The Copenhagen Climate Change Conference (COP15), held from December 7-19, 2009, was critical in addressing these issues, leading to the creation of the Copenhagen Accord as a response to the challenges faced in negotiations (Bodansky, 2010: 230). The Copenhagen Conference was the pinnacle of two years of intense international negotiations, emphasizing the high economic and environmental stakes (Dimitrov, 2010: 797).

During COP15 in Copenhagen in 2009, a total of 794 NGOs registered 12,048 participants, though increased registrations led to restrictions on their physical attendance due to security and fire safety concerns. Nonetheless, organizations like Greenpeace, WWF, and Friends of the Earth engaged actively in lobbying and policy advocacy during the negotiations (Fisher, 2011: 9-11; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2009a).

The Copenhagen Conference aimed to address key issues for the post-2012 climate regime, such as extending the Kyoto Protocol and establishing new emission reduction targets for developed countries (Bodansky, 2010: 230). Despite high expectations, negotiations leading up to the conference had shown little progress. The negotiations culminated in the Copenhagen Accord, a political agreement involving

approximately twenty-eight countries, including major economies worldwide (Bodansky, 2010: 230).

Consequently, the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in 2009 brought together more than 100 of world leaders, with initially high expectations for a successful outcome (Dimitrov, 2010: 795). The scale of the event, hosting 37,000 participants, including 10,500 government delegates, marked the largest diplomatic summit of the United Nations' history (Dimitrov, 2010: 796; Rajamani, 2010: 824).

The Copenhagen Accord, presented during COP15, introduced significant shifts in climate change governance. It aimed to limit global temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius, reflecting a commitment to effective climate change mitigation (Bodansky, 2010: 231; Rajamani, 2010: 824; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2009b). Unlike the Kyoto Protocol's exclusive focus on developed nations, the Accord implemented a 'pledge and review' system for mitigation commitments, applicable to both developed and developing countries. Introduced during the INC 2 meeting in Geneva in 1991 (Grubb and Steen, 1991; as cited in Bodansky, 1993: 486), the system allows countries to independently pledge their emission reduction targets while an international team of experts periodically review their progress (Bodansky, 1993: 486; Bodansky, 2010: 231; Luomi, 2020: 5). Moreover, the Accord proposed substantial financial resources to support global climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts (Bodansky, 2010: 231).

Objections from a group of developing countries —Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Sudan, and Tuvalu— led to an overall disagreement on the agreement's terms, consequently causing the Copenhagen conference taking 'note of' the Accord, leaving its future status uncertain (Bodansky, 2010: 231; Luomi, 2020: 5; Rajamani, 2010: 826). As of March 30, 2010, 114 countries associated themselves with the Accord, and the UNFCCC Secretariat received national pledges to limit greenhouse gas emissions from seventy-three countries, representing more than 80% of global emissions (Bodansky, 2010: 231).

The Copenhagen Process marked a shift in negotiation dynamics from the EU-U.S. axis to a developed-developing country focus, especially U.S.-China relations (Bodansky, 2010: 232). This shift, initiated after the rejection of the Kyoto Protocol by the Bush administration, became apparent during the Bali conference in 2007. The

two-track negotiating process involved the Kyoto track (AWG-KP) and the Convention track (AWG-LCA), raising questions about whether there should be one or two outcomes and whether these outcomes should be legal (Bodansky, 2010: 232-234). Negotiations involved two tracks: the Kyoto Track, focusing on emission reductions by industrialized countries, and the Convention Track, considering long-term commitments by all countries (Dimitrov, 2010: 800-802). Major players, including the European Union, the Umbrella Group, the United States, Japan, Russia, developing countries in the G-77/China coalition, and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), had diverse positions and expectations (Dimitrov, 2010: 802). As the conference progressed, expectations for a legally binding treaty diminished, leading to the emergence of the Accord (Dimitrov, 2010: 807).

The Copenhagen Accord aimed to establish a shared vision for long-term cooperative action to address climate change collectively (Bodansky, 2010: 236). Negotiations involved discussions on long-term global goals for emission reductions, including limits on temperature increases, greenhouse gas concentration targets, and emission reduction goals. Developing countries expressed doubts about setting dates for emission peaks, highlighting objections to global emissions goals (Bodansky, 2010: 236-237). The Accord introduced economy-wide emissions targets for developed countries, a bottom-up process for mitigation actions, and an international review of developing countries' Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) (Bodansky, 2010: 237-238). It also addressed financial assistance, recognizing the importance of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD-plus), and highlighted the urgency of enhanced action on adaptation (Bodansky, 2010: 238-239). The Accord avoided explicit decisions on the legal form of the post-2012 climate regime, leading to debates about its status (Bodansky, 2010: 239). The Accord recognized the need to limit global temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius, outlined emission reduction pledges, and proposed substantial financial resources (Dimitrov, 2010: 808).

The Copenhagen Accord faced criticism for emission reduction pledges falling short of the 2°C goal but marked a notable shift with its bottom-up process, quantified long-term goals, and significant new funds commitment. Its political nature reflected the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, with assertiveness from

China and fractures within the developing country bloc acknowledged (Bodansky, 2010: 239-240).

Post-Copenhagen negotiations lacked the clarity and strength of the previous Bali Action Plan, with ongoing political differences among key nations (Dimitrov, 2010: 815). Fundamental issues such as temperature limits, emission targets, and financing mechanisms remained unresolved, indicating persistent challenges (Dimitrov, 2010: 815-816). Furthermore, the Copenhagen Accord was criticized for being non-binding and lacking specific emission reduction targets, leading to the emergence of the Durban Platform in 2011, setting the stage for the Paris Agreement (Seo, 2017: 5).

The Copenhagen Climate Change Conference and the resulting Copenhagen Accord marked a critical juncture in the international response to climate change. The negotiations, challenges, and outcomes reflected the complexities and divergent interests of nations in addressing the global threat of climate change. While facing criticisms for its limitations, the Accord represented a shift in the approach to climate governance and laid the groundwork for continued negotiations and global cooperation in the face of an evolving climate crisis.

2.2.3. Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement, established in 2015, is a landmark event in the global effort to combat climate change, signifying a crucial turning point in international climate policy (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2016; Seo, 2017: 1). Addressing criticisms of previous agreements for their limited participation (Seo, 2017: 5) which imposed binding emissions targets only on developed countries, the Paris Agreement aims to represent a bottom-up approach invites all nations, irrespective of their developmental status, to actively engage in climate mitigation and adaptation efforts (Luomi, 2020: 6). This inclusivity is operationalized through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), allowing each country to commit to specific actions and targets tailored to its unique circumstances (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2016, Article 4; Seo, 2017: 9).

COP21, which was accommodated in the Paris Agreement, was a landmark event for NGO involvement. Organizations such as C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, CARE International, Climate Action Network (CAN), Friends of the Earth, and Greenpeace played crucial roles. Track 0, a small NGO founded by Farhana Yamin, was instrumental in advocating for the net-zero emissions goal, which gained widespread support and was adopted at the G7 meeting in Bavaria in June 2015 (Jacobs, 2016: 320). These NGOs provided policy input, mobilized public support, and facilitated the drafting of the agreement (Kingston, 2019: 2-4; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2015; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2016).

To ensure the effectiveness of climate actions, the Paris Agreement introduces mechanisms for transparency and accountability (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2016). Parties are obligated to regularly report on their progress in implementing NDCs and achieving climate-related goals (Seo, 2017: 9). This commitment to transparency not only enhances the credibility of the global climate regime but also facilitates peer review and mutual learning among nations. Article 13 of the agreement outlines a transparency framework that represents a crucial step towards building trust and ensuring that countries fulfill their climate commitments (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2016). The Paris Agreement sets a global temperature limit, aiming to keep the increase in average global temperature well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, with an aspiration to limit the increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2016, Article 2; Luomi, 2020: 2).

Despite its ambitious goals, the Paris Agreement has faced several criticisms. One major point of contention is the adequacy of the collective emission reduction pledges. According to the UN Environment Programme Emissions Gap Report in 2019, current NDCs would lead to a temperature increase of more than 3°C, far exceeding the target limits and resulting in catastrophic consequences for ecosystems and human societies (Luomi, 2020: 2). This discrepancy between pledges and required action highlights a significant gap in the agreement's effectiveness. Seo (2017) and Bodansky (2016) also mention criticisms for the agreement's non-binding nature. The agreement is legally binding within the definition of the Vienna Convention on the

Law of Treaties, but not all provisions create legal obligations. The Paris Agreement includes a combination of mandatory and non-mandatory provisions related to mitigation, adaptation, and finance (Bodansky, 2016: 14). The absence of legal force, contrary to the Kyoto Protocol, and reliance on a ‘name and shame’ strategy for non-compliance pose challenges, as countries self-monitor, making international assessment efforts highly difficult (Seo, 2017: 10). The lack of enforcement mechanisms further complicates its effectiveness. While the agreement promotes transparency and accountability through systems of review, its enforcement relies heavily on voluntary compliance and peer pressure (Bodansky, 2016).

The Paris Agreement faces several challenges that could hinder its effectiveness. These include the gap between pledges and required actions, its unclear legal status, reliance on voluntary commitments, and the ongoing debate over responsibility-sharing between developed and developing nations. The coming decade will be critical in assessing whether these obstacles can be overcome to achieve its ambitious goals and mitigate climate change effectively.

2.2.4. Talanoa Dialogue

The Talanoa Dialogue, introduced during the Conference of the Parties (COP23) to the UNFCCC was held in Bonn, Germany, and represents an innovative and culturally significant approach to global climate negotiations. Originating from the Pacific, particularly from Fijian, Tongan, and Samoan traditions, the term *talanoa* translates into an open, participatory, and transparent effort of discussion and storytelling. It is designed to foster trust, empathy, and collaborative problem-solving among parties (Lesniewska and Siegele, 2018: 41-43; Lyster, 2019: 36; Kirsch, 2021: 331).

The Talanoa Dialogue officially began in January 2018 and continued throughout the year, releasing its conclusive statements at COP24 in December 2018 in Katowice, Poland (Kirsch, 2021: 332). The dialogue aimed to enhance global climate action by addressing three fundamental questions: “Where are we?”, “Where do we want to go?”, and “How do we get there?” (Kirsch, 2021: 338; Lesniewska and Siegele, 2018: 43). These questions guided the dialogue towards evaluating current

efforts, refining ambitions, and identifying pathways to achieve climate goals. This process is structured into two phases: the preparatory phase, which builds a strong evidence base, and the political phase, which focuses on high-level discussions and decision-making (Lesniewska and Siegele, 2018: 43; Lyster, 2019: 56-57). The political phase later took place during COP24 itself (Lesniewska and Siegele, 2018: 44).

The Talanoa Dialogue differs significantly from previous climate dialogues and agreements in its foundational approach and methodology. Unlike the more adversarial and competitive nature of earlier negotiations, such as those seen in the Kyoto Protocol or the Copenhagen Accord, Talanoa emphasizes non-confrontational, empathetic dialogue aimed at mutual understanding and collective action, as the former Fijian Prime Minister talked at the Royal Institution, London a year later, referring to the Talanoa Dialogue as “a grand coalition for climate action, composing cities, states and regions, the private sector, civil society, and faith-based groups” (Bainimarama, 2019). Lesniewska and Siegele (2018: 43) call this new approach a ‘shift from a narrower technocratic approach to a broader more inclusive one’.

Additionally, Lyster explains how Talanoa Dialogue differs from previous attempts by implementing a “capabilities approach” (2019: 39), a term developed by Sen and Martha Nussbaum in 2011 (as cited in Lyster, 2019: 38). This approach sets forth the idea that quality of life should be assessed through a combination of various elements, rather than focusing on only incomes and commodities. While most previous climate discussions focused on the distribution of costs of mitigation and adaptation, this approach focuses on the various ways vulnerable populations are affected by the climate (Lyster, 2019: 39). Aimed to bring together a diverse range of political actors, the dialogue was designed to host a multi-level engagement by welcoming non-Party stakeholder experts, businesses, civil society and think tanks’ (Lesniewska and Siegele, 2018: 46).

At COP23, the participation of 1,005 NGOs with 4,660 participants highlighted their ongoing influence. The participant organizations contributed to policy discussions and advocated for stronger climate action, particularly focusing on issues related to equity and sustainability (Kingston, 2019: 5-6).

However, there remain concerns about the extent to which these contributions influence final outcomes. While NGOs have been able to voice their concerns and recommendations, the translation of these inputs into concrete policy actions and commitments remains uneven. A study by Mundaca et al. (2019) suggests that despite the inclusive process, the ultimate decisions still heavily reflect the traditional and persistent ways of prioritizing economic interests, potentially sidelining the more ambitious or equity-focused proposals from civil society (Mundaca et al., 2019: 10)

One of the main concerns with the Talanoa Dialogue is its potentially limited effectiveness in driving concrete climate action. Critics argue that the dialogue's emphasis on storytelling and consensus-building may not translate into the strong political commitments necessary to achieve significant emissions reductions (Lesniewska and Siegele, 2018: 47). There are fears that without binding agreements or specific targets, the dialogue may result in more talk than action.

Another criticism centers on the practical challenges of integrating a culturally specific process into the highly formalized and structured setting of international climate negotiations. The informality and flexibility that are hallmarks of Talanoa may conflict with the procedural rigor and accountability mechanisms typically expected in global governance frameworks (Kirsch, 2021: 339).

2.2.5. Katowice Climate Package (Paris Climate Rulebook)

The Katowice Climate Package, sometimes referred to as Paris Agreement Rulebook (Fuentes and Harries, 2019: 4), adopted at the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in December 2018, plays a critical role in operationalizing the Paris Agreement. This package consists of guidelines, procedures, and mechanisms essential for implementing the Paris Agreement, particularly focusing on enhancing transparency, accountability, and global cooperation in combating climate change (Dröge and Rattani, 2019: 1)

The Katowice Climate Package includes various elements that are crucial for the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement. Among the most significant achievements is the establishment of common modalities, procedures, and guidelines

(MPGs) to operationalize the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF). The MPGs apply to all parties, although they provide flexibility for developing countries that may not yet have the capacity to meet all requirements immediately (Dal Maso and Canu, 2019: 9).

The ETF is central to the Katowice Climate Package, designed to build mutual trust and confidence among parties by promoting effective implementation of the Paris Agreement. The ETF requires all parties to report regularly on their GHG emissions and the progress made in implementing and achieving their NDCs (Dal Maso and Canu, 2019: 9; Fuertes and Harries, 2019: 5). This reporting helps ensure transparency and accountability, providing a clear understanding of the collective progress towards tackling climate change.

One of the key aspects of the ETF is its built-in flexibility, which considers the different capacities of parties. Developing countries can determine their own flexibility options they need based on their capacities and constraints. It is mandatory for the countries to explain these flexibility options, and the capacity constraints necessitating these options, and provide timeframes for improvement (Dal Maso and Canu, 2019: 9). Through this approach, gradual improvement and capacity building over time becomes possible, ensuring that all countries can eventually meet the ETF's requirements. To support developing countries in building the necessary capacity, the Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) was established. This initiative helps countries develop the institutional and technical capabilities required to comply with the ETF (Fuertes and Harries, 2019: 18).

