

A thesis submitted to the Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy of
Central European University in part fulfilment of the
Degree of Master of Science

Investigating the Impact, Drivers, Methods and Perceptions of Climate
Youth Activism

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July 2023
Vienna, Austria

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Strychenko', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS submitted by:

Liudmyla

for the degree of Master of Science and entitled:

Month and Year of submission: July, 2023.

In an era marked by rising record-breaking heat waves and escalating disruptive climate protests, the world is confronted with a climate crisis and an urgent need for global action to mitigate the most drastic consequences of human-driven global warming. The climate crisis requires immediate and collaborative global effort from all sectors of society, and youth climate movements can implement non-violent disobedience to push for the increase of this meaningful change. While facing worrying thoughts about the state of their future and issues with climate anxiety, young climate activists fight against climate and intergenerational injustice, often implementing instruments from non-violent civil resistance.

This research aims to assess the impact, drivers, and perceptions of climate youth movements through the comprehensive analysis of in-depth interviews with climate activists from Fridays For Future, Last Generation, Just Stop Oil and Extinction Rebellion and decision-makers and findings from participatory observations. The study reveals the potential for using the NVCD methods by youth climate activists while emphasizing the importance of careful planning and building a dialogue with decision-makers.

Keywords: youth climate activism, Fridays For Future, Last Generation, Just Stop Oil, Extinction Rebellion, Civil Non-Violent Disobedience, Intergenerational Justice, Climate Justice, Dialogue

Acknowledgements

I take this opportunity to thank the people who helped me and supported me in obtaining this degree in Environmental Science and Policy - I want to say thank you to my parents, who always believed in me and to my sisters and the whole family and older friends.

A special thank you goes to my supervisor, Professor Diana Urge Vorsatz, for being a true inspiration and for supporting and guiding me in my academic and personal growth. Working together was invaluable learning experience.

I want to thank people who have been a big support for me during 2022-2023 year, as in time of war in my country, I needed their support so much - my dear Spanish family in Vienna, the best group of MESP(OM) I've ever had, professors and faculty staff for making me realize that I want to do only meaningful and impactful work, that I am ready to take responsibility into my own hands.

I am grateful for my activists colleagues from FFF Ukraine and other climate movements, for making this world a better place. I wanted to thank people who helped me secure the scholarship and BayWa R.E. company for having the opportunity to live and study in Vienna. And lately, I want to thank me for making it and achieving so much, despite everything what happened in the last year.

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List of Abbreviations

FFF	Fridays For Future
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
NVCD	Non Violent Civil Disobedience
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
XR	Extinktion Rebellion
YOUNGO	The Official Children and Youth Constituency of UNFCCC

Abbreviations for pseudonyms for the interviews

DM1	Decision-maker 1
DM2	Decision-maker 2
FFF1	Fridays For Future activist 1
FFF2	Fridays For Future activist 2
JSO	Just Stop Oil activist
LG	Last Generation activist

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Relevance of the topic

Since 2019, when the first youth protests broke out with one lonely girl with a banner in front of the Swedish Parliament, climate action against environmental injustice and the destruction of a stable present and future as a cost for economic growth has grown, taking different forms and methods. While having record-breaking heat waves, wildfires, and the highest temperature of the ocean surface, more and more youth are becoming desperate about the future they fear to face. Some young people have to take more radical but peaceful actions to pressure the government and public, often being not understood and judged heavily by the public and their environment, and even face jail sentences. What are their motivations, experiences, and perceptions? Will their actions have a positive impact on climate action? What is the attitude of decision-makers towards it?

Climate change poses one of the biggest threats of our time (Intergovernmental Panel On Climate Change (IPCC) 2023), which requires immediate action from all stakeholders of society and collaboration within a minimal time (United Nations Development Programme 2007). At this time of climate crisis and raising awareness of the consequences of global warming, various youth climate movements have emerged as an efficient tool and powerful answer to intergenerational injustice. This unfairness of climate change commands a drastic shift in values, for which young climate activists advocate (Theodorou, Spyrou, and Christou, 2023). Climate change poses long-term drastic negative implications for future generations, developing nations, and the nearest stable future of younger generations, and it depends on the decisions made now by leading developed nations (Birnbacher 2006). The youth has a vital role in climate action, and deep research and assessment of motivations, methods, experience, and perception of it is needed.

1.2 Research questions and aims

The particular interest of this research is the impact of peaceful civil resistance tactics implemented by various climate movements and the difference between them. This research aims to assess the significance and impact of these movements, focusing on the role of Non-Violent

Civil Disobedience (NVCD) methods and additionally elaborating on the perceptions of decision-makers on youth climate action.

The scope of the study is concentrated around Global North countries, particularly the Europe region, and involves decision-makers and young climate activists from the same area. The main focus of the research is such social climate movements as Fridays For Future, Last Generation, and Just Stop Oil, while having insights from the participant observation method during Extinction Rebellion's peaceful four-day climate action and observations from Bonn Climate Change SB58 Conference by United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

I am motivated to conduct this research with a profound purpose to address the pressing issue of climate change and the alarming threat to human existence. Additionally, as a Fridays For Future activist, I want to help my fellow climate activists by conducting research and providing both theoretical and practical insights into enhancing the impact of climate actions and campaigns, as well as contributing to the existing research on social climate movements by concentrating in my research on the young climate activists from Europe region, NVCD methods of it and the perception of the mentioned by the decision-makers.

My main research aim is to assess the drivers and motivations of young people to participate in climate activism, their perceptions of NVCD methods, and the impact of climate action they are doing. The other research question is to explore the perceptions of climate activists and decision-makers towards each other and the dialogue between them and investigate the prerequisites for a successful climate movement.

1.3 Overview of the structure

This thesis is structured to provide a comprehensive analysis of the impacts, drivers, methods, and perceptions of youth climate activists engaging in NVCD and the attitudes of decision-makers toward youth climate action. To achieve the goals of the research study, I designed the following structure:

1. Introduction:

- Introduces the research topic, relevance, and problem, the aims of the thesis, and the research questions.

2. Literature Review:

- Presents an in-depth literature analysis on the topic, pointing out the existing gaps in the research field.

3. Theoretical Framework:

- Describes existing theories used to assess the research questions and to conduct the research.

4. Methodology:

- Presents the research design, approach for data collection methods, and approach for analysis while outlining the limitations.

5. Results and discussion:

- Provides a detailed overview of the findings and analysis and presents the discussions of it.

6. Conclusions and recommendations:

- Summarises conclusions from the results and discussions chapter and presents recommendations.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Importance and drivers of climate action. NVCD methods

Climate change is an urgent global challenge, which is requiring immediate action (Intergovernmental Panel On Climate Change (IPCC) 2023). Youth climate movements are potentially one of the key tools for creating enough pressure to act for state and non-state stakeholders through the implementation of Non-Violent Civil Disobedience methods. This literature review aims to show the importance of climate action and how youth climate movements can drive it and engage with state stakeholders. This chapter explores the existing academic literature concerning various aspects of youth climate movements, including their profound importance, the drivers motivating youth participation, and the role of non-violent civil disobedience within these movements. This chapter employs thematic approach toward literature analysis, identifying the main takeaways of the analysis and insights in the existing body of research and the notable gaps in the academic research landscape.

2.2 Importance of climate action

The science behind climate change is undeniable, and we have all evidence to conclude that climate change has a human-caused nature (Intergovernmental Panel On Climate Change 2021). A study by Cook et al. (2016) states that 97% of consensus in published climate research is in line with other research by climate scientists and peer-reviewed studies. Every year we face heat-breaking climate records - whether it is ocean surface temperature, the loss of ice in the Arctic, or the highest temperature in a day ever. With strong evidence and security, we can state that summer and heat waves, unlikely 20-40 years ago, are much more common now (Jones, Stott, and Christidis, 2008). The consequences of climate change and different global warming trajectories

vary, but exceeding 1.5 degrees of global warming lead to the poorest experiencing the most drastic impacts of climate change, creating an inequality (King and Harrington 2018). The effects of global warming trajectories on the economy, food and water security, biodiversity, and human well-being have a devastating effect with a high probability (Intergovernmental Panel On Climate Change (IPCC) 2023). Therefore, climate change is one of the biggest threats to the stability and development of humanity. Therefore, we can name climate change a climate crisis, as it greatly threatens humanity.

In light of the dangers of the climate crisis, global climate action from state and non-state parties is needed, and the action should be urgent to mitigate the most ruining consequences of global warming. As stated in the latest AR6 Synthesis Report by IPCC (2023), - the window for action is rapidly narrowing, but there is still space for ambitious climate and accelerated climate action.

In the picture of the overwhelming evidence of the importance of swift climate action, it can be worrying to see that the pledges made by state stakeholders are not sufficient to combat and mitigate climate change or even not met - the available evidence indicate that the world has seriously committed to achieving the 1.5-degree goal (Matthews and Wynes 2022). Moreover, Jeweell and Cherp (2020) state that the 1.5 degrees goal of the Paris Agreement is not likely feasible anymore and remain out of reach without large-scale international cooperation and support which we do not have currently (Holz, Kartha, and Athanasiou 2018). As we see insufficient global climate action, staying within the 2 degrees of global warming trajectory can be challenging. As the study by Holz et al. (2018) reveals, to stay within the equitable pathway of 1.5 °C, we should engage in large-scale international cooperation and support (Holz, Kartha, and Athanasiou 2018). As for now, according to the Climate Action Tracker (n.d.) initiative, the globally adopted policies aim at 2.7 degrees of global warming. It is the case if all pledges by states are done in time and

according to their claims. This global warming trajectory can have a significant negative impact on us with a high probability, according to multiple IPCC findings (2023) (2022) (2014). Therefore, the importance of climate action is indisputable. Taking more ambitious goals and actions by state and non-state stakeholders and pushing for implementing more efficient strategies and solutions towards combating the climate crisis is highly needed. A multidisciplinary and complex approach is needed, evolving perspectives such as techno-economic, socio-technical, and political perspectives on national energy transition (Cherp et al. 2018). At the same time, it is essential to recognize the drivers of such rapid and highly needed changes and policy adaptation in society to influence the decision-making processes more effectively regarding the inadequacy of global climate action by major stakeholders and contributors. Some of the reasons for the successful implementation of climate-change-related policies are the way they are integrated with civil society (Puppim De Oliveira 2009) and the positive effect of democracy on climate policy output (Bättig and Bernauer 2009).

