(NO) HOPE FOR A FUTURE

A study on imaginations of climate futures and how these futural imaginations translate into activist citizenship of members of Extinction Rebellion Amsterdam

Master's thesis

On July 3, 2022, as part of the master's Programme Cultural Anthropology: Sustainable Citizenship, I submitted this thesis to the Department of Cultural Anthropology.

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Abstract

We, living beings, find ourselves in a rapidly changing world. Humanity can no longer deny that it is damaging and having an indisputable impact on our planet. The effects of these changes are becoming increasingly unpredictable, but one thing is certain: this century is a time of irreversible changes. Therefore, this thesis aims to demonstrate how futural imaginations impact our "being" and "moving" in the present world. This study draws from three months of ethnographic research among members of Extinction Rebellion (XR) Amsterdam who are campaigning for a climate-just world. It presents how XR members imagine climate futures, resulting in different orientations and how this translates into activist citizenship. First, I present how XR portrays two dichotomous futural imaginations: going extinct or surviving. However, the rebels of XR are not a homogenous group as they demonstrate that their futural ideas are personal, multi-layered, and more nuanced. Second, I elaborate on how these imaginations trigger feelings and cause rebels to orientate differently towards the future. Two orientations that strongly emerged were hope and anticipation – in the form of eco-anxiety. Third, I demonstrate how futural imaginations and orientations impact the way of being and acting in the present. I conclude that one can see an activating process among the rebels: The futural imaginations affect rebels in the present as they become activist citizens. In turn, the rebels hope they can live a worthwhile life by becoming activist citizens; a moral person that fits the ethics and morals of XR and maybe somehow influence the future.

Keywords: Extinction Rebellion, Futural Imaginations, Social Movements, Hope, Eco-anxiety.

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This thesis, it represents so much. I remember well when I started the premaster programme in 2019. This year has flooded me with inspiration, workload, and to be honest a lot of emotions. I entered the master's programme with even more nerves. Can I do this? Am I good enough? Meanwhile, COVID-19 was up and running, I just had a knee operation, and severe sleeping problems. These things caused stress. Fortunately, I am blessed with an amount of motivation and perseverance which would hopefully bring me to this moment. Handing in my thesis…

I am grateful for the education I have received for the past two years. It has opened my eyes to the status quo of the world. Learning all these things has been tough, but it is also realistic. Hence, I feel even more motivated to look for work where I can make a positive contribution to the world.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the whole team for the master Cultural Anthropology and Sustainable Citizenship. Especially my supervisor David Henig, who gave me so much confidence and fun during the process. I would like to thank you enormously, David, for the wealth of knowledge you have and for your support. I would also like to thank my fellow students that I got to know despite Covid. We supported, helped, and motivated each other. Moreover, I would like to thank my dear friends, especially Susan, and family who have given me a lot of confidence, support, and well-needed hugs. Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my participants in Extinction Rebellion. The rebels have received me with open arms, made time for me without effort and have shared beautiful feelings and events. Thank you so much, I could not have done it without you.

Inspired by the rebels, I say:

With love and rage,

Danique Wormgoor

Contents

Glossary

XR   Extinction Rebellion

Rebels   Members of Extinction Rebellion.

Circles   XR consists of circles with mandates on specific issues (e.g., Action and Logistics, Integration, Regenerative Culture, Political Strategy and Change, Outreach and Training, Arts, and Media and Communications). Each circle consists of an alterable number of people, a facilitator who organizes meetings, and a representative that operates nationally. These representatives are democratically nominated and retained in this position for two or three months.

Climate and ecological justice   According to XR, the goal of climate and ecological justice is to address and recognise the oppressive power structures that are mainly responsible for the current climate situation. They demand freedom, equality, and basic human rights for all people around the world (Extinction Rebellion UK 2022b). [1]

Non-violent civil disobedience   XR aims to create both economic and civil disruption to unsettle the political system and raise awareness. This strategy pursues legal reforms by using non-violent and public tactics. They accept punishment (e.g., arrests) to respect the legal system.

Very low-risk action   An action where a rebel, for example, hands out flyers in the park, cleans the beach, or provides arrestee support. There is as much risk of arrest as a normal walk in the park.

Low-risk action   An action where a rebel, for example, provides care for other rebels or reaches out to people to tell more about XR. Seldom someone gets arrested.

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[1] Within XR, I discovered that this concept is continuously in the work of revision.

Medium-risk action	An action where a rebel is disruptive but leaves after a first warning from the police. There is a real risk of arrest.
High-risk action	An action where a rebel is disruptive, for example, stays at the action after a warning from the police. For some rebels, it is their purpose to get arrested.
Very high-risk action	An action where a rebel is disruptive, for example, by using lock-ons[2], tripods, or glue themselves in place. There is a big chance of arrest and violence.[3]

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[2] Rebels utilize lock-on techniques. A lock-on often is an improvised or specially designed hardware, which has the function of a chain. This technique makes it harder to remove them from an action location (Fieldwork 9 April 2022).
[3] These definitions are based on my fieldwork (February, March, April 2022).

Introduction

On March 29, 2022, I walked in the Oosterpark in Amsterdam. While my eyes searched for Arte, I enjoyed the lovely weather. Arte is a rebel of Extinction Rebellion (XR) Amsterdam, we had arranged to walk and talk together. Once I found her, we greeted each other, which immediately felt familiar. We chitchatted for a bit which was comfortable due to Arte being an enthusiastic and friendly young rebel. We talked about the beauty of the world, the lovely warmth of the sun and our shared passion for nature. The enthusiasm and genuine interest made the conversation flow to Arte's life and passions. She told me about her fascination with the grotesqueness of nature and the futility of humanity. However, she also recognised that humanity is now having such an impact on the world that the grotesqueness is only increasing. Arte argued: "This is precisely the reason for my participation in XR, I want to do something, otherwise the future is kind of scary you know". When she said this, I asked her how she imagines the future and if that translates into her involvement with XR, Arte elucidated:

> When I think about the future, I don't even know what I should think. I just know it's wrong: whether it is for me, my children, grandchildren, people somewhere else, the animals, trees, flowers, fish, everything. We don't realise it yet, but the fact that species are disappearing, that'll be our downfall. Oh, and you know about the interconnectedness of the ecosystems, that is impressive right?! Yet, knowing that much of these ecosystems are collapsing, makes me sad and this is oftentimes misunderstood by my friends. It just breaks my heart… So yeah, how shall I put this? I want to be sad. It comes from fear, and not knowing what to do…

While I looked around in the park, the words of Arte sank in. I resonated with her ideas regarding the beautifully connected ecosystems that you could see even in this park. Simultaneously, Arte's words surprised me a bit. She portrayed a "hopeless" situation, but still, she finds motivation to participate in XR. I asked her to elaborate on this, to which she said:

> Apparently, I do have hope, otherwise, I wouldn't do anything, but I also don't have hope. Does that make sense? You simply can't do nothing, even if there is no more hope: I can't sit at home and think there's nothing I can do. So, I want to do something, otherwise, I will go mad. Therefore, I sacrifice my free time and dignity,

sitting on the streets trying to make a statement. Meanwhile, I cry and just participate (Fieldnotes, 29 March 2022).

This interview with Arte, which felt like a normal conversation, brought me valuable insights into her ideas about the future. It illustrates that futures are a multi-layered phenomenon that influence people how to think and act in the present. As you have read, Arte's futural ideas make her sad, hopeless, and isolated from her friends. However, despite the hopelessness, she feels that she must do something which consequently makes her participate in XR. During my fieldwork, I often encountered similar conversations with other members of XR, hence I will elaborate on this.

Extinction Rebellion or XR is an international social movement that employs nonviolent civil disobedience in an attempt to minimize the risk of collapse of life on the planet and the environment and to stop mass extinction (Extinction Rebellion 2021a). According to XR, the current climate crisis and the attendant crises of colonialism and capitalism will not solve via a gradual compromise. Therefore, the movement strives for a radical systemic transformation of the capitalist system to achieve climate justice, a regenerative culture, a non-capitalist system, and a citizen's assembly (I explain these demands on page 22) (Extinction Rebellion 2019; 10-14). In this regard, I wondered how "the future" is important and/or how it plays a role in XR – as a movement – and for the rebels within the movement. Also, what futural scenarios do they envision, and is that what drives them? And eventually, how does that translate into actions and feelings?

The vignette at the beginning of this introduction exemplifies these questions. It demonstrates that Arte's catastrophic ideas about the future have an impact on her life in the now, such as, having restless feelings and feeling compelled to act. The Arte's story thus goes to the heart of what question my thesis seeks to answer, namely:

How do members of Extinction Rebellion Amsterdam imagine climate futures and how do these imaginations translate into activist citizenship?

To answer this question, this thesis draws on the cutting-edge debates within the anthropology of the future and social movements. I will unpack these debates in this introduction. I will first explore the debate on imaginations and the anthropology of the future. This helps me to study XR's ideas of the future. Then I outline the debates on citizenship, which enables me to

demonstrate how rebels resist the current system. In turn, I will discuss my methodology, positionality and ethics, and an outline of the thesis.