All parties are required to submit Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) starting by the end of 2024 under the ETF. These reports will include information on national GHG inventories, progress in implementing and achieving NDCs, climate change impacts and adaptation, and financial, technological, and capacity-building support provided and received (Dal Maso and Antonio Canu, 2019: 10; Fuertes and Harries, 2019: 19).

The ETF is closely linked to the Global Stocktake, a mechanism established by the Paris Agreement. This mechanism helps assess collective progress towards achieving its long-term goals. The Global Stocktake will check the information reported under the ETF and other sources to evaluate the effectiveness of climate

actions and inform future NDCs (Dal Maso and Canu, 2019: 16; Dröge and Rattani, 2019: 3; Fuertes and Harries, 2019: 18).

The discussions at COP24 also centered around the “Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage Associated with Climate Change Impacts” (WIM), established in 2013 with developing countries, especially the least developed nations, urging for the strengthening of WIM and financial assistance from developed countries to address loss and damage. Despite the vulnerability of small islands to climate change impacts, including rising sea levels, COP24 did not result in official promises for financial assistance (Dröge and Rattani, 2019: 1; Nidhi, 2023: 1542).

Human rights protection stands out as a significant discussion during COP24. Civil society groups and some countries advocated for integrating human rights references into the Paris Agreement's Rulebook, emphasizing ecosystem integrity, intergenerational justice, decent work, just transition for workers, food security, women's empowerment, gender equality, public participation, rights of Indigenous Peoples, and poverty alleviation. However, these efforts were only partially successful, due to many human rights references remaining in the Preamble without being practicalized in the main text (Nidhi, 2023: 1541). Certain youth groups such as several indigenous groups, FFF, XR, and Sunrise Movement stated their dissatisfaction, some of them underlining that the Rulebook lacks an action plan of urgent action, given the findings of the IPCC 1.5°C global warming report (Dröge and Rattani, 2019: 4; Washington Post, 2020). The conference saw substantial NGO involvement, with 1,032 organizations sending 5,054 participants, their engagement was critical in shaping the transparency rules and reporting frameworks established by the UNFCCC system (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2018: 6-7).

COP24 also recognized the intersection of gender and climate change, emphasizing the disproportionate impact on women and marginalized groups. Resolutions were called for gender perspectives in climate policies and actions, emphasizing gender equality in the climate and energy sectors. The resolutions also advocated for the active participation and leadership of women in climate change decision-making processes (Nidhi, 2023: 1542).

Lastly, the Katowice Ministerial Declaration on Forests was adopted during COP24, highlighting the crucial role of forests in climate change mitigation and

adaptation. It included commitments to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+), sustainable forest management, afforestation, reforestation, and the protection of rights of communities and indigenous peoples dependent on forests (Nidhi, 2023: 1542).

The Katowice Agreement, as a result of COP24, encompasses several critical provisions aimed at facilitating the implementation of the Paris Agreement. These provisions include guidelines for disclosing and monitoring greenhouse gas emissions, improvements in adapting to the effects of climate change, and resolutions on executing the 'loss and damage' mechanism established in 2015.

The guidelines outlined in the agreement are intended to enhance transparency and accountability, ensuring that countries remain on track to meet their emissions reduction goals. Additionally, the agreement addresses the need to assist vulnerable nations in dealing with climate change impacts that cannot be prevented through mitigation and adaptation measures.

2.2.6. Glasgow Climate Pact

The Glasgow Climate Pact, forged during the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in November 2021, aimed to advance the goals of the Paris Agreement and address the escalating climate crisis through international cooperation and commitment (Arora and Mishra, 2021: 585).

The COP26 summit saw the participation of nearly 200 countries aiming to keep the Paris Agreement alive (Arora and Mishra, 2021: 585). The primary goals outlined at COP26 included securing global net-zero emissions by mid-century, adapting to protect communities and natural habitats, mobilizing finance, and enhancing international cooperation (Arora and Mishra, 2021: 585; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2021a: 1-3).

The conference saw the participation of 1,598 NGOs, registering 9,529 participants. Key NGOs included Cornell University, Corporate Accountability International, Climate Action Network, ActionAid International, and the Council on Energy, Environment, and Water. These organizations focused on various aspects of climate policy, from grassroots mobilization to providing technical expertise on

emission reduction strategies (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2021b: 12).

The Pact reaffirmed the global goal to limit temperature increases to 1.5°C and acknowledged the need for rapid and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2021a: 3-4). Specifically, it called for reducing global carbon dioxide emissions by 45% by 2030 relative to 2010 levels and achieving net-zero emissions around mid-century (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2021a: 3). This includes phasing down coal power and eliminating inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, a goal that faced resistance during the negotiations and resulted in a watered-down commitment from “phasing out” to “phasing down” coal (Arora and Mishra, 2021: 586; Lyster, 2023: 383).

The Pact urged for scaling up action and support for adaptation, highlighting the insufficient provision of climate finance for adaptation in developing countries (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2021a: 2-3). It also called for integrating adaptation into local, national, and regional planning and enhancing adaptive capacity and reducing vulnerability to climate change (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2021a: 2).

One of the critical areas of discussion was climate finance. Developed countries were asked to meet the \$100 billion annual funding goal for climate finance, which has been consistently unmet. Calling for a significant increase in financial support, including grants and concessional finance, it aimed to assist developing countries in both mitigation and adaptation efforts (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2021a: 4).

Additionally, the pact acknowledged the already occurring and increasing loss and damage due to climate change. It reminded the need for enhanced support to address these impacts, particularly in developing countries, and supported the operationalization of the Santiago Network, which aims to provide technical assistance and resources to avert, minimize, and address loss and damage (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2021a: 6).

Despite the ambitious goals, the Glasgow Climate Pact has been met with mixed reactions. On the positive side, it brought significant global attention to the

climate crisis and secured some critical commitments towards reducing emissions and supporting vulnerable countries. For instance, the recognition of the need to reduce methane emissions by 30% by 2030 was a significant step (Arora and Mishra, 2021: 586).

However, the Pact falls short in several areas. The failure to secure commitments from major coal-dependent countries like China and India to phase out coal was a major setback (Arora and Mishra, 2021: 586). Moreover, the continued shortfall in climate finance commitments from developed countries undermines the support needed for developing countries to adapt to and mitigate climate impacts (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2021a: 4).

Lyster (2023) further critiques the Pact, suggesting that while it represents earnest attempts to address climate change, it falls into the trap of rhetoric without substantial action. Lyster highlights the failure to establish the Glasgow Facility for Financing Loss and Damage as a critical shortcoming, reflecting the ongoing struggles to secure meaningful financial commitments for vulnerable countries (Lyster, 2023: 383). The Pact's watered-down language on coal, shifting from “phasing out” to “phasing down” exemplifies the compromises that undermine its potential effectiveness (Lyster, 2023: 383).

Additionally, Lyster highlights the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report which underscores the urgency of the climate crisis (Lyster, 2023: 384). The report highlights the inadequacy of current NDCs under the Paris Agreement, projecting an increase in global temperatures if current commitments are fully implemented (Lyster, 2023: 385; IPCC, 2023: 11). This starkly contrasts with the 1.5°C target, emphasizing the need for more aggressive and immediate action.

The Glasgow Climate Pact represents a critical step in international climate negotiations, reflecting both progress and persistent challenges. While it reinforces the global commitment to limiting temperature rise and enhancing climate action, its effectiveness will largely depend on the concrete actions taken by individual countries and the fulfillment of financial commitments.

2.3. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AT COP28

The 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the UNFCCC was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from November 30 to December 12, 2023. Over 160 world leaders and nearly 100,000 delegates attended, making it the largest COP to date (Jiang et al., 2024: 1; Smeeth and Haines, 2023: 1).

COP28 was set against the backdrop of record-breaking global temperatures. July 2023 was the hottest month ever recorded, with global mean surface temperatures reaching unprecedented levels (Jiang et al., 2024: 1). This year marked a new phase described by the UN Secretary-General as the “era of global boiling” (Arora, 2024: 108).

A historic decision was made at COP28, where nearly all participating countries agreed to transition away from fossil fuels. This marked the first time that fossil fuels were explicitly recognized as the primary driver of climate change in a UN document (Arora, 2024: 109). The Global Decarbonization Accelerator (GDA) program was launched, which aims to facilitate a just and orderly transition, focusing on reducing emissions from methane and other non-CO₂ greenhouse gases, decarbonizing the current energy system, and building a future energy system reliant on renewables (Arora, 2024: 110).

The Loss and Damage Fund, established at COP27, was further developed at COP28 with 19 countries committing a total of USD 792 million. Despite being a significant step, this amount fell short of the estimated annual damage costs of USD 140 billion to USD 280 billion due to extreme weather events (Arora, 2024: 108; Newman and Noy, 2023: 3).

The conference took notable steps, such as the formal agreement on fossil fuel transition and the integration of health considerations into climate policies. However, the COP28 presidency, led by Sultan Al-Jaber of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, faced criticism for potential conflicts of interest, as approximately 2,400 delegates from fossil fuel companies attended the summit (Smeeth and Haines, 2023: 1).

For the first time, COP28 included an official health day, highlighting the significant impacts of climate change on health. More than 140 countries signed a

health declaration emphasizing the need for health gains from mitigation and adaptation actions. However, the declaration was criticized for not explicitly calling for the phase-out of fossil fuels (Smeeth and Haines, 2023: 1).

While substantial financial pledges were made, such as the USD 1 billion committed to climate health interventions and over USD 700 million pledged to a loss and damage fund, these amounts were deemed insufficient relative to the actual needs. The Global Stocktake indicated a need for more ambitious actions to achieve net zero by 2050 (Smeeth and Haines, 2023: 1; Jiang et al., 2024: 2).

The summit was attended by leaders from nearly 200 countries and representatives from various industries, including a notable presence of fossil fuel companies (Smeeth and Haines, 2023: 1). Numerous NGOs and environmental groups actively participated in COP28, advocating for stronger climate action and holding leaders accountable for their commitments. Organizations representing over 40 million health professionals endorsed the WHO's call for ambitious climate action, highlighting the intersection of health and climate policy (Smeeth and Haines, 2023: 1; World Health Organization, 2023). 2,092 NGOs were listed with 13,278 participants with broad and diverse participation across sectors and regions for the conference. The involvement of such a large number of NGOs highlights their crucial role in advocating for ambitious climate actions and holding governments accountable to their climate commitments (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2023: 1-2).

COP28 was another important event in the global fight against climate change given its significant decisions and notable controversies. The conference reminded the urgent need for more ambitious actions and greater financial commitments to address the climate crisis. While the inclusion of health considerations and the formal agreement on fossil fuel transition were positive developments, the influence of fossil fuel interests and the ingenuine financial pledges highlighted the challenges that remain.

CHAPTER THREE

FOUR SELECTED CONTEMPORARY YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS: DEMANDS, ACTIONS, ORGANIZATIONS AND ECHOES

Youth environmental movements have emerged as a significant force in advocating for climate action. Many of those involved in eco-climatic activism, particularly youth activists, are driven by a sense of eco-anxiety, fueled by concerns about the destruction of ecosystems and unequal access to common goods (Manu, 2023). These activists are revolting against the perceived indifference of authorities and governments to ecological crises, demanding immediate responses to address climate change.

There are a number of characteristics that set the contemporary youth movements apart from traditional social movements. Traditional social movements, particularly those emerging in the 19th and 20th centuries, were often characterized by hierarchical structures, centralized leadership, and a strong affiliation with political bodies. These movements, including the labor movement and civil rights movements, were deeply intertwined with class dynamics and sought to mobilize large groups around specific socio-economic issues (Tindall et al., 2022: 376). In contrast, contemporary youth movements exhibit a decentralized, non-hierarchical structure, focusing more on grassroots activism and direct action.

The shift from traditional to modern movements is partly attributed to the changing political and social landscape. The contemporary period of political socialization has been marked by multiple crises, influencing the values and behaviors of young activists who are more likely to hold powerholders accountable through protest actions (Nulman, 2022: 191). These factors have empowered a generation that leverages its agency to demand substantial and urgent actions against climate change and other social injustices.

This shift witnessed a significant transformation in the landscape of social movements, marked by the rise of dynamic and impactful youth-led movements. Among these, movements like Extinction Rebellion, Fridays for Future, Last Generation, and Just Stop Oil stand out due to their distinctive approaches, objectives, organizational structures, and high media visibility.

Since the formation of each of these movements to the writing of this article, 2018 for FFF and XR, 2021 for LG, and 2022 for JSO, these movements have garnered attention from the press for 18,971, 39,889, 8,936, and 12,653, respectively. These numbers indicate significant media attention, implying a unique position of these movements in shaping public discourse on climate change.

As showcased in the further sections, these movements employ disruptive and highly visible protest strategies, such as school strikes, road blockades, and die-ins, which capture public and media interest effectively. Their decentralized, grassroots organization models were worth analyzing, possibly indicating a shift in contemporary activist methodologies. In line with this theory, Scherman (2022: 751-752), states that modern protests share key characteristics: a significant presence of young people, a departure from traditional political organizations, and the broad use of digital media for political organization. The aforementioned movements reflect these traits, demonstrating innovative tactics and engaging a new generation of activists who are reshaping political participation through non-institutional means and leveraging the power of social media.

Machin comments on the bigger movements that are XR and FFF, stating that they pioneered new forms of activism that distinguish them from their predecessors. XR, for example, emphasizes non-violent civil disobedience and decentralized decision-making. This movement describes itself as “a decentralized, international and politically non-partisan movement” that is both “global” and “grassroots” (Machin, 2022: 556). Similarly, FFF has mobilized millions of students worldwide to strike for climate action, embodying a new cohort of citizens active in democracy (Scherman, 2022: 753).

In terms of protest styles, these youth movements have adapted and expanded the repertoire of contention used by former generations. Non-violent direct action and peaceful civil disobedience are central to their strategies, reflecting their aims for a fairer world. For instance, XR’s aim to carry out sustained disruptions through civil disobedience has become a hallmark of their protests. This approach is rooted in the traditions of earlier environmental movements, yet adapted to the contemporary context (Ollitrault, 2022: 27-28).

One of the notable features of modern youth movements is their organizational structure. Unlike traditional movements that often relied on hierarchical leadership, movements like XR, FFF, LG, and JSO function through decentralized, grassroots networks. This decentralized model allows for greater flexibility and local autonomy, promoting localized decision-making (Machin, 2022: 556-563).

However, this decentralization comes with its own set of challenges. While these movements urge grassroots action, they also call for state intervention to address global issues like climate change. This dual approach reflects a complex relationship with centralized authority, highlighting a tension between local activism and the need for systemic change at higher levels of governance (Pickard et al., 2022: 527-528).

Traditional movements often had stronger ties to political bodies and were more directly involved in legislative processes. In contrast, modern youth movements tend to operate independently of traditional political organizations, utilizing digital media to mobilize support and coordinate actions. This reliance on social media has been crucial for their success, providing platforms for communication and coordination that reach beyond national boundaries (Scherman, 2022: 756).

