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Graduate Studies

*Social Movements and Resistance: Extinction Rebellion
Against Dominant Structures*

A THESIS SUBMITTED BY

Samira Magdy Eltiby

TO THE

Political Science Program

SUPERVISED BY

Prof. Nesrine Badawi

The 7th of January 2024

*in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Political Science, with Specializations in Comparative Politics,
International Relations and Development Studies (MA)*

Declaration of Authorship

I, Samira Magdy Eltiby, declare that this thesis titled, “Social Movements and Resistance: Extinction Rebellion Against Dominant Structures” and the work presented in it are my own. I confirm that:

- This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University.
- Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated.
- Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed.
- Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work.
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help.
- Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself.

Signed:

Samira Magdy Eltiby

Date:

The 7th of February 2024

**STUDENT TO INSERT HERE THE PAGE WITH
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Abstract

Public dissent is the outcome of governments inaction regarding issues that populations deem as necessary. Social movements are groups that emerge due to dissatisfaction with the status quo that is presented by the current neoliberal world order. The new social movement that is studied in this thesis seeks emancipation, freedom, environmental justice and action, and the dismantlement of neoliberal capitalism as a system of production. This thesis examines the relevance of Gramscian analysis to the study of new social movements, with a focus on Gramscian hegemony and leaderless movements. The thesis uses Extinction Rebellion (XR), a UK-based movement that adopts nonviolent civil disobedience as its main case study to explore what can be uncovered through using Gramsci's ideas when studying new social movements. The thesis concludes that Gramsci offers a useful lens to explore new social movements in a different angle than is done using other theories. The thesis's main contribution to existing literature is its focus on areas of weakness and potential reasons for failure of movements fighting the current hegemonic order and how they could be perceived as tools of the neoliberal world order that they fight using Gramsci's theory.

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List of Abbreviations

XR	Extinction Rebellion
NSM	New Social Movement
SOS	Self-Organizing System
UK	United Kingdom
XRUK	Extinction Rebellion Unite Kingdom

Chapter 1

Introduction to the Contention

Introduction

Solidarity comes in different shapes and forms. It can be seen on the personal level between individuals, and it can be seen on a larger scale, both between states and among citizens from different backgrounds. Solidarity is shown in different actions; through helping those in need, extending support to allies, being an amplifying voice to subaltern populations whose languages many do not speak, etc. This thesis will focus on resistance both as a tool of showing dissent and solidarity through utilizing Gramsci's theories from his Prison Notebook.

According to David Bell (1973), resistance is a necessary step that people take to obstruct governments from taking certain actions or to stop governments from functioning (Bell, 1973, 3). Civil disobedience is defined by Thoreau as an act of individual autonomy (LeJeune, 2018, 12). For him, civil disobedience is an act taken to solve a shape of injustice that the individual views (LeJeune, 2018, 12; Sommier, Hayes & Ollitrault, 2019, 125; Delmas, 2018, 4). For an act of protest to be considered as civil disobedience, it must contain the breaking of law (including an illegal action) to dissent a violation that the individual views as a violation of existing laws, policies, or decisions by the government (Bedau, 1961, 653-654; Kellner, 1975, 899). Dissenters do not believe that their actions of lawbreaking are illegal, but rather as rights given to them through the law (Bedau, 1961, 654-655). It must be noted that civil disobedience does not entail protesting in a violent manner (Bedau, 1961, 659). Civil disobedience refers to tactics performed by dissenters through nonviolent and public methods that aim to bring common good to the group (Bedau, 1961, 659; Sommier, Hayes & Ollitrault, 2019, 132; Berglund, 2023, 2-3; Kellner, 1975, 899; Delmas, 2018, 4-9). Civil disobedience is a conscientious act that is performed by dissenter/protesters to justify their disobedience through highlighting the inequality between political circumstances and moral convictions (Bedau, 1961, 659; Sommier,

Hayes & Ollitrault, 2019, 125-127). According to Rawls and Cohen, an act of civil disobedience must be announced in advance to the government and the public to be considered truly public (Sommier, Hayes & Ollitrault, 2019, 132).

Because the world is connected, any act of civil disobedience is easily accessible to individuals all around the globe, and thus, an act taken to oppose an issue in one corner of the world echoes in all places where the same injustice is suffered. This is a reason why modern social movements spread across borders. It is also the outcome of the similar circumstances that the current neoliberal system structured. Because of the constant demands of the current system, populations suffer similar tragedies, be it environmental decay, freedom of asserting one's identity and cultural claims, repression that comes from the rising living standards, etc. Therefore, when a movement erupts with certain grievances many feel and relate to such eruption, and often connect, adopt, and develop the same methods of protesting as a form of solidarity and unity.

Currently, the development of movements is studied by many scholars through New Social Movements theory, which refers to movements that replace the old ideas of movements based around proletarian revolution (Buechler, 1995, 442). Although their roots relate to Marxism, they revised the values and forms of protest according to their individual struggles (Buechler, 1995, 442). Instead of showing disobedience through worker unions and centering around class-based struggles like older movements, new social movements show their disobedience through disruptive actions, where they make use of symbolic actions (symbols, logos, chants, slogans, etc.) (Buechler, 1995, 442). Also, they often try to link their struggle to the society and culture that the protesters come from (Buechler, 1995, 442). Theories of new social movements believe that new forms of protest focus on the promotion of autonomy, rights of citizens, identities (sexuality, religion, gender, etc.), instead of issues of hegemony and power capture (Buechler, 1995, 442; Giugni, 1998, 90-94). New social movement theories view grievances as products that emerge out of the structure of their location, meaning that grievances are different in who they affect and how they affect populations based on where specific populations are located (Buechler, 1995, 442; Lehmann, 2018, 193; Giugni, 1998, 94). They are

distinctive in their focus on the role of history in shaping/forming collective action¹ (Buechler, 1995, 442; Buechler, 1993, 218). In addition, they highlight the modern forms of power that construct the rationality of the masses. Thus, they engage with ideas of the nature of the world as a socially constructed product and argue that there could be other means of ruling other than the neoliberal ones (Buechler, 1995, 446).

The thesis uses Gramsci's theories introduced in his writings found in his prison notebooks to probe new social movements, with a focus on Extinction Rebellion as a case study. The thesis questions whether Gramsci's theories can be applied to new social movements, and what can be uncovered through using Gramsci's ideas when exploring new social movements. The initial hypothesis is that Gramsci offers a lens to explore new social movements in a different angle than is done using other theories. Thus, Gramsci's theories can offer a wide variety of tools that can uncover aspects often neglected because of the lack of employing a Gramscian analysis to study new social movements. The thesis uses the decentralized leaderless movement Extinction Rebellion, focusing on Extinction Rebellion United Kingdom as it is the most active group and the one that garners the biggest numbers of participants.

The purpose of this thesis is to see how change is reached in a world that is built on structures that oppress the masses to please an elite few through Gramscian concepts, and the model of new social movements is used as they are the dominant type of movements in current times. Extinction Rebellion is chosen as it is the current largest environmental movement, thus, the one with the widest reach (both cross-borders and class-wise). Extinction Rebellion serves as the best choice of an environmental social movement in this thesis as it is the biggest movement that emerged in the Global North to address an issue that affects the entire world, but more specifically, the Global South. It is also an attractive case to investigate as it interacts with both unconcerned civilians and different governments at a global level. Finally, the choice to use a Western group of Extinction Rebellion is due to their ability to interact with democratic governments, which offers them more room to practice civil disobedience. The thesis highlights how states, which are fundamental cornerstones of the international system, function according to Gramscian understandings.

¹ This can be seen in Indigenous struggles currently facing Indigenous people across the world. For example, Indigenous populations in the U.S. face poverty at a larger scale than most U.S. citizens due to restrictions placed on them because of their status and cultural ties. The same can be seen in the outbreak of movements around the world to protest what is currently (January 2024) happening in Gaza.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

This paper will use Gramsci's theories and writings to build its findings upon. The theories that will be used of Gramsci's are his theory on hegemony and structural change, and his theories on the formation of intellectuals. The theories will be used to analyze how Extinction Rebellion as a leaderless new social movement function according to Gramsci's understanding of groups as drivers of change.

According to Gramsci, intellectuals' formation goes through different stages before they can influence structural change (Gramsci, 1971, 444), which will aid the paper to determine how much progress movements made in their effort to bring about change. Gramsci's theory is built on the idea that society is structured through inherited understandings of the world (Gramsci, 1971, 145-147). He explained this through the role played by organic and historical intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971, 145-147). Also, he used the idea of superstructures as tools that the hegemonic powers have built to convince the masses that the world functions in a specific manner (Gramsci, 1971, 145-147). This is done through maintaining the same channels of knowledge understanding that former hegemonic powers used to keep the structures of the world the same for the advancement of their benefits (Gramsci, 1971, 145-147). Therefore, the theories engage with the idea that human practices are influenced and learned processes, which aids the thesis in seeing the relationship between the hegemonic power and social movements' ways of functioning. The following part of this section will further discuss the theories.

1.3 Gramsci's Theory on Hegemony

Gramsci views the world as the product of the hegemonic power's influence. Concepts of Gramsci that are useful for the focus of this thesis revolve around the role of civil society and intellectuals in inducing structural change, which will be used in this thesis to refer to social movements and how they influence change.

For Gramsci, there is no definitive definition of what civil society is. In some instances, he defines civil society as the space available for practicing emancipatory actions by social forces that are divorced from the state and capital holders (Cox. 1993, 3). In other, he thought of civil society as the space that kept the hegemony of the bourgeoisie, as well as the space where counter hegemony is constructed (Cox, 1999, 3). In his writings, civil society is shown to be

the realm in which the social order is preserved, but it is also the place where a new social order could be built due to it being the area where different intellectuals meet and discuss their interests and problems (Hoare & Smith, 1999, 145; Hoare & Smith, 1999, 210). Additionally, the concept of civil society was used by Gramsci flexibly, as he did not present one singular definition of what a civil society is (Cox, 1999, 4-7). Instead, he used it to refer to different practices of the state according to the different phenomena that he was explaining (Cox, 1999, 4-7). For instance, he used it to explain the space where the elite interact and discuss their interests, but he also used it to describe the area of politics where populations can practice their rights to voicing their opinions and wants (Cox, 1999, 4-7; Hoare & Smith, 1999, 145; Hoare & Smith, 1999, 210). According to this understanding of civil society, the thesis will investigate Extinction Rebellion's interactions with governments through the space that civil society provides, which will be viewed as the hegemonic power in Gramsci's theory. Based on Gramsci's theory and his understanding of civil society, civil society will be seen as the area where protests take place and demands are made known. Protestors will be framed as intellectuals seeking change to see how they interact with the state and how that is translated using Gramsci's theory.

Gramsci's theory will also show the role of intellectuals (social movements) in driving the masses into creating structural change. Through his understanding of historical materialism, Gramsci traced back the source of ethics to historical practices that witnessed different cycles of reproduction through different social and cultural practices that enabled communities to deal with the environments they lived in (Cox, 1999, 4). In turn, these ethics were agreed upon by cultural and social practices through educational and ideological agencies that push for them and are sustained by the state (Cox, 1999, 4-5). This means that the educational and ideological practices that are taught to populations are pushed onto them by the state, and if the state as an entity along with the civil and political societies are made up to please and meet the needs of the bourgeoisie, then the ideas and beliefs that are taught to the masses are essentially those that would keep the bourgeoisie in power, being the source behind them after all. Yet, Gramsci still saw civil society as capable of inducing change, making it both a shaper and shaped by the forces of the state, as well as an agent where reproduction and stability are both maintained and transformed (Cox, 1999, 4-5). Linking this to the thesis, ideas of neoliberalism as an essential component of the world order are considered as ideologies pushed onto populations. To observe whether Extinction Rebellion is influenced by the

neoliberal society or not, the thesis will look at how the movement protests, and how the actions of civil disobedience of the movement change according to state response, or lack of response.

To have a proper understanding of how Gramsci's theories can highlight points that other theories fail to, the following concepts of Gramsci will be utilized as tools of analysis. Hegemony, which is one of Gramsci's most used concepts, will be used to observe the forces that the case study of the thesis engages with, and how they influence the movement. The second aspect of Gramsci's theory that the thesis will focus on is Gramsci's concept of intellectuals, and how modern-day intellectuals are found as players in movements and in the hegemonic system. Through the analysis of intellectuals, the thesis will engage with the formation of intellectuals and the formation of masses consciousness that Gramsci highlighted as a cornerstone of influencing change. In addition, the thesis will look at concepts such as war of position and passive revolution and try to see how they translate in the current relationships between protesters and governments.

1.4 Methodology

The thesis will rely on a case study to explore the relevance of Gramsci's theories to new social movements, and what can be uncovered through using Gramsci's ideas when exploring new social movements, with a hypothesis that Gramsci offers a new lens to explore new social movements from a different angle. This was done through using the interpretative research method. Through analyzing the research problem by qualitative means, it was possible to observe and analyze new social movements with Gramsci's theories and applying them to Extinction Rebellion.

Extinction Rebellion is selected as the thesis case study due to its ongoing struggle against those who determine policies that regulate people's lives and the environment, as well as explicitly state its enemy/target as neoliberalism and the way that the current system works in a destructive way (Extinction Rebellion, 2022). Also, the selection of Extinction Rebellion is based on how widespread they are as a movement and the large amount of support they receive. The selected Extinction Rebellion national group is the movement in the United Kingdom as it is the country where the movement emerged, influenced others, and it is the most active among national groups. The thesis investigated how Gramsci's writing can be applied to a new social movement using Extinction Rebellion's actions from 2018-2024 to

highlight where Gramsci can help in understanding method of change employed by movements.