Imagination

Anthropologists, such as Stevphen Shukaitis, David Graeber and Erika Biddle (2007, 251) who studied and also participated in social movements, have demonstrated that imagination is often at the root of collective action. The idea of a possible other world is what drives many social movements. The ability to imagine that things could be otherwise brings about new political and social ways of being and hence gives people - as a collective - an opportunity to engage politically and to determine things they aspire to in life. In this thesis, I draw in particular on Alex Khasnabish's (2020, 1718-1723) notion of "radical imagination". This theory concurs with Shukaitis, Graeber and Biddle, as it also refers to the ability to see the world differently. This form of imagination reflects the capacity to think of the world as it might be otherwise, and it activates movements for social change. This type of imagination is often formed through dialogic interactions rather than through an individual project. It is a process where people collectively map "what is", narrating it as the product of "what was", and speculating on what "might be". This process is both cognitive, physical, creative, and yet mundane at the same time. I argue that the process of collectively mapping desired futures relates to the past, present, and future. However, in this thesis I focus on the future because that is something the rebels do. They collectively mapped a desired "might be", a climate just future. Although there is a collectively portrayed futural "might be", I stress that we cannot perceive the movement as a homogenous group with exact similar futural ideas (Roggeband and Klandermans 2017). Hence, I argue that we must look beyond the collectively portrayed dichotomy: extinction or survival, since futural imaginations are multi-layered, more nuanced, and personal. I acknowledge that most individual rebels recognize ideas of the collectively portrayed future. However, there are different ideas about timespans of possible catastrophic events and the meaning of "extinction".

These forms of future-oriented "radical imaginations" can be further analysed using the anthropology of the future, mainly inspired by Rebecca Bryant and Daniel Knight (2019). Bryant and Knight (2019, 16) provide an analytical tool, namely the notion of "orientations", that allows them to comprehend the link between people's imaginations and the future. The authors argue that: "Orientation is the relationship between the future and action, including the act of imagining the future." They demonstrate that people are constantly orientating and acting toward the future, for example, because they hope, speculate, or anticipate. Moreover, they try

to break away from the idea that time is only linear while they emphasize to maintain an aspect of teleology. The authors use the notion of open-ended teleologies to understand these temporal orientations. Open-ended means that things in the future are not yet known, whereas teleologies (telos) refer to certain goals or purposes, things that humans are guided by, but can always change. Therefore, open-ended teleologies are part of our everyday life activities and allow us to consider the impact of the future on our lives in the present. The concept of orientations enables me to demonstrate that rebels continuously orient themselves to the open-ended teleologies of everyday life. Hence the actions in time are always informed by the imaginations of the future (Bryant and Knight 2019, 9, 201). Thus, orientations as an analytical concept allows me to ethnographically study rebels' futural imaginations. By using the anthropology of the future, I emphasize that people orient themselves towards particular versions of the future and consider how these ideas of the future impact the experiences of being in time.

Studying the rebels demonstrated multiple forms of temporal orientations towards the future. Two strong futural orientations – identified in my fieldwork – are hope and anticipation. Hope, according to Bryant and Knight 2019, 132-134), draws the not-yet-there into the present and can spark action. However, studying the rebels demonstrated different forms of hope. Whereas some of the rebels believe and hope that another particular future is possible, there are other rebels who do not believe that reaching a climate just world is possible, they are hopeless. Consequently, these rebels participate to alleviate restless feelings in an environment where they are surrounded by like-minded people. Additionally, hope entails more than just hoping for something that is not yet here. Among the rebels, hope has the capacity to incite action and gives a sense of being a certain kind of morally good person that fits the ethics and morals of XR. Moreover, it can give meaning and telos to life (Henig 2022; Lear 2006).

The second futural orientation that emerges in the lives of the rebels is anticipation. In this thesis, I follow Bryant and Knight (2019), but I add that anticipation takes shape of eco-anxiety in the lives of the rebels. I identified in my fieldwork that anticipation is a response to discomfort of uncertainty, as well as a means of preventing or modifying anything that threatens a dramatic rewrite of the present. Oftentimes, the past then becomes a source for rewriting the future. However, in the case of climate change, this is different since it is hard to draw on past events. Resultingly, one must deal with uncertainty about possible futural events, which creates feelings of anxiety that make the present uncanny. This, in turn, can result in mobilisation to alleviate exactly these feelings (Bryant and Knight 2019, 43-47). Therefore, this thesis demonstrates that ideas about climate futures trigger, among other things, anxiety. The understudied analytical concept that explains this type of fear is "eco-anxiety". Various authors

explain this concept as a widespread sense that ecological foundations are collapsing or are going to collapse. This results in feelings such as stress, doom and anxiety (Albrecht 2012, 250; Clayton et al. 2017; Pihkala 2020, 2-5, Usher 2019).

Thus, this thesis demonstrates that rebels have particular futural imaginations entailing climate breakdown and extinction, which translate into different orientations in the rebels' lives. The rebels alleviate these orientations (both hope and anticipation – in the form of eco-anxiety) by anticipating as an individual within a collective, the movement.

Social movements and Citizenship

Anthropologists have been analysing social movements for a long time. One of the ways of studying social movements is through the concept of citizenship (Holston 2009; Isin 2009; Lazar and Nuijten 2013; Muehlebach 2018; Razsa and Kurnik 2012; Rasch and Köhne 2016; Scholtz 2006; Yuval-Davis 1997). In this thesis, I concur that citizenship is a useful frame for anthropological inquiry into politics and social movements. It enables to study how distinct political communities and political action are created. Moreover, it is fruitful for understanding feelings of belonging, enacting, and making claims. Anthropologists study how citizenship is perceived, experienced, and how communities and agency are constituted. Agency refers to people's attitudes and impressions about framed discourses, tactics, leaders, actions, and mobilizations within the movement. Simply put, it refers to the manoeuvring space of individuals within a movement (Lazar and Nuijten 2013, 3-5).

For instance, anthropologists Sian Lazar and Monique Nuijten (2013) argue that citizenship is more than a formal legal status. They move beyond this formal conception of citizenship and demonstrate that the concept takes a broader perspective. They wonder what citizenship is, how it is produced and formed, and what meaning, and value it is given. Additionally, Lazar (2013, 1, 5-7), who focused on the constitution of good citizens, argues that citizenship refers to a sense of political belonging. She believes that studying citizenship entails how people interact in political communities.

These approaches emphasise that citizenship does not only refer to being a member of a certain state or a legal status it means more than that (Lazar and Nuijten 2013, 3). Studying citizenship entails exploring the relationship between society, the state, and the individual (Yuval-Davis 1997, 5). Others have responded to this and argue that citizenship not only points to a membership that is attributed but also to a membership that is claimed (Holston 2009, 256, 257; Scholtz 2006). Anthropologist James Holston (2009, 245) demonstrates that citizens claim citizenship to maintain social justice rights. They claim it by organizing movements of insurgent

citizenship whereby they try to combat the established regimes of citizens' inequalities that divide them into metropolitan areas.

I argue that citizenship is a useful framework for studying XR as it enables me to explore how the rebels see themselves and how they resist the current system. Studying XR demonstrated that the rebels refer to themselves as citizens who want to improve the democratic system by means of their three demands.[4] To achieve this, XR employs the strategy of "non-violent civil disobedience", on which I elaborate in chapter 4 (Extinction Rebellion 2022a; 2022b).

Activist Citizenship and Acts of Citizenship

Other scholars also studied social movements via the concept of citizenship, for instance, anthropologist Engin Isin (2009, 368). While this author studied immigration, he contends that the "rights to claim rights" can be exercised by a variety of actors, including social movements. Movements can, for instance, claim ecological rights. Resultingly, citizenship can be claimed by people in multiple manners, which leaves the approach of seeing citizenship as a membership status insufficient. Due to new ideas about social movements and the proliferation of sites of rights and struggles, he argues that the twentieth century is characterised as a time of "activist citizenship".

Isin (2009, 380) shows the outcome of the construction of citizens willing to participate in political decision-making by examining these "acts of citizenship." He defines this as: "those acts that transform forms (orientations, strategies, technologies) and modes (citizens, strangers, outsiders, aliens) of being political by bringing into being new actors as activist citizens (that is, claimants of rights) through creating or transforming sites and stretching scales" (Isin 2009, 383). In other words, acts are deeds that disrupt the status quo to alter and restructure the legal system. These acts demonstrate what people do rather than what they claim to do (Isin 2009, 371). By looking at these acts, the author explores how disruption and disobedience are also expressions of citizenship. Lazar and Nuijten (2013, 5) concur with this and add that to study citizenship, one must examine how ordinary people reject or accommodate categorization as they establish themselves as certain categories of citizens. For example, through diverse modes of coordinating collective action.

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[4] XR makes three demands: (1) The government must tell the truth about the ecological and climate crisis that threatens life on earth and emphasize the need for immediate action. (2) The government must act now. They must prevent biodiversity loss and achieve by 2025 net-zero greenhouse gas emissions in a fair and just way. (3) The government must allow citizens to decide by forming a citizen's assembly to spearhead efforts on climate and environmental justice (Extinction Rebellion 2019, 16). I further explain these demands on page 22.