Civil disobedience has been a cornerstone of both traditional and contemporary movements. The concept of civil disobedience, often associated with environmental activism, finds its roots in the work and actions of the American philosopher Henry David Thoreau (Manu, 2023). Thoreau's writings on nonviolent resistance and his refusal to pay taxes in protest against the Mexican-American War (Thoreau, 1849) inspired later activists like Mahatma Gandhi and numerous contemporary social movements, including those related to environmental causes. Civil disobedience has become a constant strategy in these movements, serving as a powerful tool to draw attention to environmental issues and push for change. This tradition continues in modern movements, with XR and FFF explicitly endorsing non-violent civil disobedience as a means to achieve their goals (Grasso and Giugni, 2022: 556).

Thoreau's concept of civil disobedience is rooted in his belief in the moral responsibility of individuals to resist unjust laws and government actions. Thoreau argues that when a government becomes unjust, individuals have a duty to refuse to comply with its mandates. He emphasizes that this form of resistance, while nonviolent, is a powerful tool for effecting social change (Thoreau, 1849: 15).

Gene Sharp, in his work “From Dictatorship to Democracy” expands on the idea of civil disobedience by providing a strategic framework for nonviolent resistance against authoritarian regimes. Sharp asserts that effective civil disobedience requires careful planning and strategic execution to weaken and ultimately dismantle dictatorial power structures. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the dynamics of nonviolent struggle, noting that “the effect of nonviolent struggle is not only to weaken and remove the dictators but also to empower the oppressed” (Sharp, 2010: 76). This empowerment comes from the direct involvement of ordinary people in the struggle for their own freedom, fostering a sense of agency and self-efficacy. Sharp's approach underscores the transformative potential of organized, disciplined nonviolent action in achieving lasting democratic change.

Academics have extensively studied the role of civil disobedience in social movements, highlighting its effectiveness in drawing attention to critical issues and pressuring authorities to act. The works of scholars like Thoreau, as well as contemporary analyses, bring out the moral and strategic dimensions of civil disobedience in driving social change (Pezullo, 2022: 230; Ollitrault, 2022: 27).

3.1. EXTINCTION REBELLION

As one of the most prominent actors in the civil disobedience arena, Extinction Rebellion (XR) emerged in 2018, responding to the urgent need for climate action as the devastating effects of climate change became more widely acknowledged. XR was established in the United Kingdom in May 2018 by activists Gail Bradbrook, Simon Bramwell, and Roger Hallam. This movement quickly expanded its influence, becoming a global entity with 971 groups operating in 89 countries (Extinction Rebellion, n.d.)

XR describes itself as a “global and politically non-partisan movement” that uses non-violent direct action to compel governments to address climate and ecological emergency. XR's demands include telling the truth about the climate crisis, acting immediately to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2025, and creating citizens' assemblies to oversee these changes. Their

inspiration comes from historical civil disobedience movements and the urgent warnings of climate scientists (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2024).

XR's founders, Roger Hallam and Gail Bradbrook, were inspired by Gene Sharp's theories of nonviolent civil disobedience and disillusioned with traditional environmental movements' perceived shortcomings. They drew on nonviolent resistance movements like Occupy, the suffragettes, and the civil rights movement to create a new approach to climate activism. Their goal was to break the cycle of inaction (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2024; Taylor and Gayle, 2018).

XR quickly made its presence felt in London, using tactics similar to those employed by earlier divestment movements to stage high-profile actions. Interestingly, XR's message resonated with a diverse cross-section of society, garnering support from figures as varied as political leader Jeremy Corbyn to environmental radicals and even “luxury communists” (Kinniburgh, 2020: 128).

On October 31, 2018, shortly after the IPCC report's release, XR officially declared a “Declaration of Rebellion” against the UK government at Parliament Square (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2019a). XR issued its Declaration of Rebellion to address the urgent climate and ecological crisis and to denounce government inaction. This declaration emphasizes XR's commitment to nonviolent civil disobedience as a means to compel the government to take significant action. In this declaration, XR showcased its core demand, which is the establishment of a Citizens' Assembly on Climate and Ecological Justice, which they believe is essential for achieving fair and sustainable solutions to the environmental crisis (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2019a).

The declaration also outlines XR's strategy to mobilize mass participation in civil disobedience to disrupt the status quo. This includes organizing large-scale protests, community assemblies, and direct actions aimed at raising public awareness and pressuring political leaders. XR's actions are driven by the belief that government inaction is leading to ecological collapse, which creates a severe threat to future generations. By maintaining a global movement that unites diverse groups and individuals, XR aims to challenge political complacency and push for urgent climate action (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2019a; Taylor M., 2020). This declaration was the beginning of a series of civil disobedience actions aimed at pressuring the government to acknowledge the ecological emergency and take immediate action.

3.1.1. April 2019: London Occupations

In April 2019, XR significantly intensified its activities with many large-scale protests across London, causing major disruptions. These demonstrations included the occupation of landmarks such as Oxford Circus, Waterloo Bridge, and Marble Arch. Activists used a variety of tactics, including blocking roads, gluing themselves to structures, and setting up campsites.

The protests led to significant traffic delays and a heavy police presence. Notable incidents included a large pink boat placed at Oxford Circus, which served as a stage for speeches, including speeches from celebrities like Emma Thompson. The activists also targeted financial institutions, forming blockades at the London Stock Exchange and Canary Wharf. These demonstrations resulted in numerous arrests for offenses such as aggravated trespassing and obstructing transportation services (Clark and Curtis, 2019; Forrest, 2019)

XR repeated its primary demands during these protests, which were for the government to declare a climate emergency, reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2025, and create a citizens' assembly to oversee climate action (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2024). Their actions resulted in the UK Parliament being the first in the world to declare a climate emergency in May 2019, deeming a major victory for the movement (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2024; ITV News, 2019).

3.1.2. September-October 2019: Global Climate Strikes and International Rebellion

Later in the year, XR aimed to increase the size of its protests. In September 2019, millions of people worldwide participated in the “Global Climate Strike”, making it one of the largest climate mobilizations in history. The strikes were supported by various environmental groups, including XR and Fridays for Future (Weston et al, 2019).

On October 7, 2019, International Rebellion, an international protest started by XR, began and involved coordinated actions in over 70 countries. The protests led to more than 1,000 arrests as activists blocked roads, bridges, and public spaces,

including financial districts in London. Demonstrations also took place in cities like Paris, Berlin, New York, and Sydney, drawing significant media attention where the group was mentioned more than 70,000 times on the internet in 2019 (Chadwick and Beswick, 2019; Taylor J., 2022).

3.1.3. June 2022: Protest at European Commission Headquarters and Environmental Crime Directive Revision

In June 2022, XR activists staged a protest at the European Commission's Berlaymont building in Brussels. Activists from multiple EU countries glued themselves to the entrance doors to draw attention to the need for the criminalization of ecocide, aiming to pressure the European Commission to include this issue on the European Council's agenda in light of the insufficient revision of the Environmental Crime Directive in December 2021. With this protest, XR aimed to hold powerful institutions accountable and push for legal frameworks that protect the environment from large-scale destruction (Brussels Reporter, 2022; Belga News Agency, 2022; European Commission, 2021). Stop Ecocide Foundation, an international organization led by legal experts, and environmental advocates, defines ecocide as “unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts” (Stop Ecocide Foundation, n.d.).

XR members, emphasized the urgency of addressing biodiversity loss, stating, “We don't have time to wait because biodiversity loss is going on and on... we need to start acting” (Guillot, 2022), while others underlined the necessity of civil disobedience: “if you want to be heard, there aren't many options but to use civil disobedience” (Guillot, 2022).

3.1.4. April 2023: “The Big One” Protest

In April 2023, XR organized a massive four-day protest in London known as “The Big One”. This event aimed to be the largest climate protest in UK history and to bring together over 200 organizations in a call to end fossil fuel projects and

establish citizens' assemblies (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2023a). The protest combined a series of demonstrations, workshops, and activities designed to engage the public and policymakers (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2023c).

During the protests, Caroline Lucas, Former Leader of the UK's Green Party, addressed the crowd about the urgent need for government action to tackle the climate crisis and the role of citizens in pushing for these changes (Limb and Wright, 2023). The protest also featured talks from speakers like Zadie Smith (Real Media, 2023; Smith Z., 2023) and Chris Packham (The Guardian, 2023), and creative demonstrations such as a die-in to symbolize species loss (Van der Zee and Weston, 2023). The protest resulted in a strong participation among supporting organizations, including Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth. XR emphasized the importance of this coalition in building a long-term and sustained movement capable of driving systemic change. They also conducted on-the-ground polling to guide future actions, with the result of a significant majority supporting increased civil disobedience and local organizing efforts (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2023b).

The event targeted key locations and institutions at the political heart of the UK, Westminster, making it a prominent event both for its size and its strategic location. Having continued for four days, these protests were the first major family-friendly and non-disruptive protests after, in January, XR announced (Booth, 2023) a shift from its traditional tactics such as roadblocks and occupations of public spaces. Although this approach was not aimed at disrupting business as usual, XR confronted the fact that the size of the protests would naturally cause “logistical issues” (Mathers, 2023). The protests fundamentally were in response to the unresponsive government regarding their demands for a ban on oil, as well as an Emergency Citizens’ Assemblies.

XR had previously introduced a deadline, April 24, to the British government to end all licenses and support for oil and gas initiatives. On April 21, protests began to bring attention to the government’s dismissive reaction regarding the demands. Activists interviewed by the press stated that they wanted to “Send a message to the government that we are not going to stand by until we get change” (Russell and Graham, 2023). Similarly, on April 24, Claire Farrel, the XR Co-founder stated: “The government had a week to respond to our demands and they have failed to do so. Next,

we will reach out to supporter organizations to start creating a plan for stepping up our campaigns across an ecosystem of tactics that includes everyone from first-time protesters to those willing to go to prison” (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2023b).

According to XR's official statements, the protest drew over 60,000 participants from various backgrounds and regions, making it one of the largest climate demonstrations in UK history. The event was designed to be family-friendly, accessible, and non-disruptive, focusing on “attendance over arrest” and “relationships over roadblocks” to encourage broader participation (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2023a; Limb, 2023a). The media coverage was extensive, and public discourse generated by “The Big One” with tens of thousands of participants (Limb, 2023a) helped to keep climate change at the forefront of the national and international attention cycle (Mathers, 2023).

XR expanded beyond London quickly, with cities like Berlin, New York, and Paris seeing similar acts of civil disobedience. This helped broadcast XR's message to a global audience, attracting a new wave of activists who felt responsible to act in response to the escalating climate emergency (Kinniburgh, 2020: 128). However, while some supported XR for raising awareness and pushing for urgent climate action, others criticized their disruptive tactics. The group's methods, such as blocking public transport, led to debates about the balance between raising awareness and causing public inconvenience (Taylor J., 2022).

Some pointed out that XR's demographic was predominantly white and middle-class, calling into question the movement's inclusivity. This contrasted with XR's stated goal of prioritizing vulnerable communities and addressing environmental injustice, as led by its U.S. branch (Gayle, 2019). Additionally, some criticized XR for its narrow focus on achieving net-zero emissions by a specific date, which they felt overlooked the complex role of capitalism in the climate crisis (Josette, 2019). Despite these critiques, XR sparked a global conversation about climate change.

XR's decentralized structure empowers local branches to plan and organize actions to their specific contexts, forming the backbone of the movement. Local groups collaborate and share resources, supported by smaller affinity groups, as anyone who aligns with XR's principles and goals is welcome to participate (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2024).

XR's disruptive tactics attracted significant media attention worldwide (Townsend, 2019). A 2019 YouGov poll revealed that nearly half of respondents supported the movement during its initial London actions (Kenward, 2019), as well as financial backing from celebrities and organizations like the Climate Emergency Fund further increased its reach (Knight, 2019).

Despite its notable achievements, Extinction Rebellion encounters persistent challenges. A major concern revolves around the imperative of fostering broader alliances with other environmental groups (Gunningham, 2019: 201). While XR prioritizes civil disobedience, it's crucial to recognize that other movements may emphasize lobbying or community organizing. Therefore, finding common ground and collaborating cohesively may aid increase XR's impact significantly.

Another critical issue lies in inclusivity. Critics suggest that XR actively work towards diversifying its membership and ensuring that its message resonates with communities disproportionately affected by climate change. This endeavor could involve forging partnerships with environmental justice organizations and actively recruiting activists from underrepresented backgrounds (Knight, 2019).

Furthermore, XR's focus on achieving net-zero emissions by a specific deadline has sparked debate. Although being quite ambitious, this approach may appear overly simplistic. It's essential to broaden the discourse to encompass systemic changes necessary to address the root causes of climate change, such as challenging dependence on fossil fuels and unsustainable economic practices (Josette, 2019).

Sustaining the momentum of disruptive tactics also presents its own set of challenges. While effective in drawing attention, the long-term efficacy of such methods in influencing policy is uncertain. XR must explore a multifaceted approach that combines disruptive actions with sustained organizing and collaboration to drive meaningful change.

In conclusion, while XR's achievements are applaudable, its journey forward demands strategic recalibration and new efforts to overcome existing obstacles. By embracing inclusivity, expanding its discourse, and diversifying its tactics, XR can navigate the complexities of the climate justice landscape more effectively and continue to be a driving force for transformative change.

3.2. FRIDAYS FOR FUTURE

Fridays for Future (FFF), an influential climate movement, has emerged as a dynamic force driven by youth mobilization and a pursuit of climate justice (Shim, 2023; Svensson and Wahlström, 2021). Originating from Greta Thunberg's school strike in 2018, FFF has transformed into a global movement demanding urgent action from governments and corporations to address the threat of climate change.

FFF began in August 2018 when Greta Thunberg started her school strike for climate in front of the Swedish Parliament, and quickly turned into a global movement. The movement defines itself as a “youth-led and -organized global climate strike movement” that aims to put moral pressure on policymakers to act on scientific consensus and limit global warming to below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels. The movement emphasizes climate justice, international solidarity, and the urgent need for climate action (Fridays For Future, n.d.).

3.2.1. March 15, 2019: First Global Climate Strike

Thunberg's determined actions outside the Swedish Parliament resonated globally, inspiring solidarity strikes among youth worldwide (Shim, 2023; Svensson and Wahlström, 2021). This sense of activism culminated in the first global day of action for climate justice on March 15, 2019 (Wahlström et al., 2019: 8).

On March 15, 2019, the first Global Climate Strike organized by FFF saw over 1.4 million students in more than 125 countries take to the streets to demand urgent climate action. This coordinated global protest was a landmark event, highlighting a sense of power and unity of the youth climate movement (Carrington, 2019; Wahlström et al., 2019). The characteristics of the strikes were their widespread participation and unified message that significant and immediate action was needed to address the climate crisis: “We need to start cooperating and sharing the remaining resources of this planet in a fair way. We are just passing on the words of the science. Our only demand is that you start listening to it, and then start acting” (Carrington, 2019). The March 15 strike was a powerful demonstration of the collective action of young students. The strikes drew considerable media attention and public support,

emphasizing the growing frustration among the younger generation with the slow pace of political and corporate action on climate issues. Subsequently, the movement reached its zenith in September 2019, mobilizing over 7 million participants across 185 countries during the third global climate strike (de Moor et al., 2021; Buzogány and Scherhauser, 2022).