The thesis aims to find areas of strength and weakness that new social movements have in their interaction with their respective governments. The areas that the thesis highlight are ones that are spaces of need of growth and development according to Gramscian theories.

The research methods are qualitative and inductive analysis, entailing a close reading of groups' manifestos, alongside media sources, such as news articles and blogs, as well as academic literature in search for proof of whether the movement employs tactics and builds institutions that are effective in building a counter-hegemonic force. By collecting information about the movement, this thesis can analyze how neoliberalism was a player, if not the sole player, in the emergence of different groups as reactions to different forms of injustice. This will be done through looking for the reason Extinction Rebellion became active, how they protest and what methods they use, populations they attract, and effectiveness of their disruptive actions to make their demands heard (government response), and then analyzing them in Gramscian terms.

To further analyze the effectiveness of the Extinction Rebellion in influencing change, the thesis will observe the movements' participants/protestors through Gramsci's vision of intellectuals. By utilizing Gramsci's theory, the thesis will see protestors as either organic intellectuals that introduce new ideas to change the neoliberal world order through using alternative methods of protesting, or as traditional intellectuals that maintain the hegemonic order through reproducing ideas and beliefs that keep the current system in place; which refers to those individuals that are in charge of thinking and spreading ideas to a particular social class that maintains and conceals the formation and reproduction processes of social classes (Gramsci, 1971, 131); which will be further discussed in the paper. This will be done through observing if protestors extend their struggles to other groups/movements, reshape movements to engage with newly found interests/struggles, have a clear institution/actor that they are protesting, and introduce new resistance ideas that help in spreading consciousness of their struggle (Gramsci, 1971, 132-133). If protestors from the movements managed to satisfy some of these aspects, then they would be moving towards introducing alternative methods of existing, and thus, they would be acting as organic intellectuals, as explained in Gramsci's analysis on how counterhegemonic forces emerge when different

intellectuals from different groups work together to introduce new ideas to change society (Gramsci, 1971, 131). In that case, Extinction Rebellion would be used as a model for what an influential movement looks like according to Gramscian understandings.

Generally, new social movements tend to be leaderless to avoid complications caused by censorship and arrest.² Therefore, the thesis will examine this leaderless social movement. However, contention arises here because in Gramsci's writing, there is often a leading figure that influences the masses to act and bring change. The thesis will apply Gramsci's theory while examining how a leaderless new social movement performs without leaders, and whether having a movement leader affects the movement positively or negatively.

Initially, the thesis was planned to be conducted through observation and interviews with representatives of the Extinction Rebellion, but an issue was faced in the form of inaccessibility of contact with them³. This is due to the movements' structures being built on voluntary action, therefore, there were no available volunteers that could be contacted to get additional information from. To counter this issue, the thesis relied on the information on the movement that is found in other academic sources, on the movement's website (which was advised by the correspondents of Extinction Rebellion), and general news sources.

1.5 Literature Review

Gramsci in Secondary Literature

Antonio Gramsci's writings are used in different types of literature to observe various types of phenomena. This part of the literature will give an overview of some literature that employed Gramscian concepts to aid the authors of their analysis. Gramsci's work is often used to make sense of social movements and other forms of civil disobedience. Most scholars use Gramsci's concept of hegemony to study the relationship between the elite and the different intellectual formations they observe. In addition, Gramsci's concept of intellectual is used as a tool to distinguish to what purpose individuals serve and to what ends actions are taken.

Earl Conteh-Morgan (2002) used Gramsci's writings to study how globalization affects the security of individuals, groups, and nations through looking at the International Political

² This is also becoming the case for Western social movements such as Extinction Rebellion.

³ This is due to the movement's participants desire to remain anonymous.

Economy. The argument of the author was that there needed to be more security practices when it comes to issues originating in the economic and technological fields. The author used Gramsci's concepts of structures, hegemonic order, hegemony and the different institutions that ensure the survival of it to analyze his study.

David L. Levy and Peter J. Newell (2002) used Gramscian analysis to observe international environmental governance and how it fares in a world ruled by hegemonic forces. The authors used Gramsci's concepts of hegemony, civil society, and put a focus on Gramsci's historical materialism. They used Gramsci's historical materialism to observe the interaction between different international agencies and how these interactions always end up benefiting the elite.

AlemSeghed Kebede (2005) used Gramscian analysis, and his conception of what hegemony is to observe social movements as a reaction to hegemonic forces. Kebede visualized social movements as a counter-hegemonic bloc, like many other authors do including this thesis. His focus was the grassroots environmental justice organizations in the United States and how these movements not only challenge the hegemonic order in issues related to the environment, but also in issues relating to political, economic, intellectual and cultural understandings in the United States.

Mark Rupert (2003) employed Gramsci's work and Marxian analysis to study transnational social movements aiming at altering the capitalist system. Rupert focused on the class relations and how the history of capitalism affected these relations. Through this history of capitalism, Rupert argues that resistance emerges in the form of anti-capitalist movements that advocate for a future without capitalist limitations. He argues that with the current globalized world, movements tend to be transnational, influencing areas in the world affected by the harms of capitalism and neo-imperialism. Besides class relations, Rupert uses Gramsci's ideas of consciousness and hegemony to examine factors affecting his study. In the same vein of thought, Matthew Stephen also used Gramsci's concept of common sense to study the impact of the alter-globalization movement. Stephen uses the concept of common sense to observe how ideas changed among people between 2002 and 2007, and how this change presented a crisis for the neoliberal project.

Similarly, Christoph Scherrer (2001) used Gramsci's terminologies to explore how class is viewed in international relations. Scherrer uses class relations to observe whether an

international class or group of individuals with a collective identity has emerged. The author reaches the conclusion that while there are connections between groups, international relations and politics are still controlled by the United States, where its policies influence the world both in the economic and political sense.

To study the concepts applied to theories of international regime in International Relations, Fred Gale (1998) used the neo-Gramscian framework. Gale observed neorealism, neoliberalism, and institutionalism and their use in the field of International Relations. He engaged with the writing of Susan Strange and her criticisms in her article 'Cave! Hic dragones' and criticized her employment of International Relations theories to engage with concepts without using a critical lens.

The literature above shows how Gramsci's work is employed to describe different phenomena. However, his work goes beyond that. What is noticeable about Gramsci's work is that although it is limited (in the sense that what survived of his legacy is his prison notebooks), it is widely used to examine different issues by scholars in different fields. Therefore, Gramsci offers a flexible tool of analysis through his work, hence the use of his theory as the main investigative tool in this chapter. The concepts/theories most used of Gramsci's are his notion of hegemony and how it spreads, but his work on consciousness and how it is used by the elite to entrench their position of power is indispensable to observing situations where power is contested.

Although the literature explored above uses Gramscian analysis to study different phenomena, none of the authors engage with the new form of social movements. This thesis offers to fill this gap in literature through employing Gramsci's work to study new social movements to determine their effectiveness in making change according to Gramscian parameters. In addition, the authors used certain terminologies of Gramsci's separately, or a couple of Gramsci's concepts at the same time, but they did not employ Gramsci's theory completely to their writings to explore how the problems they studied might fare under a Gramscian lens. This thesis offers to study new social movements and their effectiveness in bringing change relying solely on Gramsci's theory of change.

Resistance and Non-violent Action

Resistance is the first step towards changing unjust systems. According to David Bell (1973),

resistance is a method to limit or destroy authority. It aims at obstructing political authority from functioning through demanding change from the state, which is considered as the normal way of protesting, or through revolutionary politics, which is considered as a non-traditional method (Bell, 1973, 3). Resistance is often the result of nonfunctional institutional limitations or because the state exceeded its authority and infringed civil rights (Bell, 1973, 3). It is a conscious decision to not obey the authorities and more extreme action than protests, which aim at changing policy but not defying authority (Bell, 1973, 4). Resistance can also be understood as a response to uneven development of neoliberalism, meaning that empathy and solidarity can be shared across borders due to sharing grievances (Cepeda-Másmela, 2020, 283).

Civil resistance, otherwise known as nonviolent action, is a form of coordinated methods performed by civilians to show discontent without causing harm (Chenoweth, 2014, 351). These methods are seen in the form of strikes, protests, demonstrations, boycotts, among others (Chenoweth, 2014, 351). It is also defined as a series of observable and continuous tactics in pursuit of a political objective (Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008, 16). These campaigns have known leaders and names to differentiate them from random riots and mass actions (Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008, 16). However, nonviolent struggle does not equal pacifism; pacifism is an ethical position, while nonviolent action is a method of showing discontent without resorting to violence (Ammons & Coyne, 2018, 152). It uses social, economic, psychological and political power in matching forces in conflict (Sharp, 1978, 325). Also, it is not limited to domestic issues, but rather offers channels of communication across countries (Sharp, 1978, 325). It is also not equal to the principle of nonviolence, which is grounded in religious and ethical reasons against violence (Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008, 10).

Cepeda-Másmela explains how resistance was not considered as a central issue of International Relations, however, it was discussed in the context of civil society organizations by liberal constructivists and its role in challenging the hegemonic order by postcolonial and neo-Gramscian scholars (Cepeda-Másmela, 2020, 276). Yet, all approaches fail to recognize that resistance is an issue that engages with how local acts and experiences influence international actors (people from different nations) (Cepeda-Másmela, 2020, 276). A concept that encompasses this idea of method of resistance sharing is Alter-globalization.

Alter-globalization refers to the process where different social movements, organizations, and

activists who are opposed to neoliberal globalization (the current hegemonic order) come together and merge to develop new alternatives to the current order in hopes of creating change (Cepeda-Másmela, 2020, 278). This process is distinguished by its diversity, where actors from different backgrounds share their struggles and develop solutions that are foreign to those in their homelands (Cepeda-Másmela, 2020, 278). One of the goals of the alter-globalization process is to have movements and coalitions across countries fighting for the same cause (Cepeda-Másmela, 2020, 288-289). It is a form of articulation of local practices and global dynamics that constantly produces encounters with the global system. These encounters create alliances, strategies, symbols, targets and solidarity across borders (Cepeda-Másmela, 2020, 276-291). In a Gramscian sense, this process relates to Gramsci's conditions on how movements influence others in the creation of a counterhegemonic bloc through sharing their intellectuals' knowledge to build alternatives to the current system (Gramsci, 1971, 444). In the scope of the thesis, this can be seen in the spread of Extinction Rebellion across the world with different national groups fighting against pollutants and other forms of environmental destruction according to their different situations, however, they all fight for the same cause, the preservation of the environment. It can also be seen in the way that the movement is learning how to develop its goals according to the criticism it receives, as well as develop new methods of protesting that it would not have incorporated in its strategies otherwise.

Having established how resistance is a potential form of structural change, the next part will focus on social movements and where they are situated in the fight against the hegemonic social order.

Social Movements and Environmental Social Movements

Social movements are the main tools used to show discontent with government and the status quo, however, they are understood differently by different scholars. Some see them as an excluded collectivity interacting with economic and political elites in hopes of social change. Others see them as the coming together of groups of ordinary people to demand shared goals using different strategies and performances, such as marches, sit-ins, etc. (Almeida, 2019, 6; Tilly, 1998, 454). They contribute to the creation of public space and transfer of power through these practices (Tilly, 1998, 469). Social movements are also understood to have continuous histories where their formation, evolution and ending are seen (Tilly, 1998, 456; Almeida, 2019, 6). They constitute themselves through mobilization by creating their own organizations and networks to create a sense of collectivity and continuity (Tilly, 1998, 456).

Mobilizing structures are formal and informal structures that people use to mobilize and engage in collective action (Morris, 2000, 446). Mobilization happens through informal networks, pre-existing institutions, and formal organizations (Morris, 2000, 446). In the case of environmentalist mobilization, the channels that form through mobilization are seen as channels for the formation of new elites (Melucci, 1994, 121-122). This is due to the idea that environmental social movements lack a common condition or cause to fight for, and the fight for the environment is a broad one, which is why the solidarity that exists among environmentalist groups is symbolic in nature (Melucci, 1994, 121-122). This can be seen in the way that criticism to environmental movements often come from other environmental groups, as was the case of Extinction Rebellion gaining a lot of criticism from groups such as Wretched of the Earth for their lack of diversity and regard for people of color in the methods they use to protest.

Although they sometimes take direct action against authorities, usually, social movements function through indirect forms of action (Tilly, 1998, 467). These indirect actions show the movement's will and capacity, but they do not show the capability to meet the objectives that they claim alone (Tilly, 1998, 467). Alain Touraine notes how unlike old social movements that freely and eagerly engaged with violent action and resistance, new social movements tend to be more pacifist and of interest in consciousness (Touraine, 1992, 143). Instead of aiming for power, the new social movements are more interested in general wellbeing, human rights, and democracy (Touraine, 1992, 143; Handler, 1992, 719). These movements use new forms of citizen politics that rely on direct action, participatory decision-making, decentralized structures, and opposition to bureaucracy (Handler, 1992, 719). Social movements emerge when groups perceive harm, and they are likely to mobilize when the movement grows (Almeida, 2019, 7).