2.3 Climate youth movements - its rise, drivers, and motivations

One of the forms of civil society and democracy is climate youth movements, which have various strategies and goals of activism, the role of which is important to recognize while talking about climate action by civil society and climate action in general. The participation of youth in climate action has seen a rise over recent years (Theodorou, Spyrou, and Christou 2023); started by Greta Thunberg, a Swedish young climate activist, school strikes outside the Swedish Parliament, which later captured thousands of young people going on strikes demanding climate and intergenerational justice, and sparked the youth to start to act on multiple levels and has its role recognized step by step by state actors and international institutions (Han and Ahn 2020).

The rising devastating effects of global warming, which are already felt by millions of people worldwide, are creating the first waves of climate refugees (Mazhin et al. 2020) and conflicts over resources (Ensor 2013); There is no wonder that the report by Amnesty International (2019) on a survey of 10,000 young people showed that 41% of the correspondents consider climate change as one of the most important challenges in the world. A more recent study by UNICEF (2021) conducts that more than 60% of young people were extremely worried or very worried about climate change (Hickman et al. 2021). According to various studies, young people tend to have increasing levels of climate anxiety, which negatively impacts overall well-being and mental health (Gunasiri et al., 2022; Clayton and Karazsia, 2020).

The feeling of being helpless and powerless towards the climate crisis in younger generations is also associated with one of the forms of climate anxiety (Gunasiri et al. 2022). Hence, climate protests can be a powerful tool for expressing the feelings of youth and a desire for a better future. The rise of climate protest movements such as Fridays For Future and Extinction Rebellion is associated with the insufficient climate action of states to mitigate climate change and as a coping mechanism for climate anxiety (Haugestad et al. 2021; Buzogány and Scherhauser 2022).

In addition, there are multiple reasons for youth to participate in strikes. According to Haugestad et al. (2021), participation in strikes can seem to youth as the only effective way of expressing political will without the possibility to vote due to age restrictions yet.

The results studying the drivers of youth participation in climate strikes vary. However, mainly researchers established that motivation for that can be out of fear of the existential threat, the feeling of shared and collective responsibility, and politicized social identity within a group (Haugestad et al. 2021). The other main aspect is intergenerational injunctive which is imposed by the current system, drivers, and threats of climate change. A comprehensive review by Theodorou, Spyrou, and Christou (2023) concluded that young climate activists often frame the issue of

climate change as an intergenerational injunctive - by calling out adults' irresponsible behaviour, which places critical threats to the future stability of young generations and generations to come, young climate protesters highlight the flaws in the system which is causing climate change at the expense of safe future of whole generations. Young activists see intergenerational injustice as both an injustice that they are unable to interfere politically with their votes (if they are too young to vote) and that they make amends with negative consequences for their future of the decisions made by them by people who will not experience it themselves (Theodorou, Spyrou, and Christou 2023). There has been some research done on the effectiveness of the climate movements and the positive side of the radical side of peaceful actions (Giugni 1998; Thackeray et al. 2020; Schifeling and Hoffman 2019; Simpson, Willer, and Feinberg 2022) but future research on the long-term impact of it as needed, as a closer look into the various methods employed by NVCD climate movements as well as into research of building a better dialogue between climate activists and decision-makers.

2.4 Non-Violent Civil Disobedience practices at climate youth movements

Climate youth protests and any form of civil power movement have different methods and strategies for enhancing their impact in reaching their goals. One of the most controversial and underrated tactics is a method of non-violent civil disobedience, which has gotten rising attention from the climate movements in recent years (Thackeray et al. 2020). There are several descriptions of civil disobedience and its effectiveness. Before addressing the term civil disobedience, understanding the interconnection of power and governance is crucial.

According to one of the most prominent scholars of non-violent civil disobedience Gene Sharp (1973), who is known by his second name "The Machiavelli of non-violent resistance" and whose works are believed to be used by most modern revolutionists, the government draws its

power from people obeying it. Sharp (1973) argues that governments rely on the obedience and cooperation of the people to maintain their authority and control and to have power. He points out that without the consent and compliance of the people, a government's power can be weakened, and the discourse can be changed. At the same time, - Sharp's research proves that non-violent civil disobedience is strategically effective because it deprives the government of its power. Additionally, when civil disobedience methods are used, the state's power is diminishing. He states that the authoritarian regime can not be overthrown by the direct and violent power of the people oppressed - due to the reason that the state will always have more power - popular resistance can erode and shake the pillars of power, allowing to create shifts in political dynamics and bring change. According to Sharp (1972), the shaking of the pillars of power can be achieved through non-violent struggles, such as boycotts, strikes, protests, and different kinds of non-cooperation, which are widely described as 198 ways for non-violent struggles in Sharp's work "The Politics of Non-violent Action". To achieve a substantial change in a society it is important to challenge the existing power dynamics (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008), and climate activists demand this shift, spreading the need for urgent action (Martiskainen et al. 2020).

Sharp (1973) and Stephan and Chenoweth (2008) also argue that due to the peaceful nature, non-violent civil disobedience attracts more people - as the protests who stay peaceful appeal to media and public support than violent protests. Peaceful activists are gaining public support in the case of states as an answer using violence and repression towards protestors as well (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008). Therefore, more people might join the movement as an answer to the violence towards non-violent protests. Second, the non-violent way is more inclusive - it allows people to participate in protests regardless of the physical power one possesses - it does not exclude people who are not yet or anymore physically strong (Sharp, Finkelstein, and Schelling 1973). Though non-violent civil disobedience can still be exclusive, doing that kind of activism can be considered

a privilege by some marginalized groups. A notable example of privilege in the civil disobedience movement is a shift in the strategy of Extinction Rebellion (XR) - the climate movement, whose strategy of climate disobedience was getting arrested as many people as possible from the climate non-violent protests to overwhelm the system of prisons in the United Kingdom. After complaints from marginalized, colored, and immigrant communities that being arrested is a privilege that not people can afford, the XR board had to apologize and change the strategy ('The Big One Climate Protest: Leaving No One Behind' 2023).. The connection between privilege and climate non-violent disruptive activism is significantly under-researched, leaving space for future academic findings.

Due to the potential controversy of using the forms of non-violent civil disobedience by climate movements, an important part of the research is to prove the justification for these forms of climate activism. In a paper by Lemons and Brown (2011), it is clearly stated that two conditions have to be proved to justify the form of non-violent civil disobedience, specifically: *“(1) a great injustice is occurring, and (2) there is strong reason to believe that policies and laws and lawful recourse to changing them will not work.”* At the beginning of this literature review, it was demonstrated that the current situation with climate change is meeting the condition above, as it is also stated in the research of Lemons and Brown. Additionally, in an early study by Berger (1970), he stated that civil disobedience is often judged because it is held to threaten law and order. However, it can sometimes be justifiable in terms of its contribution to better law and order (Berger 1970).

The other important scholars to mention in the context of non-violent civil resistance research are Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan (2008) in their work “Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Non-violent Conflict.” In their study, the authors draw an explicit dataset of non-violent movements and present compelling arguments on the effectiveness of

specifically non-violent civil movements. They argue that non-violent civil resistance movements have a better chance of succeeding in bringing the political change they strive for, having greater participation, support, and legitimacy, than violent ones. One of the most prominent findings of their work is the “3.5% rule of non-violent resistance” - through analyzing the large dataset of non-violent movements from 1900 to 2006, it was discovered that on average, around 3.5% of active people have to be involved in non-violent civil forms of resistance with a possibility of 53% of the social movement to achieve its goals and become successful (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008). The 3.5% rule indicates a tipping point where the crucial mass of support of the movement is achieved and can bring substantial pressure. This rule is widely used as an objective for many climate non-violent movements in many countries worldwide. Chenoweth repeatedly emphasized the effectiveness of non-violent resistance movements, as well as Sharp agrees on the importance of civil resistance and disobedience staying solely non-violent.

Civil disobedience as a method for climate-related resistance can be effective in various ways. For example, its acts can raise awareness of the emergency climate crisis as an example of School Strikes for the Climate (Thackeray et al. 2020), advancing public debates over climate change and bringing up the discourse of the importance of rapid action as it was with Extinction Rebellion movement in United Kingdom (DiSalvo 2019). Due to the so-called radical flank effect, NVCD methods can bring more followers to the movement and increase overall support for it (Simpson, Willer, and Feinberg, 2022). A study by Simpson, Willer, and Feinberg (2022) says “The positive radical flank effect hypothesis predicts that the presence of a radical flank—a discrete activist group within a larger movement that adopts an agenda and/or uses tactics that are perceptibly more radical than other groups within the movement—will increase support for a more moderate movement faction. The negative radical flank effect hypothesis predicts radical flanks will decrease support for more moderate factions within the same movement.” There have been

studies which can be used for assessing the impacts of social climate movements (Simpson, Willer, and Feinberg 2022; Schifeling and Hoffman 2019; Sovacool and Dunlap 2022) with positive findings towards the effect of the radical flank effect, but there is still a research gap of assessing the negative and long term impacts of it (Simpson, Willer, and Feinberg 2022).

Simultaneously, it is important to recognize the prerequisites for achieving the movements' main objectives and goals - one of which is implementing multiple actions against primary and secondary targets using a diversity of tactical approaches, integrating non-violent civil tactics with more conventional actions, being resilient and always testing and challenging the best approaches. (Gulliver, Fielding, and Louis, 2021)

One of the challenges of research addressing the impacts and effectiveness of climate protests and movements is the complexity of providing a clear causal link between emission reductions and the actions themselves (Gulliver, Fielding, and Louis, 2021).

Surprisingly, despite the effectiveness of non-violent struggles, the urgency to participate in climate activism, the lack of global cooperation, and insufficient actions by the countries to mitigate the climate crisis consequences, there needs to be more research on the interlink of the mentioned above. The importance of rapid, just, and urgent climate action is required by science, as the IPCC states, and as we have a “Code Red for humanity” (Intergovernmental Panel On Climate Change (IPCC) 2023). The instrument of civil non-violent climate resistance can be one of the most effective tools to bring change (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008) and to help us in the existential threat climate change poses us. Assessing and recognizing its role, effective strategies, and perceptions is imperative to bring more influence, recognition, and support to this kind of protest.