In the previous years, before the FFF movement gained prominence, there were several global climate strikes that, while significant, did not reach the same level of coordination and impact. Notably, in November 2015, a global climate strike was organized to coincide with the COP21 conference in Paris, involving over 50,000 participants across 100 countries (350.org, 2015). Additionally, the Global Climate March on November 29, 2015, mobilized hundreds of thousands globally ahead of the Paris conference (Phipps, 2015). However, the FFF-led strike on March 15, 2019, was a critical moment in climate activism, with 1.4 million participants in over 125 countries, driven largely by youth and achieving unprecedented media attention (Engelfried, 2022; Zinn Education Project, 2019). Public reaction was overwhelmingly supportive, with many joining the protests and calling for immediate changes in climate policies.

Fridays for Future considered the March 15 strike a significant success, believing in the power of civil disobedience (Fridays For Future, 2020; Thunberg, 2019a). The success of the strike reiterated the importance of continued activism and the need for political leaders to respond to the demands for urgent climate action (Zinn Education Project, 2019; Walfisz, 2023).

During 2020 and 2021, FFF protests persisted globally despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the movement adapted to the pandemic by incorporating safety measures such as masks and social distancing during physical protests, and by shifting many activities online, utilizing social media platforms for human rights education (Harvey, 2020; Martinez Sainz and Hanna, 2023). By leveraging digital activism, FFF continued to attract and mobilize supporters, raise awareness about climate change, and foster global solidarity during a period of physical isolation (Martinez Sainz and Hanna, 2023: 10). In September 2020, global climate strikes took place in over 450 cities worldwide, with protesters demanding urgent climate action while adhering to COVID-19 safety protocols. In Germany

alone, thousands participated in marches across major cities like Berlin and Hamburg, showing the resilience of the youth climate movement despite the pandemic's restrictions (Deutsche Welle, 2020).

Throughout 2021, the protests continued with significant events such as the large-scale demonstrations during the COP26 summit in Glasgow (Adam et al., 2021). Around 10,000 people, including Greta Thunberg, marched to demand concrete actions from world leaders. The protests during this period were highly diverse, seeing participants from young children to older generations (Walsh, 2021).

3.2.2. Earth Day

On September 23, 2022, FFF organized a Global Climate Strike with the theme “#PeopleNotProfit” highlighting the demand for climate reparations and justice. In Berlin alone, around 36,000 people participated in demonstrations. The protests aimed to hold the wealthiest individuals and corporations accountable for their role in the climate crisis and called for the redistribution of resources to communities most affected by climate change (Fridays For Future, 2022; Deutsche Welle, 2022).

As FFF's influence grew, the responses of political parties became indicators of the movement's impact (Berker and Pollex, 2022). Comparative analyses of party responses offer insights that left-leaning parties tend to be more receptive to FFF's demands, whereas right-wing parties often adopt a critical stance (Raisch and Zohlnhöfer, 2020; Berker and Pollex, 2021; Berker and Pollex, 2022). In the meantime, Thunberg have faced several arrests by the police in various European countries during different events, as she oftentimes express her frustration and dissent with the insufficient action of current policy makers (Gayle, 2023a; Aikman and Holligan, 2024).

Along with its signature school strike protests, the organization has diversified its approaches in recent years. FFF branches globally now undertake a broader spectrum of actions, including lobbying governments and corporations, hosting educational workshops, and participating in climate conferences (Euronews Green, 2023).

FFF continues to operate in many countries worldwide. In Germany, “Fridays for Future Germany” has emerged as a formidable faction within the movement, mobilizing impactful actions and influencing local policies through active participation from grassroots groups in various cities (Niranjan, 2023). Extending its reach beyond traditional climate activism regions, FFF has also made significant strides in countries like Uganda. Notably, Vanessa Nakate, a prominent climate activist, epitomizes FFF's growing presence in Uganda, where Fridays for Future Uganda has become a crucial voice in the fight against climate change, spotlighting the disproportionate impact on vulnerable communities in the Global South (Evelyn, 2020).

Believing in global solidarity and through coordinated efforts, FFF organizes massive climate strikes transcending borders, uniting youth from diverse backgrounds in a collective call for urgent action. Significantly, it has leveraged this collective voice by presenting a petition to the UN Secretary-General, urging world leaders to prioritize climate action and fulfill their obligations to future generations (Kwai, 2021).

FFF's call extends beyond environmentalism to acknowledge the intricate link between climate change and social justice (della Porta and Portos, 2023). The movement advocates for policies ensuring a just transition to a low-carbon economy, where burdens and benefits are equitably distributed (della Porta and Portos, 2023). This holistic approach fosters solidarity and collective responsibility for the planet's well-being, setting FFF apart from traditional environmental movements. FFF's distinctive strength lies in its peaceful approach, attracting young participants who engage in school strikes rather than traditional protests (de Moor et al., 2021; Igini, 2022; as cited in Schwörer and Fernández-García, 2022: 12).

Comprehending FFF's social dynamics necessitates examining its composition as a “new social movement” primarily comprising educated youth from middle-class backgrounds (della Porta and Diani, 2020; as cited in della Porta and Portos, 2023: 25). However, detailed demographic research on FFF participants remains limited, warranting further studies for a nuanced understanding of the movement's social fabric.

Critics have pointed out FFF's urgency in addressing climate change without offering concrete solutions (Svensson and Wahlström, 2021). However, the movement

emphasizes the importance of policymakers adhering to scientific evidence and enacting evidence-based policies to mitigate climate change (Evensen, 2019; Svensson and Wahlström, 2021). Thunberg herself acknowledges the necessity of systemic change, highlighting the inadequacy of current economic and political models in addressing the climate crisis (Svensson and Wahlström, 2021).

Despite encountering challenges such as disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, FFF has demonstrated resilience and continued its advocacy for climate action (Haßler et al. 2021; Shim, 2023). By mobilizing students to walk out of classrooms and take to the streets, FFF communicates to governments and institutions: that youth demand accountability and immediate measures to protect the planet from catastrophes (Frankfurter Rundschau, 2019).

3.3. LAST GENERATION

The Last Generation (LG), die Letzte Generation in German original, began gaining significant attention in August 2021 when seven activists launched an indefinite hunger strike in Berlin's government district. Their primary demands included a public dialogue with German chancellor candidates and the establishment of citizens' assemblies to address climate change. This protest continued for over three weeks, with participants facing severe health risks (Barry, 2021; Letzte Generation, 2023a; Letzte Generation, 2024a).

The movement demands immediate and substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, the implementation of renewable energy projects, and comprehensive climate policies aligned with scientific recommendations. Their tactics include blocking highways, staging sit-ins, and other forms of non-violent civil disobedience, using a confrontational yet peaceful approach when dealing with politicians (Letzte Generation, 2024a; Letzte Generation, 2024b; Letzte Generation, 2024c; Letzte Generation, 2024d).

Last Generation draws inspiration from various social and environmental movements, including Extinction Rebellion and the global youth climate movement. Their strategies emphasize non-violent direct action and civil disobedience to create societal and political pressure. The movement's tactics are designed to disrupt

“business-as-usual” and force a public and political accountability for the climate crisis (Letzte Generation, 2024e). As they advocate for the immediate need to implement climate policies that prevent further ecological damage, their inspiration comes from the scientific consensus on climate change and the necessity for radical policy shifts to avert catastrophic environmental outcomes (Letzte Generation, 2024a).

The group rapidly gained prominence through its disruptive strategies and dedication to addressing the climate crisis. Last Generation, operating in many European countries such as Germany, the UK, and Italy, forms part of the A22 network funded by the Climate Emergency Fund (CEF), established in 2019, which supports civil resistance projects across multiple countries (A22, n.d.). Climate Emergency Fund, established in 2019, provides significant financial backing for these movements, enabling their disruptive activities and campaigns. The Climate Emergency Fund is primarily financed through donations and crowdfunding and supports over 120 organizations globally (Climate Emergency Fund, n.d.).

Since 2021, the group has engaged in many protests, gaining media attention. In October 2022, Last Generation activists glued themselves to the frame of Monet’s “Haystacks” painting at the Barberini Museum in Potsdam. The activists' dramatic tactics aimed to provoke public and media, leading to increased awareness and debate about climate policies in Germany. This protest was one among many actions by Last Generation to draw attention to the urgency of the climate crisis (Jones, 2022). On November 4, 2022, climate activists from Last Generation Italy (Ultima Generazione) carried out a protest at the Palazzo Bonaparte in Rome. The activists threw pea soup on Vincent van Gogh's painting “The Sower” and then glued themselves to the wall beneath it. Shouting slogans against global warming and fossil fuels during the protest, they stated that they aimed to highlight the disconnect between the importance of addressing climate change and the lack of action by governments. The group stated that their actions were intended to make the climate crisis a constant topic of discussion in the media and political agendas (ITV News, 2022). Despite the dramatic nature of the protest, the painting, which was protected by glass, was not damaged. Security at the gallery quickly intervened and removed the protesters. Italy's new culture minister, Gennaro Sangiuliano, condemned the act, emphasizing that cultural heritage should not be used as a platform for protests, regardless of the cause (ITV News, 2022).

As of 2023 and 2024, Last Generation continues its protests across Germany. In March 2024, activists staged coordinated actions in multiple cities, including blocking streets in Berlin and Munich without gluing themselves to the pavements. This marked a shift in their tactics to focus on “disobedient assemblies” rather than traditional road blockades (Symons, 2024).

Although in contrast to the global presence of movements like FFF, whose student strikes have resonated across 125 countries (Schwörer and Fernández-García, 2022: 7), the emergence of Last Generation still aligns with a broader trend of youth demanding stricter reforms and holding governments accountable for greenwashing tactics (Schwörer and Fernández-García, 2022: 7).

However, their methods, particularly the use of disruptive tactics such as throwing soup or mashed potatoes on paintings at museums, have sparked intense debate. While these actions are non-violent and do not damage artworks (Reuters, 2022a), critics argue that they overshadow the core climate message and alienate potential allies (Huebscher, 2022: 8; Welt, 2022). A study by Huebscher (2022: 6) suggests that these disruptive tactics have shifted the online climate debate away from substantive discussions of policy solutions towards a focus on the tactics themselves.

Initially, LG’s primary tactic involved direct non-violent actions such as road blockades, which they mainly utilized throughout 2022, with over 276 documented actions in Germany alone (Kühn, 2023). While these blockades were effective at raising awareness and causing disruptions, they also faced criticism for causing traffic delays and inconveniencing the public (France 24, 2023).

Possibly acknowledging this potential drawback, Last Generation made a strategic shift in 2024. They announced a departure from road blockades, opting instead for “disobedient public assemblies” aimed at oil pipelines, energy company headquarters, and airports (Russel, 2024). This adjustment indicates a calculated effort to maximize impact while minimizing public backlash. By targeting infrastructure directly associated with fossil fuel dependence, they aim to underscore the root causes of the climate crisis and disrupt operations perpetuating it. Furthermore, focusing on these targets may result in less public frustration compared to road closures impacting daily commutes.

Recently, in May 2024, five Last Generation supporters were charged with “forming a criminal organization” by the Neuruppin public prosecutor’s office in Brandenburg. The charges stem from their peaceful protests against Germany's climate policies. The activists who were accused, including Henning Jeschke and Mirjam Herrmann, criticized the charges as a severe mischaracterization of their actions. In response, the People Against Oil Alliance called for a gathering at Washington Square to protest the charges and highlight the climate crisis (Letzte Generation, 2024f; Gayle, 2024).

Additionally, in 2024, Last Generation participated in the EU Parliament elections under the name “Shake up Parliament – Voice of the Last Generation” (Neubert, 2024). As of July 2024, the group received 0.3% of the vote in Germany, totaling 104,340 votes, despite this support, they did not secure any seats. Spokespersons emphasized the need for continued resistance and announced a new wave of protests starting in Berlin on September 25, 2024, urging citizens to join and challenge the status quo that prioritizes profits over human lives (Letzte Generation, 2024g).

Last Generation’s public perception remains divided, with supporters acknowledging the urgency of their message and opposers criticizing their methods. The group has also encountered efforts to undermine their work, being labeled “climate terrorists” by some politicians and media outlets (Wehrmann, 2023a). Overcoming these challenges requires ongoing engagement with the public, fostering open dialogue about the climate crisis and the group's motivations.

Despite obstacles, Last Generation has undoubtedly influenced the climate movement. Their disruptive tactics, albeit controversial, have sparked crucial conversations about the most effective approaches to addressing the climate emergency. Their willingness to adapt strategies and explore new avenues of influence, such as electoral politics, is an indicator of their commitment to achieving tangible results.

3.4. JUST STOP OIL

Just Stop Oil exemplifies a shift in influencing public discourse and action within democracies of the landscape of climate activism that has undergone significant change in recent years (Henry and MacKenzie, 2023: 1). The latter part of 2021 and 2022 witnessed a resurgence of direct climate action in the United Kingdom, with the emergence of Just Stop Oil and other many environmental activist groups (Karnik Hinks and Rödder, 2023: 2). Just Stop Oil is a “nonviolent civil resistance group” that demands the UK government stop licensing new oil, gas, and coal projects. JSO focuses on community building, direct action, and civil resistance to force systemic change in the face of the climate crisis. Inspired by the success of other civil disobedience movements like Extinction Rebellion, JSO emphasizes the moral discourse to act against fossil fuel expansion to prevent further harm to the planet (Gayle, 2022a; Just Stop Oil, 2024b).

3.4.1. Roadblocks, van Gogh’s Sunflowers, and Dartford Crossing Protest

On October 14, 2022, Just Stop Oil activists Phoebe Plummer, 21, and Anna Holland, 20, staged a dramatic protest at the National Gallery in London. They threw cans of tomato soup over Vincent van Gogh’s iconic “Sunflowers” painting before gluing themselves to the wall beneath it. The protest aimed to draw attention to the climate crisis and the UK government’s failure to tackle both the climate and cost-of-living crises effectively. The activists questioned the value the society places on art compared to the urgency of addressing environmental destruction and social injustices caused by fossil fuels (Boyle, 2022).

Phoebe Plummer challenged the audience, asking, “What is worth more, art or life? Is it worth more than food? More than justice? Are you more concerned about the protection of a painting or the protection of our planet and people?” (Couto, 2022).

The Van Gogh painting was unharmed, although its frame sustained minor damage. The gallery staff quickly removed the protesters, and the painting was cleaned and rehung within hours. Although the protest generated widespread media coverage and public debate about the tactics of climate activists, the demonstration was not the

first of its kind. JSO had engaged in similar protests before with Van Gogh's Peach Trees in Blossom and Leonardo da Vinci's The Last Supper (Boyle, 2022; Couto, 2022).

In October 2022, 40 and 34-year-old Just Stop Oil protesters, Morgan Trowland and Marcus Decker, scaled the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge at the Dartford Crossing, creating significant traffic disruptions. Trowland and Decker were sentenced to over two and a half years each for causing a public nuisance, with Trowland receiving three years and Decker two years and seven months. These sentences are noted as the longest for peaceful climate protests in British history (ITV News, 2023a; Pilgrim, 2023; Rowlatt, 2023; Horton, 2023).

The judge who ruled the sentences stated the need for strict punishment to prevent similar actions in the future. He addressed the protestors, "By your actions you caused this very important road to be closed for 40 hours... You plainly believed you knew better than everyone else. In short, to hell with everyone else" (Horton, 2023).