Environmental movements refer to networks of nongovernmental groups and organizations that aim at the prevention of the exploitation and destruction of natural resources (Rucht, 1999, 205). Environmental movements differ from other movements in that some of the most famous movements claim to be apolitical/politically neutral/non-partisan (Rucht, 1999, 205). One of the most recent and largest in numbers that make this claim is Extinction Rebellion, which will be the focus case study of the thesis. As a movement, Extinction Rebellion separates itself from any political issue that is not related to the fight against climate change, including issues that

affect the climate struggle but are not directly linked to it, such as issues related to racism, police brutality, and socioeconomic issues.

The structure of environmental movements possesses a cultural dimension (which is a factor found in new social movements), where the idea of “nature” and those who destroy, it is linked to the context of the movement (Melucci, 1994, 122). Thus, when different environmental movements emerge in different places, they do so to remind their specific society/community of the overall harm that humanity causes to the environment as well as the specific harm that this society causes to their immediate environment (Melucci, 1994, 122).

Neoliberalism and New Social Movements

Neoliberalism is a concept with a variety of meanings. For some, it is understood as a set of economic policies that are concerned with the deregulation of the economy, the liberalization of trade and industry, and the privatization of state-owned enterprises (Ganti, 2014, 90-91). It is also seen as a development model that maps out models with economic, social, and political implications (Ganti, 2014, 90-91). Others see it as an ideology that views market exchange as an ethic that guides human behavior (Ganti, 2014, 90-91). The origins of neoliberalism can be traced back to the late 1970s and early 1980s, where it emerged as a new political and intellectual project that countered socialist and Marxist models (Davies, 2016, 127-129). In International Relations, the concept of neoliberalism is often understood according to Robert Keohane’s work around the subject. Keohane, who is a neoliberal scholar, starts with the idea that there are variations in the institutions of world politics which shape the behavior of governments to a great extent. The pattern of cooperation of neoliberalism is understood in the context of institutions that help define the meaning and importance of state action (Viotti & Kauppi, 2012, 147-149). On the other hand, states use these international institutions to reach their interests since institutions open channels of cooperation (Viotti & Kauppi, 2012, 147-149). Once these interests are reached, they shape the order of the world into what the beliefs of those interested are (Viotti & Kauppi, 2012, 147-149). For social movements, this means that neoliberalism plays a part in both maintaining and changing the contexts where social movement’s function (Della Porta, 2013, 347). Adding to Keohane’s ideas on state ruling institutions, but curating it to social movements struggle against elite rule, Della Porta sees that governments often lose ground to elites, where the neoliberal model turns from one that the aim of is to free the market into one that the dominant class use to achieve its interests while using the freedom that the model introduces to grant it more room to act without any

governmental intervention (Della Porta, 2013, 355). Social movements' role in this relationship is to find where corruption stems from and act against the source (Della Porta, 2013, 355). Much like their predecessors, new social movements demand spaces for participation where they can influence institutional change (Della Porta, 2013, 361).

New Social Movements refer to movements that recently emerged whose focus is on both the relationship between social movements and structures, the role that culture plays in these movements, and on the identity and individuals that join social movements (Pichardo, 1997, 411; Heery, 2018, 662). Aspects such as sexuality, gender, race, among others play a major role in new social movements (Heery, 2018, 664). They emerge due to the grievances which stem from the structural conditions of the postindustrial society (D'Anieri, Ernst & Kier, 1990, 446). This is due to the belief that the capitalist system causes protests to break out due to the changes that it causes to not only the economic conditions of people, but also the outcomes it has on the social relations between citizens (D'Anieri, Ernst & Kier, 1990, 446).

The theory of new social movements links the development of social movements with the development of the middle class and the radicalism offered by this specific class, which plays a part in changing the system (Pichardo, 1997, 411). And like traditional social movement theories, new theories also state that social movements are both shapers of the political structures and shaped by them (Pichardo, 1997, 412; Buechler, 1993, 218). Unlike their predecessors, new social movements tend to focus on issues related to identities, quality of life, and the structure of representative democracies that controls citizen participation rather than economic conditions (Pichardo, 1997, 412-414; Melucci, 1994, 105; Heery, 2018, 662; D'Anieri, Ernst & Kier, 1990, 446-447; Day, 2011, 98). Another aspect that is unique to new social movements is that they constantly question what they are protesting for, which ensures that they revisit the purpose of their cause constantly (Pichardo, 1997, 415). Also, new social movements tend to employ tactics outside of the normal ones employed in protests, mainly focusing on disruptive and symbolic acts to gain attention from the masses (Pichardo, 1997, 415; Melucci, 1994, 103; Handler, 1992, 719). New social movements tend to work in a non-hierarchical way where they rotate or have no clear leadership, vote on all issues, and have temporary organizations so that there is no clear leader that controls and solely decides on what the movement does and where its direction is headed (Pichardo, 1997, 416; D'Anieri, Ernst & Kier, 1990, 447; Handler, 1992, 719).

Members of new social movements tend to belong to the “new” middle class, who are individuals who are not employed in corporate jobs nor depend on them for survival (Pichardo, 1997, 416; D’Anieri, Ernst & Kier, 1990, 447; Offe, 1985, 831-832). Instead, they depend on state expenditures such as careers in academia, the arts, human services agencies, where the need for them to be highly educated is present (Pichardo, 1997, 416-417). Belonging to such educational backgrounds enables new social movements to benefit from their members through the members ability to introduce new ideas on ways that society could build new structures and ways of living, using Gramsci’s theories, these individuals could be seen as intellectuals who introduce channels of change. Other than the middle class, participants in new social movements usually belong to the old middle class and populations that are not heavily involved in the economy, such as housewives, students, senior citizens, etc. (Pichardo, 1997, 417; D’Anieri, Ernst & Kier, 1990, 447; Offe, 1985, 831-833). A distinctive aspect about members of new social movements is that they are said to be class aware but not class conscious, which means that they engage in politics and make demands against the existing structures, but these demands are class based, universalistic, or group specific (Offe, 1985, 832-833).

Extinction Rebellion

Extinction Rebellion is a decentralized, non-partisan, environmental social movement that spread around the globe in 2018 after protests broke out in England (Gardner, Carvalho & Valenstain, 2022, 426; Weaver, 2022, 1). The movement first mobilized on the 31st of October 2018 in Parliament Square, London, England following the IPCC report on the state of climate change, and its calls for rapid changes in all aspects of society (Stuart, 2022, 806; Stuart, 2020, 488). The initial Extinction Rebellion London protest gathered six thousand people showing their discontent with the governments’ inaction towards the climate crisis (Stuart, 2020, 488; Friberg, 2022, 2-3). To show their discontent, Extinction Rebellion members engaged in non-violent disruptive actions, and in the Parliament Square protest, they did so through blocking roads and bridges, planting trees in the middle of Parliament Square, gluing themselves to the gates of Buckingham Palace, and digging a hole there and burying a coffin to represent the future of the planet (Extinction Rebellion, 2022; Friberg, 2022, 4). After the events of the United Kingdom protest, Extinction Rebellion started to spread around the world, with local chapters existing in all continents (Fotaki & Foroughi, 2021, 229).

Extinction Rebellion have a three main demands for governments, which they state they will continue rebelling until they are met, which are for governments to tell the truth about the climate situation by declaring a climate and ecological emergency, where it must collaborate with Citizens Assemblies to find solutions for change; the second demand is to act now, which urges governments to find ways to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025; the third demand is for governments to go beyond politics where they aid in the creation of Citizens' Assemblies that would function as bodies which make decisions towards reaching climate and ecological justice (Extinction Rebellion, 2022; Stuart, 2020, 488; Friberg, 2022, 4; Fotaki & Foroughi, 2021, 230; Stuart, 2022, 807). Also, the movement has ten values that explain why the movement was created and it applies them to any form of protest it takes. Besides Extinction Rebellion's ten values, there are often additional values curated to each country's needs, where some values might exist in some areas of the world and not others (Extinction Rebellion, 2023).

Extinction Rebellion uses radical tactics and nonviolent civil disobedience to influence governmental action to avoid the climate crisis (O'Brien & Chada, 2020, 38; Gardner, Carvalho & Valenstain, 2022, 426; Friberg, 2022, 2; Fotaki & Foroughi, 2021, 230-231). According to Extinction Rebellion, governments must be involved in solving the climate crisis as their role is indispensable in the struggle against climate change (O'Brien & Chada, 2020, 38; Stuart, 2022, 807). To get government's attention, Extinction Rebellion's acts of civil disobedience focus on disrupting the normal flow of businesses, where they occupy major city sites for long periods of time, often causing the spaces the protestors are occupying to shut down (Stuart, 2020, 488; Slaven & Heydon, 2020, 59). However, seeing that their efforts resulted in little to no effect on government's stance on the climate crisis, Extinction Rebellion started to call for a revolutionary act in the form of a system change, with a logic behind it that if governments refuse to take the necessary steps to curb the climate crisis, then it is the responsibility of the individuals to bring about the needed change (Weaver, 2022, 1-2). Yet, this does not correspond with how change is to be achieved. Literature on social movements (Gare, 2017) finds that due to the way that the neoliberal system works, responsibility to "fix" society often falls on individuals instead of governments. But this usually results in failure as individual effort cannot curb the harms of environmental degradation, and state effort is needed to manage climate change (Gare, 2017, 2).

Although the movements tries to cater for the needs of both the environment and individuals with its acts of civil disobedience, it gained criticism because of its tactic of mass arrest (which makes it hard for people of color to join the movements), its political non-partisan position, its disregard of history when having conversation about climate change and the environmental crisis, and of the demography of the participants of the movement (Slaven & Heydon, 2020, 60; Demos, 2020; Zantvoort, 2021; Westwell & Bunting, 2020; Mansfield, 2020; Bell & Bevan, 2021).

Literature on the movement varies on the issues that exist within it and how to develop the movement to address different problems that are linked to the climate struggle. However, upon a close reading of the literature on Extinction Rebellion, none engage on why the movement is not reaching its goals and spreading its messages, which this thesis will aim to address through employing Gramscian analysis. Although all the criticism pointed towards the movement is valid and was addressed by the movement to be weak points that will be worked on, the authors often do not employ any theoretical lenses to explain why the movement might be failing to address their concerns properly. For instance, when the movement is criticized for its exclusion of people of color, it is often overlooked how the movement emerged, and who built it. The discussion on environmental decay being linked to direct harm to less fortunate populations is vital, but it is usually overlooked or briefly mentioned when criticism is pointed to the movement. Employing a Gramscian lens offers observing how the movement was built, who it was built by, and to what purposes. By tracing the origin of the movement and employing Gramscian concepts of intellectuals onto the participants of the movement, it is possible to see the interactions within the movement, and those outside of it (with governments and different groups). Also, it is beneficial to employ Gramsci's understanding of the concept of hegemony as an interaction of consent and coercion between the state and movements to see how Extinction Rebellion and governments interact, and how this interaction between the two changed throughout the years. In addition, by treating Extinction Rebellion as a new social movement, since it meets the conditions of what a new social movement is, it is possible to apply Gramscian analysis on how the movement is structured. Gramsci stated that for a movement to succeed it must have a leader. However, having a leader or a figurehead in social movements is something that no longer exists for the larger part. So, this paper will investigate how decentralized movements can fare without meeting the Gramscian condition of needing a movement leader.

1.6 Conclusion

Upon completing the literature review, it is apparent that although there is a lot written about Extinction Rebellion as a movement, many aspects linking the movement to issues of structural change and how to achieve it are not explored. Although much of the literature engages with ideas of the movement calling for a systemic change, none of them goes into analysis on how that can be achieved, why it did not happen yet, and how Extinction Rebellion partakes in this, which this thesis will aim to investigate. This will be done by using Gramsci's theory on intellectuals and new social movements theory to investigate how the movement and its participants are affected by the neoliberal structures of the state, and whether they can influence change through their efforts to protest the system that they deem as harmful for the environment.

Chapter 2

Antonio Gramsci and the Study of Resistance

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the theories of Antonio Gramsci that can offer alternative methods to social movements on how to mobilize and shift the power structure. Antonio Gramsci was an Italian politician and member of the Communist Party before his imprisonment. Gramsci wrote his notebooks and offered his insights on how change can be brought while imprisoned through using terminologies that do not directly link to what is happening in real life to avoid censorship. Gramsci wrote about many aspects of societal change, ranging from speaking about individuals (Machiavelli's influence) to speaking about how parties ought to function. In this chapter, the following concepts that Gramsci introduced will be used to investigate how new social movements are performing when it comes to altering the current system. The first idea of Gramsci that will be discussed is his writings about hegemony. Then, Gramsci's concept of intellectual will be explained since when writing about hegemony Gramsci speaks of the intellectuals and their role in maintaining and changing systems. For studying the movement, the case studies will be considered as intellectual formations. In addition, the chapter will examine Gramsci's criteria for a successful party/movement that can achieve change and offer critique where it is due. The second part of the chapter will focus on how the case study interacts with the current hegemonic system. Finally, a conclusion will be offered from the findings of the chapter.

2.2 Gramsci's Hegemonic and Counter-Hegemonic Forces

This part of the chapter will discuss what Antonio Gramsci wrote about hegemony in his prison notebooks, and how to distinguish it from other forms of power. Also, the section will explain what hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces mean according to Gramsci and will later apply what Gramsci wrote to the case study.

To begin with, Gramsci advised that the historical background of dominant groups must be unraveled to understand how they came into being (Gramsci, 1971, 203-204). For him, a hegemonic group must have gone through two phases before gaining power, which are having autonomy and no enemies to contest their ruling, and having support from the masses that keeps them in place

(Gramsci, 1971, 203-204).