2.5 Conclusion

The literature review underscores the importance of rapid climate action and the critical role of youth climate movements in it. It focuses on non-violent civil disobedience actions and the research that has been done on civil resistance. Despite the evidence of the effectiveness of civil non-violent resistance methods (Simpson, Willer, and Feinberg 2022; Thackeray et al. 2020; Stephan and Chenoweth 2008), the role of it in climate youth movements is yet to be recognized and researched. Although there exists a considerable amount of work on this aspect, little systematic research has been done so far (Giugni 1998). Further and deeper research on drivers of youth activism is needed to investigate the motivations for participating in various climate protests, as the climate crisis is worsening and more protests can arise.

It is crucial to address the impacts, drivers, and perceptions of climate youth movements as one of the powerful tools to escalate the change (Han and Ahn 2020) we need as a society due to the minimal time we have to reduce the drastic impacts of climate change.

Chapter 3. Theoretical Framework

This part of the literature review provides a theoretical framework for investigating the impact, drivers, and social theories on youth climate protests and non-violent civil disobedience in climate protests. It draws the key theoretical perspectives that contribute to understanding the significance and dynamics of climate youth movements. By incorporating such theories as social movement theory, non-violent civil resistance theories, climate, and generational justice, this framework strives to provide a deeper understanding of these phenomena and simultaneously identify new approaches for merging the views in the research of climate youth movements. In this research, I focus mainly on the interlink of climate and intergenerational justice approaches within climate youth protests. However, the theoretical framework briefly touches on environmental and ecological justice to provide a better understanding of the context, as these concepts are interconnected and often overlap.

2.1 Climate and intergenerational justice

The message of justice and injustice is heavily linked with the discourse of climate change (Schlosberg and Collins 2014) and the call for justice in the environmental, climate change, and intergenerational context is currently widely used as one of the main demands in climate social movements. In this section, I elaborated on the types of justice connected to climate and environmental issues, focusing on environmental and climate justice as the ones which are used by the young climate activists the most (Theodorou, Spyrou, and Christou 2023).

According to David Schlossberg (2004), one of the field's prominent scholars, environmental justice is a predecessor for other types of justice, and the research on environmental justice is mainly centered around the equal distribution of environmental ills and goods. However, a clear definition of environmental justice for various social and environmental movements is yet

to be agreed upon. At least, for the various movements, countries, NGOs, and other stakeholders, the definition of environmental justice may vary, and it expands far beyond just equal environmental distribution (Schlosberg 2004). It integrates a complex variety of concepts and aspects involving other social theories. Simultaneously, the definition and scope of climate and environmental justice are similar, though they differ.

As Schlosberg (2013) writes, environmental justice focuses on distributing environmental needs and risks equally among the various groups, covering such aspects as basic rights to clean water and air while simultaneously recognizing the right to participatory justice - having the right to make decisions influencing the environment. This concept evolves around protecting the most vulnerable and unprotected people and marginalized communities, such as indigenous peoples - environmental justice recognizes the knowledge brought by indigenous perspectives (Schlosberg 2013).

Ecological justice, in turn, addresses the right to fair and equal treatment of all living beings and ecosystems (Wienhues 2020). Wienhues (2020) gives as an example that some human activities causing loss of biodiversity, pollution, and deforestation by the followers of this social theory are considered acts of ecological injustice. Therefore, it has interlinks to environmental degradation and considers all members of the environment besides humans worthy of just and fair treatment.

In comparison with environmental justice theory, the climate justice concept was developed later after the consequences of climate change became more visible than before. Surprisingly, according to research by Schlosberg and Collins (2014) on the interlink of environmental and climate justice, there are sometimes tensions and misconceptions among representatives of both movements. For example, he cites one environmental justice activist: “Traditional climate activists espouse ‘our economy works, except for the carbon thing. How do we simply make our economy

less carbon-intensive?’ Nevertheless, EJ folks [Environmental Justice folks] see climate as a symptom of a whole system, so we must rethink our economics.”Alternatively, on the other hand, climate justice activists can perceive the community-based work of environmental justice movements as small, as local impacts are irrelevant in a picture of global carbon (Schlosberg and Collins 2014). Nonetheless, Schlosberg and Collins (2014) state that environmental justice has a direct influence on the conceptualizing of environmental justice, while at the same time, these movements have fused and influenced each other variously.

At the same time, according to Porter et al. (2020), climate justice is mainly centered around adaptation and mitigation topics, emphasizing that the distributional effects of climate change are unequal – they disproportionately affect the poorest and least disadvantaged. By drawing the concept of climate justice, Porter et al. have been able to show that climate and environmental movements argue for incorporating climate and environmental justice into the decision-making processes and policies to become a centered framework for the functioning of society. The concept of climate justice underlines the burden of underrepresented, marginalized communities, which have already been historically repressed with environmental injustices, and which still bear the biggest negative impacts of climate change, often contributing the least to it (Porter et al. 2020). It is significantly interconnected with the definition of MAPA (Most Affected People and Areas), who suffer the most from the devastating effects of the climate crisis.

Intergenerational justice, a key aspect of environmental and climate justice concepts, emphasizes the importance of climate action now and that the decisions made today will have profound consequences for younger generations now and generations to come (Theodorou, Spyrou, and Christou 2023). According to Theodorou, Spyrou, and Christou (2023), it recognizes the right of future generations to an equitable future and well-being and the moral obligation of current generations to provide future generations with better or the same resources. Mainly it

includes escalating action of mitigation - rapidly reducing greenhouse gas emissions, justly transitioning to renewable energy sources, and protecting natural resources. Additionally, current younger generations have a legitimate interest in participating in decision-making processes related to climate change (Theodorou, Spyrou, and Christou 2023). The authors of this research argue that youth climate activists face challenges due to restrictions on their age.

In the context of climate change, intergenerational justice becomes particularly relevant as the impacts of climate change will be felt by future generations who have no role in creating the problem. It raises questions about the intergenerational distribution of resources, risks, and benefits of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Intergenerational justice and climate youth protests are closely linked in the fight against climate change - youth climate activists call for a more collective approach to climate justice and decision-making processes and emphasize the need for an intergenerational effort toward creating a more just society (Birnbacher 2006). To successfully address this issue, there is a big need for intergenerational partnerships which ensure that young people have legal rights to influence the policies and that they can represent their interests and participate in decision-making processes related to climate change (Theodorou, Spyrou, and Christou 2023).

According to Costanza-Chock (2012), young people are one of the most powerful agents of social change. Thus, they have the desire and capacity to transform the world and bring quite a change to society. Despite being largely misrepresented in media and public opinion, youth have been key actors in many social movements throughout history (Costanza-Chock 2012). Moreover, with a climate crisis being a significant issue of intergenerational injustice, climate movements, and actions have been increasing in quantity and scale (Martiskainen et al. 2020). As German Fridays For Future climate activist, Luisa Neubauer said in her TEDxYouth video talk, “Why I became a climate activist -- and you should, too” (TedEd, 2020): “Noone else will gonna fix it for

us.” She refers to the youth and states that “grown-ups” will not resolve climate change alone. However, the drivers of youth for participation in protests are assessed later in the research.

In a study by Birnbacher (2006), the definition of intergenerational justice implies responsibility for future generations of us now. It refers to the concept that present generations have a moral obligation to ensure that the consequences of their actions do not unfairly burden future generations (Birnbacher 2006).

2.2 Non-violent civil resistance theory

The Non-violent civil resistance theory is addressed by Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan (2008) in their prominent seminal work “Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict”, where the NVCD has emerged as a powerful theoretical framework to assess the dynamics, strategies, and prerequisites of social movements. As it is described in a previous chapter, their findings clearly demonstrate that non-violent strategies are an efficient tool in bringing social and political change, and have a higher probability of success in achieving their goals, compared to violent movements., while having fewer casualties associated with bringing the desired change. This theory emphasizes the strategic use of NVCD methods and changing the power dynamics in favor of the social movement. For climate movements, the findings of Chenoweth's (2008) research provide valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of peaceful protests to driver further climate action.

2.3 Conclusion

The theoretical framework I present in this chapter lays the foundation for assessing and understanding the drivers, impacts, and perceptions of climate youth movements, and the NVCD instruments of potential change they can bring. Such examination of climate and intergenerational injustice helps to grasp the complexities of climate youth movements. Simultaneously, non-violent civil resistance theories provide valuable insights into the strategic approach to a desired social

change. Together, these theories provide a ground for comprehensive research of the role and impacts of climate youth movements.

Chapter 4. Methodology

In this chapter, I outline methods to investigate the impact, drivers, and methods of climate youth movements to assess deeper the climate youth movements and the existing gap of the under-researched topic of my study. With the following instruments and type of data analysis, I determine the experiences and perceptions of climate youth activism. I do it by focusing on civil resistance and non-violent methods of climate activism.

The most relevant methods to address the research questions set for this thesis research and aims are qualitative methods, specifically in-depth interviews and participatory observations. These methods are typical for the research of climate activism and its impact, as the study by Corry and Reiner (2021) analyses, and used by multiple studies (Orsini and Kang 2023; Fisher 2016; Haugestad et al. 2021; Corry and Reiner 2021). The methodology regarding semi-structured interviews is relatively standard in my research field (O'Brien, Selboe, and Hayward 2018; Fisher 2016; Haugestad et al. 2021).

The research aims to investigate the experiences, drivers, and perceptions of climate activists and the phenomena of Non-violent Civil Disobedience (NVCD), compare it to the findings of interviews with decision-makers of the study, and collect valuable insights from the participants. To address the interpretations of decision-makers and young climate activists most efficiently and profoundly, I chose the method of conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews, as it provides unique and essential contributions to the research and sheds light on “micro-links” (Gerson and Damaske 2020). Gerson and Damaske’s (2020) book states that in-depth interviews allow for exploring new phenomena that are otherwise possible to overlook or ignore. This research was particularly notable for drawing common differences among the views of decision-makers and climate activists. Additionally, this research methodology gave the youth, decision-makers, and

experts working with youth voice, allowing them to express themselves freely and safely due to the anonymous approach for publishing interview findings.

Another qualitative method used in the research is participatory observation in climate youth protests – namely, in the Extinction Rebellion “The Big One,” the 4-day peaceful March in London, United Kingdom, on 21-24 of April 2023, and in the climate policy-making United Nations Convention on Climate Change Conference SB58 - pre-COP climate negotiations 5-15 in Bonn, Germany in June 2023. This method involves the researcher’s involvement in various activities to observe the stakeholders and their activities from the inside (Kawulich 2005). Participant observation was chosen as a method to gain a deeper understanding and experience of youth climate protests both in their “natural environment” in an urban area of the city (“The Big One” in London) and during the critical climate conference negotiations (SB58 in Bonn), to be able to interview activists with different approaches and decision-makers.