Other climate activists have criticized the sentences. An Extinction Rebellion spokesperson expressed that the news was "absolutely devastating", and the men's actions were courageous and necessary to raise awareness of the climate crisis. Another Just Stop Oil spokesperson, stated that the climate activists will not back down on resistance, "Just Stop Oil will not be deterred by these draconian sentences. Where they imprison one of us, 10 more will take their place" (Horton, 2023).

Since the beginning of Just Stop Oil campaigns on 1 April 2022, over 2,000 people have been arrested, with 138 spending time in prison (Horton, 2023). Morgan Trowland and Marcus Decker have both been released from prison. Trowland was released after serving 14 months of his three-year sentence, while Decker, who served nearly 16 months, is now out on immigration bail and facing potential deportation to Germany (ITV News, 2023a; Just Stop Oil, 2024a).

3.4.2. EU's Climate Advocacy and Record Temperatures

In the first week of July 2023, the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service reported the hottest week in recorded history. Christopher Hewitt, director of climate

services at the World Meteorological Organisation, warned about the need for immediate action, adding that it was ‘worrying news’ (Just Stop Oil, 2023).

On July 17, just before his own graduation ceremony, a university student sprayed the courtyard orange in order to draw attention to climate change. He was known for his previous disruptive protests such as his interruption of the World Snooker Championship in April. Right before taking action, he announced that he would be disrupting the ceremony:

“My name’s Eddie, I’m 25 years old and I’m about to disrupt my own graduation ceremony. Exactly 3 months ago, I disrupted the snooker world championship. I’m taking these actions because our government has failed young people like me. They have failed to cut greenhouse gas emissions in line with science. They have failed to prepare us for the inevitable disruption that they have caused.”

Mentioning that universities are mere institutions to maintain the status quo instead of educating young people on the catastrophes of climate change, he added: “What use is a university degree if you can’t feed yourself? What use is ‘education’ if society is collapsing around you? Each one of us has a choice: die quietly or get into resistance. It’s now or never.” He was tackled by the police following his protest (Just Stop Oil, 2023).

A multidisciplinary approach becomes crucial to understand the phenomenon of the criminalization of political activism. Practices within movements that contribute to their own criminalization require examination (Cristiano et al., 2023: 112). Tracey Davanna sheds light on the problematic framing of political activism concerning policing in liberal democracies. The language used, particularly the distinction between activism and political activism, significantly influences public perception and shapes acceptance of aggressive policing tactics (Cristiano et al., 2023: 114).

Just Stop Oil's actions have disrupted museums across Europe and the UK, blurring the lines between heritage activism and climate protests (Giannini and Bowen, 2023: 1994-1995). Their campaign is what some view as aggressive attacks on art, raising critics about the alignment of their goals with the objection of preservation of these institutions (Giannini and Bowen, 2023: 1986). A distinctive aspect of contemporary political activism, particularly in the UK, is the paradoxical embrace of criminalization, evident in groups like Just Stop Oil. This shift, where arrest becomes

an integral part of the action itself, challenges conventional notions of dissent and criminalization (Rossdale, 2019; as cited in Cristiano et al., 2023: 116).

While maintaining independence, XR has crucially played a major role in shaping climate activism for newer groups like Just Stop Oil. The intricate relationship between the climate movement and science grows deeper, with XR serving as a reference point for the emergence of movements like Just Stop Oil (Karnik Hinks and Rödder, 2023: 12). The group's emergence raises questions about its historical reliance on science as an authority and points at a potential shift toward a more politically driven focus. Additionally, the current political climate in the UK, as seen by industrial strikes across various sectors, creates the possibility of an alliance between the climate movement and labor movements in pursuit of a shared vision of climate justice (Karnik Hinks and Rödder, 2023: 12).

Just Stop Oil's methods employ non-violent tactics causing substantial public disruption, primarily aiming to raise awareness of the climate crisis and put pressure on the UK government for stricter regulations (Saltmarsh, 2022; Gayle, 2022a). Their methods include a variety of actions. They target oil terminals and major thoroughfares to interrupt operations and disrupt services. Notable instances include blockades at pivotal oil terminals in England in April 2022, disrupting fuel distribution (Webster and Smyth, 2022). Just Stop Oil disrupts significant sporting events like the British Grand Prix, the World Snooker Championship, and prominent rugby and cricket matches, pushing these events into the spotlight and sparking dialogues regarding the convergence of sports and environmental concerns (Sutcliffe, 2023; BBC, 2023). Lastly, their protests extend to art galleries and museums, with some protestors resorting to affixing themselves to artworks or defacing frames. These actions incite controversy, with arguments positing that they overshadow the pressures of the climate crisis (BBC, 2022; Gayle, 2022b). Just Stop Oil operates with a decentralized structure. Local, self-governing groups ("blocs") collaborate and share resources sans formal leadership, rendering the organization more flexible and adaptable (Lynskey, 2022).

The efficacy of disruptive strategies employed within the climate movement creates discussions. Just Stop Oil's slow marches, disrupting daily life in London over twelve weeks, become a focal point of this discourse (Thomas-Walters and Young, 2024: 1). This debate highlights the necessity for targeted actions against entities with

the authority to implement change, challenging the conventional belief that movements must secure majority approval to achieve success (Thomas-Walters and Young, 2024: 3-5). However, while Just Stop Oil garners public support for their cause, their disruptive techniques, particularly the destruction of artworks, draw substantial criticism. Some contend that these actions alienate potential allies and divert attention from the urgency of the climate crisis (Feldman, 2022; Townsend, 2022). Moreover, their endeavors often conclude in arrests and potential legal outcomes for the involved protestors (Keay, 2022).

Just Stop Oil confronts a shifting financial landscape. While reliant on donations, certain high-profile donors, doubting the efficacy of their methods, have withdrawn their backing (Vince, 2023). Even those aligned with their objectives are disconcerted by more controversial actions, such as the soup-throwing incident at Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* (Thomas, 2023).

In June 2024, Just Stop Oil activists targeted a private airfield at Stansted Airport, where they believed Taylor Swift's private jet was parked. Two activists, Jennifer Kowalski and Cole Macdonald, sprayed orange paint on several private jets to protest the use of fossil fuels and call for an emergency treaty to end fossil fuel extraction and burning by 2030. The activists were arrested on suspicion of criminal damage and interference with the use or operation of national infrastructure. This protest aimed to draw attention to the luxurious lifestyles of the wealthy, which activists argue contribute disproportionately to climate change (Lee, 2024; Meighan, 2024).

Just Stop Oil has faced significant legal challenges throughout its campaign. The UK government's Public Order Act, implemented in 2023, increased police powers to arrest protesters and imposed harsher penalties for actions like obstructing roads and locking onto objects. Despite these measures, Just Stop Oil's activism has kept climate issues in the public eye, forcing ongoing discussions about the UK's fossil fuel policies (Barradale, 2023; ITV News, 2023b)

The group's actions have sparked considerable debate about disruptive activism in the public's eye. While some praise their commitment to highlighting the climate crisis, others criticize their methods as overly disruptive. Nevertheless, Just Stop Oil

remains steadfast in its mission to compel urgent governmental action on climate change (Barradale, 2023; ITV News, 2023b).

While Extinction Rebellion, Fridays for Future, Last Generation, and Just Stop Oil all fall under the umbrella of youth-led climate activism, their approaches diverge in strategy and target. XR, known for its large-scale, often disruptive protests, aims to bring the climate crisis to the forefront of public consciousness and disrupt business as usual. FFF, spearheaded by Greta Thunberg, leverages the power of youth by mobilizing students through school strikes, demanding concrete action from political leaders. Last Generation and Just Stop Oil take a more targeted approach, employing direct action to prevent fossil fuel extraction or transportation through occupations and blockades.

Measuring the success of these movements is complex. While none have single-handedly reversed climate change, they have undeniably gained significant public attention and media coverage. XR's disruptive tactics have sparked debates about the necessity of civil disobedience in the climate fight. FFF has arguably had the most significant impact on policy discussions, with school strikes inspiring similar movements worldwide and influencing climate agendas. Last Generation and Just Stop Oil, though newer groups, have successfully disrupted fossil fuel operations and highlighted public dependence on these resources (Koc, 2023; Reuters, 2022b).

Public opinion on these movements is varied. Some support their passion and commitment, while others view their tactics as disruptive or attention-seeking. There's ongoing debate about the appropriate level of disruption necessary to address the climate crisis. However, there's no denying the impact these youth-led movements have had on the global conversation about climate change. They have forced a reevaluation of priorities and ignited a sense of urgency in demanding action from governments and corporations. Their diverse approaches highlight the multifaceted nature of the climate movement, showcasing the determination of a generation demanding a sustainable future.

The following table provides a comparative overview of the movements discussed above. It highlights their foundational details, primary demands, missions, areas of operation, tactics, and notable events. The diverse strategies and priorities of

these movements offer insights into their unique contributions to global climate activism.

Table 2: Descriptive Information Regarding XR, FFF, LG, JSO

Name	Extinction Rebellion (XR)	Fridays for Future (FFF)	Last Generation (LG)	Just Stop Oil (JSO)
Foundation	2018, UK	2018, Sweden	2021, Germany	2022, UK
Primary Demands	Government must declare a climate and ecological emergency, and act now to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025.	Immediate action to address climate change, following the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C.	Urgent measures to combat climate change, including adherence to the Paris Agreement and achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.	End all new fossil fuel licenses and funding, transition to renewable energy, and reduce carbon emissions.
Mission	Push for climate emergency declarations; citizens' assemblies for climate justice.	Demand urgent climate action for climate justice.	Immediate action on climate change, focusing on governmental accountability.	End new fossil fuel projects and drive transition to renewable energy.
Area of Operation	Global	Global	Local branches operating under one big network	Local branches operating under one big network
Tactics	Non-violent civil disobedience—mass disruptions, occupying public spaces.	School strikes every Friday; global climate strikes.	Civil disobedience, road blockades, targeted actions on energy infrastructure, and recently, running for EU Parliament.	Direct action, public disruption, and strong media engagement.
Major Events	April 2019 London Occupation: Led to UK Parliament declaring a climate emergency.	March 2019, Global Climate Strike: 1.4 million participants across 125 countries.	Aug 2021, Hunger Strikes: Hunger strike in Berlin, demanding a meeting with German political leaders.	October 2022, Art Gallery Protests: High-profile art protests (i.e., van Gogh's "Sunflowers").
	April 2023, "The Big One": Mobilized over 60,000 participants in a family-friendly protest.	Sep 2022-2024, Earth Day Protests: Ongoing annual strikes for climate justice.	Jan 2024, Shift In Tactics: Shifted tactics from road blockades to targeting fossil fuel infrastructure.	Aug 2024, Protest at Stansted: Targeted protest at Stansted Airport, criticizing luxury carbon footprints.

CHAPTER FOUR

ENVIRONMENTAL YOUTH ACTIVIST GROUPS' DIALOGUE WITH IGOs

The interaction between youth-led activist groups and IGOs is a complex and multifaceted dynamic, deeply influenced by the groups' tactics, visibility, and international recognition. As the climate crisis intensifies, these interactions play a crucial role in shaping global environmental policies and actions. However, the nature and extent of these interactions can vary significantly among different activist groups.

Youth-led movements have emerged as powerful voices advocating for urgent climate action. These groups, characterized by their passionate and often radical approaches, aim to hold leaders accountable and demand systemic changes. However, the response from IGOs, particularly from influential entities such as the United Nations, is not uniform and is often contingent upon the perceived legitimacy and methods of these groups.

Fridays for Future (FFF), founded by Greta Thunberg in 2018, epitomizes a youth-led movement that has garnered substantial international recognition and engagement. The group's emphasis on peaceful, non-disruptive protests and its ability to mobilize millions of young people globally has led to significant attention from various United Nations officials and bodies. FFF's strategy of aligning its messaging with scientific consensus and leveraging social media for widespread outreach has positioned it as a credible and influential advocate within the climate action arena. Consequently, FFF enjoys considerable interaction with IGOs, exemplified by invitations to high-profile climate conferences, opportunities to address global leaders, and active participation in UN climate initiatives.

In contrast, other youth-led groups such as Extinction Rebellion (XR), Last Generation, and Just Stop Oil adopt more unconventional and often disruptive tactics to draw attention to the climate emergency. These groups utilize methods such as civil disobedience, public disruptions, and direct action to underscore the urgency of their demands. While these tactics are effective in generating media coverage and public debate, they also attract controversy and can lead to legal consequences. As a result, their engagement with IGOs, including the United Nations, is markedly different.

Extinction Rebellion, known for its dramatic and highly visible protests, such as blocking major roads and occupying public spaces, emphasizes the need for immediate and radical systemic change. Despite its global reach and significant public presence, XR faces challenges in establishing formal interactions with IGOs. The disruptive nature of its actions often leads to a perception of illegitimacy among institutional actors, resulting in minimal official response or encouragement from the United Nations.

Similarly, Last Generation and Just Stop Oil, groups focused on direct interventions to halt climate-destructive activities, encounter limited recognition from IGOs. Their strategies, while effective in spotlighting critical issues, do not align with the more diplomatic and incremental approach preferred by many international organizations. Consequently, these groups experience negligible interaction with UN officials and bodies, highlighting a significant gap in the engagement between radical climate activists and global governance structures.

The divergent levels of interaction between youth-led activist groups and IGOs have profound implications for the global climate movement. While groups like Fridays for Future benefit from their recognition and engagement with international bodies, enabling them to influence policy discussions and decisions, other groups face marginalization despite their substantial contributions to raising climate awareness. This disparity underscores the need for a more inclusive approach by IGOs, one that acknowledges and integrates diverse activist strategies and voices.

Understanding the dynamics of interaction between youth-led activist groups and IGOs is essential for fostering a more collaborative and effective global response to the climate crisis. By examining the experiences of different groups, we can gain insights into the opportunities and challenges faced by young climate activists and the critical role of international recognition and support in advancing their goals.

4.1. EXTINCTION REBELLION

Extinction Rebellion has established itself as a movement that relies on disruptive tactics to challenge the status quo in climate governance. XR's interactions

with global institutions have evolved over time. This section explores XR's early engagements with the UN, and its confrontational actions at key international events.

4.1.1. Early Relations with the UN: IPCC Report and Impact of 2019 London Occupations

After Extinction Rebellion was officially established in May 2018 in the UK, the movement quickly made headlines with its bold and innovative tactics. In October 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change of the UN released a critical report highlighting the severe impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. This report showed the urgent need for measures to combat climate change and catalyzed XR's future activities. Finding that the IPCC report aligned closely with XR's message and provided a scientific foundation for its demands, XR leveraged the report to amplify its calls for government action, organizing protests and raising public awareness about the warnings from climate scientists (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2018a; Nicholson, 2021).

The IPCC report was widely covered in the media and brought a renewed sense of urgency to the current climate discourse. XR used the report to bolster its campaigns, emphasizing the necessity of immediate and comprehensive action to mitigate the effects of climate change. The report also influenced other environmental groups and activists, further spurring the global climate movement (Nicholson, 2021). The scientific validation provided a strong foundation for XR's demands (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2018b) and helped amplify their message. Following the release of the report, XR saw a substantial increase in support, donations, and active participation in their protests and campaigns (STV News, 2021).