Gramsci took great care to explain the power stemming from the hegemony of a group. For him, hegemony is exercised by a dominant group in society, and through the state and other executive entities that report to the state (Gramsci, 1971, 145). The hegemony of the dominant group is seen in social and economic structures that it built to keep itself in power (Levy & Newell, 2002, 86-87). Hegemony is exercised in two ways, given by the consent of the masses, and forced upon the masses through legal practices (Gramsci, 1971, 145). The approval of the masses to consent to the continuous domination of one group is granted through the history that the group had (Gramsci, 1971, 145; Levy & Newell, 2002, 86-87; Loftus & Bryant, 2015, 90; Bates, 1975, 353). If a certain dominant group managed to maintain peace and security, and gave the masses what they needed to function, Gramsci finds that the masses agree to keep this certain group in power (Gramsci, 1971, 145). If the masses were not pleased with the dominant group, then it can impose its rule on them through legal channels (Gramsci, 1971, 145). This is done through disciplining groups that aim at dismantling the dominant group⁴ (Gramsci, 1971, 145). However, Gramsci saw this type of acceptance of the dominant group as fragile, as the masses might try to remove it whenever any form of unrest presents itself (Gramsci, 1971, 145). Thus, for a hegemonic system to survive, the approval of the masses must be secured (Levy & Newell, 2002, 86-87; Perkins, 2011, 559; Koch, 2022, 3-4). Essentially, hegemony refers to power, how it is used by the ruling class to exert their influence without using excessive coercion but by using their intellectual capabilities to win the consent of the masses (Moolakkattu, 2009, 441). Hegemony is not a structure that is imposed on citizens from above, but rather a product of negotiation between the ruler and those they rule that is continuously reproduced through the beliefs, cultures, and practices of populations (Moolakkattu, 2009, 441). The essence of hegemony itself is kept in place through what Gramsci called a “historical bloc” which is a bureaucratic structure that the elite use to exercise dominance over the economy and to keep the consent of the masses (Levy & Newell, 2002, 87). He also used it to refer to the alliances built between social groups to continue the practice of reproducing ideas and their meaning (Levy & Newell, 2002, 87; Bieler & Morton, 2004, 85-113). Thus, not only does the historical bloc ensure the position of the elite, but it also offers them the knowledge and ability to strengthen their position through building alliances with other groups in society (Levy & Newell, 2002, 87; Bieler & Morton, 2004, 85-113). For counter-hegemonic forces to replace the existing hegemonic bloc, they must build on existent practices that the masses are familiar with to create a new world conception that is not too foreign to deal with (Loftus & Bryant, 2015, 91). Gramsci finds that the domination of one group offers them gains and benefits that keep them in top positions and industries in any given state (Gramsci, 1971, 145), which results in the construction of society that is built on different class hierarchies (Gramsci, 1971, 146; Loftus & Bryant, 2015, 91). Here, Gramsci finds that positions where thinking and planning must be involved, such as positions in scientific, academic, and philosophical careers (Levy & Newell, 2002, 86-87), are usually filled with

⁴ For Extinction Rebellion this can be seen through the introduction of limitations and laws to hinder the movement from participating in protest action.

people with a domination leverage than found in clerical and administrative careers (Gramsci, 1971, 146). For an elite to fill such positions is vital as they are the ones who ensure the stability of the hegemonic bloc through teaching the masses how to consent their practices (Levy & Newell, 2002, 86-87; Perkins, 2011, 559-560). This stability is kept in place through religious, academic, and governmental institutions and the media (Levy & Newell, 2002, 86-87). Gramsci also mentioned how through the learned understanding of the world that the elite spread, subordinate classes believe that the world is structured in a certain way, and it cannot be changed (Tesh, 2000, 127). Thus, they must accept it as it is. This part of Gramsci's writing is of importance as it allows us to see where the protesters fall on the scale of hierarchy according to how it is linked to one's job.

Besides hegemony practiced between the hegemonic power and the rest of society, Gramsci saw levels of hegemony being practiced among different groups of society based on their level of development (Gramsci, 1971, 203). For example, an urban social movement is more likely to influence change than a local one according to Gramsci. However, this is not necessarily the case in current day politics. What can be seen from modern social movements is their willingness to share ideas and forms of showing civil disobedience in effort to find ones that work to unbalance the power of the ruling elites⁵ (Pichardo, 1997, 416; D'Anieri, Ernst & Kier, 1990, 447; Handler, 1992, 719). Hence, no certain social movement has leverage or hegemonic influence over another due to its background. Nonetheless, it should be noticed that leverage or hegemony here can be seen in the reaction of states to movements. While states might tolerate environmental movements such as Extinction Rebellion, they are not inclined to tolerate movements that question their control over lands and movements that question their ruling method such as Indigenous movements and movements emerging due to racial justice reasons. Thus, hegemony can be seen here in either the cultural background of protesters or their social class/position.

In addition, Gramsci saw consciousness as multilayered, meaning he did not see it as a variable that is spread equally among different groups and classes in society (Cox, 1999, 15). But rather, Gramsci saw consciousness as a viable product that can be developed according to the level of understanding of society (Cox, 1999, 15). Where each class decides to place their support is where they make a conscious decision that they deem as beneficial for them. Gramsci wrote about not only the fundamental classes (bourgeoisie and proletariat) relationship, but also other classes that are often not considered when observing the production/reproduction of ideas, norms, and power relations process (Cox, 1999, 15). Classes beside the main two were to be seen as allies to either, according to Gramsci (Cox, 1999, 15). They could either join the current hegemonic bloc or join or form the counter-hegemonic bloc. This division of positions constituted how consciousness is shaped within classes (Cox, 1999,15).

Consciousness is not a constant variable for Gramsci, but rather a historical construction shaped by classes. For him, there were points of differentiation between the levels of consciousness (Cox, 1999, 15-16). The lowest being the corporative consciousness, which does not challenge the state and its

⁵ This can be seen in Extinction Rebellion's "The Big One," which gained the big number of protesters through a coalition among different social movements.

status quo in any form but focuses on the interest of a particular class/group (Cox, 1999, 15-16). The second level is class consciousness, which questions the reason behind the formation of the state (Cox, 1999, 15-16). Class consciousness is made up of a mix of corporative consciousnesses, with the goal of building a political authority to advance an idea of society that has the potential of influencing the formation of the leading class and essentially civil society and the state (Cox, 1999, 15-16; Bates, 1975, 360). Class consciousness also offers spaces for different identities to compete for their rights within the state, which, on the other hand, are often manipulated by the state to oppress others; for example, when the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement erupted all around the world to raise up the issue of police racism, another narrative emerged, which is that of All Lives Matter. This new narrative existed solely as a counterpoint to the BLM to take away from its validity, and to frame it as exclusionary based on the wording and name that the movement uses; it also worked to advance the idea that the police were not to be seen as tools of the state to further oppress those who were already oppressed but rather as innocent people who were only doing their jobs to capture and punish "criminals". In short, this type of consciousness is easily manipulated when knowledge and consciousness are not high and the masses are fragmented, hence why it is not the highest form of consciousness to Gramsci (Cox, 1999, 15-16).

The highest level of consciousness according to Gramsci is hegemonic consciousness. This type of consciousness goes beyond issues like class and identities by making the interests of those who are not from the bourgeoisie its core mission, where society cannot be seen without having the interest of all classes at the forefront of society building (Cox, 1999, 15-16). Additionally, this type of consciousness makes the integration of all classes as interest groups within a society as the natural order of society (Cox, 1999, 15-16). Gramsci ties the inability to reach hegemonic consciousness to the role of intellectuals of spreading and maintaining the hegemonic ideology, which the next part of the paper will discuss in detail.

2.3 Intellectual Activity and Hegemonic Preserve

How do hegemonic powers maintain their position of power? For Gramsci, he attributed the power hold that hegemonic power possesses as the product of their intellectual's hard work (Bodenheimer, 1976, 22; Landy, 1986, 53). Hegemonic systems maintain their existence not through force, nor do they convince the masses to be ruled by them. Rather, hegemonic forces ensure they stay in a position of power through spreading an idea that the world is structured in a certain manner, and any attempt to deviate from the existing power structure will throw the world into a state of chaos (Bodenheimer, 1976, 22; Levy & Newell, 2005, 49-50). Thus, it is in the interest of the masses to continue to adhere to the hegemonic system so that they can continue to live and function without any disturbance to their daily lives (Bodenheimer, 1976, 22).

The tool systems use to ensure their power stays in place are their traditional intellectuals, who ensure to spread a certain world understanding through educational channels and the media (Bodenheimer, 1976, 22-23; Levy & Newell, 2005, 40-50). These channels influence how the masses think through encouraging them to acquire certain types of knowledge about history, culture, religion, and other core concepts of human life (Bodenheimer, 1976, 22-23). Also, they discourage certain practices, ideologies, and thoughts that might threaten the power-hold of the elite

(Bodenheimer, 1976, 22-23). The hegemonic class is not the sole possessor of intellectuals, but rather, all classes possess their own intellectuals (Bates, 1975, 353). What creates this difference between classes is how these intellectuals work.

What is an intellectual? Gramsci believes that all humans are intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971, 131; Bodenheimer, 1976, 21) as they are distinguished from other creatures by their ability to reason. All humans are intellectuals, but not all intellectuals are influential (Bodenheimer, 1976, 21). Not every human can influence change and societal development. Gramsci took this further to explain the types of intellectuals present in society that can bring change.

The first type, which is the type that is vital to the hegemonic system is the traditional intellectual (Gramsci, 1971, 131). Traditional intellectuals function as the cornerstone of society. Gramsci explained how traditional intellectuals fill professional positions where they exert influence that maintains the hegemonic systems position in place, such as philosopher, teachers, artists, writers, journalists, religious leaders, etc. (Gramsci, 1971, 131; King, 1978, 25; Bodenheimer, 1976, 21).

Traditional intellectuals derive their power from former traditional intellectuals' power structures and from present events that they use to strengthen and maintain their position (Gramsci, 1971, 131).

The second type of intellectual in Gramsci's theory is the organic intellectual. Organic intellectuals exist in all social groups/classes. Although their professions vary, organic intellectuals play the same role in each group, which is to act as the thinking agents and organizing elements of their social class (Gramsci, 1971, 131; Woolcock, 1985, 206; King, 1978, 25-26; Bodenheimer, 1976, 23). Organic intellectuals must question the world and be critical of how it is built and functions (Landy, 1986, 59).

They must also have a drive to restructure society according to the answers they reach through questioning the origin of the current hegemonic system (Landy, 1986, 59). Thus, their task not only revolves around spreading knowledge they have from their quest to find alternative forms of living, but also to enhance the world (Landy, 1986, 59). For him, the intellectuals play the role of mediating struggles among groups, where each advocate for the benefit of their social class/group (Gramsci, 1971, 132). Gramsci pointed out that coalitions between intellectuals from different groups could be formed out of necessity (Gramsci, 1971, 132; Susser, 2016, 186).

Intellectuals go through stages of formation. According to Gramsci, every social group capable of economic production rises in place through the creation of a specialized intellectual bloc (Gramsci, 1971, 134). The intellectuals of each group give it meaning and functional tools to not only develop in the economic field, but in the social and political as well (Gramsci, 1971, 135). Intellectuals of different groups must have a sound know-how of how their group could gain power, and to do so they must have leadership and organizing skills to lead their masses (Gramsci, 1971, 135). This need of organization and leadership skills are advocated for by Gramsci due to his vision that when intellectuals have knowledge, they can bring benefit to their groups and classes (Gramsci, 1971, 135; Bodenheimer, 1976, 23). The second condition for the emergence of an intellectual formation/bloc is that they have an economic history and purpose (Gramsci, 1971, 137). Gramsci believes that for any group to develop and form its own intellectuals, they must have had an economic base for their emergence and thus the group is given meaning (Gramsci, 1971, 137). This is linked to the importance of historical continuity, which according to Gramsci is an indicator of a successful

intellectual influence (Gramsci, 1971, 137). If a group survives different historical events and withstands system changes, it indicates that the group possesses a set of intellectuals who can organize and lead their respective groups. However, Gramsci made sure to point out that intellectuals, once they develop their abilities and knowledge, can shift alliance and join the elites' intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971, 137). Thus, he stressed the importance of organic intellectuals who rise from social groups and stay throughout history in their social groups of origin (Gramsci, 1971, 137). Another point that Gramsci raised is for intellectuals to be wary of is changing what they work for unconsciously (Gramsci, 1971, 138-139). He warned that intellectuals of all social groups witness development, but their purpose could shift when they witness development from wanting to develop their social class interest to benefiting the elite group (Gramsci, 1971, 138-139). This is done through using the knowledge and mechanisms of the dominant class; thus, he warned about falling into this folly (Gramsci, 1971, 138-139).

Intellectuals mostly play a mediator role in keeping the fabric of society and superstructures intact (Gramsci, 1971, 144; King, 1978, 27). Gramsci contends that to find solutions to shift powers, intellectuals of the counter-hegemonic bloc must work to change two levels of the superstructure (Gramsci, 1971, 145). The first level is civil society, and the second is the state (Gramsci, 1971, 145). According to him, these two arenas must be altered to bring change since they are controlled by the current hegemonic power and are used to keep the elite in their position of influence where they continue to practice their hegemony and domination (Gramsci, 1971, 145). Intellectuals can shift these areas through forming a political party, but a political party can be used to mean any association of individuals where they discuss the political climate and ways to alter it. Hence, in this paper the political party will be considered social movements.