To summarize, this research employed qualitative methods such as in-depth semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and literature analysis to investigate the impact of climate youth movements, drivers, perceptions, and methods. I decided to bring these elements to my research approach, as it is essential to understand deeper the perceptions and interpretations of youth protestors by decision-makers and to observe the participants from the inside to gain the trust of activists and later gather valuable insights from them. Using these methods, I provided valuable insights into the interpretations and experiences of stakeholders of my research - climate youth activists, decision-makers, and experts working with youth. This methodology approach for data gathering and analysis is precise and repeatable, which should be the case for a robust methodology of qualitative analysis (Williams and Moser, 2019).

4.1 Research approach & design

I adopted an interpretive research approach as the underlying research philosophy in this research. William Pelz (2023) said: “Interpretive research is a research paradigm that is based on the assumption that social reality is not singular or objective but is rather shaped by human experiences and social contexts (ontology), and is, therefore, best studied within its socio-historic context by reconciling the subjective interpretations of its various participants (epistemology).” In other words, interpretivism acknowledges that social reality is not objective or singular but is shaped by human experiences and social contexts. Using this interpretive research philosophy, I aimed to explore the nature of the climate youth movements and their non-violent civil resistance component. By embracing interpretivism, the research acknowledges the subjective nature of social reality and emphasizes the importance of exploring the socio-historical context in which youth climate activism occurs.

The inductive approach is the most relevant research theory for this study on impacts, drivers, and perceptions of climate youth activism, focusing on non-violent civil resistance, as it is mainly used by studies with qualitative research methods (Williams and Moser 2019). As inductive research focuses on generating theories from collected data based on existing literature and theoretical frameworks, I draw the conclusions and takeaways from the interviews and participatory observation, contributing to the existing body of knowledge of the research on climate youth activism.

While conducting this research, I took several considerations into account. First and foremost, interviews were done according to the ethical checklist rules of Central European University. All participants were informed of the confidentiality of their information and data, the purposes of the study, and their rights as participants as well as the anonymity of their identities to

gather more profound and honest opinions by all three groups of participants, as well as to secure the safety of interviewees.

Second, to enhance reliability in my research, I used the semi-structured interview guide with predefined questions to maintain consistency within all interviews and take detailed notes during participatory observations. Additionally, I aimed to provide a safe and non-judgmental space for participants to discuss their views and ensure slight bias and openness freely.

4.2 Data collecting methods

4.2.1 Participatory observation

As a first step in data collecting methods, I chose participatory observation in both climate policies making processes and climate protests. Kawulich (2005) writes: “Participant observation involves the researcher’s involvement in a variety of activities over an extended time that enable him/her to observe the cultural members in their daily lives and to participate in their activities to facilitate a better understanding of those behaviors and activities.” As a part of my research, I joined a variety of different climate actions as well as policy-change processes in a high-level United Nations conference as well as in climate protests of various forms. My participatory observation aimed to collect insights into the processes mentioned above and gain access to decision-makers and non-violent disruptive activists, who can be hard to reach in usual circumstances. Additionally, I conducted field notes and gained a broader overview of climate youth protests, their possible impact on decision-making processes, and the experiences, drivers, and perception of the protestors observed. Collected observational evidence consisted of the notes taken on evidence observed during “The Big One” climate action and SB58 Climate Change Bonn Conference. These observations provided additional important information, such as methods and aims of the climate movement Extinction Rebellion, Just Stop Oil, and Fridays For Future, and

allowed them to take part in their inner processes in a natural setting of different types of climate actions.

Another goal of my fieldwork was to get a better overview of climate protests and perspectives of climate activists, to prepare better for the interviews, and create a proper set of questions for the interview sample. Additionally, during participatory observations, I aimed to gather contacts for future interviews of both climate activists and decision-makers, establish an initial connection, and get more honest answers to my research questions.

While conducting participatory observation in all mentioned activities above, it was important for researchers to consider the ethics of such a data collection approach. According to Kawulich (2005), for research ethics, it is crucial to inform the participants and people they interact with of the purpose of the research and the role of being there (a researcher role), and it was part of my ethics research strategy of participatory observation. In other words, I had an overt and active participant observation. This experience helped me further formulate research questions.

I joined for full two weeks the SB58 Climate Change United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the pre-COP (Conference of Parties) negotiations at the headquarters of UNFCCC in Bonn, Germany.

During SB58 Climate Change United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), I followed climate negotiations (Mitigation Working Program) and took part in the following bilateral meetings:

- Bilateral meeting between YOUNGO and UNICEF, the 6th of June;
- Bilateral meeting between YOUNGO (The Official Children and Youth Constituency of UNFCCC) and heads of the European Union delegation, the 7th of June;

- Bilateral meeting between Global Youth Coalition & COP28 Youth Climate Champion, 12th of June;
- Closing plenary of SB58 (Delivered an intervention on behalf of YOUNGO on the 15th of June).

During the Climate Change Bonn conference, I contacted decision-makers, obtained their contacts, and discussed their attitude toward youth engagement in decision-making processes. Moreover, I had a chance to participate in and observe various climate actions happening during the conference:

1. Participated in a strike of Fridays For Future Ukraine against ecocide, which was committed by Russia during the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, on the 7th of June, outside of the conference venue;
2. Observed action against Fossils Fuels by Climate Action Network, 8th of June, inside the conference venue;
3. Participated in Fridays For Future Climate Strike, on the 9th of June, outside of the conference venue;
4. Participated in Fridays For Future Action against Construction of EACOP (Eastern African Crude Oil Pipeline) on the 12th of June, where climate activists from around the world participated (including Greta Thunberg, the well-known climate activist and the founder of Fridays For Future climate youth movement) outside of the conference venue;

My participation in the mentioned activities allowed me to gain deeper insights into the decision-making processes and the negotiations side of the conference, allowing me to collect contacts for potential research participants with a broader perspective to approach and prepare for more profound interviews. I also gathered field notes collecting different methods, informal

comments by climate activists, and being able to research my feelings as a young climate activist and as a part of climate movements. I saw youth engaging more disruptively, such as strikes, and participating in official bilateral meetings between main stakeholders, such as experts working with youth (UNICEF representatives, the Youth Envoy of COP28 and COP27, climate negotiators, and youth activists). It is crucial to acknowledge that my participation during the 2-week conference was part of my research and activism work as a Fridays For Future Ukraine activist. I also considered my observations possible biases and limitations, which I explored later in the Limitation sub-section.

Additionally, as a part of my research, I participated in a 4-days action organized by Extinction Rebellion (XR) on 21-24th April. “The Big One” action aimed to gather 100k in front of the Houses of Parliament and Westminster, London, United Kingdom. It resulted in the biggest joint climate strike in the UK since the climate protests in 2019, where more than 60k people were gathered, as was reported by the Euronews article of the 25th of April (2023). There, each day I participated in various forms of climate protests, such as:

- Strikes, dance strikes, painting banners, singing, die-out, slow marches, a prototype of people’s assembly, talking to people about the science behind climate change, singing, reading poetry, listening to pickets, mocking strikes.

During this 4-days big strike, I connected with various activists from climate movements such as Extinction Rebellion and Just Stop Oil, talked to scientists, and collected field notes with information gathered from activists and my observation of the big protests. The “Big One” climate protests were highly peaceful and non-violent, attracting participants of various ages, ethnicity, and status.

For the “The Big One” 4 days action, I gained access through the online application of the Extinction Rebellion website, where I indicated the research reasons to participate in climate

action; nonetheless, the access to the action was open, and people could freely participate. Since accreditation is required to participate in the SB58 Climate Change Bonn Conference, as an FFF Ukraine activist, I gained one through the Ukrainian party delegation as a “Party-Overflow”.

4.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

As one of the main parts of my research methodology, I chose semi-structured interviews to gather the insights of the stakeholders of my study. In summary, I conducted in-depth interviews with seven people, of which four are climate activists from both conventional and more radical climate youth movements, two are decision-makers, and one interview with an expert working with youth and climate movements.

Table 1 presents the overview and details of the interviews conducted:

Table 1. Interviews overview

Pseudonym	Organisation associated	Date of interview	Format	Country affiliated with the interviewee	Main goals
DM1	EU climate negotiation team member	11.07	online	Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building a dialogue with climate activists • drivers for policy change • perspective on youth role in decision-making processes • perspective on NVCD
DM2	Member of National Council of Austria	24.07	online	Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building a dialogue with climate activists • drivers for policy change

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perspective on youth role in decision-making processes • perspective on NVCD
FFF1	Fridays For Future Austria	24.07	online	Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • motives and drivers for climate action • perspective on the decision-makers • experiences • strategies and methods
FFF2	Fridays For Future Sweden	19.07	online	Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • motives and drivers for climate action • perspective on the decision-makers • experiences • strategies and methods
JSO	Just Stop Oil UK	5.07	online	United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • motives and drivers for NVCD • perspective on the decision-makers • experiences • strategies and methods
LG	Last Generation Austria, Extinction Rebellion Austria	12.07	online	Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • motives and drivers for NVCD • perspective on the decision-makers • experiences • strategies and methods
Youth Expert	UNICEF	18.07	online	International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perspective on NVCD • recommendations for youth movements

I chose to interview participants specifically from Europe because both cases of participatory observations were in this region, making access to possible interviews easier. Interviewing participants from different European countries would allow a comparative analysis of climate activism across diverse sociopolitical contexts. Additionally, focusing on the case of Austria, a more nuanced examination of the local and national factors that influence climate activism and decision-making would be available -to compare the perceptions of the Last Generation activist (LG), Fridays For Future Austria (FFF1) activist and an Austrian decision-maker.

Initially, I aimed to conduct interviews during the actions and conferences. However, I was not initially aware of the limitations – the lack of free time for the participants during such busy events and the lack of a safe and silent space for interviewing. Therefore, I decided to conduct interviews online, using the Microsoft Teams platform, which allowed me to record the meetings and transcript the data obtained. Most of the interviews were conducted at the end of June and the beginning of July 2023 with all three groups of stakeholders.