This thesis builds upon these debates. I argue that XR - as a movement - can be analysed via the concept of activist citizenship. XR states that if we continue our current way of life then mass extinction awaits us. Hence, XR wants to change that, leave the current capitalist system behind, and strive for a climate just future. This particular future entails an honest government that acts on what is needed to turn the tide and introduces a citizen's assembly that gets citizens more involved. To reach this particular future, XR claims their rights by using the strategy of "non-violent civil disobedience". This is their "act of citizenship". Thereby, they aim to create awareness and put pressure on governments by causing as much economic and social disruption as possible. Hence, by studying non-violent civil disobedience, I explore how disruption and disobedience are expressions of citizenship – the acts of citizenship – whereas the acts are deeds that disrupt the status quo to alter and restructure the legal system (Isin 2009; Roggeband and Klandermans 2017).

Methodology

The field

I conducted my research among members of XR Amsterdam, the capital city of the Netherlands. XR is a transnational social movement that started in 2019 in England. According to the movement the current ecological crisis, as well as the associated crises of colonialism and capitalism, will not be overcome via gradual compromise. They aim for a dramatic systemic transformation on a "never-before-seen" scale to reach "climate justice" (Extinction Rebellion 2019, 10-14). According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, climate justice means that "the parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind, based on equity and following their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities" (UNFCCC 1992, 4). XR elucidates that climate justice is a key component of tackling climate catastrophe (Extinction Rebellion 2019, 10-14). In sum, XR is a science-driven movement that declared itself into rebellion against governments[5] while employing non-violent civil disobedience.

However, XR has also been criticised by others. The movement was seen as being overly white and elitist (Cheuk 2016; Derbali 2019). Furthermore, indigenous people and people of colour, who are experiencing the brunt of climate change's effects, would receive too little attention (Cheuk 2019). The growing awareness of these limitations and exclusions coincides with a global trend in climate movements toward "climate justice" activities. This underlines climate change's systemic foundations, as well as the unequal distribution of responsibility and effects (Tokar 2021, 20, 21). Terms like "climate justice," "system change," and "intersectionality" have become virtually buzzwords as a result (Friends of the Earth 2021). My time in the field taught me that XR takes this criticism seriously and is actively reflecting on and questioning its strategy to eventually become more inclusive (Fieldnotes, March 2022).

Due to time constraints, I confined my research to XR Amsterdam. This delegation consists of independent decentralised groups and delegates authority to several people in positions with mandates, allowing them to act without the requirement for group consensus. Despite the structure, they are cooperative and receptive to feedback from everyone before making choices (Extinction Rebellion 2021b). Because XR Amsterdam has many active

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[5] I want to remark that the way XR uses the word/concept "government" in their discourse and documents is quite opaque, since I did not yet encounter a definition. I want to stress that the word government is a social construct and can have different meanings and implications in different countries (Andrews 2010, 2). An example of XR referring to the word is: "… and force governments from all over the world" (Extinction Rebellion 2019, 9). My interpretation is that they mean all groups of people who have the authority to govern a country.

members, there is a range of colours, ages, educational levels, and time commitments. Some people participate full-time, while others work or go to school (Fieldnotes, February, March, April 2022).

Research methods

Between February 7th and April 29th, I conducted ethnographic research among members of XR Amsterdam. I concentrated on grasping the emic perspectives of rebels. This allowed me to get a more sensitive understanding of the rebels' futural imaginations, feelings, and acts of citizenship (O'Reilly 2012). To further comprehend these emic perspectives, I employed a variety of qualitative research methods, including participant observation, interviews, online content analysis, and autoethnography.

To enter the field, I contacted XR by e-mail and telephone. After having an integration interview, I joined two circles: "Outreach and Training" and "Arts". Additionally, I participated in the Mobilisation Days working group. Due to COVID-19, I attended the weekly meetings online, which were normally in person. After a while, the restrictions imposed by the government became more lenient, and we met offline. During these meetings, I could apply the method of participant observation. This allowed me to participate in the everyday activities, interactions, and events of XR (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, 1). These meetings, enabled me to get to know the rebels easily. I almost automatically used the snowball effect, meaning that the first interactions are leveraged to create further contacts in the field (O'Reilly 2012, 44). This led me to attend workshops and seminars, for example, the "Heading to Extinction Talk" which informed me of the status quo of the planet in terms of global warming, CO_2 emissions, and political interventions. Moreover, the seminar about climate justice explained whether privilege can be an explanatory factor in how people deal with the climate crisis. Also, I attended the Solidarity and Climate Justice weekend which made anti-racism, (de)colonisation, and climate justice discussable with attention to a safe environment. The topics were personal development and XR's inclusion policy. Finally, I joined XR's weekly vegan dinner at De Sering which enabled me to acquire informal contacts and build rapport.

During these events, I took notes in my notebook, and reflected on my experiences in my diary. The notes enabled me to get back to that specific moment. My diary helped me to observe and mitigate my feelings and senses. Moreover, it allowed me to support my research with autoethnography. Autoethnography, according to Narayan (2006, 241), is a transformative technique for learning about oneself and the world by paying close attention to one's own life. Reed-Danahay (2009, 28) elucidates that the method situates human experience in social and

cultural contexts, posing challenging concerns regarding social agency and socio-cultural limits. Consequently, I observed and participated as much as possible. I thought that this would be the best way to experience how rebels feel when engaging in acts of citizenship (Isin 2009, 368). Therefore, I carried out action points, for example making; minutes, flyers, social media posts, financial budgets, etcetera. So, both ways of documenting were crucial for the data analysis. Moreover, it helped me to interpret my fieldnotes and discover personal biases (Bernard 2015, 294; DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, 1). Resultingly, I merged and interweaved the notes containing over 50 meetings, many (in)formal conversations, actions, seminars, and workshops into this thesis and the interludes.

Due to these events and the flowing rapport, I conducted 17 semi-structured interviews with rebels from different circles within XR Amsterdam. I interviewed a mix of rebels varying in age, sexuality, gender identity, and nationality and participation. The semi-structured interviews evolved easily due to well-established rapport (O'Reilly 2012, 27). Additionally, I had many informal conversations with the rebels, for example on the streets, during actions, or at making-sessions with the Arts circle. This required flexibility and fast writing after these occurrences.

In sum, this triangulation of methods has created a way to gain insights into XR – as a movement – and into the lives of the rebels in a way that reflects the sensory richness of the interwovenness between the components.

Positionality and ethics

For anthropological research, reflexivity regarding positionality is crucial since there is no objective and unbiased knowledge in ethnographic research. There is a need for acknowledgement of the interwovenness between the researcher and interlocutor and between fieldwork and everyday life (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011). O'Reilly (2012, 100) agrees and argues that anthropologists cannot engage in research without understanding the importance of their own corporeal, sensuous, thinking, analytical and positioned self. Hence, the rebel's lifeworld, feelings, and opinions are filtered and interpreted via my preoccupations and presumptions (Gusterson 1996, 13). Moreover, these ideas are in connection to my "situated knowledge" (Haraway 1991). Haraway's concept relates to the impossibility of creating knowledge from a totalizing and universal "view from above"; since the data is based on embodied and fragmentary "view from somewhere". Hence, I stress that my thesis is founded on my experiences as a twenty-five-year-old white, Dutch, middle-class, academically educated woman. Additionally, I have a strong interest in socially relevant themes; in particular, the

climate crisis is something that has been close to my heart for a long time. Hence, I sometimes struggled with keeping distance regarding the values of XR. Their values resonate with the knowledge I gained during my studies. For example, critically questioning the neoliberal system with the attendant consequences such as exploitation of humans, animals, and the planet. As well as living in a more regenerative way, which resembles the work of Anna Tsing, whose work I highly appreciate.[6] Furthermore, I consider it important to recognise that being able to take action is a privilege in itself. XR also acknowledges this, certainly regarding the tactic of non-violent civil disobedience. During my fieldwork, the rebels told me that due to living in a racist society people of colour face more police brutality. And so, the fact that I can do fieldwork with XR and learn 'freely' about these topics is something that I see as a great benefit which is not a given for everyone in the world.

Since I autoethnographically studied XR and somewhat identify with their values, I feel the need to reflect on activist anthropology and how I relate to this as a researcher. According to anthropologist Charles Hale (2006), activist anthropologists form bonds with unified groups of individuals fighting for a common cause, accompanying them on a paradoxical and partially compromised journey to their political aims. Direct involvement with the complexity of political disputes produces outputs that are both disturbed and deeply enriched. Dual allegiances to a struggling formed organization and a thorough scholarly examination are frequently incompatible. They are in a state of tension, which can devolve into direct disagreement (Hale 2006, 103, 105). Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1995, 401) emphasizes the importance of this type of research, arguing that cultural relativism is no longer appropriate. Anthropologists should stand up against injustice. As I can highly appreciate the point of these scholars and myself wanting to fight injustice, I cannot decide for everybody what injustice is. Translating this to my thesis, I critically explore XR, their strategy, and the way they imagine their futures. Hence, I constantly re-evaluated my role during fieldwork; how do I balance participating and observing? As a result, I sometimes take more distance to remain critical while wanting to fully experience how it is to be a rebel. Therefore, I do not reckon myself an activist anthropologist as I still see both sides of the coin.