How can social movements influence change in Gramscian terms? Gramsci outlined two methods where change can be brought. The first is what he called "passive revolution" (Levy & Newell, 2002, 88; Levy & Newell, 2005, 51). Passive revolution refers to a social change that is influenced in a top-bottom way, where weak hegemonic groups agree to change to maintain their position of power and their social structures (Levy & Newell, 2002, 88; Gramsci, 1971, 193-194; Bates, 1975, 354). Instead of being change influenced by the people, passive revolution refers to change influenced by the state (Gramsci, 1971, 287).

The second is the concept of "war of position" which refers to a long-term strategy made by subordinate groups across sectors to gain influence in civil society (Levy & Newell, 2002, 88; Levy & Newell, 2005, 51). Thus, this strategy entails the creation of connection among different groups of intellectuals who unite in the civil society and demand change in a bottom-up manner. Gramsci explained that this method needs a stable political climate to be performed (Gramsci, 1971, 446). For this method to succeed, the counter-hegemonic bloc must exercise leadership (Gramsci, 1971, 446; King, 1978, 30), so the group must have widespread influence and control to replace the hegemonic power. Also, Gramsci stressed that the counter-hegemonic bloc must shift ideas that the masses view as common sense (Bodenheimer, 1976, 27), since common sense is a form of knowledge that the former traditional intellectuals/hegemonic bloc constructed.

2.4 Neoliberalism and Gramsci's Structures

As was mentioned in the literature on neoliberalism and new social movements, the world is shaped according to the interests of international actors (Viotti & Kauppi, 2012, 147-149). States shape the relations present among them due to the interest of the most powerful, and this is done through the history of international relations among states (Viotti & Kauppi, 2012, 147-149). If neoliberalism is understood as a channel of connection that ties sets of institutions that encourages cooperation among states (Viotti & Kauppi, 2012, 147-149), then in Gramscian terms, neoliberalism is understood as the hegemonic power's superstructure. This claim is made since Gramsci, as previously explained (Gramsci, 1971, 689-690), places superstructures as tools that the hegemonic powers use to keep them in a position of power (Gramsci, 1971, 689-690). If applied to international relations instead of a state/local parameter, instead of looking for religious, academic, historical, and educational sources of where the current system keeps its claim of power, looking at the current system that the world functions according to offers insight on where power is centered and where ideas come from. If we look at states politicians, decision-makers, leaders, etc. as traditional intellectuals, we can consider how they act and push for the spread of the neoliberal system among all states as a method of trying to maintain the system that keeps them in a position of power, which is why they push it on states that do not necessarily see it as beneficial for their situation. But why is questioning the neoliberal system as a hegemonic system relevant to this thesis? This is because of the demands that the neoliberal system requires for it to function, all of which have a massive outcome on the environment, economies, and social relations. The outcomes of the neoliberal system were the reason behind the eruption of different social movements, including the case study of this thesis. For the neoliberal system to survive, it demands an economy that is dependent on extraction and using resources in an excessive manner to meet the increasing demands of populations. This has been an ongoing cycle where demands constantly increase with the development of the world, which further exacerbates the climate crisis. Movements did not erupt necessarily due to this ongoing cycle of demand and production, but due to the refusal of states to find ways to curb the harm that comes with the outcomes of the neoliberal world order. New social movements are mostly the reaction to states' inactivity to avert the dangers presented by the neoliberal system, and their refusal to change their ways of production.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter introduced theories of Gramsci that will be used to analyze the case study in the following chapter. It explained what hegemony is, how it is maintained, and how it spreads. Also, it explained the different types of intellectuals, their role, and how they are the maintainers and drivers of both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces. Finally, the chapter explained how neoliberalism is seen as a superstructure using Gramsci's theory, and how state actors act as intellectuals. In the following chapter, an analysis of how Gramscian concepts can be applied to new social movements using Extinction Rebellion as a case study will be taken.

Chapter 3

Extinction Rebellion Activism and Disobedience

3.1 Introduction

Climate change is a public evil that harms all human and non-human lives/organisms. It refers to the rapid shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. Some argue that climate change is a natural issue that occurs normally without any human intervention, but these arguments have been proven null countless times by scientists and climate professionals, as was explained by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report that was published in 2022. The report showed the direct link between climate change and human activities. It discussed how climate change and human activities are linked through the unregulated extraction of fossil fuels and natural resources (The United Nations, 2022).

When dealing with the climate crisis, the world seems to be stuck between two scenarios: the Prisoner Dilemma scenario and the Tragedy of the Commons scenario. The first is the Prisoner Dilemma, where countries do not wish to take the initiative to solve climate change because they want to eliminate the issue of free riders (Keohane, 2015, 20). This in turn, does no good to any efforts to overcome the ongoing crisis, but rather exacerbates it. Developed countries/the Global North, who have the power and the means to solve the crisis do not want other countries to benefit from their efforts without doing their own part (Keohane, 2015, 20). In addition, some developed countries and a small number of countries in the Global South benefit from extractive industries and the fossil fuel industry. For example, Gulf countries, although located in the Global South, have immense wealth and availability of capital due to their extractive industries. With entire economies being built on the wealth that fossil fuels provide, they have no incentive to part with their source of income and find solutions to the climate crisis. These countries are also the same ones with means to deal with whatever outcomes climate change brings, due to their oil and natural gas wealth. On the other hand, some countries in Southern Europe, such as Greece and Portugal struggle due to their economic situation even though they are technically located in the Global North. Developing countries need to find solutions to overcome the climate crisis, as they are the most affected by climate change effects. They are the ones that must deal with extreme weather conditions, floods, hurricanes, among other disasters with no means of developing systems to combat natural crises as well as having no means to deal with the crises that hit them in current times. This leaves them at the mercy of developed countries to find and agree on solutions to the climate disaster. All of this is caused by the fact

that no one has the incentive to act first, remaining stuck in a Prisoner Dilemma scenario (Keohane, 2015, 19; Faber & Schlegel, 2017, 1).

The second scenario that the world is stuck in is the Tragedy of the Commons (Hardin, 1968), which is a scenario that refers to a situation where there are public resources that no one has the power to control and regulate. In the case of the environmental disaster, the public resource is the environment and the atmosphere, which no country has ownership over leaving all to do as they please to reach their development goals. In theory, it would be manageable to deal with the issue of climate change if there was an international body that regulated countries such as the United Nations. However, international organizations have no power over states, as there is no global government to regulate global affairs, which again leaves developing countries at the mercy of Western powerful ones (Keohane & Victor, 2010, 7-15).

But why is this the case? And what can be done to overcome this crisis? This is the case because power is distributed disproportionately between countries. This disproportionate power distribution is linked to the history of colonialism taken to meet capitalist ends, where Western countries tore the world apart and reshaped it into what will aid their development. It is also the outcome of a global transformation that the world witnessed during the 19th century that shifted the world order from a polycentric one with no power center into a core-periphery world where exploitation was made more accessible (Buzan & Lawson, 2015, 1-10). Along with slavery, which have been prevalent long before this divide of core-periphery, the outcome of which was the abuse of the environment and the oppression, genocide, and violence that populations in the Global South and Indigenous people had to and still must face to pay the price of an endeavor they did not take part in (Lazarus, 2011; Blaut, 1989). These century-long abuses against both populations and the environment are thought to be the foundations of the current world order which are maintained through the neoliberal system (Lazarus, 2011; Blaut, 1989).

Efforts to overcome the climate crisis are taken in the shape of climate conferences and agreements. But these efforts are not enough (Keohane & Oppenheimer, 2016, 143), which raised the need for further efforts to force states into acting. Environmental movements in the early 2000s mobilized to show their discontent with the way that governments deal with climate change and mitigation (Almeida, 2019, 5). Environmental social movements emerged as a reaction to government's inaction when it comes to issues that concern the environment and climate change. These movements emerged in the early 1970s to show their discontent and disapproval of governmental efforts to tackle climate change and issues related to it (Earth Day, 2022), but they started to gain attention and grow in the 2000s and continue to gain more attention and gather more participants specifically after the Paris agreement (Almeida, 2019, 5). Also, environmental movements emerged as a reaction to neoliberalism and to protect the futures of lands and upcoming generations from capitalist endeavors that often result in destruction (Apostolopoulou & Cortes-Vazquez, 2018, 2). These movements oppose capitalism's treatment of nature which view nature as a material condition of capital accumulation, and as a result it brings decaying impacts on the environment and the daily lives of humanity

(Apostolopoulou & Cortes-Vazquez, 2018, 3). As time passed and the climate crisis developed in its intensity and decay, environmental movements needed to develop as well to match the intensity of the situation.

Movements around the world are demanding that their respective governments take actions to decarbonize the world and maintain healthy environments (Gunningham, 2019, 195-196).

International environmental structural change is realized when environmental movements in major industrialized democracies successfully pressure their governments to change the course of their action (Gunningham, 2019, 196). This chapter examines the efforts of new social movements to influence such change.

Extinction Rebellion is an environmental social movement that emerged first in 2018 to protest government inaction towards climate issues in the United Kingdom (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). As already explained, Extinction Rebellion applies non-violent methods to protest (O'Brien & Chada, 2020, 38; Gardner, Carvalho & Valenstain, 2022, 426; Friberg, 2022, 2; Fotaki & Foroughi, 2021, 230-231), which this chapter will analyze through Gramscian theory to determine whether these methods are effective in the struggle of the movement or not.

Extinction Rebellion paints the fossil fuel industry as its main enemy (Gunningham, 2019, 196). Its current goal is to remove the industry's social license to operate, and in turn, raise awareness of the climate crisis to bring about change embodied in a world that is fossil fuel free (Gunningham, 2019, 196). It aims to do so through continuous action and sustained disruption (Gunningham, 2019, 196).

The chapter will showcase the role of its intellectuals (XR members) in the rise of the movement and how protest action is taken, with examples to showcase the methods the movement employs. The chapter then questions how protesters are seen by governments because of the type of non-violent or violent action they decide to utilize.

The second part of the chapter engages with the government response to Extinction Rebellion and introduces the policies that the government legislated to limit protests. In this part of the chapter, the response of Extinction Rebellion to the introduction of the policing bill is showcased, and how they plan to keep protesting among more oppressive conditions is examined.

The third part of the chapter discusses Extinction Rebellion's plans for citizen assemblies. It engages with why the movement views assemblies as vital to the climate struggle, how they plan for these assemblies to function, and what the limitations of these assemblies are. The section then analyzes the idea of citizens assembly introduced by Extinction Rebellion through a Gramscian lens.

The chapter then turns to alliances that the movement has created, and the learning it went through and is still going through. The creation of alliances is then analyzed through Gramscian conceptions.

Then, the chapter focuses on the leaderless structure of the movement. It explains how it is seen through Gramscian theory, and how the Gramscian vision of a leader can be applied with the absence of an individual leader.

Afterwards, the chapter engages with the alternative methods that the movement introduces to protest the government. The chapter examines what the methods are, where their strengths and weaknesses are, and how they are seen in the Gramscian sense.

Finally, the chapter delves into a discussion of Extinction Rebellion as a type of intellectual formation. It analyzes the actions of the movement and aims to categorize it into a classification of intellectuals based on the findings of the analysis to view the points of strength and weakness of the movement. The chapter then concludes with a quick summary of the findings.

3.2 Extinction Rebellion and Gramsci's Intellectuals

Extinction Rebellion emerged as a reaction to governments inadequate inactivity when it comes to issues of climate crises, as already discussed. But how is this seen in the Gramscian sense? And what type of intellectuals can Extinction Rebellion be considered as? The following section will delve into categorizing Extinction Rebellion as either traditional intellectuals who preserve the current hegemonic system, or as organic intellectuals who work to act as a counter-hegemonic bloc. Gramsci tools of dismantling and preserving the hegemonic structure were his conception of intellectuals, who are individuals that work to further the development and interest of the social class they belong to (Gramsci, 1971, 131). Traditional intellectuals, as already explained, work to keep hegemonic power in place through spreading knowledge through society's superstructures (Gramsci, 1971, 131). Organic intellectuals are those individuals that belong to different classes who work to spread new forms of knowledge to find alternatives to those that the hegemonic power have in place to alter the system (Gramsci, 1971, 131). Which type of intellectuals are Extinction Rebellion members? This will be determined through looking at whether Extinction Rebellion spreads new ideas on methods of protesting and consciousness, form alliances with other groups according to their needs, and if they change their way of protesting according to government action.

3.3 Extinction Rebellion Protest Ideals

Extinction Rebellion adheres to non-violent protests like most modern social movements. Throughout its years of mobilizing, Extinction Rebellion engaged in different forms of showing dissent through mass disruption, such as road blockades, sit-ins, marching, gluing members to different structures, etc. Extinction Rebellion states that they do not employ the usual traditional methods of voicing dissent, such as petitions, letters to governmental officials, and they prefer showing dissent through methods that are disruptive and attention capturing due to their need to show their actions to the population (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). This is due to the idea that if civil disobedience is taken in ways that all citizens can see, then the cause behind the movement will be heard and known by people from every corner of society. Essentially, Extinction Rebellion protests through causing civil disruption to make their message clear and have it spread to wider audiences. Although this type of protests can hinder business from carrying on as usual, Extinction Rebellion acknowledge that this is a goal of theirs to make the public more aware of their cause, and to disrupt harmful economic activities that they oppose (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). However, at the beginning of 2023, Extinction Rebellion United Kingdom posted a statement titled "We Quit," explaining that

they will be moving away from disruptive action and will find alternative tactics to protest (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). The following will highlight some of Extinction Rebellions' most recent protests using their new and old tactics leading up to their biggest protest movement of 2023. In the Netherlands, more than 1,500 protestors were arrested by the police for blocking the A12 motorway in the Hague. The protest attracted 6,000 people who are discontented with the government's continuous investing and subsidizing of the fossil fuel industry (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). This act of disruption is not a new tactic for Extinction Rebellion, but this tactic never fails to attract the attention of citizens.