I selected participants for my semi-structured interviews through careful analysis and observations during my engagement in climate actions and conferences, albeit in the end, to reach the initially desired number of decision-makers for the interviews, I had to conduct cold outreach and gather positive answers for readiness to participate in my study. In the end, I gathered seven semi-structured interviews, which entirely fulfilled my aim of this research method. The duration of the interviews was 30-45 minutes, and each was recorded, with the initial consent of the participant to be recorded. I informed the participants that the data obtained would be used solely for research purposes and strong anonymity and confidentiality. For the data obtained to be replicable and continuing, I created a well-structured and defined interview sample guide for each representative of three stakeholder groups. In general, the number of questions for youth activists was 10; for decision-makers, it was 8; and for experts working with youth, it was 8. However, due

to the nature of the semi-structured interviews, the final number of questions varies for each participant. All conducted interviews were in English.

4.3 Method of analysis

I chose to employ thematic analysis as a research method to uncover the underlying themes and patterns of the data collected from my participatory observation and semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis is a widely used approach in qualitative analysis that allows for a systematic and in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives by identifying the main recurring themes and familiar patterns, allowing later to do a comprehensive analysis. According to Williams and Moser (2019), the researcher needs to sift through participant responses and organize similar words, phrases, and concept indicators in broad initial thematic domains to conduct thematic analysis and coding. Considering the nature of semi-structured interviews and my research field, I argue that it is the most suitable approach to identify and examine youth climate action's impact, drivers, perceptions, and experiences. Alternative data analysis methods, such as content analysis or grounded theory, could have been considered for this research. However, content analysis could limit my research to a more surface-level examination of textual data, while grounded theory might not have been suitable as it focuses on developing new theoretical concepts, not just identifying existing themes.

The thematic analysis method consists of the following steps:

- Data preparation
- Coding
- Theme development
- Review and validation
- Interpretation

Therefore, the interviews were transcribed, and thematic analysis was conducted, with the manual coding of gathered semi-structured interviews and identifying key main themes to investigate the interpretations and experiences of each of the three groups of stakeholders of my research - climate youth activists, policy- and decision-makers, and experts working with youth.

The following methods used to address research questions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Methods and Data gathered

Research Questions	Research Method used	Types of Data gathered	Further Details and Specific Observations
1. The impact of youth climate activism	In-depth interviews; participatory observation	Insights obtained from interviews; field notes and researcher observations;	three stakeholder groups; two cases of participatory observation
2. Drivers and motivations of young climate activists	In-depth interviews; participatory observation	Insights obtained from interviews; field notes and researcher observations;	two stakeholder groups; two cases of participatory observation
3. Methods of climate movements	In-depth interviews; participatory observation	Insights obtained from interviews; field notes and researcher observations	three stakeholder groups; two cases of participatory observation
4. Perceptions of non-violent civil disobedience	In-depth interviews	Insights obtained from interviews	three stakeholder groups

4.4 Reliability, and limitations

Overall, the methodology of this research allows it to be considered a strong base for academic credibility, but as with every research, it has limitations and considerations.

One is the potential bias in participatory observation and interviews conducted due to my involvement as a Fridays For Future Ukraine activist during the SB58 conference. The other limitation was the limited accessibility for interviews with high-level decision-makers during the minimal time of this stakeholder group. Additionally, only decision-makers prone to emphasize young climate protesters were potentially ready to participate in such kind of study, leaving the decision-makers aside with different views. On the other hand, decision-makers were not aware of me being a climate activist, not only a graduating student, so potentially, it would not have negative implications. Moreover, due to the limited available research material in the field and the restricted research time, this study might only encompass some aspects of the complexity of the climate of youth movements.

Participating directly in a non-violent civil disobedience protest could enrich my participatory observation. However, it was impossible due to the legal boundaries and possible consequences for me as I do not hold a passport from a European country. Therefore, any illegal or slightly illegal activities such as slow-marching, gluing, or other disruptive methods could negatively affect my status as a non-EU resident.

However, despite potential limitations, the methodology described above provides a comprehensive overview and base to answer the main research question - assess and investigate the impact, drivers, perceptions, and experiences of the young climate movements and analyze its non-violent civil resistance compound.

4.5 Conclusion

This methodology chapter has outlined a reliable approach to investigate the impact, drivers, experiences, and perceptions of youth climate activists through participatory observation and semi-structured interviews. By employing these qualitative research methods, I aimed to fully address the research topic, relying on similar methodology approaches used in this field of study research. While the research has its limitations, the strengths of the methodology outweigh it creating a clear and accessible structure for investigating the youth climate movement and non-violent civil disobedience, reviewing the interpretations of both decision-makers and young climate activists.

Chapter 5. Results & discussion

This chapter presents the information collected during my participatory observation in two cases - during the Bonn Climate Conference SB58, June 5-15, and the peaceful action by Extinction Rebellion, “The Big One,” between 21-24th of April, as well as results from the thematic analysis of obtained semi-structured interviews, which I conducted to collect insights and perceptions of young climate activists, decision-makers, and an expert working with youth. This chapter aims to provide the readers with insights and key findings from the study, and discussion associated with it. By going deeper into the experiences and perspectives of various stakeholders, I aimed to understand and explore the drivers, impact, and potential for climate youth activism to bring meaningful change in climate policy and action and assess the perceptions, drivers, and experiences of youth climate activists.

All interviews were performed online and recorded using a Microsoft Teams application. Afterward, I transcribed recordings manually and coded them using a deductive approach with a predefined set of themes, the details of conducted interviews and relevant required data is provided in Table 2.

The foundation of the research lies in a comprehensive exploration of existing literature on youth climate activism, social movements, and non-violent civil resistance. Through an in-depth literature analysis, I identified critical theories, concepts, and studies that informed our understanding of the subject matter. My theoretical framework provides various theories such as environmental, climate, and intergenerational justice, social movement theory, and civil non-violent resistance theory, drawing insights from prominent scholars such as Erica Chenoweth, Gene Sharp, Maria Stephan, and David Schlossberg. These foundational elements pave the way

for a deeper exploration of the research questions and analyzing the data gathered from participatory observation and interviews.

I have conducted seven semi-structured in-depth interviews; five were with activists, two with decision-makers, and two with experts working with youth. The average length of interviews was 45 minutes, with based questions in-between 8-10 and a semi-structured flow of the interviews.

Among climate youth activists, from which I gathered insights, representatives of significant climate youth movements use various practices and methods. The movements are Fridays For Future (FFF) - 2 people, Last Generation (LT) - 1 person, Just Stop Oil (JSO) - 1 person. These activists were from Global North countries, specifically Europe and the United Kingdom. From the decision-makers stakeholder group, I conducted two interviews with the decision-maker from the EU delegation for UNFCCC climate negotiations and one decision-maker, a member of the parliament of one of the EU member states. The LT activist and second decision-maker are from the same country. With the third group, the experts working with youth, I interviewed the expert from - the adolescent and climate change UNICEF manager.

In order to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the interview participants, I assigned pseudonyms to each participant.

For participants from the first stakeholder group - young climate activists (participants in an age range of 18-28 years were chosen) these pseudonyms are chosen:

- XR;
- FFF1, FFF2;
- LT;
- JSO.

For participants from the second stakeholder group - decision-makers I chose the following pseudonyms:

- UNFCCC DM (decision-maker) - a participant from the EU delegation for climate negotiations;
- Decision-maker 2 (Parliament Member of EU member state);

For participants from the third stakeholder group - experts working with youth, the following the marker-words are:

- Youth expert (UNICEF Youth & Adolescent and climate change team)

These pseudonyms were chosen to ensure that they have no connection to the participants' real names or identities but to show their field of engagement in climate change, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of their responses. As a part of the deductive approach, I chose nine main themes for analyzing transcribed interviews, and in the following section, I presented in detail each of them.

5.1 The impact of youth climate activism

All the interviewed activists agreed that they do meaningful and impact work, recognizing the importance of climate action now. It correlates with the outcome of the literature findings, where I established the need for rapid climate policy change and the role civil society plays in it. While interviewed activists agreed that they had achieved some successes, such as media visibility and political engagement, they also expressed concerns about the effectiveness of specific laws and decisions made by decision-makers. There is also a general sense of dissatisfaction and distrust toward governments as well as uncertainty about the long-term impact of their actions. In addition, some studies show through systematic evidence and empirical findings that climate social movements indeed are efficient and have a big impact – they play a significant role in staying

within the global carbon budget by constraining fossil fuel supplies and supporting climate change mitigation processes (Thiri et al. 2022), so the actual cases and evidence of the efficiency of climate movements may indeed justify the feeling of impactful work that activists have.

In detail, activists expressed both satisfaction and dissatisfaction with their movement's impact - "successes and losses" (FFF1, FFF2, LG). This finding is supported by the research by Gunasiri et al. (2022), where mixed feelings are associated with climate action and personal action. (Gunasiri et al. 2022) While progress has been made in raising awareness and understanding climate justice, concerns remain about the effectiveness of specific laws, like the watered-down Natural Restoration Law (FFF2), or deep disappointment at the rejection by the Austrian constitutional court of the case for intergenerational injustice done by activists (FFF1).

Activists of NVCD expressed more satisfaction and feeling of being powerful with their actions than activists of Fridays For Future. The NVCD activists expressed the effectiveness of their movements through media visibility of the actions (LG, JSO). All interviewed activists agreed that there would be escalating actions and intensiveness of NVCD in a case of continuous climate in-action by states. The JSO activist said that Just Stop Oil is effective because "It takes only two people to block the whole bridge, to make the big statement go into headlines." by their actions, they have a voice now in the political spectrum (LG). While expressing strong confidence in their NVCD actions, activists were unsure whether it would succeed in the long-term consequences. However, according to LG, Last Generation's "radical flank effect" is more positive than negative.

Some studies prove as well as current NVCD climate action brings more positive effects than expected, as for positive radical flank effect, which brings more support to moderate factions of social movements (Simpson, Willer, and Feinberg 2022; Corry and Reiner 2021) or raise awareness of public about climate change (Thackeray et al. 2020) while at the same time recognized that radical form of the movements can lead to less public support by impacting

negatively perception of the broader movement (Simpson, Willer, and Feinberg 2022) and bring a dangerous dissent (O'Brien, Selboe, and Hayward 2018). We can establish that there is no scientific consensus on the effect of the radical flank effect of NVCD, specifically in climate change movement, so further research is needed.