Thus, during my research, I paid attention to the "socially constructed nature of social research" (O'Reilly 2012, 62). This enabled me to do ethical research (Madden 2017, 34). During my research, I ensured that neither my participants nor I were harmed, entirely in accordance with the rules of the American Anthropological Association (American

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[6] Tsing (2017) argues that a threat to Holocene resurgence is a threat to liveability. All life on earth is connected and part of an ecosystem.

Anthropological Association 2021). Hence, all interlocutors gave their informed consent and were anonymised to protect their privacy (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, 215). Finally, I want to remark that most of my interviews were in Dutch. I have therefore tried to translate this well and correctly to stay as close to the content as possible.

Outline of the thesis

My thesis comprises two storylines: the first storyline consists of autoethnographic interludes. These interludes follow my embodied journey in studying the future and becoming a rebel. I illustrate my experiences and feelings on two XR-related occasions. I invite you to read these interludes alongside my second storyline because it provides a sense of context. The second storyline draws on my personal experiences but adds ethnographic data and theoretical depth by using anthropological concepts.

I start this thesis with an excerpt of one of the rebels, Arte. Arte's words make me see and feel how her futural imagination and the related feelings have a severe impact on our lives. Her words elucidate the importance of studying futural imaginations since it helps to understand the "being" in and "moving" in this present world. This leads up to the larger context of the research that studies how members of Extinction Rebellion "are" and "move" in this world.

Thereafter follow three ethnographic chapters, which demonstrate futural imaginations and their translation in orientations and acts of citizenship. The first chapter maps the futural imaginations of both XR – as a movement – and the rebel within the movement. I explore the futural scenarios communicated by the movement that comes down to either going extinct or surviving. Then, I present the individual futural scenarios which enable me to argue that futural imaginations are multi-layered and hence we should nuance the illustrated dichotomy. The second chapter illustrates the workings of imaginations through people's conceptions of the future via the concept orientations. I argue that rebels orientate towards the future via hope and anticipation – in the form of eco-anxiety. The third chapter demonstrates how XR aims to reach another future by performing non-violent civil disobedience. I elucidate, what participation in XR looks like by identifying two layers of citizenship and the acts of citizenship that go with that. Finally, the concluding chapter aims to formulate an answer to how the futural imaginations of members of XR translate into activist citizenship and acts of citizenship. Additionally, I discuss the limitations of this study as well as future recommendations.

Futural imaginations – die or survive?

Chapter 1

It was Monday morning, the second week of my fieldwork, and I heard the postman throwing a parcel through the letterbox. Finally, XR's handbook, "It's a drill", was delivered. I immediately ran downstairs, grabbed the book, and continued my way to the coffee machine. While making a cup of coffee, I opened the bright pink booklet; the first chapter read "Declaration of Rebellion". My curiosity sucked me into the book, and I saw words like "Crisis", "Emergency" and "Rebellion". I read on intently and for a moment I stopped. My eyes flew over the phrase once more: "This is our darkest hour. Humanity finds itself embroiled in an event unprecedented in its history, one which, unless immediately addressed, will catapult us further into the destruction of all we hold dear: this nation, its peoples, our ecosystems, and the future of generations to come" (Extinction Rebellion 2019, 1). The quote spoke to me. I understood that we are stuck in an unfamiliar situation which we must solve as soon as possible. If we do not, we will destroy life on earth and there will be no future for next generations. Reading this made me realize that XR – as a social movement – straightforwardly communicates two futural scenarios: extinction or survival. So, while my coffee was getting cold an uneasy feeling crept up and I wondered what the future would hold for me (Fieldnotes, 14 February 2022).

This first chapter illustrates the futural imaginations of both XR – as a movement – and the individuals within the movement. I first explore the collective futural imagination of possible mass extinction. Then, I illustrate the collective futural imagination of "turning the tide". Thereafter, I emphasize that studying the futural imaginations of individual rebels is important since it is a heterogeneous group. Accordingly, individual ideas of the future are multi-layered and more nuanced. Finally, I argue that we should move beyond the illustrated dichotomy: extinction or survival.

The status quo will lead to extinction

> HUMAN ACTIVITY IS CAUSING IRREPARABLE HARM TO THE LIFE IN THIS WORLD. Many current life forms will be extinct by the end of this century. We may right now be causing the Sixth Mass Extinction in Earth's history (Extinction Rebellion Netherlands 2022).

After googling Extinction Rebellion, joining introduction talks and reading the handbook, I have come across this message many times. References towards the future, or as I call it, futural imaginations, are everywhere and we cannot escape from it (Fieldnotes April 2022).

The quote exemplifies the *first* futural imagination of Extinction Rebellion – as a movement. It elucidates the possible threat of a Sixth Mass Extinction of many life forms, including humanity. Simultaneously, the quote plays on human responsibility. XR argues that humanity causes this irreversible damage and hence, we must act now as we are in a "state of emergency". Scrolling on their website, I saw that this futural scenario is supported by science. In fact, there is a whole section with all kinds of sources that support this. Opening some of these documents, I encountered several articles that describe the irreversible changes and how they threaten life on earth (Extinction Rebellion Netherlands 2022). I will briefly describe some of these events.[7]

According to XR, the human values that underpin our political and economic systems, as well as our consumer-focused lifestyles, are corrupting and compromising the water we drink, the food we eat, the air we breathe, and the diversity and charm that sustains our mental well-being, our health. Accordingly, the current repercussions of climatic and ecological upheaval are insignificant compared to what is still to come. Catastrophic consequences for human society and the natural world may occur. For instance, humans will face nature and biodiversity loss, wildfires, water shortage, drought and scarcity, ocean acidification, water pollution and sea ice, desertification, crop failures and food insecurity, air pollution, global heating, an increase in greenhouse gases, and extreme weather conditions. Moreover, if the temperature on earth rises further, it will surpass a particular threshold. The consequences will become self-reinforcing and hard to reverse, even if the emissions fall. This is what XR calls a tipping point. Reaching such a point might result in abrupt and irreversible change. However, it is difficult to say when these might be reached. Some may occur with a 2°C increase in temperature (Extinction Rebellion Netherlands 2022). For instance, the ice-albedo effect. If there is a loss of sea ice due to global warming, there is a darker sea surface which in turn reflects less heat and elevates local temperatures which will result in more sea ice loss. This is a serious concern for life on earth (Climatetippingpoints 2022). These destabilising circumstances will combinedly result in pandemics and diseases, human rights increased risk of war and conflicts and millions of displaced people. As a result, everything that we now experience as modern, political-, and cultural life would be scrambled by these forces.

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[7] Due to the limited space, I acknowledge that I cannot provide a full description. Hence, I limit myself to the overarching futural imaginations.

Eventually, according to XR's futural imagination, life on earth will go extinct (Extinction Rebellion Nederland 2022). Reading this, I found myself a little defeated and overwhelmed by everything that our future might hold for us. However, while sipping my coffee I read on and saw that "turning the tide" was still possible… (Fieldnotes, 23 February 2022).

"Turning the tide"

> Change is possible - We are standing on a precipice. We can acknowledge the truth of what we are facing, or we can continue to kick the can down the road and allow the effects of a heating planet to have even more detrimental outcomes on all living beings. We are already locked into a certain amount of warming and biodiversity loss, but there is still time to change this story (Extinction Rebellion Netherlands 2022).

I read the abovementioned sentence and had an "aha" moment, thinking that it is still possible to "turn the tide". Despite the size of the problem and the terrible implications of tipping points, XR argues that it matters what we – as humans – do in the coming years for life on earth. I felt that in these three pages alone, I had been tossing and turning with my emotions; from overwhelmed and defeated to hopeful and activated. Continuing reading, I saw that XR strives towards a future where climate justice reigns (Fieldnotes, February 2022).

Anthropologists Stevphen Shukaitis, David Graeber and Erika Biddle (2007, 251), elucidate the fact that social movements always strive towards something; either achieving change or conserving things the way it is. Movements imagine how things ought to be while having a certain future in mind. This theory reveals the importance and the capacity of these movements to imagine alternative possible worlds. Consequently, for social movements, imagination is often key to collective action and the possibility of imagining another world incites them.[8] This also applies to XR when striving towards another future of "radical system change", their *second* futural imagination (Extinction Rebellion 2019, 99). The idea of a climate just world incites the rebels to act. Moreover, they want acknowledgement regarding the truth of what the future holds for all life on earth so that they can "turn the tide". In the next paragraphs, I will shortly explain what this other future according to XR needs and holds.

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[8] There is a well-established tradition of thinking about the role of imagination in forming national political communities. Benedict Anderson (2006) studied the imagination as a collective force at the heart of modern social formations, particularly, the nation-state. Here, the scale and ideological nature necessitates individuals to imagine themselves as members of a community even though they will never meet many other members. Still, they had to understand themselves as bound in a common collective endeavour.