In Berlin, more than one thousand Extinction Rebellion member marched the streets demanding the formation of citizens' assemblies and the declaration of the government of Germany of a biodiversity emergency (Extinction Rebellion, 2023).

In Denmark, protesters threw paint to resemble blood as a representation of the violence that the Ministry of the Environment commits against the Danish people through their pollution of water sources and their use of exemptions for the use of illegal pesticides (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). After these events, 7 protesters were arrested, 3 of which were only holding banners (Extinction Rebellion, 2023).

In the United States of America, two protesters smeared paint over the stand and the glass encasing of an art piece. The protesters were arrested and fined. Following their detainment, multiple protests and sit-ins took place to protest the detainment of the two protesters, the latest being held on the 9th of July 2023 (Silverman, 2023; Extinction Rebellion 2023; Extinction Rebellion, 2023). This tactic was used in several museums and exhibitions to attract the attention of the masses through "destroying"⁶ valuable art pieces.

In France, rebels managed to urge their government to start negotiations (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). Over 300 protesters engaged in civil disobedience around a major chemicals company to protest the pollution that is associated with it (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). The protesters also managed to convince the government to raise their issue to not only French authorities, but also to other European countries to regulate environmental pollutants (Extinction Rebellion, 2023).

These are some of the forms of civil disobedience that some western-based groups of Extinction Rebellion have taken in the past months. A focused section on Extinction Rebellion United Kingdom will be discussed below. Some argue that these actions are justified in the struggle of environmental decay and climate change, while others see these actions as violent acts of terrorism.

3.4 Activism and Terrorism: where is the line drawn?

Some analysts see environmental groups that use non-violent forms of civil disobedience as acting as terrorist groups. According to Snow and Remy (2011), the first point to consider when it comes to protests is that the state is the one deciding whether the actions that are seen in protests are radical or

⁶ Although at first look it seems as if protesters are doing damage to art pieces, that is not the case. Art is usually kept behind protective glass cases, meaning that what is being damaged by protesters is the glass shields that are made to protect the arts. This goes along with the idea that protest action often has a performative aspect, where it aims at attention capture through employing actions that result in shock value.

not, and the determining factor lies on how the state decides to respond to protests (Snow & Remy, 2011, 116-117). However, if this was the case, then states will frame any movement that contests its power as radical, and therefore, illegal. This will be shown in the next section in the part on the Policing Bill, and how the government of the United Kingdom created new laws to hinder and restrict the freedom of social movements to protest. They also explain how due to the structure of new social movements, protesters tend to partake in violent and illegal action (Snow & Remy, 2011, 118-119). But this contradicts one of the core principles of Extinction Rebellion as a non-violent movement, and therefore cannot be judged because the movement does not associate with individuals not adhering to its values.

3.5 Hegemonic Response and the Policing Bill

Extinction Rebellion have been actively opposing the government of the United Kingdom since 2018 with multiple mass demonstrations. This is to show their discontent towards the government's continuous fossil fuel deals and new investments in fossil fuels (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). As a response for these demonstrations, the United Kingdom government started to crackdown on protests, and eventually introduced new policies to counter civil disobedience shown by protesting groups.

The United Kingdom's government has been working on drafting a bill to control protests since the summer of 2020, which is a time that coincides with the outbreak of the protests of the Black Lives Matter movement. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill was what they came up with. The government asserts that protests are an important part of the United Kingdom's democracy, and that it is a human right for citizens to express their views. However, they claim that these rights are not absolute, and question how much disruption should be tolerable, and how to deal with protesters who break the law. They call for a balance that would ensure the maintenance of the interest of the "community" (Gov.UK, 2022).

The bill was drafted to deal with new social movements that challenge the neoliberal structure and injustices that the state commits against disenfranchised populations. In the bill announcement document, it refers to certain tactics that cause inconvenience to citizens, and paints these tactics as done deliberately to harm average citizens. The bill also tries to paint the protesters themselves as posing danger to other citizens and uses Extinction Rebellion as an example of such dangerous protesters. The bill explains how through the actions of the rebels in April and October 2019, London was brought to a standstill for many days. They also explained how this cost the police who were operating the protests £37 million. Besides Extinction Rebellion, they used the Black Lives Matter movement to draw another image of protests the current system as being violent, where they claim that 172 police officers were assaulted by a "violent minority". As a result, they decided to create new legislation to counter the highly disruptive protests. The new legislation will grant the police an increased ability to manage the protests, where they will balance the rights of the protesters against the rights of others, which is a dangerous measure to take when it is well known how brutal the police is to people of color. They drafted several new laws, which are:

- To widen the range of conditions that the police can impose on assemblies (static protests), to match existing police powers to impose conditions on processions.

- lower the fault element for offenses relating to the breach of conditions placed on a protest of either kind.
- widen the range of circumstances in which the police can impose conditions on protests (of either kind).
- Increase the penalty for obstructing highways.
- replace the existing common law offense of public nuisance with a new statutory offense as recommended by the Law Commission in 2015.
- Ensure that entrances to the parliament remain unobstructed.
- Introduce expedited Public Spaces Protection Orders (*Gov.UK, 2022*).

How will these suggested legislations affect protests? First, they can restrict protests if they manage to prove that the protest causes serious damage or disruption to the community, which in a condition that they create and control, and to frame protests as damaging to the community is extremely easy. Second, they can set out the measures and routes of protests and marches, limiting the access of groups to protests based on where they allow them to take place. Third, for protests that attract huge amounts of participants details are typically agreed upon with the organizers. The bill will grant the police to set conditions on such protests, where they can set start and finish times. The bill also sets noise limits, and it will be considered a crime if a protester failed to follow restrictions that they should have known about even if no one informed them about them. Additionally, people will be imprisoned for ten years if they cause damage to memorials (*BBC News, 2022*), which is a rule that is clearly drafted to save the statues of colonizers from Black Lives Matter protesters.

Extinction Rebellion's response to these legislations was accusing the government of being repressive if the bill was to be approved, which was decided on the 12th of May 2022 as valid and ready for enforcement and received royal assent in August 2022. Extinction Rebellion asserts that it will continue to protest as per usual, with or without the bill, as they see it as a violation of human rights and as actions of a failing state to curb and micromanage protests (*Extinction Rebellion, 2022*).

How is the introduction of the bill and its policies to manage protests seen from a Gramscian lens? The term "passive revolution" best describes this change. As mentioned above, passive revolutions are not changes introduced to society in a bottom-up approach or by the masses/counter-hegemonic bloc, but rather the other way around (*Levy & Newell, 2002, 88; Gramsci, 1971, 193-194; Bates, 1975, 354*). The influential power behind the change is the state/elite (*Gramsci, 1971, 287*). This can be seen clearly in the case of the Policing Bill. The Policing Bill was introduced, legislated, and approved by the elite/parliament. Although there is a lot of dissent and disapproval over the bill before it received royal assent, it still went into force (*Liberty, 2022*).

The bill does not benefit the counter-hegemonic bloc in any way, but rather it makes mobilization and taking acts of civil disobedience more complicated and riskier for protesters. The increased policing power introduced by the bill not only makes it harder for advantaged groups in society to

protest, but also makes it dangerous for people from marginalized groups to even exist⁷. The bill introduced a policy where permission must be had for movements to use spaces, which is a hindrance on where they can protest and a strategic decision as it criminalize their presence in specific area or close vicinity to areas of interest (the parliament and the Westminster area). The bill in Gramscian understanding is clearly made to make it harder for the counter-hegemonic bloc to access the civil society, where in this sense civil society is understood as the area where contending groups unite and make their demands.

Nevertheless, environmental movements in the United Kingdom saw the introduction of the Policing Bill as an opportunity to build alliances and show that they can gather large numbers of protesters from different backgrounds while maintaining order, as was seen during the Big One, which will be discussed in this chapter. Not only that, but they proved that even if they followed the will of the government and did not disrupt or destroy any properties, the government still does not answer their calls for action. This is being used by movements, and especially by Extinction Rebellion, as a point of departure for their upcoming strategies for showing dissent.

3.6 Citizens' Assemblies

Extinction Rebellion introduced the concept of citizens' assembly, which is an entity that they advocate for the creation and verification of to take necessary actions regarding climate issues instead of the government (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). Citizen assemblies are supposed to be made up of normal citizens that the assembly requests to attend their sessions, much like jury duty, to ensure that there are no biases to the decisions that will be made (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). The assemblies are said to be headed by climate specialists that will explain what the situation is and the available solutions and obstacles, and it is up to the chosen and willing assembly of citizens to come up with solutions to whichever environmental problem is presented to them (Extinction Rebellion, 2023).

Extinction Rebellion believe that this is a possible solution to government inadequacy when it comes to finding solution to climate disasters, and they cite similar successful assemblies to showcase how their proposed citizens' assembly might look like (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). They explain how a similar entity to their proposed assembly solved the issues revolving around same-sex marriage and abortion laws in the Republic of Ireland, and how others take lead about climate related policies in France and Belgium (Extinction Rebellion, 2023).

The basic idea behind citizens' assemblies is that random citizens are selected, they learn about and discuss the problem at hand, the historical responsibility of polluters, the outcomes of colonialism, global justices, and the economic structure that created the current crisis (Extinction Rebellion, 2024), and they agree on solutions that they explore together with the experts that explained the issue (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). Eventually, their findings are presented to the government for them to study how to apply the solutions arrived at by the assembly (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). The

⁷ The bill put in place new laws that criminalize occupying spaces without permission, which puts Roma people in the United Kingdom at a disadvantageous position as they do not usually have legal permission to live in spaces they fill (Liberty, 2022).

suggestions of the citizens' assemblies are not legally binding, but they act as clues that the government should consider as they are presented by people who have no interest beside the environment they live in and how it affects them (Extinction Rebellion, 2023).

In Gramscian sense, citizens' assemblies can be seen as an intellectual formation, where intellectuals gather and share knowledge with their groups to find alternatives to the status quo. If considered in Gramscian terms, then citizens' assemblies are supposed to act as a structure engaging in the space provided by the civil society. This is because they insist that the assemblies engage with all parts of society. Extinction Rebellion specified that they must build these assemblies with background, economic situation, race, gender, and many other aspects in mind to ensure fair and just assemblies. In addition, citizens' assemblies should be considered as counter-hegemonic formations since the reason behind them is to take the power from the hands of the dominant groups and place it in the hands of the masses. It is true that the assemblies will be headed and moderated by experts, but the demands of them are not aligned with those of the hegemonic group as their main goal is to step away from the oil industry, which opposes the current endeavors of states. However, some issues might present themselves in the idea behind citizens' assemblies.

In a study conducted by Anneleen Kenis and Erik Mathija (2011), the authors led a discussion among participants who expressed their interest in issues of climate change. The participants were engaging and voiced what they think should be done. The author explains how when questioned on how, and more importantly, why change must be made the participants had no clear answers. This suggests that there could be knowledge among the participants, but it only covers a shallow tier of the whole problem. If Extinction Rebellion intends on using experts to explain the entire climate crisis for participants, it would be extremely time consuming. In addition, there are no guarantees that the participants will be completely unbiased regarding different issues. So, Extinction Rebellion must make sure that they have time, energy, and resources to ensure the delivery of suggestions that are effective to conquering the climate problem.

Extinction Rebellion explains how a citizens' assembly on climate and ecological justice would work to achieve political deadlocks in issues regarding the environment (Extinction Rebellion, 2024). The idea behind this is that if the political system cannot deliver what the citizens want in environment related policies, it should be the responsibility of the assembly to come up with solutions to present to the government. Because the solutions are agreed on by unbiased actors, the government should not be in a position where it is unable to act on climate policies. Extinction Rebellion advocate for the role of a citizens' assembly in dissolving political deadlocks by stating "A Citizens' Assembly on Climate and Ecological Justice will empower citizens to take the lead and politicians to follow with less fear of political backlash" (Extinction Rebellion). However, there are some points to be made here. Is it not the purpose behind a citizens' assembly to take away decision-making power from interested politicians and place it in the hands of the population? The statement of Extinction Rebellion paints a picture where the assembly looks like another governmental body that exists to give leeway to politicians to not consider what citizens want, and to get away with "unfavorable" decisions. It raises questions on who politicians are liable to? Are they liable to the citizens who elected them, or are they liable to industries? And if it is the latter, then why should ordinary citizens

help in saving politicians from backlash from industries that are harmful for the environment and are the reason behind the current crisis? Why should citizens be interested in joining an assembly that would serve a structure that is harming their interest?

Another point of concern regarding the structure of a citizens' assembly is that it is to be funded by the government. Extinction Rebellion states that besides funding the assembly, the government should have no other role in how the assembly proceeds, but this raises some questions. How will Extinction Rebellion guarantee that the government will not interfere, when the main failings of Scotland's Climate Assembly 2020-2021 that they list are related to governmental interference and control of the narrative and attitude towards the climate crisis? How do they guarantee the continuity of the assembly if the government decides to stop funding it?