5.1.1 Dialog between climate activists and decision-makers

All activists shared a sense of frustration regarding the actions of decision-makers (LG, FFF1, FFF2, JSO) and the feeling of distrust toward governments. The feeling of “greenwashing” by politicians was also addressed by many activists (FFF2, JSO, LG). In addition, the Green Party, for most activists, was more thrust-worst but still associated with in-action and greenwashing. While FFF activists tried to build a dialogue with politicians, the representatives of more disruptive climate movements did not mention any explicit efforts to build dialogue with politicians or decision-makers. Decision-makers recognized the role of the state in building a dialogue with youth climate movements, saying that they have to be more open and that yet youth has the most significant impact ever now. One of the best ways to act is to approach intergenerational injustice through legal cases (DM1). The activists must be knowledgeable to be perceived earnestly (youth expert). Important to add that during my participatory observation, most activists I could talk to during two cases of my participatory observations expressed different levels of distrust toward decision-makers.

While distrust towards state stakeholders is common among activists (Gunasiri et al. 2022), the engagement of youth in the decision-making process and political area of climate change is rising every year (Orsini and Kang 2023). While my fieldwork during SB58 Climate Conference, I witnessed plenty of youth having the possibility to talk to decision-makers mainly through

YOUNGO processes, which was established relatively recently and due to the efforts of youth advocates, according to the YOUNGO representatives I talked to.

5.1.1.1 Perspective of activists on decision-makers

Both activists from NVCD (Non-Violent Civil Disobedience) movements were skeptical about building a dialog with political powers. They observed that politicians have not reached out or talked to them even though the movements are evident, and they also felt that talking to politicians was worthless. Additionally, NVCD activists expressed a high level of distrust towards police and mentioned the multiple cases of violence towards non-violent climate activists, such as: pulling hair while carrying activists away aggressively behavior; and according to LG, the most disturbing experience for activists are illegal incidents of molesting by police, when without any reason, the representatives of police touch genitals of activists - “we have been molested multiple times .” As I talked informally to some NVCD activists, I learned horrifying stories of power abuse towards peaceful activists, especially in Germany.

Activists from FFF were more open towards talking to politicians, mentioning plenty of meetings and trying to reach out to them and make appointments. FFF activists still shared the familiar feeling that discussions with politicians are often insincere. They acknowledge challenges in getting politicians to listen to them but continue their independent advocacy efforts. Additionally, as a part of my participation in the Climate Change Conference, I met many activists from the FFF movement who ensured their voices were heard.

We can conclude that less disruptive activists movement, such as Fridays For Future, are more keen to develop a dialogue with policy-makers than more radical NVCD movements. It correlates withdrawing from findings from the research by O’Brien et al. (2018), which concludes that activists with “disruptive dissenters usually report that they are more interested in critiquing,

challenging, and changing the system than working dutifully within it” (O’Brien, Selboe, and Hayward 2018).

5.1.1.2 Perspective of decision-makers and youth expert towards climate activists

Among decision-makers, there was support for already existing various approaches to climate action. They emphasized the importance of climate activists talking to politicians and making an effort to build a dialogue with them or even taking them legally to court to prove intergenerational justice rights. DM1 said, “The voices of youth are heard now more than ever before,” and was optimistic that the success of youth being heard would come. The best way is to present specific solutions and propositions (DM1), as the voices of youth can be easily dismissed without knowledge or specific demands and solutions (youth expert). The importance of the actions of the government and people in power toward dialogue with activists was emphasized. For example, they took steps to connect to the climate movements and youth. The study by Martiskainen et al. (2020) finds that surprisingly many strikers have little knowledge of climate change. Therefore, the notes of knowledgeability by activists as a prerequisite for successful climate policy advocacy should be considered.

Indeed, there is the importance of rapid engagement of young people as agents of change in the global climate change arena and the urgency of building a dialog with them to address global climate change (Han and Ahn 2020) while recognizing that the lack of dialog between youth and climate governmental leaders to transform climate protests into formal policies agreements (Orsini and Kang 2023).

5.1.2 The reasons for climate policy changes

Decision-makers agree that youth civil power can be one of the reasons for policy changes, although not one of the major factors for it as crises and wars (DM1), and there is space to increase youth influence. Reaching a policy change involves collaboration between different stakeholders;

activists and design-makers agree (FFF1, FFF2, DM2). “Youth has become a voice you can no longer ignore” (DM1) as well as with time, youth would gain more power as a political movement. Decision-makers and youth experts recognize the complexity of rapidly changing the system, while activists demand more rapid action and feel disappointed by insufficient climate state action.

Additionally, DM2 states that “Democratic parties are keener to achieve solutions for climate change.” DM2 indicates that “media attention and the influence of radical movements can shift the general agenda towards climate action.” According to a youth expert, there is a place for “boiling from the syndrome” when the significant consequences of climate change are overlooked as they appear too slowly in our life. Therefore, people do not understand the urgency of action. It is said that there is indeed limited space for system change and the use of transformative adaptation as a response to shifts in society driven by climate change (Fedele et al., 2020)

5.1.3 Cases of effective climate youth activism

This section presents various successful cases of climate youth activism provided by some participants, showcasing the impactful efforts of young activists. Examples include specific community-driven actions, legal challenges, and expert advocacy. The cases in a Table 3 highlight the power of collective efforts, strategic approaches, and non-violent direct action in driving positive change in climate policies and practices.

Table 3. Successful cases of climate action by participants

Participant	Case of Effective Climate Youth Activism
FFF activist 1	FFF strikes in 2019 and implementation of Green New Deal

FFF activist 2	Sweden: Civil society united to stop Preem's oil refinery expansion in Lysekil, Sweden.
DM1	Young people in several EU countries took government to court to fight against intergenerational injustice.
DM2	Stakeholders united to implement political education law in schools.
Youth expert	Successful implementation of Nature Restoration Law. Sunrise Movement in the US and their engagement with politicians and raising awareness of climate change among them.
Bonn conference SB58	Activists' actions against fossil-fuel lobbyists led to a decision requiring lobbyists to identify themselves during climate negotiations.

5.2 Drivers and motivations of young climate activists

The interview data with activists revealed a shared sense of injustice and a desire to do meaningful work as critical motivators for advocating climate action. Education and awareness of the climate crisis played a vital role in the pathways of participants to activism, while local engagement and grassroots movements were significant in driving their involvement. Emotional connections to the climate crisis and the unjust consequences of it, a human-centered approach - “it is not nature or ecological approach - it is a human-centered approach” (FFF1), and a sense of

urgency were also common reasons to participate in climate action among the activists. These findings are consistent with a vast body of research on the motivations of youth climate activists, where it is stated that young climate activists justify their non-compliance towards the government in the form of climate strikes (Haugestad et al. 2021), striving for their future and mobilizing the fight against intergenerational justice (Theodorou, Spyrou, and Christou 2023). It is worth mentioning that no interviewed activists explicitly mentioned the phrasing of “intergenerational injustice” as one of the main issues they fight against. However, the sense and meanings behind their reasons gave a strong sense of the unfairness of intergenerational injustice.

Additional support to the interview findings was my experience during the fieldwork. I observed the sense of injustice, and a need to do meaningful action motivated all activists I talked to. While participating in various climate actions, I felt a sense of belonging and satisfaction in doing meaningful work, even though I did not directly see the shifts in policy change. Climate activism allowed me to feel a sense of community and that we are bringing change together as a movement or as a group of activists. The study with a similar methodology to this research also established the importance of community belonging in youth climate movements - youth climate activists commit to the movement, not just the issue of climate change (Fisher 2016).

A recurring theme among the activists was the role of education and media in shaping their awareness of climate issues and creating a desire to participate in climate action. Activists shared that they were inspired by climate action by getting to know the science and seriousness of the threat of climate change, whether by documentaries, raising awareness events, or talks by other activists - “I wanna be like her” (LG).

All interviewed activists emphasized the significance of local engagement and grassroots movements in driving their involvement in climate activism. They all started their climate action

journey with strikes or local grass movements, where they felt like a community and joined it (JSO).

The urgency of the climate crisis was a typical pattern among all activists. Their sense of responsibility toward future generations and concern for their future pushed them to take action. For some, like the LG and JSO activists, the urgency was so intense that they made personal sacrifices, such as quitting their job to commit full-time activism or risking imprisonment for non-violent civil disobedience. A study by Fisher (2016) supports that predominantly negative emotions from seeing, realizing, or experiencing the consequences of climate change play a vital role in young people establishing themselves as climate activists.

A study by Theodorou et al. (2023) revealed that young climate activists recognize that the responsibility for causing and addressing climate change lies on everyone, which is why the common guilt sense is one of the motives among young activists to participate in climate movements. They recognize that the responsibility is at both individual and structural levels (Theodorou et al., 2023). Interestingly, I did not determine any collective sense of guilt as a reason to act during my participatory observation nor from the interview findings. Rather activists tend to focus on political actors and motivating climate action globally, then bringing the responsibility on themselves or humans as species.

During SB58, I also received support from my fellow activists and my environment while engaging in conventional climate activism and representing global youth. However, I had mixed feelings about the impact of our actions and protests, as I felt that my youth voice sometimes felt disregarded by decision-makers. The disappointment among activists at SB58 grew when parties disagreed on including the Mitigation Working Program on the COP28 agenda, the essential pillar of the fight against climate change under the Paris Agreement.

5.3 Methods and strategies of climate movements

5.3.1 The role of strategic planning and varied approaches

All participants recognized the role of strategic planning and varied approaches for achieving success for climate movements, and this finding is supported by many scholars of social resistance ('Gene Sharp: Non-violent Struggle' 1987; Stephan and Chenoweth 2008; Delina, Diesendorf, and Merson 2014, Thiri et al. 2022). The effectiveness of strategies was observed through increased movement participants after protests and several implemented laws and policies. These conclusions correlate with other researchers focused on the success and outcomes of climate movements, where it is outlined that the success of climate movements can be quantified by objective measures of activity and participation, like the number of members and activities undertaken (Feola and Nunes 2014). Additionally, it is agreed that the definition of success in social movements involves complex concepts. However, it often involves the public acceptance of the legitimacy of the movement and government responsiveness to it in terms of policy change (Giugni 1998).

Building resilience within the movement and constantly changing approaches were emphasized as a prerequisite for success and mobilizing and collaborating with various social movements and NGOs (FFF2, LG, DM2). Additionally, activists recognized that using the experience of previous cases of civil rights movements to plan the strategy is highly beneficial, giving many examples of successful social non-violent movements in the past, such as for women and people of color rights and the peaceful Gandhi movement in India. Certainly, the importance of historical analysis of successful campaigns can be supported in attempts to strengthen climate movements (Delina, Diesendorf, and Merson 2014).