On October 31, 2018, shortly after the IPCC report's release, XR officially declared a "Declaration of Rebellion" against the UK government at Parliament Square (Extinction Rebellion, 2019). This event was the beginning of a series of high-profile civil disobedience actions aimed at pressuring the government to acknowledge the ecological emergency and take immediate action. XR's demands included the government telling the truth about the climate crisis, enacting legally binding policies

to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2025, and creating a national Citizens' Assembly to oversee these changes (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2024b).

The report also influenced XR's strategic approach. They organized large-scale, non-violent civil disobedience actions, such as the blockage of major bridges in London in November 2018 and the occupation of key commercial areas in April 2019. These actions were designed to force the authorities into a dilemma: either tolerate the disruption or arrest thousands of protesters, thereby drawing more public attention to the climate crisis (Saunders et al., 2020). While there were no formal endorsements from the political bodies, XR's activities have contributed to the climate discourse in other ways. The British Parliament declared a climate emergency in May 2019, following XR's April protests, possibly indicating a significant political impact from XR (BBC, 2019). However, UN and EU bodies have generally maintained a focus on broader policy frameworks and climate agreements rather than responding to specific protest movements.

4.1.2. European Parliament Elections

In April and May 2019, XR used the European Parliament elections as a means to broadcast its message on climate issues (Taylor M., 2019). Many European activists mobilized to encourage voters to support action on climate change, this strategic move aimed to influence EU policies from within by ensuring the election of environmentally conscious representatives (Calderwood, 2019). The elections saw a significant increase in the Green Party's influence, implying a growing public concern over climate change (Chadwick, 2019). This period was referred to as the 'Green Wave' in multiple resources. (Hurst, 2019; Stone, 2019). The May 2019 European Parliament elections were a crucial moment for XR and other climate activists, who saw the elections as an opportunity to push for stronger environmental policies.

In the 2019 elections, the Greens/European Free Alliance (EFA) increased their number of seats in constitutive sessions from 50 in 2014 to 74, reflecting a substantial rise in voter support across Europe. This success was particularly notable in Germany where the Greens achieved 20.5% of the vote. The Green Wave extended to other countries as well, including Denmark, Austria, and Ireland, demonstrating widespread

public concern over climate issues and a desire for stronger environmental policies (European Parliament, n.d.; Green World, 2019).

XR played a crucial role in mobilizing voters and raising awareness about climate issues during the elections. Their actions, alongside other climate movements like Fridays for Future, contributed to this increased support for green policies and candidates. However, despite these gains, the political climate has become more challenging, with increased resistance to green policies from various political factions and industries (Euractiv, 2023; Smith I., 2024).

4.1.3. Meeting with COP Officials and Other Activities during COP25

Later in 2019, during the COP25 summit in Madrid, XR representatives met with UN officials to discuss the climate emergency, emphasizing the need for authentic cooperation and immediate action to address the crisis. The key representatives from XR included Skeena Rathor, Tim Crosland, and Marc Lopatin. They met with the team of advisers supporting the COP president and Chilean environment minister, Carolina Schmidt. Both parties agreed that the current process was not effectively addressing the planetary emergency and emphasized the need for a radical shift in the narrative surrounding the climate and ecological crises (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2019b).

The XR representatives presented their three global demands and highlighted the historical divisions in UN talks regarding responsibility and equity between the Global North and South. They stressed the importance of coming together across these differences to address the climate crisis comprehensively. The discussion also included the need for deep collaboration and systems transformation to protect the interdependent web of life (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2019b). Additionally, Extinction Rebellion, alongside the indigenous group Minga, took part in actions to demand climate justice for the Amazon. These included symbolic protests, such as installing a yellow boat at the COP25 entrance and blocking roads to draw attention to the plight of the Amazon and its defenders (Extinction Rebellion, 2019a).

4.1.4. UN Secretary-General's Statement

In September 2019, millions of people worldwide participated in the Global Climate Strike, making it one of the largest climate mobilizations in history. The strikes were supported by various environmental groups, including XR and Fridays for Future (Weston et al, 2019). On October 7, 2019, the International Rebellion began and involved coordinated actions in over 70 countries. In London, the protests led to more than 1,000 arrests as activists blocked roads, bridges, and public spaces, including financial districts. Demonstrations also took place in major cities like Paris, Berlin, New York, and Sydney, drawing significant media attention and public discourse on climate crisis (Chadwick and Beswick, 2019). The protests received substantial media coverage where the group was mentioned more than 70,000 times on the internet in 2019 (Taylor J., 2022; Discover Society, 2019). XR has been praised for raising awareness and pushing for immediate climate action, as well as being criticized for its disruptive tactics (Taylor J., 2022).

In April 2021, during the virtual climate summit by U.S. President Joe Biden, UN Secretary-General António Guterres delivered a call to action in response to the climate protests and the global environmental movement. Guterres urged immediate and concrete measures to address the climate crisis. He emphasized that the world was on a “red alert” for climate change and stressed the need for a “green planet” to ensure a sustainable future. He called for a global coalition to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and called all countries to submit more ambitious climate action plans (United Nations, 2021b).

Stating that “Young people are pushing their elders to do what is right”, Guterres’ address (United Nations, 2021b) was a direct response to the heightened climate activism and growing public pressure from movements like XR, aligning grassroots movements and high-level international leadership.

4.1.5. Protest at European Commission Headquarters and Environmental Crime Directive Revision

In June 2022, XR activists staged a protest at the European Commission's Berlaymont building in Brussels. Activists from multiple EU countries glued themselves to the entrance doors to draw attention to the need for the criminalization of ecocide, aiming to pressure the European Commission to include this issue on the European Council's agenda in light of the insufficient revision of the Environmental Crime Directive in December 2021 (European Commission, 2021). Once more, XR was aiming to hold powerful institutions accountable and push for legal frameworks that protect the environment from destruction (Brussels Reporter, 2022; Belga News Agency, 2022).

XR members, reminded the urgency of addressing biodiversity loss, stating, “We don't have time to wait because biodiversity loss is going on and on... we need to start acting” and underlined the necessity of civil disobedience: “if you want to be heard, there aren't many options but to use civil disobedience” (Guillot, 2022).

By 2023, there was consistent pressure from XR and other environmental groups for the Environmental Crime Directive to include ‘ecocide’ as a crime. XR expressed frustration with this omission and highlighted that there was an ongoing struggle to have ecocide recognized as a crime under EU law (Euractiv, 2023). On 20 May 2024, the European Commission addressed several objectives with the new directive, such as clarifying terms used in the definitions of environmental crimes, bringing new environmental crime sectors under its scope, and establishing more defined penalties for offenders. The directive also sought to enhance cross-border investigations and prosecutions, improve data collection, and strengthen national enforcement mechanisms (European Commission, 2024; European Commission, 2024b).

While XR and other groups managed to raise significant awareness and even saw a surge in the Green Party's influence initially, the political landscape has since experienced some backlash. During this time, there has been a noticeable pushback against green policies, with some EU ministers calling for delays in implementing environmental legislation such as the deforestation law (Smith I., 2024). This was a

broader trend of growing opposition from certain political factions and industries affected by stringent environmental regulations.

In response to this backlash, XR and other climate activists have increased their efforts to keep climate issues at the forefront. They have organized more frequent and larger protests, aiming to apply direct pressure on politicians and policymakers. For example, in the lead-up to the 2019 elections, XR activists launched campaigns across multiple European countries to highlight the importance of electing environmentally-focused representatives (Smith I., 2024).

Findings about XR will be discussed in detail later in comparison with other movements. It might yet be concluded that despite some attempts at dialogue such as meetings with high-level officials during COP25, XR's demands for urgent and systemic change often clash with the slow-paced and consensus-driven nature of international governance. While some high-level officials such as UN Secretary-General António Guterres have acknowledged the importance of youth-driven climate action, XR's confrontational approach limits its involvement in formal policymaking processes. XR exemplifies a predominantly conflictual relationship with IGOs, as defined by Johnson's 4Cs taxonomy. XR's reliance on civil disobedience, public disruptions, and direct actions positions it in direct opposition to the bureaucratic and slow processes of IGOs. These confrontational tactics aim to stress systemic failures in addressing the climate crisis but often result in strained interactions with institutional actors. For example, XR's protests such as blocking major roads and occupying public spaces have resulted in major public attention yet failed to create continuous cooperative engagement with IGOs. This lack of formal recognition shows the difficulty of aligning XR's radical approach with the cautious strategies of IGOs.

4.2. FRIDAYS FOR FUTURE

Fridays for Future is a symbol of youth-led climate advocacy. It emphasizes the importance of cooperation and visibility in global policymaking. This section examines FFF's strategic presence at high-level platforms such as the World Economic Forum and its significant milestones, including its global strikes, recognition at the European Parliament, and the winning of the UN's Champions of the Earth Award.

The discussion also highlights FFF's role in global summits like COP26 and its partnerships with organizations such as Ver.di, showcasing its efforts to influence institutional policies.

4.2.1. World Economic Forum in Davos

In January 2019, Greta Thunberg attended the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland, where she delivered a speech urging world leaders to take action on climate change. Greta's participation at the WEF was one of her first major international engagements, bringing the voices of young climate activists in light of global economic discussions. Her renowned speech titled “Our House is on Fire” had a clear message: the time for inaction was over, and leaders needed to treat the climate crisis as an existential threat (Thunberg, 2019b; Workman, 2019).

During her world-famous speech, Greta emphasized that the climate crisis was not just an environmental issue but a fundamental challenge that required urgent attention and substantial changes in policies and lifestyles (Thunberg, 2019b). She stated her concerns: “I don’t want you to be hopeful. I want you to panic... I want you to act as if the house was on fire because it is... Our house is on fire. At Davos, people like to talk about success, but financial success has come with a price tag, and on the climate, we have failed. And unless we recognize the failures of our system, there will be unspoken suffering” (Thunberg, 2019b). United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, at the closing of the forum, had also underlined that multilateralism is the only solution to tackle climate change, emphasizing the need for support from intergovernmental organizations, private businesses, civil society, and the scientific community (Guterres, 2019a).

4.2.2. UK Strikes, European Parliament Address and the First Global Climate Strike

Following the climate march on February 15, Thunberg delivered a speech in Brussels, where she addressed the European Parliament, pressuring European leaders to take more decisive action against climate change (Rodriguez, 2019). She demanded

that the political elite start listening to the scientists. Her speech gained applause and support from many members of the European Parliament, highlighting the recognition of the climate crisis among European policymakers (Rodriguez, 2019).

The reactions from EU bodies were generally supportive. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, influenced by Thunberg's speech, announced a substantial increase in the EU's climate change budget, proposing that every fourth euro spent within the EU budget from 2021 to 2027 be dedicated to combating climate change. This commitment was seen as a direct response to the growing pressure from the youth-led climate movement (Rodriguez, 2019).

Greta's address to the European Parliament positively influenced the reputation of the Fridays For Future movement, inspiring students and activists worldwide to intensify their climate protests. Her speech highlighted the importance of youth voices in the climate debate and underscored the need for intergenerational solidarity in addressing environmental issues (Oroschakoff, 2019; Rodriguez, 2019).

In 2019, following the successful Global Climate Strike on March 15 with more than 1 million participants, UN Secretary-General António Guterres acknowledged the impact of climate activism, stating, “Tens of thousands of young people took to the streets yesterday with a clear message to world leaders: act now to save our planet and our future from the climate emergency” (Guterres, 2019b). He emphasized the urgency of the situation, noting that the window of opportunity is closing and that climate delay is almost as dangerous as climate denial (Guterres, 2019b; Guterres, 2019c).

French President Emmanuel Macron responded to this sentiment at the 4th UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi, acknowledging the urgency of the youth and emphasizing the need for real, binding international rules to address the climate crisis (UNEP, 2019a). Macron stated, “The accounts we will have to render are immense, immense. And now our youth is urging us. They say we are not going fast enough. They are protesting, and rightfully so” (UNEP, 2019a).

4.2.3. Champions of the Earth Award to Fridays for Future

On September 20, 2019, FFF was honored with the United Nations' Champions of the Earth Award. This prestigious recognition was awarded to FFF for passionately

demanding urgent climate action from global leaders (UNEP, 2019b). The award acknowledged the significant influence and dedication of the movement in raising awareness about the climate crisis and mobilizing millions of people worldwide to take action.

The Champions of the Earth Award is the UN's highest environmental honor, recognizing individuals and organizations who have made outstanding contributions to the protection and restoration of the environment (UNEP, 2019b). By awarding FFF, the UN highlighted the critical role of youth activism in the global effort to combat climate change. The movement's success in organizing large-scale climate strikes and further illuminating the climate issue carries the importance of intergenerational solidarity in addressing environmental challenges (UNEP, 2019b). The FFF activists who were invited to receive the award rejected it on the stage, stating “Awards are for celebrating achievement, but the achievement we seek has not occurred. The world is in climate crisis, and actions of the United Nations are failing to stop it” (First-Arai, 2019).

4.2.4. UN Climate Action Summit

The UN Climate Action Summit 2019, convened by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, took place on September 23, 2019, at the UN Headquarters in New York. The summit aimed to accelerate global climate action bringing together world leaders, business executives, and civil society representatives to commit to more ambitious climate actions and policies. (United Nations, n.d.). As part of a series of events leading up to the UN Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit, the first UN Youth Climate Summit was held on September 21, 2019, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. This event served as a platform for young leaders to discuss their climate action solutions and engage with decision-makers (United Nations, 2019b).

Key speeches at the summit included those by Greta Thunberg and UN Secretary-General António Guterres. Greta Thunberg highlighted the unity and determination of the youth climate movement, stating, “We show that we are united and that we young people are unstoppable”. António Guterres acknowledged the significant responsibility of his generation and stressed the need for accountability to

ensure a sustainable future: “My generation has a huge responsibility. It is your generation that must make us be accountable to make sure that we don't betray the future of humankind” (United Nations, 2019c). Other notable speakers included such young climate activists as Komal Kumar from Fiji, Wanjui Njoroge from Kenya and Bruno Rodriguez of Argentina, who declared climate change the political and cultural crisis of our time, and called for an end to fossil fuels (United Nations, 2019b).

Two days later, on September 23, 2019, Greta Thunberg addressed the UN Climate Action Summit in New York, delivering her iconic “How dare you” speech (Thunberg, 2019d; Thunberg, 2019e). Greta Thunberg's speech at the UN Climate Action Summit was a powerful and emotional critique of world leaders' inaction on climate change. She stated, “You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words” and accused them of ignoring the science behind the climate crisis. She emphasized the gravity of the situation by saying, “We are in the beginning of a mass extinction and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth - how dare you!” (Thunberg, 2019e).

At the closing of the summit, Guterres acknowledged the critical role of youth in the climate movement and emphasized the need for concrete action. He stated, “This had to be a summit of action plans, not platitudes. I thank you for delivering. You understand that the climate emergency is the fight of our lives and for our lives. I thank young people around the world for leading the charge and holding my generation accountable. We have been losing the fight against climate crises, but the world is waking up. Pressure is building, momentum is growing, and action by action the tide is turning” (United Nations, 2019d).

During the protests at the summit, another prominent FFF activist, Luisa Neubauer, stated her frustrations with the inaction of the leaders worldwide, saying “It was bizarre, scandalous, how bad it was” about the German climate protection package, which proposed only a 10 euros-a-ton tax on CO₂. “Despite all of the demonstrations and lobbying, what came out wasn't even an attempt to meet the Paris Agreement. We had to explain to our supporters why we had expected results and didn't get them. There was a shift in spirit [in FFF circles]: from hopefulness to outrage” (Hockenos, 2020).