First, XR imagines a climate just world which goes hand in hand with reforming the capitalist system. I encountered various rebels in the field referring to the relation between capitalism and the environment (Extinction Rebellion Nederland 2019; Fieldnotes, 20 February 2022). According to the rebels, capitalism is a broad term that encompasses more than an economic system. It includes the state, the police, government institutions, courts, and other organisations that frequently use violence to regulate human and other-than-human beings. Capitalism is built on the foundation of ever-increasing economic growth, aiming for profit and economic expansion. It thrives on the exploitation of particular marginalised beings which find their origins in a history of brutal colonialism. Through oppression and injustice, the system causes great misery for them. Moreover, capitalism needs ever-increasing resource use which in turn creates environmental degradation. In this sense, humans are seen as superior to nature – and not being a part of nature – and hence, nature is regarded as a resource. Therefore, capitalism is a major contributor to climate change (Corporate Watch 2020, 21-45, Fieldnotes, 5 March 2022). From here, the principle of climate justice flows naturally. XR demands a just transition that prioritises the interests and voices of the people, and other living species, on the front lines of the environmental crisis and holds the people that are most responsible for ecological collapse accountable (Extinction Rebellion 2021, Fieldnotes, 4 March 2022).

Besides climate justice, XR strives towards a regenerative culture. Every rebel that I spoke to emphasize the importance of this, Arte (introduced, p. 7) elucidates:

> We should live more quietly, now it is about being productive, making money, fast, fast, fast, and always being busy. This is completely based on capitalist ideas. For me a regenerative culture is important; it entails appreciation, having time, re-using things, giving less value to materials and more to people and nature, so yeah, real connection with friends and family, with the earth (Arte, interview, 29 March 2022).

As Arte explains, the regenerative culture is about connection. Other channels of XR also refer to this, stating that we should take care of ourselves and others to build a resilient community in anticipation of an uncertain and challenging future. It promotes self-care, occasional respite from XR advocacy, and stimulates rebels to emotionally support one another (Stuart 2020, 500).

Finally, XR envisions a citizen's assembly on climate and ecological justice. This is a group of citizens that explores, discusses, and offers suggestions on how to address, for example, the climate crisis. Members will be chosen randomly and must represent the respective country concerning ethnicity, education, age, gender, and geography. Experts and

individuals most impacted by the situation will provide balanced information to the assembly members. With the help of expert facilitators, members will communicate openly in small groups to resolve disagreements and develop and vote on proposals. Accordingly, the assembly must enable citizens to collaborate and feel responsible for the climate crisis (Extinction Rebellion UK 2022a).

Looking at this *second* futural imagination, I noticed that the ideas of XR were crystal clear: according to them, the current system is not working. We must leave this system and strive towards another future. To conceptually support this, I draw on Alex Khasnabish's (2020, 1718-1723) notion of "radical imagination", as discussed in the introduction. This idea refers to the ability to see the world differently. It is a process where people collectively map "what is", narrating it as the product of "what was", and speculating on what "might be". This process is cognitive, physical, creative, and yet mundane at the same time. Khasnabish argues that while imagination is often a site of political conflict one cannot reduce it to "ideology". Imagination demonstrates an agent-driven, complex, rich, and continuously working out of affinity. It is an important component of the inherently political and consistently collaborative (though seldom autonomous) work of restructuring the social environment. Therefore, the author argues that political life and participation belong to both formal institutions and individuals who engage in multiple ways; from prefigurative, to argumentative, to resistance and everything in between. Moreover, he argues that radical imagination can take the form of a legislative discussion organized by elites, expressed in riots, or revolutions. Movements are engines of social change and vehicles for contested political claims, as well as incubators of alternative social connections and testing spaces for other ways of life. More specifically, this type of imagination speaks to our capacity to create something new together. Accordingly, movements are being fuelled by radical imagination (Khasnabish 2020, 1719, 1720). I argue that this body of literature is relevant since the imagination process can be understood in relation to time, both the present and the desired future. In the case of XR, I argue that the movement collectively draws the present situation as the "what is". The "what is" reflects the capitalist system that exploits everything and everyone, and eventually creates extinction. Hence, the current situation, the "what is", must be changed and put in the past, so that it becomes a "what was". Accordingly, XR wants to move forward, beyond the current situation, towards another particular future. Therefore, they portrayed a collective "might be". This "might be" is something they strive for, something that must be there in the future, but preferably as soon as possible. This "might be" entails a climate just world with a fair democracy and just economic

system that is based on regenerative principles. XR wants to achieve the "might be" by performing non-violent civil disobedience.

Khasnabish (2020, 1719) continues and argues that scholars should move away from the demobilizing assumption that movements find their origin spontaneously, or from exploited and/or oppressed individuals. Consequently, scholars should attempt to discover the origins of movements, how and why individuals join movements, and what constitutes movement failure and success. This I encountered in the handbook of XR, which says:

> Extinction Rebellion did not come out of nowhere (…) Extinction Rebellion has been carefully planned. For several years a group of academics and activists have been working (…) we studied decades of work looking at organizational systems, collaborative working styles, momentum-driven organizing, and direct-action campaigning … People have now joined us from many fields (…) This is now a movement of scientists, academics, lawyers, diplomats, councillors, campaigners, teachers, doctors…(Extinction Rebellion 2019, 99).

This quote indicates that XR has not just originated randomly. The movement is established after years of studying and working with people that collectively portrayed a futural scenario they want to strive for.

All in all, studying XR both online and in the field demonstrated *two* overarching futural imaginations: (1) XR strives for a climate just future to build a fair world and to prevent (2) an apocalyptic future of climate breakdown and mass extinction. However, while studying the rebel within the movement, I argue that there is more nuance to these two imaginations, it is personal and hence multi-layered.

The rebel within Extinction Rebellion

Speaking to the rebels individually demonstrated that there are more than the two dichotomous imaginations portrayed by the movement. Still, aspects of their individual ideas resemble the events that XR – as a collective – portrays. For instance, themes like floods, global warming, species- and biodiversity loss, climate refugees and migrations, and "extinction" are often mentioned. Yet there are many different views in terms of details. This became clear to me when I spoke to a young female rebel Suus. Suus and I met in a cosy café in the middle of Amsterdam, where we drank a cup of coffee. She told me about her role within XR and her

responsibilities regarding the integration of new rebels. When I asked her about her ideas of the future, she argued:

> Well… I am going to be very honest. I don't have a lot of faith that it is all going to work out. For me, it is pretty much fifty-fifty. In 30 years…, I don't think I'll be alive then. The Netherlands will flood, heatwaves will come, we will not be able to breathe normally, etcetera. These things we do not mark as climate change-related issues!!! For example, every year almost 250 Dutch people die from heatwaves; these deaths are definitely linked to the climate crisis, you know. Then I am wondering, what the fuck; how many deaths are still unknown? But in the Netherlands, we are privileged right? Now it is still 'okay', but in other places of the world, it is already happening. Very soon we'll see more climate refugees and 'we', the people in the Netherlands, are not going to be empathetic nor take responsibility, certainly not the government. So yeah, in 30 years, I will be 50, the Netherlands will be a flood plain and I am not prepared to run away. I'm going to fight, also if a government does not, I am going to help other people. So, I give it 30 years and a 25% chance that I am still alive. If I am alive, I will fight, or I will be in a hospital or die or something. In 50 years, I am 70 and it will all be over by then (Suus, interview, 16 February 2022).

Suus is imagining a catastrophic future which clearly touched her. It brought up emotions, especially when she referred to the climate- and social disasters. I interpret that on the one hand, Suus has a clear image of futural events that will lead to extinction. On the other hand, she admits that there is a lot of uncertainty and unfamiliarity. Hence, I argue that the events she portrays are still vague and undetailed. For example, because she does not explain a what, when, where, and with whom. Yet, she does mention the unfairness of the current situation in the world and relates that to the inactiveness of the Dutch government and their privileged position. With this, Suus puts her words in a larger context of XR's fight for climate justice, implicitly referring to the fact that the world's richest 1% cause double the CO2 emissions of the poorest 50%. By arguing that "we" are causing the climate problems and not going to be "empathetic" toward climate refugees, she is referring to the fact that the Netherlands – among other countries – is operating unfairly and therefore certain groups of people are more likely to suffer from the climate crisis than others (Fieldnotes, 4 April 2022).

Hearing this, I discovered another emerging discrepancy. There is non-consensus among the rebels regarding the term "extinction". Whereas the movement communicates that all life on earth will go extinct if nothing happens, the rebels have other ideas. For example, Sebas. Sebas is a rebel in his mid-thirties, who occasionally joins high-risk actions. He argues: "I don't think that humanity will go extinct, maybe we will be left with only a million, but what is extinction? It's semantics right, like a metaphor; it's about the world as a whole rather than about humanity." (Sebas, interview, 15 February 2022). Talking to Sebas made me realize that extinction is not necessarily something literal. He explains that the word can be a form of imagery, or that the meaning of the word symbolizes something. For him, extinction means two things (1) the fact that due to the capitalist system certain groups will go "extinct" sooner than others, whereas he, elucidated by multiple other rebels, implicitly seems to refer to people from the "Global South" (also, there is no consensus among the rebels about the destiny of people from the "Global North. And (2) the idea that society, as we know it today, will go "extinct" (Fieldnotes, 16 February 2022, 19 March 2022).

Moreover, there is no consensus among the rebels in terms of specific details such as the timespan of possible catastrophic events. Most rebels are not specifically referring to numbers or graphs, their futural imaginations are still open-ended (Bryant and Knight 2019, 201). Arte (introduced, p. 7) concurs, and along with many other rebels, she states: "I know my life will not be the same as it is today, it is very hard to imagine... I don't have to know the exact numbers or timespans to realize that we must do something now" (Arte, interview, 29 March 2022).