According to the interviewees, while the popularity and media attention of the FFF movement decreased (FFF1), NVCD activists observed an increase in movement participation after protests, indicating the effectiveness of their strategies, which rather contradicts the finding of a study by Simpson et al. (2022). It is stated that radical social movements can have a positive radical flank effect, increasing the support of medium movements (Simpson, Willer, and Feinberg, 2022).

One of the interviewed participants emphasized the importance of having a clear vision and well-planned strategy for successful mobilisation - a youth expert stated - “Failing to plan - plan to fail - careful planning is the most powerful tool for success.” This recommendation by youth experts is supported by the work of Giugni (1998). Many stressed that a clear vision of policy change and careful strategic planning are crucial elements in mobilizing the masses and gaining political attention (Youth Expert 1, LG, FFF1, FFF2). It is important to note that activists pointed out that successful strategies may vary from country to country, but exchanging knowledge between the movements is essential to bring influential change. The constituency is also critical for a successful movement: “The fight is never over” (Youth expert).

In conclusion, various consistent approaches and careful strategic planning combined with resilience are prerequisites of success for the overall climate movements and goals. One can see the potential impact of these movements through increased movement participation and the implementation of laws and policies, while a strategic approach is a prerequisite for achieving the social movement’s goal (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008).

5.3.2 Diverse strategies in climate activism

The outcomes of the interviews highlighted the significance of diverse strategies and approaches used by different climate movements. The Last Generation, Just Stop Oil, and Fridays

For Future climate movements employ different protest strategies to achieve their goals. Last Generation and Just Stop Oil focus on disruptive tactics to gather media attention and pressure the government to act on climate issues. In contrast, Fridays For Future predominantly adopts non-violent civil disobedience, policy advocacy, and conventional methods such as large marches. Therefore, movements like Just Stop Oil and Last Generation employed more disruptive non-violent direct action. At the same time, Fridays for Future took a more conventional and moderate approach to climate action, avoiding radical and disruptive methods. There is no literature comparing the strategies and narratives of Just Stop Oil, Last Generation, and FFF. However, a parallel can be drawn between FFF and Extinction Rebellion movements (XR) as XR is similar to JSO and LG in their NVCD tactics, according to few literature findings, where it is said that Fridays for Future is more in line with mainstream discourses and existing institutions than Extinction Rebellion (Buzogány and Scherhauser 2022). Moreover, FFF is considered more conventional, and moderate movement is also possible due to the radical flank effect (Simpson, Willer, and Feinberg, 2022). Moreover, Fridays For Future activists feel that conventional protests, such as FFF global strikes, are the most successful approaches. The case of implementing the green new deal was mentioned when FFF strikes in 2019 led to a “shift of a certain percentage of the voters” (FFF1).

Based on the outcomes of the interviews and participatory observation, the climate movements include the following methods in their strategies:

- Massive climate peace strikes;
- Blocking city roads, bridges, and traffic and disrupting life and business-as-usual strategies;
- Attacking luxury infrastructure (as for private jets, luxury shops, and hotels) ;
- Disrupting property (as oil # gas pipelines);

- Disrupting public events;
- Disrupting arts;
- Blocking the functionality of business;
- Occupying universities or schools;
- Legal cases against the in-action of the government;
- Mocking protests;
- Cooperation with other social movements as Labour Movement;
- Blocking the infrastructure which directly connected to fossil fuels expansion;
- Overwhelming administrative & government systems.

For example, by O'Brien et al. (2018), it was established that having the government legally responsible for in-action is common among many young activists that challenge business-as-usual economic and social policies (O'Brien, Selboe, and Hayward 2018). This approach was considered one of the most effective by decision-makers.

The importance of gathering at events and local meetings for education and empowerment was emphasized. Creating a push for decision-makers through online platforms, social media, and street protests was recognized as essential for success.

According to the youth expert and DM2, activists should pursue politics to bring change. Additionally, peer-to-peer approaches and finding supportive economic actors are crucial elements for the success of the climate movement (Youth Expert, LG). Some participants stated that they base their tactics on “gut feeling,” focusing on what would disturb people the most. Last Generation and Just Stop Oil use disruptive methods towards art, which are not directly harmed as “art will hurt people the most” (LG).

While participating in “The Big One” climate action, I discovered that many activists emphasized the importance of gathering and facilitating events and meetings, raising awareness.

Facilitating face-to-face meetings was a big part of the strategy, where the aim of these meetings should be educating and training people on climate solutions and empowering them to take action (Delina, Diesendorf, and Merson 2014).

The Just Stop Oil movement mainly uses slow-marching and disrupting strategies such as attacking arts, disrupting social and sports events. It is important to note that NVCD forms, such as gluing themselves to the road, are illegal in the UK (JSO). The LG activist says that in Austria, slow marches are less punishable; Additionally, as states produce new laws against climate activism, the movements have to come up with creative and new approaches, like throwing paint in luxury stores and hotels to target the wealthier society as well as and making themselves visible for politicians by putting green paint in a fountain near parliament to target politicians (LG). Another successful form of protest is mocking ones (FFF1), which I also experienced during “The Big One” in London and witnessed quite a media and public support. Additionally, interviewed activists recognized the need to create a push for decision-makers on different levels: online, through social media, and through street protests (FFF1, FFF2, LG). It is recognized that youth often innovate social movement media practices, making the movements more effective and well-spread (Costanza-Chock 2012).

5.3.3 Targeted protests and general demands

Movements mention distinct aims and goals: Last Generation and Just Stop Oil prioritize emission reduction, halting fossil fuel expansion, reducing speed limits, and advocating for a citizen council. Meanwhile, Fridays For Future promotes various laws and policies related to environmental protection and climate action. Despite the different approaches, all the movements emphasize raising awareness, especially for climate justice, as essential goals, seeking to influence political discourse and gain public and media support.

All activists pointed to awareness raising as one of the primary goals of their movements and the importance of climate justice. They attempt to influence the political discourse by raising awareness, making their voices heard, and getting media and public attention and support.

Just Stop Oil aims to make the state stop new fossil fuel licenses in the UK. The goal of the Just Stop Oil movement, the JSO activist stated, is to get as much media and public attention as possible, to get people talking about stopping fossil fuels from expansion, and by therefore disrupting art and museums are justifiable (JSO).

Last Generation focuses on policy implementation, like reducing speed limits to lower fuel consumption. They also advocate for establishing a Citizen Council in Austria (KlimaRat) to provide a platform for all citizens to have a voice in an important issue such as climate change policy shaping. According to interviews, the Last Generation and Just Stop Oil movements aim to achieve their goals by creating enough pressure for the state to target what would hurt the most but without doing primary damage.

Fridays for Future began with broad aims but now targets specific policies through activism. The movement strives to amplify the voices of youth and Global South countries, such as implementing the Austrian Climate Law, abandoning dependency on Russian gas (FFF activist 1), or European level, such as Nature Restoration Law (FFF activist 2). FFF activist 2 said that despite the recent implementation of the Nature Restoration Law, the community feels that the law was “watered” and “because of that is not impactful anymore.” Both FFF activists emphasized the importance of bringing into political discourse the voices of youth and people from countries of the Global South.

While participating in “The Big One” 4-day climate action, I did not observe the exact policy or law targeted during a climate action, nor the one primary demand. The action used more general demands such as climate justice or advocated freeing peaceful climate activists from jail sentences.

At SB58, Climate Conference in Bonn, I observed small-sized targeted actions against specific points such as anti-visa discrimination of activists from Global South countries and against secret participation of fossil fuels lobbyists as well as more general demands. Notably, many actions were organized by the FFF International movement. Concluding, I can state that NVCD activists almost do not participate in major climate conferences and, according to the 5.2.1.1 section of this chapter, tend to be less keen on building a dialog with decision-makers. In their turn, FFF activists participate in major climate decision events and make efforts towards meeting and talking to politicians.

5.3.4 The Importance of non-violence and stakeholder collaboration

All interviewed agree that non-violence is a significant factor in the success of the movements. Collaboration and the dialogue between those in power and activists are recognized surprisingly by all but LG and JSO activists, which correlates with the findings of another study, where it is concluded that activists with more disruptive tactics are less keen toward dialog with decision-makers (O'Brien, Selboe, and Hayward 2018).

The implementation of non-violent methods into strategies for social movements is recommended by many scholars (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008; Delina, Diesendorf, and Merson 2014); where in their studies, they considered multiple cases of social movements, where non-violent component help to break elite regimes and ultimately achieve large-scale changes and transitions (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008). Therefore, amid the climate crisis we are living in right now, it is highly recommended to strengthen the climate movement and its impact to implement non-violent social resistance tactics (Delina, Diesendorf, and Merson 2014).

Decision-makers acknowledge the impact of youth climate movements and encourage proactive engagement with activists while recognizing the proactive role of the government in

engaging with young climate activists more. Notably, according to DM2, Last Generation activists are an excellent example of how to be heard, appearing regularly in newspapers and contributing to the climate discourse (Decision-maker 2). Both decision-makers agree that governments are not doing enough to build a dialogue with activists, and all interviewed activists feel the same. Notably, while Austrian activist FFF1 explicitly stated that Fridays For Future Austria is trying to contact the politicians, LG does not say anything about legal ways of reaching out to decision-makers. Therefore, a conclusion can be made that while Last Generation is very visible with NVCD actions, the dialog between this movement and decision-makers of Austria has yet to be built or attempted properly from both sides.

Additionally, the dialogue between climate activists and decision-makers is inherently shaped by power dynamics. As decision-makers hold significant authority and power over policy making processes, activists often represent grassroots movements seeking change while having no power to directly change the policies. According to interview and participatory observation findings in case when activists can gain media attention, public, universities, and support by scientists, and aim to conduct disruptive actions, they can challenge the status quo and power pillars of decision-makers, therefore push addressing climate issues more seriously. Interaction between all levels of intervention as mass public opinions, campaigns, researches on different institutional structure is important to challenge existing power dynamics (Han and Barnett-Loro, 2018). It correlates with the theories of non-violent civil resistance by Chenoweth and Stephan (2008), and Sharp (1973), which conclude that in order to achieve significant social change, the methods of NVCD should be used to deprive the power and shift the dynamics of political and social discourse.