Also, if recommendations do not have any legal status, then what weight do they hold? As Extinction Rebellion say, the science is clear, so if the government is choosing to ignore the crisis, what motive would they have to fund an assembly that they are not willing to act on its recommendations and are not legally liable to any policies or recommendations that might come out of? Of course, Extinction Rebellion justifies the creation of a citizens' assembly as a tool of public pressure, but would the outcomes of an assembly put more pressure on governments than physical movements that are unignorable? Extinction Rebellion states that the assembly sessions will be broadcasted and made available to the public (Extinction Rebellion, 2024), but is it not easier to hide a broadcast than a large social movement/protest?

If the creation of a citizens' assembly is to bring any tangible change to the climate crisis, then it should present itself as an opposing side to the hegemonic power that continues to fuel the crisis. Extinction Rebellion does not attempt to do that, and they state that they do not aim at changing the current system, but they aim to improve it (Extinction Rebellion, 2024), which is not necessarily a bad thing. However, as a climate movement concerned with curbing the actions of the government on its fossil fuel projects, Extinction Rebellion could build the assemblies based on an effort of coalition with their partner movements in an action of uniting contending forces instead of appealing to the source of destruction. They can continue to use other climate assemblies as guides to how an assembly should be built, but also as warning on what not to do in the creation of their own assembly, which is where government playing partner should be. Using Gramscian analysis, Extinction Rebellion acts as a form of traditional intellectuals, where they bring their expertise on climate issues to empower and fill gaps that the current system has, but they can move forward by engaging with other movements on how to create an assembly separated from government control to call for climate policy change.

3.7 Reflection and Learning

As a social movement, Extinction Rebellion has faced a lot of criticism since its inception. The movement had issues with disregard of the historical roots of the climate crisis (Demos, 2020; Zantvoort, 2021; Slaven & Heydon, 2020), criticism towards its non-partisan position (Slaven &

Heydon, 2020), and not being safe for marginalized groups because of its methods of mass arrest⁸ (Westwell & Bunting, 2020; Mansfield, 2020; Bell & Bevan, 2021). Upon receiving a lot of criticism from both individuals and other social movements, Extinction Rebellion made it one of its goals to learn and develop according to criticism and expertise offered from other movements and individuals.

In their fifth value, Extinction Rebellion state that the movement will continue to not only be open to criticism from other movements to help its development, but also continuously question itself to revalidate the reason behind it (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). Their sixth value stresses that the movement welcomes all and is not accepting of anyone who discriminates against anyone for their beliefs, sexual orientation, economic background, ethnicity, and ability (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). In addition, their most controversial tactic, mass arrest, was put on hold at the start of 2023 due to the harm it does to members of the movement and the exclusion of minorities from practicing this tactic. Another part of this abandonment of the mass arrest tactic is because the movement wanted to test the response of the government. Also, in their seventh value, Extinction Rebellion explains how they try to amplify the voices of people from marginalized backgrounds (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). This is done to give a platform to issues that would not make it to the public otherwise due to the disadvantageous positions of marginalized people and the lack of channels to make their needs known.

How is this understood in Gramscian thought? Extinction Rebellion as a movement is opening its doors to people from different societal backgrounds. This means that they are inviting groups to belong to their cause by making themselves accessible. By being more accessible, Extinction Rebellion makes their goal of mobilizing 3.5 percent of the population more feasible. And with greater numbers of protesters, their message becomes more widespread and well known and their demands harder to ignore. If their demands were ignored it gives them grounds to take other forms of action that they might not have taken otherwise, which will be discussed in the next section when discussing “The Big One”. If Extinction Rebellion, as an organic intellectual bloc spread its own set of ideas, in Gramscian terms, its own class consciousness, this means that their understanding of the world, and their plans and views on why it must be altered and why power must be changed will be shared by groups they reached that the hegemonic group failed to reach. Over time, beliefs on what is beneficial for populations will change, and more people will mobilize against structures that push for more investment in oil and its byproducts. However, for this to happen Extinction Rebellion needs to cover more than just issues regarding climate change. The way forward is to investigate where the current crisis stems from, and what is there to be learned from populations that are most harmed by the climate crisis. Extinction Rebellion is actively engaging with movements led by people of color to strengthen their demands for a more just future in issues related to climate change (Extinction Rebellion, 2023).

3.8 Alliances and Movements

⁸ This is because people of color tend to receive harsher treatment when faced by police forces, and often end up facing additional punishment compared to white people.

Forming alliances is, according to Gramsci, vital for change (Levy & Newell, 2002, 87; Bieler & Morton, 2004, 85-113; Loftus & Bryant, 2015, 91). The removal of a hegemonic force must be done in a manner where the masses are convinced that they are not benefiting from the current system but can benefit from a new one (Gramsci, 1971, 145; Levy & Newell, 2002, 86-87; Loftus & Bryant, 2015, 90; Bates, 1975, 353). And for a counter-hegemonic force to replace the current hegemon it must have alternative forms of knowledge that can meet the needs of the population. If these needs are not secured, then the hegemon will either defeat the counter-hegemonic bloc, or they will regain power once they prove to the masses that they served them better than the alternative (Gramsci, 1971, 145). Thus, replacing a hegemonic force must be followed by securing power through securing the masses. This task is made easier when there are already existing alliances coming from different sectors of society. In the case of Extinction Rebellion, for them to secure the masses means that they must have solid understanding and means of delivering goals to the masses in the form of environmental policies that benefit the environment and are clear to the people. Because Extinction Rebellion is a movement that mostly attracts people from advantageous positions in society, the alternative to attracting marginalized populations is for them to form alliances with groups that represent these populations, which they succeeded in doing in their last demonstration, the Big One.

The Big One is a mass demonstration following the idea of non-violent action led by a coalition of 200 movements and trade unions in the United Kingdom (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). The Big One managed to attract 60,000 protesters in an act of civil disobedience that lasted from the 21st of April 2023 till the 24th of April 2023 with no arrests or disruptions to businesses or people's daily lives (O'Hagan, 2023).

Besides Extinction Rebellions' demands, telling the truth about the situation of the climate crisis, immediate action, and establishing citizens' assemblies, an additional demand was introduced; to end all new licenses, approvals, and fundings for projects related to fossil fuel and oils (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). These demands were made by all organizations/movements that attended the protest, and the government of the United Kingdom was given a deadline to respond to the demands of the protesters by the 24th of April 2023. The UK government was given a week to consider the demands of the movements, but they were not responsive. Out of this refusal to address the demands of the movements, Extinction Rebellion decided to take three courses of action, the first is for members of Extinction Rebellion to join trade unions strike actions in picket activities, the second form is through organizing locally to protest issues that affect different areas and municipalities, and the third is for continuous civil disobedience to disrupt economic activity (Extinction Rebellion, 2023).

As previously mentioned, the lack of government response gives Extinction Rebellion room to introduce new forms of civil disobedience along with the old ones they used. In addition, because many other movements were involved in the Big One, Extinction Rebellion is now accessible to participants of other movements, since different movements united under the same demand to halt the use and investment in fossil fuels. In addition, seeing the lack of government response to the demands made during the Big One and following movements Extinction Rebellion focused on growing the movement and creating connections outside of its immediate circle, where it reached out

to organizations, groups, communities, and people (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). Its goal is to see different perspectives and views on how to move forward, and to learn, adapt, and build plans based on what they gather (Extinction Rebellion, 2023).

Therefore, in Gramsci's theory this is a sign of success since links between different groups were established and they have a common enemy to make their demands to (Levy & Newell, 2002, 87; Bieler & Morton, 2004, 85-113; Loftus & Bryant, 2015, 91). Can Extinction Rebellion be considered as organic intellectuals? As mentioned before, Gramsci believes that every human has the potential to become an intellectual (Gramsci, 1971, 131). What is needed to be considered as an organic intellectual is for the individual/group/movement is to exert influence and have leadership position and the ability to organize the masses (Gramsci, 1971, 131-132), which are all aspects that Extinction Rebellion managed to achieve in this instance.

Are they on the road to becoming influential? If we consider the latest protest as an effort to wage a "war of position" on the state, then Extinction Rebellion still need to exert dominance, have wider leadership role, and form stronger alliances with other environmental groups. In addition, the goal of Extinction Rebellion is limited to climate change, so their goals only revolve around issues that do not require a full change of the regime, but rather changes in the system that will ensure environmental survival. Extinction Rebellion place neoliberal capitalism as a system that must be replaced, but they do not aim at replacing the government that works within and according to the neoliberal system, and they are yet to introduce a functioning alternative to replace it. However, they did introduce degrowth, which will be explained later in the paper, as a starting point to their struggle against the system that they deem toxic.

The next part of the chapter will discuss the structure of the movement, and how this structure is considered in the Gramscian sense.

3.9 Decentralized Leaderless Movements

In the "Philosophy of the Epoch" Gramsci explores why states/groups/parties fail to keep their hold on power after a period of unrest. Gramsci attributes this disintegration of the order to multiple reasons. The first is that the masses took their endeavors to achieve change in a disorganized, chaotic manner with no clear leadership (Gramsci, 1971, 479). He explained that when the masses follow changes made by a leader/group with no precise collective will, they are doomed to fail. The second is attributed to the idea that those who held leadership positions, who he describes as the middle classes, are left unemployed once the period of unrest is finished (Gramsci, 1971, 479). When former leaders lose their purpose, they begin looking for new ones, which might not align with their former ones, and might try to introduce or replace the change they created. The final reason is due to the inability of the group to organize the situation of unrest to their own advantage (Gramsci, 1971, 479). Gramsci asserts that in this instance, force must be used (Gramsci, 1971, 479).

As already mentioned, Extinction Rebellion is decentralized and functions according to voluntary participation. The movement, like most modern movements, does not have a single leader or group of people to lead, but it has a clear goal that it pursues which is ending the use and extraction of fossil fuels and healing the environment through the creation of a society that is built on fair democratic rules and citizens participation. According to Extinction Rebellion, any individual or

group can act in the name of Extinction Rebellion if they follow the values of the movement, and they adhere to the rules of Extinction Rebellion (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). In addition, Extinction Rebellion has a system that they call the Self-Organizing System (SOS)⁹. According to Extinction Rebellion, the need for the Self-Organizing System “defines how we organise, communicate and make decisions. It sets out how we distribute decisions about how we organise, allowing us to reflect our values and leave behind ways of working that reproduce injustices and emotional pain in society”, “XR UK has developed the Self-Organising System (SOS), because it’s the best way we could find to embody the Principles and Values of our movement – in particular, that we are based on autonomy and decentralisation, that we actively mitigate power, and that we value reflecting and learning” and “One of the main indicators of successful movements is that they are highly organised and maintain organisational infrastructure under pressure” (Extinction Rebellion, 2024). Although Extinction Rebellion is a decentralized movement, they find that having a structure is the only way for the movement to survive, and thus the need for a SOS (Extinction Rebellion, 2024). Authority is not in the hands of any member, and roles are distributed among the group in a process that requires all to consent the roles of themselves and others (Extinction Rebellion, 2024).

The decision for the movement to be structured was made in 2019 by the rebels and founders, and it was a response to earlier movements failure that was related to movements being structureless, such as Occupy (Extinction Rebellion, 2024). Decisions are only reached when all members agree, and if any contestation arises, the contestee is required to provide explanation to why they disagree, and from this they either look for better strategies if the point of disapproval is valid, or they try to solve the issue with the contestee (Extinction Rebellion, 2024).

If Gramsci’s first condition for the failure of movements is applied to Extinction Rebellion, a decentralized movement, it does not diminish that even with the absence of a leader or a center of power, the movement continues to pursue the goals that it set, and this is because what unites people in new social movements is not their faith in individuals or groups, but rather their belief in causes that touch their daily lives. In this case, Extinction Rebellion do not fail in having solid grounds to consider as their collective will. In addition, Extinction Rebellion does not fail to provide a body where decision making is achieved, a position which is filled by the citizens assembly and through the Self-Organizing System. This further strengthened Extinction Rebellion’s stance as a leaderless decentralized movement in Gramscian terms.

To apply the second and third conditions of Gramsci, the movement must be at a stage where it already seized/acquired power, which has not happened to Extinction Rebellion nor is it the goal of the movement to do so. In addition, the political climate in countries where the movement is active is usually calm and stable. Therefore, the only condition that can be analyzed by Gramsci’s is the first, as discussed earlier, which has already been done and explained through the theory that they engage with it.

⁹ For more details on the Self-Organizing System: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-8uN7j1pjtvn9yKFiJkpJS9-2KGh9r8_s8BYTxIH94E/edit

3.10 Alternative Methods and Mechanisms

In their second demand, Extinction Rebellion states the need for a complete change of the current system due to its toxicity. It is in their 73rd newsletter where they offer an alternative to the current mode of production (capitalism), calling it degrowth (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). According to XR, degrowth highlights how capitalism is at the base of climate change and the ecological crisis, as well as the stance of politicians behind this system due to the benefit they gain from it (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). They further explain the reason behind the push for neoliberal capitalism is due to the need to grow and develop (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). This is done out of fear of entering another recession that would harm the economy and the interest of those in power (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). Further, they explain how for the economy to grow, resources must be extracted from areas that are resource rich, which are usually found in developing countries (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). Extinction Rebellion explains how if the current system continues its domination, the climate crisis will continue to worsen (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). The solution to this crisis is a change in the system in the form of what they call degrowth.