Later in the year, during COP25 in December 2019, Greta Thunberg delivered another speech that emphasized the need for immediate and decisive action to address the climate crisis. Her speech reminded that world leaders were failing to meet the necessary targets to mitigate climate change (Thunberg, 2019d).

UN Secretary-General António Guterres also expressed his disappointment with the outcomes of COP25. In a statement, he said, “I am disappointed with the results of COP25. The international community lost an important opportunity to show increased ambition on mitigation, adaptation and finance to tackle the climate crisis. But we must not give up, and I will not give up. I am more determined than ever to work for 2020 to be the year in which all countries commit to do what science tells us is necessary to reach carbon neutrality in 2050 and a no more than 1.5-degree temperature rise” (United Nations Climate Change News, 2019). Elizabeth May, former leader of the Green Party of Canada, addressed Thunberg's concerns by describing COP25 as a platform where countries negotiated loopholes rather than taking substantive climate action (May, 2019)

4.2.5. More Strikes and COP26

In the following years, FFF activists continued attending various international climate summits and meeting political leaders. On March 4, 2020, Greta Thunberg and other young climate activists met with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to discuss the European Green Deal's new law. The law, if passed, would make it a legal requirement for the EU to be carbon neutral by 2050. During the discussion, Thunberg reiterated her concerns about the insufficiency of the current climate measures, pressuring for more robust targets to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement (BBC, 2020).

During the meeting, Thunberg stated “We will not be satisfied with anything less than a science-based pathway... Nature doesn't bargain and you cannot make 'deals' with physics” (The Brussels Times, 2020), underlining that the climate law is only a “surrender” to the climate change (BBC, 2020). Von der Leyen, on the other hand, stated that the new law is “the heart of the European Green Deal”, and it is the translation of the EU's “political commitment” (The Brussels Times, 2020).

Next year, during the COP26 summit in Glasgow in November 2021, FFF mobilized around 100,000 participants for climate protests (BBC, 2021). Indigenous activists and youth leaders, including Vanessa Nakate from Uganda and Mitzi Jonelle Tan from the Philippines, participated in the protests and reiterated Thunberg's message. They highlighted the ongoing destruction caused by policies favoring fossil fuel industries and the urgent need for inclusive and genuine climate action (Boyle, 2021).

Once again, Guterres shared his disappointment with the overall outcomes of COP26, aligning with Thunberg's critique, referring to global fossil fuel consumption as “We are digging our own graves” (United Nations, 2021). Various other political figures and leaders also related to Thunberg's speech. For instance, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson acknowledged the necessity to move from “aspirations to actions” to tackle climate change (Rowlatt, 2021).

Numerous human rights and climate activists criticized COP26 for greenwashing. They argued that the promises made by world leaders were often empty and failed to address the urgent needs of the most affected communities. The call for a human rights approach to climate action emphasized the necessity for real, systemic change rather than superficial commitments (Wu, 2021).

4.2.6. Recent Strikes and Initiatives

In February 2024, a notable collaboration between the Ver.di Union and Fridays for Future took place in Germany, where bus and train drivers joined forces with climate activists for a strike. Ver.di, short for Vereinte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft, is the United Services Trade Union in Germany (Hughes, 2024). It is one of the largest independent, democratic trade unions in the world, representing approximately two million workers across various sectors, including public services, education, health care, transport, and more. Ver.di is committed to advocating for better working conditions, fair wages, and the rights of employees. The union plays a significant role in negotiating labor agreements and organizing strikes to achieve these objectives. The collaboration between Ver.di and FFF was a strategic alliance aimed at highlighting the interconnectedness of labor

rights and environmental issues. This collaboration brought together bus and train drivers, represented by Ver.di, and climate activists from FFF to participate in a strike (Hughes, 2024; Quecke, 2024)

In addition to local and global strikes, there are some ongoing initiatives by FFF such as the TalksForFuture Webinars and the EU Citizens' Action on Climate Emergency. The TalksForFuture Webinars are a series of regular online discussions featuring climate activists and experts, such as Naomi Klein, a prominent ecofeminist activist, and UN representatives. These webinars provide a platform for sharing knowledge and strategies on effective climate action. The EU Citizens' Action on Climate Emergency is an ongoing initiative that seeks to compel the European Commission to address climate issues through direct democratic engagement. This initiative aims to mobilize citizens to participate in shaping climate policies and ensuring that the EU takes solidified actions to combat climate change (Fridays For Future, 2020; European Citizens' Initiative, 2019).

In early 2024, the European Commission is set to present a proposal for a 2040 greenhouse gas reduction target. This initiative follows the EU's commitment to be climate-neutral by 2050, with an interim goal for 2030. Climate Commissioner Wopke Hoekstra has indicated a push for a 90% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2040. This proposal will ignite significant debate within the European Parliament and among member states, influencing legislative and policy directions for the next decade. The FFF movement has been instrumental in maintaining public pressure on the EU to adopt more ambitious climate targets, leveraging their widespread grassroots support and global visibility to keep climate action (Wettengel, 2023; Wettengel, 2024). Through mass protests and engaging in direct dialogues with policymakers, FFF has helped frame climate targets as critical electoral issues (Wettengel, 2024).

FFF maintains a complex relationship with IGOs, showcasing characteristics of both cooperation and elements of co-optation under Johnson's taxonomy. As a movement that employs peaceful protest tactics, FFF has gained significant formal recognition from IGOs. This cooperative relationship is evident in FFF's frequent invitations to high-profile climate events, such as the UN Climate Action Summit, where Greta Thunberg's speeches have directly influenced global discussions on climate policy.

However, the relationship continues to carry tension. The limited concrete outcomes from these engagements often lead to dissatisfaction among FFF activists, who view many IGO commitments as insufficient. This dynamic suggests elements of co-optation, where IGOs use FFF's visibility to enhance their legitimacy without fully addressing the movement's demands for transformative change. Nevertheless, FFF's ability to sustain global mobilization highlights its potential to act as a bridge between grassroots activism and institutional climate governance.

4.3. LAST GENERATION

Last Generation combines direct action with an increasing emphasis on formal political engagement, which reflects a dual strategy of grassroots disruption and institutional participation. This section delves into LG's high-profile demonstrations, including its protests at the ICC and Berlin ePrix, and the resulting legal and political consequences. It also explores LG's recent shift toward engaging with political structures to push for systemic change.

4.3.1. Radical Protest and Its Discontents

Throughout their active years, Last Generation continued their protests in various ways. Consequently, they found themselves facing criminal accusations. In February 2023, Last Generation activists staged a protest near the ICC in Berlin, blocking a motorway and causing significant disruptions. The protest led to confrontations with motorists and law enforcement, gaining widespread media coverage and public debate about the effectiveness and ethics of such tactics (Berliner Kurier, 2023). Similarly, in the last half of April 2023, LG activists performed a series of 10-day protests where they glued themselves to roads and blocked traffic; and blocked and delayed a Formula E in Race in Berlin (Frost, 2023; Smith F., 2023; Reuters, 2023). On 28 April, on their Twitter account, @AufstandLastGen, they posted: "This morning we again blocked many traffic junctions in the city center. In doing so we oppose the government's breach of the constitution, which does not protect our livelihoods." (Letzte Generation, 2023c).

Activists that are detained by the police can only be held for 48 hours under imprisonment in Berlin, however, in states like Bavaria, the detention laws allow for a period of detention up to 30 days. The discussion around the most effective strategy varies across the opinions of different police officers, while officers such as Rainer Wendt, head of Deutsche Polizeigewerkschaft, police trade union suggests a Bavarian approach to the arrests; Benjamin Jendro, a Berlin police, stated that they “don’t want Bavarian-type rules” but alternative ways of handling protests were necessary (Frost, 2023). This divergence in approaches reflects the variety of dynamics between youth activist groups and state authorities, showcasing the differing perspectives towards their methods and objectives.

Only a month later, in several states across Germany, the police raided the homes of 15 climate activists, two of whom were previously accused of attempting to sabotage an oil pipeline between Italy and Germany (EFE Noticias, 2023, Al Jazeera, 2023). During the raids, the group’s website was shut down and accounts were confiscated. Additionally, the activists were accused of “organizing a fundraising campaign to finance further crimes that have so far collected at least 1.4 million euros in donations” and forming a criminal organization according to EFE Comunica and the Guardian (EFE Noticias, 2023; Connolly, 2023).

During one of his press releases in the following days, Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesman for Secretary-General Guterres, responded to a German journalist’s question of if he found the latest imprisonment and treatment the activist group received from the police acceptable; stating that peaceful demonstration is a fundamental right in democracies, while the police have the responsibility to uphold the law (United Nations, 2023a; United Nations, 2023b). Similarly, Guterres, during another press conference at the United Nations Headquarters in June of the same year, mentions the “trampling” of the climate activists and says he supports every type of peaceful protest for climate action; while highlighting that he disagrees with any violent form, either coming from the activists or the police (United Nations, 2023c).

In June 2023, Last Generation activists launched a campaign specifically targeting wealthy individuals, accusing them of disproportionately contributing to climate change (Bateman, 2023; Lawson, 2023; Japan Times, 2023). The protestors sprayed orange paint on private jets and yachts, holding up signs that read “You

consume, others suffer”, in locations like Sylt in Germany and Geneva in Switzerland (Lawson, 2023; Japan Times, 2023). LG activists argued that luxury practices, such as owning private jets and yachts, contribute heavily to emissions and environmental harm, claiming that their reckless actions are affecting everyone (Bateman, 2023; Lawson, 2023; Japan Times, 2023). LG, shortly prior to their protest, had announced they would target the rich for their next action, stating that “every single day, the super-rich are destroying the foundations of our lives” (Wehrmann, 2023b).

In response to these actions, the conservative opposition party heavily criticized the group’s actions, while Chancellor Olaf Scholz and the Green Party distanced themselves from the group (Bateman, 2023). Only a few days before the protest, debates had sparked following a proposed ban on private jets that was ultimately ruled out by the EU Transport Commission (Limb, 2023b).

4.3.2. Announcement of Shift in Tactics and Participation in European Parliament Elections

In January 2024, the group announced that it was moving from its classical tactic of “gluing” and was seeking new ways in its actions (Kurmayer, 2024). Following the Federal Election Committee's approval for Last Generation to participate in the European Parliament elections, the group registered under the name “Shaking up Parliament – Voice of the Last Generation”, claiming they want to “bring the voice of the street, the voice of the movement into Parliament” (Neubert, 2024). The lowered voting age to 16 in European elections offers an advantageous demographic for the Last Generation, enabling broader youth participation and support for their cause (Zauner, 2024). Additionally, the absence of a threshold clause in EU elections offers Last Generation a favorable environment to secure representation in parliament, although with uncertain implications for the broader political landscape (Neubert, 2024; Zauner, 2024).

In the latest European elections held in June 2024, the Last Generation did not win any seats in the European Parliament. The election results showed a shift towards more traditional political groups, with the European People's Party (EPP), the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), and the European

Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) securing the majority of seats. Newer and smaller political movements like the Last Generation did not manage to secure enough votes to gain representation (European Parliament, 2024).

The decision to contest in the EU parliamentary elections represents a strategic shift for Last Generation, showing a departure from its earlier focus on street protests and direct actions. Last Generation's participation in EU parliamentary elections offers a unique opportunity to influence climate policy at the supranational level and engage with policymakers on critical environmental issues. By leveraging its grassroots support base and disruptive campaign tactics, Last Generation can amplify its advocacy efforts and push for more ambitious climate action measures within the EU framework. However, the practicality and representativeness of their initiative, as well as their compatibility with existing democratic structures and legal frameworks could pose a challenge (Rucht, 2023). Without a detailed political program, Last Generation's entry into the EU Parliament appears more as an experimental endeavor aimed at disrupting the political discourse and challenging mainstream narratives on climate action. While the EU provides a platform for addressing transnational environmental issues and shaping regional policies, Last Generation's engagement with IGOs necessitates strategic alignment with broader policy agendas and collaborative approaches to effect meaningful change (Der Spiegel, 2023).

LG occupies a unique position in its interactions with IGOs, blending elements of conflict and emerging competition within Johnson's taxonomy. Initially, LG challenged the policies supported by IGOs through its disruptive protests and direct interventions, creating a conflictual dynamic. Through these actions, LG was committed to protesting against systemic inaction but has often faced limited formal engagement with international bodies. However, LG's recent shift towards political participation, such as contesting EU Parliamentary elections, shows an attempt to influence policy from within the system. This strategic evolution suggests a potential for competitive engagement in the future, as the movement seeks to transition from external pressure to institutional rivalry.

4.4. JUST STOP OIL

In November 2023, after several harsh punishments of Just Stop Oil members by the UK police, interventions by the former UN special rapporteurs, including Ian Fry and Michel Forst, shed light on the challenges faced by environmental defenders. These rapporteurs are non-paid, independent human rights experts that are elected to report and advise on human rights to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, n.d.). In his publications, Ian Fry expressed concern about the severity of sentences handed to Just Stop Oil protesters for peaceful protest activities, highlighting potential breaches of international law and the risk of silencing public concerns about the environment (Gayle, 2023b).

Similarly, Michel Forst condemned the UK's crackdown on environmental protests, citing “draconian” new laws, excessive restrictions on courtroom evidence, and civil injunctions that stamp on fundamental freedoms (Forst, 2024). Forst stated his concerns about the prosecution of peaceful protesters under regressive new laws and criticized harsh bail conditions imposed on climate activists. He also highlighted the negative framing of climate protesters in the media and political sphere (Laville, 2024).

On many occasions, Just Stop Oil refers to and shares speeches and press releases concerning climate action by government leaders and UN officials. This showcases Just Stop Oil's preference for collaborations with world leaders rather than their initial impression of aiming for only destruction. On the other hand, as far as this study's findings reached, there were no formal meetings or invitations from any intergovernmental bodies to JSO. Additionally, despite the fact that they face some of the harshest criminalization for activists in UK history, there do not seem to be any instances where these activists are mentioned in any official setting by political leaders. This could be due to the group being relatively recent, compared to the other three groups in this study, still being a relatively small group, they may not have been pressing enough to force or officially interact with governmental bodies as of yet. It might also be concluded that JSO represents a primarily conflictual relationship with IGOs, due to its uncompromising tactics and focus on disruption of the status quo. Its

actions often lead to clashes with governments and IGOs, which tend to prioritize gradual change over radical shifts. Unlike movements such as FFF, JSO has received minimal formal recognition from IGOs, a reflection of both its relatively recent emergence and its radical methods.

JSO's lack of formal invitations or collaborations with IGOs showcases its marginalized position. This dynamic reflects broader issues for highly disruptive movements, as their perceived legitimacy often fails to align with the institutional frameworks of IGOs. For better inclusion in the formal political processes, JSO could explore ways to reconsider its approach in a way that balances its disruptive tactics with opportunities for dialogue, which may open pathways to meaningful engagement. However, addressing this disconnect would also require IGOs to acknowledge the critical role of radical activism in highlighting systemic flaws.