5.5 Perceptions of Non-Violent Civil Disobedience

In this section, the main points of perspectives of participants are gathered. Specifically, on non-violent civil disobedience (NVCD) as a form of climate activism, participants have mixed views on its effectiveness in driving policy changes and influencing decision-makers. I address these findings with relevant literature sources and with a correlation with the theoretical framework of this study. As stated in the literature analysis, the climate movements during recent times implemented more NVCD strategies (Thackeray et al. 2020), but considering the growing popularity of NVCD methods in climate movements (Sovacool and Dunlap 2022). While NVCD's actions gained public attention and media coverage, some activists believed in its positive impact, while others questioned its efficiency (FFF1, youth expert). Media coverage, support of big media persons, and perception by politicians were identified by NVCD activists as significant factor influencing public perception of NVCD.

5.5.1 Impact of Non-Violent Civil Disobedience

The participants provided insights into the level of support and effectiveness they attribute to NVCD to drive climate action. All interviewees acknowledged that NVCD actions (blocking roads or disrupting public spaces) garnered public attention and media coverage. Among activist participants engaging in non-violent civil disobedience (NVCD), such as JSO and LG activists, there is a strong belief in the positive impact of their actions. They emphasize the significant media attention their disruptive tactics garner as evidence of their effectiveness. Activists compare the little amount of attention conventional forms of protests gather and various NVCD actions. JSO provided her experience during “The Big One,” a peaceful multi-thousands strike by Extinction Rebellion, when she felt like the media did not report enough about the action and, therefore, “it is a proof of the effectiveness of direct action.” or FFF1 faces that journalists are not that eager to

consider statements of FFF movement, as “you are not real climate activists.” However, there were mixed views on the actual effectiveness of these actions in driving policy changes and influencing decision-makers (DM1, FFF Activist 1, FFF Activist 2, Youth Expert). The debate between the disruptive nature of NVCD and its actual impact on policy decisions was a recurring theme among the participants.

According to interviews, there are both positive and negative radical flank effects on the level of support from the public. The interview outcomes imply that having radical forms of climate activism can, on the one hand, reduce public support of climate action and stigmatize climate activists; on the other hand, push the state to implement policies that were considered before as too radical or impossible to implement, raise more awareness about the climate crisis and make the moderate climate movements seem more legal and justifiable. Through the research, I discovered more literature and academic research findings were available to support that the positive side of Non-Violent Civil Disobedience climate movements is bigger than the negative one (Sovacool and Dunlap 2022; Simpson, Willer, and Feinberg 2022; Somerville 2020; Gulliver, Fielding, and Louis 2021) as well as participants views (DM1, DM2, FFF1, JSO, LG) then research on negative side of disruptive protests (O’Brien, Selboe, and Hayward 2018), or interviews concerns (FFF1, youth expert). However, there is no consensus on the effects of NVCD. However, the majority of interviews agree that these methods should be used carefully and thoughtfully planned - considering long-term impacts and careful strategic planning are crucial in ensuring successful NVCD actions (youth expert).

5.5.2 Perceptions of climate activism and NVCD during participatory observations

During participatory observations at “The Big One” climate action, I observed strong support for the Just Stop Oil movement among the activists. At the same time, participants were devastated that “The Big One” action was not appropriately reported enough by the media, even though it gathered thousands of participants, as many said, due to its peacefulness. At SB58, perceptions of more radical ways of NVCD were not gathered due to the absence of relevant and conventional forms of climate actions during the UNFCCC conference. As I engaged in conventional climate activism, such as peaceful strikes outside and inside of SB58 venue during SB58 as part of Fridays For Future, I had mixed feelings about the actual impact of it when parties disagreed on the Mitigation Working Program for the agenda for COP28 and was wondering whether more radical NVCD would work better.

5.5.3 Media Influence on NVCD and public perception of It

It was agreed that media coverage significantly influences public perception of non-violent civil disobedience (NVCD) and climate activism. Positive portrayals, scientific support, and university backing increase public support (LG, DM2). In contrast, negative portrayals in right-wing media or hatred of politicians towards climate activists can lead to hostility (JSO, FFF1, LG) - according to LG, “The more politicians hate climate activists, the more aggressive people become towards us.” Indeed, the study by Feldman et al. (2017) conducts that negative perceptions of media are common among conservative media. Moreover, while such hostile perceptions can push more participants with liberal views, it can discourage political moderates from participating in action and additionally creates division and extreme opinions on climate change (Feldman et al. 2017).

Participants stressed the need to address media portrayals to present NVCD positively. Concerns include stigmatization and such misconceptions as portraying climate activists as irrational or egoistic or even blaming NVCD activists for terrorism. Despite many negative media portrayals, NVCD actions still receive public support (JSO, LG) in an average form of 50/50 (JSO, LG). According to the interviewed, media influence is crucial for garnering public understanding and support for climate activism.

Notably, FFF1 says, “Now it is ordinary people versus climate activists - while in 2019 strikes ordinary people were together with climate activists and it was inseparable. Furthermore, while media perception towards Fridays For Future is more neutral than for NVCD action, media tend to report and engage with NVCD actions more than with conventional forms of climate movements.

5.5.4 Long-term impacts and strategic approaches

While some interviewees expressed hope that NVCD could lead to significant change over time (LG, JSO, DM2), others emphasized the importance of carefully planning and framing NVCD actions to avoid drastic negative consequences (FFF Activist 1, Youth Expert). It was said that once your movement is known - there is no need for disruption as activists can create a political movement already (youth expert); they also emphasized the need for a cautious approach toward NVCD as without proper strategy and planning instead of democracy, aggressiveness, populism, and chaos can emerge. The need for incremental change and inclusive strategies to engage diverse stakeholders, including decision-makers, was also emphasized (Youth Expert 1, DM2).

Chapter 6. Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter summarises this research on impacts, drivers, and perceptions of young climate activists by outlining the main findings and giving practical recommendations for enhancing the efficiency of climate movements and dialogue between decision-makers and climate activists, as well as providing suggestions for further research.

As discussed earlier, humanity needs to conduct urgent climate action to avoid the most drastic impacts of the climate crisis, and climate social movements are potentially playing a significant role in pushing that change. While climate youth movements have to grow more to ensure a sufficient voice in political discourse, the methods of non-violent civil disobedience, which young climate activists are pushed to use facing the fear of coming climate crisis, disrupt the usual life of people and often are misunderstood if not jeopardized by media and public. The role of young climate activists in engaging in a dialogue with decision-makers has emerged as a crucial prerequisite for successful global climate action. Through a comprehensive review of relevant literature and participatory observations of different kinds of climate action and policy-making processes, I gained valuable insights into the dynamics and challenges of young climate activists. Based on the elaboration of these insights, I concluded several main outputs.

Interview participants and existing literature recognize the impact and essential role of youth in climate decision-making processes. While all interviewed activists expressed frustration and distrust toward decision-makers, Non-Violent Civil Disobedience (NVCD) activists showed little willingness to dialogue with decision-makers. Decision-makers recognized the importance of building an engaging collaboration with young climate activists and the active role which the government has to play in it. And collaborating with different stakeholders, implementing various

strategies on different levels, and carefully long-term planning, youth climate movements can achieve their goals with higher probability;

Methods of NVCD are mainly recognized by the existing research and by the interviewed participants as an efficient tool for influencing political and social discourse and promoting climate policies. However, not all NVCD methods, especially those involving art disruption, receive equal support. Nevertheless, there is a prevailing perception that NVCD has a positive influence, but it needs to be carefully planned to prevent adverse impacts. Surprisingly, activists from NVCD movements, during their peaceful disruptive actions, receive a growing and much higher level of support, leveraging around 50% of the people. It surpasses expectations and highlights the potential positive effects of NVCD.

By interviewing decision-makers and climate activists, I could establish the key commonalities and differences in their perceptions of climate activism, non-violent civil disobedience methods, system changes, and their perceptions of each other and dialogue. Young climate activists expressed a high level of distrust toward the government, had worrying concerns about the future, felt unheard by those in power, and had expectations that in case of continuing in-action by states for mitigating climate change, the intensiveness and number of NVCDs would escalate, and decision-makers should expect that. Additionally, activists engaging in NVCD felt more powerful and satisfied with their work than Fridays For Future activists, which also is unexpected. The most significant difference between climate activists and decision-makers was the perceptions of the possibilities of system change. While young activists require rapid system shifts in climate politics, the decision-makers recognize the obstacles and difficulties of the rapid system change in favor for climate change mitigation. Important to note that the claim for a rapid decrease in carbon emissions is stressed by the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2023).

The directions for further research on the youth climate movements are to have a comparative case of in-depth multi-stakeholders interviews of one country or alternatively specifically UNFCCC climate negotiations processes. Going deeper into insights of both decision-makers or politicians and youth climate activists around one field or country is needed to develop later a clear guide for both stakeholders for a proper dialogue building. Another recommendation would be to conduct a deeper assessment of the impact and effectiveness of non-violent disruptive methods of Just Stop Oil in the United Kingdom or the Last Generation climate movement in Austria.

The recommendations for decision-makers:

- Recognize the crucial role of youth climate activists in decision-making and policy-making processes, legally engaging youth and creating meaningful opportunities on local, national, and international levels or climate-related processes such as climate negotiations and climate policies adaptation;
- Implement climate education practices at all levels of education.
- Support climate movements and forbid hate-speech towards youth climate activists, as with such form of interpretations by politics, the aggressiveness towards climate activists rises;
- Take proactive steps towards building a dialogue with climate youth movements, taking steps towards speaking directly to representatives of climate peaceful youth movements.

Recommendations for Climate Activists:

- Do research-based advocacy for climate action and youth participation and approach politicians and decision-makers with a clear solution plan and propositions;

- Use Non-Violent Civil Disobedience methods to enhance media attention and raise awareness of the climate crisis, but carefully and as a part of a long-term strategy that includes various methods acting on different levels of policy advocacy;

- Engage with decision-makers, approaching and actively seeking a dialogue with them and build collaborations with different stakeholders such as other social movements, NGOs, universities, scientists, and banks;

- Use knowledge to build effective strategies from historical cases, research, and science behind the social and NVCD movements.

In conclusion, the research provides valuable insights into the perceptions of youth climate activists and decision-makers, delving into the motivations, experiences, and methods of climate action by youth. The role of non-violent civil disobedience, dialog with decision-makers, public perceptions, and attentive, strategic planning is essential for bringing the change youth climate movements are attempting to make. By addressing the research insights, considering findings, and implementing recommendations from the research, climate activists and decision-makers can work together to ensure effective climate action to build a better future for us all.

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