Thus, conversating with the rebels individually unveiled multiple motivations and ideas about the future. Differences of opinion within social movements have not gone unnoticed by scholars. In fact, there is a long history of studying social movements that support this idea. For instance, in sociology, where the main focus lies on social movements being a homogenous group rejecting social orders (Edelman 2001; Roggebrand and Klandermans 2017; Park 1967). Whereas, in contrast, anthropologists plead for a focus on different members and motivations within movements. According to Conny Roggeband and Bert Klandermans (2017, 71, 75) anthropologists should raise questions regarding the extent and breadth of agency in societal structures that are organized and culturally solidified. Looking from "above", movements may appear to be homogenous and determining entities that are intentionally striving and organizing to achieve their objectives. However, in reality, this is rarely the case. So, while we can acknowledge collective cultures and processes, we should not lose sight of the manoeuvring space, the agency of individuals. Agency reflects people's attitudes and perceptions towards

the framed discourses, methods, leaders, activities, and mobilizations. This is critical since oftentimes participation is wavering and participants are heterogeneous. Hence, we should focus on rules of conduct, everyday strategies of interaction, memories of previous struggles, and less conscious dimensions that are to a certain degree immune to changes.

Being in the field made me realise that XR has a very clear vision of the future. Meanwhile, the individual rebels have a less detailed and/or elaborate idea of it. What they do know is that irreversible events are going to arise. I became aware of the fact that many rebels do not want to know all the nitty-gritty about what we are going to face. For them, knowing that the current way of life could lead to "extinction" is enough to act. At this point in my fieldwork, I experienced anxiety. The acknowledgement of the fact that both the movement, as well as the individuals within the movement, predominantly portray futures of climate breakdown gave me an uncanny feeling. Moreover, with the future being a vague and open-ended phenomenon made it even more elusive, and thus not knowing how, what, where or when things are going to happen frightened me (Fieldnotes, 30 March 2022).

This chapter exemplifies that Extinction Rebellion – as a movement – has two strong collective futural imaginations: going extinct or surviving. Via the notion of "radical imagination", I illustrated how the movement has formulated a "what is": the current capitalist system. This unsustainable way of life must become a "what was". Something that we should move beyond and put in the past. Therefore the movement formulated a desired imagined future of what "might be", a climate just world (Khasnabish 2020, 1718-1723). However, as this chapter has illustrated, one cannot perceive the movement as a homogenous group concerning these ideas (Roggeband and Klandermans 2017). One must look beyond the dichotomy: extinction or survival, since futural imaginations are personal, multi-layered, and nuanced. Every individual rebel recognizes the collectively portrayed future, however, there are different ideas about timespans and whether who and/or what goes "extinct".

Whereas this chapter has set a context of the futural imaginations of both the movement as the individual rebels, the next chapter will elaborate more on the working of these imaginations through rebels' conceptions of the future.

"There is a thin line between hope and hopelessness"

Interlude 1

It is Saturday morning, 9 April 2022. Today's goal was doing an Outreach action for the Mobilisation Day. After a chaotic morning, I cycled to the train station of Amsterdam Zuid. In my hand, I had a cotton bag with 500 flyers that had been delivered to my house. Big drops of rain fell from the sky, which made me curse from inside: "What on earth am I going to do in this rain?" I thought about the upcoming awkwardness that I was going to face since the travellers would probably see me as one of those annoying salespersons. So yes, I was definitely relieved that we only had to promote the Mobilisation Day. When Emiel arrived, I heard that Kyla, another rebel, unfortunately, could not come. My initial confident and hopeful mood turned around to slight disappointment and a bit of defeatedness. I wondered how we, on this rainy day, were going to hand out 500 flyers with just the two of us.

Fortunately, Emiel was in a good mood, and he quickly pulled me out of this stream of thoughts. He explained the strategy, and afterwards, we positioned ourselves at the exit of the train station. A stream of people followed, and I prepared myself to approach them. I experienced both excitement and a little bit of fear which clashed with my idea of how socially easy I am. Normally, I easily approach people and I hardly ever feel uncomfortable doing so. However, this time I needed to cross a small barrier. After talking to a few people, I realised that I was quite good at it. I connected effortlessly and had flowing conversations. During the break, I said to Emiel that I was hoping that these people would come to the mobilisation day, otherwise we were standing here for nothing. Emiel astonishedly responded: "Noooo, Danique! Even if they don't come, we have raised awareness about the climate problem! That is the goal, remember."

This cold and rainy action made me step out of my comfort zone. I approached people which was exciting and required communication skills. I had to be able to present knowledge about the Mobilisation Day, XR, and the climate crisis. Moreover, I experienced that there is a thin line between hope and hopelessness. Emiel's comment made me realise that there are multiple telos for the rebels, for instance: (1) recruiting rebels for the Mobilisation days and (2) spreading awareness about the climate crisis (Fieldnotes, 9 April 2022).

Orienting and acting towards what?
Chapter 2

The previous chapter illustrated the futural imaginations of rebels. This chapter will continue analysing how the futural imaginations trigger feelings and cause rebels to orientate differently towards the future – this I refer to as the workings of imaginations. I analyse these workings of imaginations through rebels' conceptions of the future via the notions of "open-ended teleologies" and "orientations" (explained in the introduction, p. 5) (Bryant and Knight 2019, 9, 16, 201). This will illustrate how rebels orientate themselves differently towards their futural imaginations. The first orientation that I discuss is hope. Hope emerges in different forms in the rebels' lives. While some still hope for a climate just future, other rebels have lost hope in this particular future and only participate with XR to alleviate restless feelings. Afterwards, I will demonstrate another orientation: anticipation - in the form of eco-anxiety. In the end, I argue that individual rebels have multiple futural imaginations that translate into their lives in various ways.

The future impacts the present

As I elucidated in chapter 1, futural imaginations incite action among the rebels. In turn, these imaginations trigger feelings and cause people to orientate differently towards the future. Before I engage with this, I will elaborate on how we can analyse the workings of imaginations using the anthropology of the future. Since the early 2000s, "the future" has been a focus of anthropological research. The turn towards the study of the future was a response to several crises that occurred during that time, like the Financial Crisis and the War on Terror. These events left people in great uncertainty about what would happen in the future. Moreover, basic certainties, in terms of food or housing, were no longer self-evident (Bryant and Knight 2019).

According to Arjun Appadurai (2013), the future is a cultural and social category. He emphasises that culture influences what humans hope, speculate about, envisage, aim, fear, and plan for. He argues that humans are "future-makers" and therefore it is interesting to look at their anticipation, aspiration, and imagination (Appadurai 2013, 285, 286, 293-295). Bryant and Knight (2019, 9) agree partially, arguing that the future is instilled in us. Futures impact the present, even though the future does not yet exist. Therefore, our everyday practices are connected to ideas and feelings about the future and resultingly people constantly orient and act towards the future – and so do the rebels too. To understand the open-ended teleologies of

everyday life, I present two orientations of the rebels that strongly emerged during my fieldwork. These orientations allow me to study the impact of perception regarding the future and how they resultingly affect the lives of the rebels in the present. I will discuss forms of hope and anticipation – in the form of eco-anxiety.

Hope, no hope, hope comes, and goes

Scrolling through the website, the social media channels, and attending meetings of XR taught me that according to the movement, a climate just future is possible. I especially remember the Welcome to XR talk on 20 February 2022, broadcasted via Zoom. The scientifically based PowerPoint presentation demonstrated the catastrophic status quo, the structure of XR, and the way we can act. The presenting rebel argued: "The last IPCC report is now crystal clear: humans cause global warming and only if there is very ambitious action, we can turn the tide. Remember it's the people who are at the controls, so anything is possible!" (Fieldnotes, 20 February 2022). I must admit, the presentation caused a mix of emotions in me, from dropping spirits to being hopeful. Studying these documents, the social media channels and the presentation created feelings of hope for reaching a climate just world. Yet, I was also confused. In an interview with Suus a few days earlier, she told me something completely different as she did not feel hope all the time. For a while I did not know what to feel anymore, my emotions were going in all directions (Fieldnotes, February 2022).

The above-described situation in the field, made me realize that in the lives of the rebels, hope emerges in different forms and at different moments. Hence, I argue that hope can be there, it can be absent, it can come, but it also can go.

Suus (introduced, p. 24) elucidated this multi-layered process when I asked her about her ideas of the future and her motivation for joining XR. She told me that the process of integrating new rebels helps her to find hope:

I am angry, very scared, sometimes hopeful, and powerless; a feeling that it does not matter anymore, because I cannot do anything about it. People are just wrong; it's terrible you know. That is why I integrate new rebels. Talking to new people who are motivated and enthusiastic gives me hope, it motivates me to continue to act. By finding the right spot in XR for them, I can contribute to a better working of XR and a more climate just world. Also, I can see how much potential there is, and I feel less powerless and hopeless. I guess, other rebels get hope in different ways; I know someone who feels the same when cooking for rebels, by providing

good food, she can literally give energy, yet others go talk to politicians. Yeah, we get hope in different ways, that's the strength of XR (Suus, interview, 16 February 2022).