An important approach to bridging such disconnect is the participation of these youth movements in COP summits. While FFF has established a visible presence in these spaces, delivering speeches and addressing global leaders, others like XR, LG, and JSO have adopted a more confrontational approach that limits formal participation. Table 3 provides an overview of the involvement of these movements in COP summits, highlighting their level of participation, key interactions, and overall impact. This comparison is crucial in underlining the varying degrees to which youth movements gain access to these platforms.

Table 3: Youth Movements' Participation in COP Summits

	Extinction Rebellion	Fridays for Future	Last Generation	Just Stop Oil
COP25 (2019)	Not a participant	Participated	Not formed yet	Not formed yet
COP26 (2021)	Not a participant	Participated	Not a participant	Not formed yet
COP25 (2022)	Participated	Participated	Not a participant	Not a participant
COP25 (2023)	Participated	Participated	Not a participant	Not a participant

Source: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2019; 2021b; 2022; 2023

4.5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The interplay between youth environmental movements and IGOs is multilayered and complex, surrounding varying degrees of engagement, challenges, and outcomes. These relationships can be analyzed through Johnson's 4Cs taxonomy—cooperation, co-optation, competition, and conflict—while also considering each movement's approach, key interactions, challenges faced, and overall impact on climate governance (see Table 4).

Fridays for Future has shown instances of cooperative engagement with IGOs. FFF leaders, particularly Greta Thunberg, have been invited to multiple high-profile events, including UN conferences and the EU Parliament, where she has delivered powerful speeches. These invitations indicate that IGOs recognize the importance of youth voices in climate discussions and suggest a willingness to cooperate. However, despite these engagements, FFF often finds that the outcomes do not meet their urgent demands for climate action. The commitments made by IGOs frequently fall short of what FFF deems necessary, resulting in continued dissatisfaction among its members.

Consequently, FFF's involvement in these events can be seen as a form of co-optation. By giving the movement a platform, IGOs acknowledge FFF's influence and attempt to integrate their perspectives into the broader climate dialogue. However, this recognition comes with limitations, as it might aim to silence FFF's more radical calls. Despite these opportunities for engagement, FFF continues to actively protest and criticize both governments and IGOs. This persistent activism indicates that co-optation does not successfully neutralize their efforts to push for more ambitious climate policies.

FFF frequently criticizes the lack of substantive action from IGOs, highlighting the inadequacies of current climate policies. In this sense, FFF is in constant conflict with IGOs, challenging the effectiveness of their policies and advocating for more robust measures to address the climate crisis.

Extinction Rebellion's relationship with IGOs is predominantly characterized by conflict. XR's strategy of civil disobedience and direct action aims to challenge the status quo and draw attention to the urgency of the climate crisis. This confrontational

approach is rooted in a belief that IGO policies are insufficiently ambitious and fail to address the climate emergency adequately.

It might be argued that there have been examples of cooperation, such as meetings with high-level IGO officials and indirect support from figures like UN Secretary-General António Guterres. However, these interactions have not significantly altered XR's radical approach. The movement maintains its disruptive tactics and radical demands, leading to frequent detainments and legal challenges. XR's actions and criticisms of IGO policies create a conflictual dynamic where they continuously push for more radical and immediate climate measures.

Just Stop Oil operates primarily within a conflictual dynamic. JSO's actions, which include direct interventions and civil disobedience, are designed to disrupt fossil fuel infrastructure and demand immediate action against fossil fuel dependency. These confrontational tactics position JSO against both governmental and IGO policies that continue to support or tolerate fossil fuel projects.

While JSO has received indirect recognition from special rapporteurs, this support does not extend to formal cooperation or co-optation. The movement's focus on aggressive direct action and the frequent detainment of its members highlight the clashing nature of its relationship with IGOs. JSO's approach showcases the urgency and desperation felt by many activists, who view radical disruption as necessary to provoke meaningful change.

Although not directly engaging with many of these activist groups, the UN seems to be recognizing the pivotal role of youth in climate action. Most recently, the UN has actively sought to collaborate with youth-led organizations. Initiatives such as the collaboration with UNICEF and the establishment of the UN Secretary-General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change exemplify the UN's effort to integrate youth perspectives into global climate governance structures (United Nations, 2023d; United Nations, 2023e). Similarly, on many occasions, Just Stop Oil refers to and shares speeches and press releases concerning climate action by government leaders and UN officials. This shows Just Stop Oil's preference for collaborations with world leaders rather than their initial impression of aiming for only destruction.

Lastly, Last Generation's relationship with IGOs provides a different outlet that is marked by conflict and emerging elements of competition. LG's focus on halting

climate-harming projects through their disobedience tactics, including blockades and public disruptions, emphasize their confrontational approach; placing them in direct opposition to established policies supported by IGOs. However, LG's attempt to enter the EU Parliament represents a notable shift towards formal political engagement. This move suggests a dual approach, where LG steers from disruptive activism toward efforts to influence policy from within the system. This political participation can be seen as a form of competition, where the movement seeks to embed its ideals within institutional frameworks while competing with the current political bodies.

Just like JSO, LG has also received indirect recognition and support from UN officials, such as comments from Guterres and Dujarric condemning police actions against peaceful protestors. This support highlights the broader acceptance of peaceful protest as a legitimate form of activism, even as LG continues to face detainment and criticism for its methods.

Table 4: Youth Movements-IGO Relations and Their Alignment with the 4Cs Taxonomy

Name	Extinction Rebellion (XR)	Fridays for Future (FFF)	Last Generation (LG)	Just Stop Oil (JSO)
Alignment with 4Cs Taxonomy	Conflict	Cooperation/Co-optation	Conflict/Competition	Conflict
Approach	Limited formal IGO engagement.	Frequent formal engagement.	Minimal IGO engagement; focuses on EU politics.	No formal IGO interaction.
Key Interaction	Meeting with UN officials during COP25.	Thunberg's speeches at World Economic Forum and European Parliament.	EU Parliament election campaign, "Shake up Parliament."	No formal IGO interaction.
Challenge	High criminalization, divisive public opinion.	Tension with IGOs over stronger demands.	Criminalization in Germany, polarized public perception.	Legal restrictions and societal pushback.
Impact	Pushed climate conversation in the UK.	Raised climate urgency and influenced IGO agendas.	Mixed support from German political factions.	Sparked debate on environmental radicalism.

The collaborative efforts among young people aim to empower them, providing them with the platform and resources to drive change at local, national, and

international levels, and represent a recognition of the transformative potential of youth-led activism. While these initiatives appear to represent progress toward incorporating youth perspectives into climate action, the UN's efforts to establish a separate and controlled youth organization, instead of engaging directly with the already existing grassroots movements, raises questions about its genuineness for inclusivity and its reluctance to engage with bottom-up initiatives.

While the aforementioned grassroots movements operate on principles of urgency, mobilization, and direct action, international diplomacy within the UN framework is characterized by complex negotiations, consensus-building, and long-term planning. This dichotomy often leads to tensions between the rapid pace of youth activism and the slower, more deliberative processes of international diplomacy. The urgency conveyed by XR, FFF, LG, and JSO often challenges the inactivity and incrementalism that can characterize international climate negotiations, highlighting the need for more ambitious, equitable, and immediate action.

Why some groups gain more recognition from the international bodies poses another area of discussion. Arguably, FFF steps out as the only youth movement among the respective groups, whose relationship with the UN and the EU has reached a certain degree of cooperation. As discussed in the first chapter of this research, there are different theories on why some NGOs tend to be at the forefront of the attention of IGOs. Explanations could be derived from the aforementioned scholars' attempts to understand the varying degrees of these relations:

One of the possible reasons that FFF draws more attention from IGOs is their non-disruptive method of protest. FFF's primary tactic of school strikes is seen as a peaceful and constructive form of advocacy, which stands in contrast to the more confrontational and disruptive strategies employed by movements like XR, JSO, and LG. IGOs are more welcoming towards NGOs that engage in non-conflictual advocacy, as Gordenker and Weiss (1995: 546-549) put it, as they pose less of a challenge to the authority and order maintained by these organizations.

FFF's approach of organizing school strikes, which involve students peacefully abstaining from classes to protest climate inaction, is less likely to be perceived as a direct threat to public order and safety. This non-disruptive nature makes FFF a more suitable partner for IGOs, which prefer to engage with groups that advocate for change

through constructive and orderly means. In contrast, the civil disobedience and direct action tactics of XR, JSO, and LG often involve blockades, sit-ins, and other forms of disruption that can lead to conflicts with law enforcement and governmental authorities. These confrontational tactics can make these groups less attractive partners for IGOs, which seek to maintain stability and order in their operations.

Additionally, legitimacy and international media attention are crucial factors in determining the influence and favorability of youth movements by IGOs. While Vabulas (2013) emphasizes the importance of the legitimacy and “friendliness” of the NGOs in their relations with the IGOs, Reimann (2006) underlines the role of media attention in their degree of influence, noting that movements with high media attention, coupled with a variety of other resources, have bigger platforms in the international political arena. FFF, particularly through the leadership of Greta Thunberg, has achieved significant global visibility and media attention. Thunberg’s speeches at major international forums, such as the UN and the EU Parliament, have elevated the movement’s profile and helped gain widespread support.

This high visibility, coupled with the non-radical image of FFF, is likely to have increased their perceived legitimacy. FFF is often viewed as a reasonable and rational advocate for climate action, making it an attractive partner for IGOs. The movement’s ability to mobilize large numbers of people globally, especially youth, further enhances their legitimacy and demonstrates the widespread support for their cause. In contrast, movements like XR, JSO, and LG, while also highly visible, are often perceived as more radical and extreme due to their disruptive tactics and confrontational approach. This perception can undermine their legitimacy in the eyes of IGOs and make them less favorable partners.

This type of media coverage and public perception might also be the reason behind the lack of positive engagement between the remaining youth groups. FFF has benefited from positive media framing, portraying Greta Thunberg as a passionate yet non-radical advocate for climate action. In contrast, XR, JSO, and LG have sometimes been portrayed as radical or extreme, in times as “climate terrorists”, affecting their perceived legitimacy and attractiveness as partners for IGOs. This negative framing can diminish the public’s support for these movements and make them less favorable partners for IGOs.

CONCLUSION

The intricate relationship between youth environmental movements and IGOs epitomizes the evolving nature of global governance. Movements like Extinction Rebellion (XR), Fridays for Future (FFF), Last Generation (LG), and Just Stop Oil (JSO) have become crucial actors in climate change discussions. These groups use mobilization, disruptive and innovative tactics, and social media to influence policies and public opinion, often pushing IGOs to take concrete actions.

These dynamics highlight the theoretical contribution of this study to understanding the role of youth environmental movements within global climate governance. By applying Johnson's 4Cs taxonomy—cooperation, co-optation, competition, and conflict—this research provides a clear framework to analyze how youth NGOs and IGOs interact. It shows how grassroots activism, through both collaborative and confrontational methods, can influence international climate policies and public opinion. The 4Cs framework not only categorizes these relationships but also helps explain the challenges and opportunities in connecting institutional governance with grassroots advocacy. The relationships between these youth movements and IGOs vary significantly, revealing different positions within Johnson's 4Cs taxonomy. Initially, all these movements sought cooperation with political bodies, as evidenced by their demands for more ambitious climate policies and greater inclusion in decision-making processes. However, as their voices were often unheard and their demands unmet, many resorted to disobedience and direct action, leading to their criminalization and further hindering their relationships with IGOs. Integrating Johnson's theory to these dynamics reveals different insights into such relationships.

FFF often finds itself in a mix of cooperative and co-optative relationships with IGOs. This group is frequently invited to participate in IGO conferences and discussions, pointing to a mutual interest in engaging in climate negotiations. The inclusion of FFF in these formal settings allows IGOs to leverage the movement's widespread support and mobilization capacity while providing FFF a platform to influence policy directly. However, incidents of detainment, such as those involving Greta Thunberg, reveal underlying tensions and elements of conflict in their

interactions with governmental authorities. This complexity suggests that while FFF often engages in cooperation, there are many aspects of their relationship that align with co-optation and conflict due to the resistance and criminalization they face.

In contrast, Extinction Rebellion (XR) and Just Stop Oil (JSO) often encounter more controversial relationships with IGOs through conflictual dynamics. Possibly, these movements are less frequently invited to official meetings due to their disruptive tactics and radical demands. XR's and JSO's strategy of civil disobedience and direct action challenges the status quo, leading to a more confrontational dynamic with IGOs. These groups' occasional formal dialogues with the policy-makers are insufficient in establishing a cooperative relationship, eventually resulting in conflictual relations.

The Last Generation (LG) experiences a varied relationship with IGOs, often fluctuating between competition and conflict. Their disruptive and disobedient tactics challenge the status quo, bringing them into direct conflict with established policies and practices supported by IGOs. However, LG has also ventured into political participation by running for office in the EU Parliament, representing a strategic shift aimed at influencing policy from within the system. This initiative showcases their commitment to pushing for radical policy shifts as a formal competition to existing political bodies.

Regardless, the impact of youth environmental movements on climate governance is undeniable. They have managed to shift public opinion, bring climate change to the front of political agendas, and pressure governments and IGOs to adopt more robust policies. Their ability to mobilize large numbers of people, particularly the youth, has created a wave of solidarity by challenging the slow and bureaucratic processes of IGOs. Despite the challenges they face, including access, representation, and resource constraints, these movements continue to play a crucial role in the global climate governance landscape. These youth movements have utilized various strategies to influence policy, and through protests and participation at formal events, they have managed to pressure IGOs and governments to be more responsive to public opinion, address climate issues more seriously, and adopt more ambitious targets.

These dynamics showcase broader implications for global climate governance. First, the inclusion of youth perspectives in decision-making processes is not merely a

moral imperative but a strategic necessity for ensuring legitimacy and effectiveness. IGOs can no longer afford to marginalize disruptive voices, as these voices often reveal systemic blind spots and push for necessary reforms. Second, creating a more inclusive environment can bridge the gap between cooperative and disruptive movements. By acknowledging the validity of diverse tactics, IGOs can enhance their responsiveness and adaptability, and align their values more closely with the fight against climate change.

This study opens several avenues for future research. Exploring the interactions of youth movements from underrepresented regions could provide a more comprehensive understanding of global climate activism. Additionally, longitudinal studies tracking the long-term impacts of these movements on policy and public opinion would create valuable insights into their evolving roles. Quantitative analyses, such as varying metrics to evaluate the tangible political impact of youth movements, could complement qualitative approaches and offer a more robust assessment of their contributions.

The urgency of the climate crisis demands an unprecedented level of collaboration between state and non-state actors. While youth movements have emerged as powerful catalysts for change and challenging the status quo, their potential can only be fully realized if IGOs adopt a more inclusive and adaptive engagement strategy. Strengthening this relationship will require structural reforms within IGOs to lower bureaucratic barriers, provide resources for capacity building, and create platforms for meaningful participation.

In conclusion, this thesis highlights the important role of youth environmental movements in shaping global climate governance. By connecting grassroots activism with institutional frameworks, these movements can drive systemic change and encourage collective action to address the climate crisis. However, to fully realize their potential, challenges in youth-IGO relationships—such as limited collaboration and unequal access to decision-making—must be addressed. Strengthening these connections through open dialogue, capacity building, and greater inclusion of youth voices can make their efforts more impactful and lead to more effective climate governance. Ensuring that the voices of younger generations are both heard and acted upon is essential for meaningful progress in tackling climate change.

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