Degrowth is explained as a system where economic development and growth is not required across all sectors (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). Economic growth is planned according to how much energy and resources can be consumed in each sector to bring back balance between economic growth and environmental protection (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). It focuses on parts of the economy that must develop and abandons ones that have more environmentally friendly alternatives, such as fossil fuels industries (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). By prioritizing industries that serve both humanity and the environment, XR suggests that human production and environmental preservation can be balanced (Extinction Rebellion, 2023). However, the mechanisms of how XR plans to replace neoliberal capitalism with degrowth are still not clear. Nonetheless, this could be considered as introducing alternatives to the current system in Gramscian sense which entails a challenge to the current hegemonic system (Gramsci, 1971, 131). Extinction Rebellion can be seen to act as a counter-hegemonic bloc here as they investigate what the current system does not offer and find alternatives to challenge the power of the system through using their intellectuals (protestors and members of the movement) to alter the system. However, they do not provide how to run this system they propose, and thus they leave a vacuum space that needs to be filled as to not create weakness to the group.

3.11 A Discussion of Extinction Rebellion Intellectual Formation

According to the ideas explored so far in the chapter, this part will delve into a discussion on how to categorize Extinction Rebellion using Gramsci's theories. The question is whether Gramsci's theories can be applied to new social movements, and what can be uncovered through using Gramsci's ideas when exploring new social movements? The initial hypothesis of the was that Gramsci offers a lens to explore new social movements in a different angle than is done using other theories. Thus, Gramsci's theories can offer a wide variety of tools that can uncover aspects often neglected because of the lack of employing a Gramscian analysis to study new social movements.

To understand how Gramsci, who was concerned with issues of class and power transition among classes, can be applied to issues of climate change, it is important to understand what new social movements represent, and why they are built around issues that might not be seen as class based,

but they touch upon class struggles indirectly.

As mentioned before, new social movements focus on three areas, how the structures affect the movements and their emergence, how culture is part of how movements are built, and who joins social movements according to how individuals personally identify with the goals of the movements (Pichardo, 1997, 411; Heery, 2018, 662). New social movements theory asserts that the reason for the emergence of movements is the structure of the world that neoliberal capitalism has built (D'Anieri, Ernst & Kier, 1990, 446), which when linked to Extinction Rebellion is made extremely clear.

Extinction Rebellion emerged as a reaction of the destruction of nature and the lack of decisive action to tackle the forces that destroy the earth. How can this be seen in Gramscian terms? This will have to be considered through a historical lens. As often discussed, the climate crisis can be linked to colonial roots. The aggression of the developed world against not only the developing world, but also local and Indigenous groups in developed countries created the climate disaster, and it continues to do so. A clear example of a developed country attacking its own communities' interest to reach capitalist ends is the Norwegian wind turbines and their effect on the Sami population and their livelihoods (Reuters, 2023).

The Norwegian government decided to build wind turbines in the north of Norway in efforts to encourage clean energy, but this came with a cost. The wind turbines were built on lands where the only Indigenous European population lives, the Sami people. The turbines did not consider how the Sami community would be affected by their new structures, which they later found out to be extremely harmful in the form of the turbines disrupting the nature of reindeer and forcing them away from the area. The Sami population relies on the reindeer population in the area, so their departure caused massive losses for them and their livelihoods. In effort to draw attention to this issue, members of Extinction Rebellion and other groups held protests in front of government buildings in Oslo, but they were all removed by the police (Paddison, 2023; Extinction Rebellion, 2023). While it is not their struggle as it does not affect them, protesters stood in solidarity with a marginalized group to bring their issue to light.

Where is Gramsci in this? Gramsci is used here to explain how alliances are formed between intellectuals of different groups and marginalized groups in society (Levy & Newell, 2002, 87; Bieler & Morton, 2004, 85-113; Loftus & Bryant, 2015, 91). The alliance here does not benefit either group directly, but it makes their connection stronger, and they share knowledge to amplify their demands. But how is this a class issue? While it might not be a clear case of class, it is one of the dominant and marginalized groups. The dominant power here is the Norwegian government looking to further its agenda of being climate friendly at the expense of native groups residing in the area. And marginalization shows clearly in this case through the fact that the struggle of the Sami people only came into mainstream media when actors with reach and popularity decided to highlight their struggle. So, while it might be challenging to show class in the classic sense of trade unions protesting wages and taxes, it can be shown in groups extending aid to those with no voices based on their marginalization status. In addition, class is not the driver of civil disobedience in modern protests, but causes and grievances are (D'Anieri, Ernst & Kier, 1990, 446). Therefore, if class is "replaced" in the formula of protests with goals and grievances, then Extinction Rebellion will be

considered as a movement that meets Gramscian terms when it comes to struggling against structures in this case.

New social movements, like old ones, state that movements are both shapers and are shaped by the dominant structures (Pichardo, 1997, 412; Buechler, 1993, 218), which can also be found in Gramsci through his discussion of historical materialism, war of position, and passive revolution. When individuals unite to form movements, they unite to protest a common evil that affects them all. This is the structure playing a part in forming movements as a reaction to how it affects individuals. It also plays a part in how movements are shaped. For instance, most modern social movements are leaderless, decentralized, with no bureaucratic structure to them. This is because the current climate makes it risky for movements to have structure, leaders, or individuals who can be traced as leaders. Thus, the structure plays a part in how movements are formed. The structure is shaped by movements in the way they fight back against it, and the policies that must be introduced to either appeal to the demands of movements or to fight them back and reassert their dominance and the hegemony of the elite.

In Gramsci's writings, this is the role of civil society, the arena where demands are made and where change, whether positive or negative, is brought to life (Cox. 1993, 3). How is this seen in the case of Extinction Rebellion? The movement can be shaped by the hegemonic order in the way it is structured as a decentralized movement functioning through voluntary action. It can also be considered as shaped by the structure due to the reasons it emerged, environmental struggles against unresponsive governments. Extinction Rebellion can be considered as a shaper of the hegemonic order in the responses it gets from governments, as previously discussed in the paper, both negative and positive responses. In addition, this interplay between the two can be highlighted in the latest protest of Extinction Rebellion United Kingdom, where the unresponsiveness of the government plays the leading role in how the movement plans to develop its tactics.

What is being proved here? The idea that is being highlighted here is Extinction Rebellion as a potential part of a counter-hegemonic bloc. While it cannot be considered as a full force that aims at replacing the current hegemonic order, it can be considered as a part of a new organic intellectual bloc that challenges the system in its area of interest, environmental wellbeing and decisive environmental action. Extinction Rebellion might not be a contending group seeking to replace the current order, but it acts as a player in the civil society where challenges to the hegemonic order take place.

But does Extinction Rebellion offer alternatives to the issues they oppose? Gramsci states that there should be no vacuum spaces left in areas that witnessed change; because the existence of vacuum spaces calls contending forces to make plans to every aspect on how they intend to change through using these spaces. Extinction Rebellion aims to do that through two aspects, the first is their idea of citizens' assemblies which was discussed, and the second is their degrowth ideas.

On the discussion of citizens' assemblies, Extinction Rebellion seem to have planned how they will function in detail. They plan to have experts explain what the danger is, they plan to run these assemblies in a jury-like style that ensure that everyone gets a voice and to eliminate biases, and they plan to present the governments with what these assemblies find to be the best solution to help

governments make decisions that will meet the interests of citizens instead of politicians doing so. The same cannot be said about their degrowth ideas. Degrowth is, as already mentioned, a system that aims to replace the capitalist one. However, how they plan to spread it and how it functions exactly are still not clear points that can be considered as achievable. Degrowth seems like a challenge to Extinction Rebellion as it departs from being a demand that they can achieve as an environmental movement that is mostly active in Western-developed countries into becoming an international economic system that the world functions according to. This is because Extinction Rebellion, although extremely popular, does not have an international reach that covers most developing countries, nor does it currently have the capabilities to do so in developed ones. Therefore, while citizens' assemblies might come to fruition, the idea of degrowth would leave a power vacuum that Gramsci warned about, and if it did succeed, it will leave spaces for other groups or the old ones to replace it and come into power.

3.12 What Type of Intellectuals?

Finally, and most importantly, which type of intellectuals are Extinction Rebellion? Traditional intellectuals of the elite or organic intellectuals that represent the masses? This part of the thesis will analyze the findings and highlight how Extinction Rebellion are viewed using Gramsci's concept of intellectual.

Extinction Rebellion protest issues that might not be considered as serious as others in the context of international relations when they are compared with wars, displacement, nuclear aggression, or economic disaster. However, this is because the degree of threat that comes with environmental issues is not taken into consideration due to the time it takes to show the damage done to the climate. Environmental disaster leads to displacement when populations can no longer use lands, it also leads to wars when countries seek the resources that other states have, which could lead to nuclear aggression if said resources are in countries that possess weapons of mass destruction. Finally, environmental disasters could lead to economic collapse, which could happen if environmental disasters struck areas where financial markets are, which could force economic and financial activity to be put on hold. Therefore, the struggle for the environment is not one centered in developed countries, but it has been one that the entire world is facing throughout history. The difference is that some groups in the developed world have the means to voice their opinions and make them heard. Does focusing on an issue that is mostly focused on in the global North in terms of interest make Extinction Rebellion a tool of the hegemonic order? No, it does not. Perhaps the movement in its starting days took actions that deemed it as a tool of the hegemonic order because of the marginalization that it presented against populations of color, but Extinction Rebellion worked to rectify their past mistakes through being open to criticism and using it to change and become more inclusive. Extinction Rebellion worked to build alliances with marginalized groups and other environmental groups to strengthen their cause and to give a platform to populations that would have otherwise been unheard. Also, it tries to introduce alternatives, both in the way they protest and to areas in the system that they deem as corrupt. In addition, their structure, while it might not be built exactly as Gramsci specifies for movements to succeed, does meet some Gramsci's criteria if considered in another way. Leadership, which is a concern to Gramsci, was said to be a common

goal. While leadership in the literal sense does not exist in new social movements including Extinction Rebellion, common goals do, and they unite and drive people. However, while Extinction Rebellion ticks some of the boxes, it does not have it all figured out yet. Extinction Rebellion continues to cater to the government, and it shapes its demands to align with politicians needs instead of the population. While it introduces ideas to move away from the neoliberal system as a production tool, it advocates for the survival of governments that not only play a persistent part in keeping the current system, but also ones that built the system of injustice. According to these reasons, the thesis will consider Extinction Rebellion to still be part of the hegemonic bloc, and the protesters as traditional intellectuals demanding alternatives from the current toxic structures that harm their cause.

3.13 Gramscian Application on New Social Movements

This part of the chapter will briefly introduce the findings of what employing Gramscian analysis to new social movements uncovers. The findings are:

The scope and size of movements – because of the state of interconnectedness of the world, movement often spills across borders. A struggle in one country, as mentioned previously, can echo across borders. This in turn connects the grievances of a certain population to many others across the world. This can be clearly seen in the case of the war on Gaza (2023-present). Although the grievances suffered by Palestinians are unique to them, the struggle against violence committed against civilians echoed across the world and mobilized thousands to call for the rights of Palestinians. Not only that, but the Palestinian struggle shed light on other struggles in the region, highlighting what is happening in Sudan (2023-present), and the silent genocide in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Thus, boycotts, which are the main form of protest for the public dissent on what is happening in Gaza, began including boycott targets that affect stakeholders involved in what is happening in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Therefore, Gramsci is useful here in tracking the source of grievances through historical materialism, making sense of who is behind these grievances through analyzing the hegemonic actor at force, and to shed light on the alliances built because of the emergence of grievances.

Power vacuums – Gramsci warned about the existence of power vacuums left in civil spaces, and this is an aspect always present in new social movements. This is most likely because of the focus of movements. Most new social movements do not act as revolutionary forces that seek the destruction of the hegemonic force, but rather they act as whistleblowers to highlight areas of lack and corruption in the current system. This leaves a space that must be filled on who to implement changes that neither the movements have the specialization in filling, nor is it filled by states that are reluctant to take on new actions.

Population movements – finally, new social movements are unique in that they are led by the new middle class as previously explained. Through Gramscian analysis, the elements of class can be highlighted and examined. New social movements tend to protest issues not related to class, and thus, the element of class struggle disappears. There are two aspects here; the first is questioning why class is not employed as a driver of dissent in new social movements when class struggles are still alive, and the second is has there been an unknown development in new social movements that

transcended the need of class? These are both questions to consider when engaging with new social movements.

3.14 Conclusion

This chapter explored the emergence of Extinction Rebellion, how it can be considered as an intellectual bloc and why it is seen as a traditional intellectual formation. Through exploring why Extinction Rebellion is considered as a traditional intellectual formation, ideas of Gramsci's that relate to formation of alliances, introducing new ideas and channels of knowledge, and reshaping the movement to develop were used to prove the type of intellectual's categorization Extinction Rebellion fall under. Also, the structure of the movement was studied using Gramscian concepts, and the validity of their values when applied to the movement was used as a determining factor that the thesis followed to reach its findings. Additionally, the government response to Extinction Rebellion was explained, and it was considered in Gramscian terms through his concept of passive revolution. Also, the movement's suggestion of production methods as an alternative to the current destructive methods was explored. Finally, a discussion of how the movement fares in Gramscian terms was undertaken to examine if Gramsci can highlight aspects of new social movements that other theories cannot.

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#73: F* Davos, Love Degrowth!**

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