In the excerpt, Suus' futural imagination triggers emotions such as anger, anxiety, powerlessness, and sometimes hope. Yet, she remains committed to XR as she finds motivation and hope in integrating new rebels because the new energy and motivation they show contribute to a sense of potentiality. In short, Suus has no hope for a better future, but sometimes hope is sparked by participating in XR. This process is elucidated by Bryant and Knight (2019, 132-134). They illustrate that hope is a futural orientation and imagination which pictures that what is not-yet-here, into the now and this potentially can spark action. Even though nothing now at this moment exists, hope in the life of Suus stimulates potentiality to become a reality. Talking to Suus made me realise how there are many forms of hope, it is a multi-layered relational process. To demonstrate these forms of hope, I will delve into anthropological and philosophical research combined with ethnographic examples.

Hope is a theme in anthropology that gained momentum. Following anthropologist Sherry Ortner (2016) one could see a turn from "dark anthropology" toward studying ideas regarding the "good life" and hope. Ortner demonstrates that hope is often connected to possibility. However, anthropologists should recognize the idea of hope as such, which is not the same as optimism. It is intimately related to despair and poised for disappointment. Anthropologists Nauja Kleist and Stef Jansen (2016, 454) concur and emphasize the thin line between the two concepts. They add that the idea of hopefulness and trying to change things has been implied to find the possibilities created by the people themselves. This is illustrated by Emiel, a rebel that often participates in high-risk actions, he argues:

Actions make me feel like I'm contributing, and yeah, then I feel hope. However, when a stupid policeman in that same action says to me: 'Hey, but ehhh, we have to make sure I'm in time for dinner, otherwise I'll get cranky'. Then I think: 'Dude, you really haven't understood.' Wow, then I feel despair. So yeah, there is a fine line between the two (Emiel, interview, 11 April 2022).

Emiel tried to create a possibility by acting in order to change things. This in turn created feelings of hope. However, as Emiel illustrates, hope easily shifted to disappointment and hopelessness during the action. Hence, one sees the thin line between hope and despair emerge.

According to Joel Robbins (2013, 448), anthropologists have been focused over the last three decades mainly on the issues of suffering, and those who live in pain, poverty, or oppression. As Robbins argues, anthropologists should also pay more attention to the ways in which people imagine and realize the good in their lives. Hence, he situates the anthropology of the good as closely related to topics of value, morality, imagination, hope, change, and time. Ortner (2016, 16) agrees and emphasizes the importance of the idea of what gives lives a sense of purpose, how people look for a way to live, a direction. She asks: "How can we be both realistic about the ugly realities of the world today and hopeful about the possibilities of changing them?" Ortner's ideas are relevant for this thesis when looking at the realities of today's world: an increasing worry about climate breakdown, and even ideas about extinction. These events create feelings of urgency that humans should act to create a sustainable future (Fieldnotes, March 2022). Considering this, she also points towards the concept of resistance and activism. According to her the possibilities for change are produced in the environments of activism and resistance (Ortner 2016, 59-61). I argue that the stories of Suus and Emiel exemplify the created possibilities within activism. Their stories illustrate that hope emerges in different times and contexts. This aroused my interest and, as a result, I asked more detailed questions during my upcoming interviews.

The next rebel I spoke to was Roos. Roos is a young woman and has been active for two years in the regenerative circle and participates around once a month in medium-risk actions. When I asked her about XR, she already referred to hope herself:

> Hope for me comes from the people I surround myself with, especially people from XR. The COP26 is a good example: those fucking idiots' politicians. They were not doing anything, dark situation... Although I was not there, I felt connected with the rebels. It felt good to know that this many people feel the same and are equally motivated to do something (Roos, interview, 17 May 2022).

Roos argues that although she is not in direct contact with her fellow rebels, she gains hope and feels connected because they experience similar feelings and are equally motivated to do something. However, it also illustrates that Roos might not have experienced hope if the rebels had not been there. This is concurred by other rebels who argue that by participating in-, or connecting with XR, they can feel sparks of hope, even though they actually do not believe in the idea that a climate just future is possible. Hence, I follow Ortner (2016, 59-61) and argue that the possibilities and hope are produced in forms of resistance and activism.

That is why I was surprised to encounter rebels who do not feel hope at all. This made me wonder: How can someone participate when they do not believe that another future is possible? It became clearer to me when I spoke to Mannes. Mannes is a man in his mid-fifties, currently working at a University, and has been involved in activism since childhood. Our conversation went as follows:

> **Mannes:** I think we are really beyond the possibility of bringing back change. A lot of it is irreversible, awful right?

> **Danique:** So you say we have passed a certain point and that is why you have no hope anymore? Still, you participate in XR, where does that come from?

> **Mannes**: Yes, if I do not, I think I'd just go crazy. I mean, otherwise, you're so alone with that pessimism! (Mannes, interview, 19 March 2022).

After this explanation, it made more sense. Mannes participates in XR to get rid of his pessimism and not to go crazy on his own. He is not the only rebel with these feelings. In fact, it is quite widely held. Philosopher Antonio Gramsci (1975, 159) points to this phenomenon, arguing: "never despairs and never falls into those vulgar, banal moods, pessimism, and optimism ... my mind is pessimistic, but my will is optimistic". As Gramsci describes, the mind is pessimistic, just like Mannes's. However, there is an optimistic will as Mannes wants to participate to surround himself with like-minded people, to alleviate his feelings and in the end, to feel more optimistic.

Based on these conversations, I realized that hope for the rebels is not something passive. Simply put: the rebels are active in bringing about what they aim for and do not wait and hope for others to create a better future. This resembles the concept of "active hope" of Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone (2012). According to them, there are two different meanings of the word hope. The first meaning is related to hopefulness, this entails that the preferred outcome is likely to occur. If one needs this type of hope before a person commits to something, the reaction is blocked in situations where this person does not think the prospects are good – it becomes passive. Whereas the second meaning concerns desire. This kind of hope activates to act. It involves three steps: first, getting a clear picture of reality; second, getting an idea of what people want to see happening and the values that come with that; and third, these people trying to shift themselves in the desired direction. In other words, knowing what one wants to

happen and thus what one hopes for, makes a difference. And so, active hope concerns taking an active role in this process (Macy and Johnstone 2012, 1-4). As I already have illustrated by utilizing Khasnabish's notion of radical imagination, I argue that the rebels have a clear view of the reality, the status quo. Hence, they have identified the desired outcome – what they hope for – a climate just world. And so, the rebels take steps to move in that direction by participating in the movement and practising "active hope".

"Hope is when I am with XR"

Hoping for something that can happen in the future can make a person feel a certain way. This became clear to me when speaking with Noor. When I met her in the Oosterpark she told me how she sometimes feels a bit lost in "the greatness of the problem" (Noor, interview, 24 February 2022). To not feel that lost and to add value to her life she participates in circles and medium-risk actions. When I asked what hope means to her, she argued:

> For me, hope is when I am with XR, it is a feeling; not necessarily something rational. And yeah, about, climate futures, haha, I don't want to rely on reason with these kinds of things, it is about connecting to your values. If joining makes me happier and feels meaningful to me; then I want to invest time and bits of money. This is more meaningful than doing nothing. 40 years from now I want to look in the mirror and be able to say: at least I tried, also if it partially or didn't work out (Noor, interview, 24 February 2022).

In the case of Noor, the practice of actively hoping while being with XR keeps Noor going. At the same time, she wants to become "a moral person" with a "meaningful" life. Another rebel, Maxime, confirms Noor's feelings. Maxime provides training about climate justice to newly recruited rebels. She argues:

> Let me put it this way. I have gotten used to the idea of climate breakdown, but I still want to go on, tomorrow is a new day! I don't want to say to my future self that I did not do anything. I want to be on the right side of history, it gives meaning to my life (Maxime, interview 15 February 2022).

Interestingly, speaking to Maxime and Noor, I saw another hope-related dimension emerge, morals and the meaning of life. Following Robbins (2013, 458), we can see how both rebels

use hope as an area to create something good in their lives. For the rebels, participating in XR makes them a different kind of moral persons and allows them to say: "at least I tried" or I was on "the right side" of history. By hoping, the rebels try to add meaning to their lives.

Bryant and Knight (2019) tend to describe hope as something in the future, as a temporal orientation that is not here yet. However, I follow Lear (2006, 57) and Henig (2022, 217, 218) who add another dimension [to hope]. They introduce the concept of "radical hope". Lear argues that radical hope emerges when there is a "destruction of the telos" of one's way of existence amid dramatic ruptures. Accordingly, this type of hope is radical in that it emphasises the need of having the fortitude, amid these ruptures, to explore new horizons of conviction, anticipation, and striving. These horizons offer people a new context of relevance and purpose for activities in the aftermath of dramatic events, while opening alternative pathways for conceiving new ways to live a worthwhile life (Lear 2006: 57). Henig (2020, 220) adds that these situations raise questions such as: What does it mean to live a worthwhile life? He emphasizes that to ask such questions requires moral fortitude because one must imagine that what is possible, rather than that what is actual (Henig 2022, 220). Moreover, hoping is connected to certain ideas of personal ethics and morals. This, in turn, raises questions such as: What kind of person do you want to be? Hence, trying to live a life worth living and to become a different kind of "moral person", such as Noor and Maxime, entails doing, thinking, or acting in a certain way. In this case, a way that fits the ethics and morals of XR. However, according to the authors, this is not only something individual, but it emerges in relation to the given socio-historical juncture (Henig 2022, 220).

Hearing both Noor and Maxime, I recognize that rebels want to achieve a climate just world to prevent a future of mass-extinction. Here, hope is related to temporality, something that is not yet there (Bryant and Knight 2019). Additionally, the rebels demonstrate that engaging with XR amid adversity on the planet opens a new way to a meaningful life beyond despair. It is connected to a new telos which entails contributing to "save the planet", "being on the right side of history", and "at least I tried even if it does not work out". This new telos gives the rebels the idea that by participating in XR, they become a different kind of moral person which, in turn, gives meaning to their lives.

"I am afraid of the future"

Besides being hopeful, rebels also experience other-than-hopeful feelings. In fact, many rebels expressed anxious feelings regarding the future. This became clearer to me when I spoke to Franka. My interview with Franka took place on March 15, 2022. We agreed to walk through

the city centre of Amsterdam so that she could show me places that were meaningful to her. When I met her, we connected easily and as a result, we got caught up in a delicate conversation which allowed me to forget the busyness around us. Franka was not afraid to open up to me when I asked her to tell me something about her feelings regarding her ideas about the future. She had read many academic books which enabled her to grasp various perspectives and visions from prominent environmental academics. She argued that this was the reason for her having catastrophic futural scenarios. She said:

> Well, the biggest reason why I joined XR is because I am actually just scared. Not just scared, super scared... I am afraid of the future, afraid of the consequences that are coming, and I can tell you that is not relaxed, it's an intense emotion. It gets me into a fight or flight mode. Whereas many people choose to flee, saying: "Okay, the climate crisis is there but I'm not going to get involved since I've got my problems". I'd rather face it, I simply can't do nothing, then the emotions bottle up. However, really dealing with it is also hard, knowing all this can give you severe depressing feelings. It is difficult to define… Maybe I am a little depressed? So, yeah… fear is a very big one here and of course, other emotions are very much part of it; the powerlessness, frustration and feelings of injustice that is done to me. All this makes me constantly go back and forth between fleeing and fighting. However, I decided to turn that fear into action. My future is just at stake! (Franka, interview, 15 March 2022).

The moment Franka explained this, I saw the sadness in her eyes, which touched me. Still, I was curious about the consequences that she referred to. When I asked her to elaborate on this, she explained that we, as living species, are going to deal with the effects of "our human-created, destroying-the-world system." This statement gave me chills, I realized that Franka's catastrophic ideas of the future make her orient constantly in the present (Bryant and Knight 2019, 16). She is in a constate state of anxiety but dealing with it is hard. I understand that either ignoring or dealing with it can result in depressive feelings. As a result, she feels that she is constantly on a thin line between being depressed and not being depressed. Nevertheless, our conversation suggests that the best option for her, and for many other rebels, is to act because doing nothing results in bottled-up emotions.

All in all, Franka's excerpt represents a widely held feeling among the rebels. Many rebels feel the need to reach two teloses' (1) alleviating anxious feelings and (2) hopefully

changing the future by doing that. So, in addition to hope, there can also be anxiety, which I will explore in the following paragraph.

Thick anticipation

The second futural orientation that emerges in the lives of the rebels is anticipation. In this paragraph, I suggest that anticipation manifests in the form of eco-anxiety in the lives of the rebels.

Before I elaborate on the orientation: anticipation, I want to emphasize the heuristic distinction between anticipation and expectation. Bryant and Knight (2019, 19, 22-23) argue that there is a difference in 'thickness' (the unknowable, something that we are not able to see) of the present while linking it to relationships of the past. Consequently, this differing thickness reveals different teleologies (goals/purposes/things that humans are guided by and capable to change) of action. For example, if someone *expects* rain and decides to bring an umbrella "just in case", there is an expectation of rain. This action can be tempered by factors that might have failed in the past such as weather predictions. Therefore, the authors argue that expectation can be seen as a conservative teleology, meaning that the present can get thickness by relying on the past. Simply put, expectation can often be linked with probability – less uncertainty. For instance, one can say more easily: If event X happens, then, event Y might happen. You can expect a result.

Yet, in the case of anticipation, it is different and more linked to uncertainty. When one *anticipates* rain, however, it comes to smelling and feeling it in the air, closing windows and covering your furniture while imagining the future as if it is in the present. Hence, "anticipation slims the present, often breaking entirely with the past as it draws present and future into the same activity timespace" (Bryant and Knight 2019, 22). Bryant and Knight make this argument by using the example of the war history of Lebanon. There, the experiences of the unresolved civil wars have led to people living in the present with a kind of constant anticipation that war can happen again. One could not expect it, but it always looms as a future possibility. Accordingly, that means that whenever things go wrong, people can move from anticipation to expectation. However, the experience of these catastrophic events of the past is something that will make future projects uncertain. Hence, the authors argue that anticipation influences the present and is essential to daily life and action. It is important to mention that if there are spontaneous responses necessary by anticipation, these are much more difficult to mobilize at a societal level. This appears to be the reason why anticipation becomes the communal response to similar communal risk perceptions. What the collective perceives as "Times of Crisis" or

"Times of Danger" - or times of conflict or imminent tragedy - elicit anticipatory responses. These responses are projected into the collective future while imagining for example the annihilation of people by human-caused or natural violence. This is something in which imagination falters since the world is not going to be what it was. As a result, collective anticipation becomes an endeavour to try to make this radical alteration easier (Bryant and Knight 2019, 22, 23, 34, 37, 38).

Hence, anticipation is often connected to specific moments of threatening or uncertain futures. As Franka explains, it is an intimidating uncertain future and accordingly, she anticipates it being such that she needs to act now. Franka demonstrates a response to the discomfort of uncertainty, as well as a means of preventing or modifying anything that threatens a dramatic rewrite of the present. Oftentimes, one sees that the past becomes a resource for rewriting the future. However, in the case of climate change, it is hard to draw on the past. This was confirmed in the "Heading to Extinction" talk I joined in February 2022. During this talk, a middle-aged rebel told me that it is difficult to predict what is going to happen in the future since "there are reinforcing powers that we have never seen before" (Fieldnotes 20, February 2022). Anthropologist Adriana Petryna (2018, 572) confirms this. She argues that the mutually reinforcing feedback loops that generate regime-shifting occurrences nowadays are either partially measurable or completely non-observable. Consequently, people are unable to predict the future, and this makes anticipation a challenging task. Bryant and Knight (2019, 43) add that when instances and life's parameters shift dramatically and the future can no longer be imagined, these times are collectively defined as a "Time of Crisis" or "Times of Danger". Then, the present becomes uncanny and can create anxiety which can result in mobilizing "forgotten" pasts to form new deliberate postures toward the future to alleviate anxiety (Bryant and Knight 2019, 43-47). My time in the field demonstrated that the rebels collectively defined a "Time of Crisis". According to them, we are heading to an apocalyptic future of climate breakdown (as elucidated in chapter 1), and thus we find ourselves in the "Climate- and Ecological Crisis", also referred to as "The Emergency" (Extinction Rebellion Netherlands 2022c). Following Bryant and Knight (2019), this emerged crisis can be understood as a collective anticipation that in turn create anticipatory responses – in particular in the form of eco-anxiety.

Eco-anxiety

Utrecht, Solidarity Weekend. It is Saturday morning March 15, 2022. While I still enjoy the peacefulness that the silent breakfast gave me, we – around twenty-five rebels – positioned

ourselves in a circle. One of the hosting rebels explained that we were going to do a small exercise. She explained that the left side of the room represented: "feeling many emotions", whereas the right side represented: "feeling fewer emotions". The exercise entailed that you had to move yourself to the side of the room that resonates most after hearing particular words. The first word was: fear. I looked around and many rebels moved towards the left side – feeling many emotions. Accordingly, the hosting rebel asked if somebody wanted to elaborate on his/her/their feelings. One of the rebels responded and argued that hearing about the climate crisis and the injustice makes her afraid and sometimes discouraged. She argued that the destruction of the world is already happening in other places, and soon will be here in the Netherlands: "I often wonder what the hell is going to happen? Then I feel fear." Hearing these words, and feeling the ambience in the room, gave me goosebumps. Seeing the rebels move from one part of the room, to the other, while sharing deep emotions such as fear, sadness, hope and guilt, made me emotional (Fieldnotes, 15 March 2022).

This vignette exemplifies that fear – and other emotions – are strongly present in the lives of many rebels which has an impact on them in the present. By seeing all these rebels moving to the left side I realized that many people fear the future. Fear of that what is not so much here yet in the Netherlands, but something that might come. In particular, I argue that the rebels have a kind of shared sense of anticipation that something is coming, and this is one of the reasons for joining XR. Importantly, to understand and analyse this sense of anticipation, I discuss the notion of "eco-anxiety".

Eco-anxiety reflects fear of the deterioration of the environment and, as a result, the future of civilisation. According to environmental researcher Panu Pikhakla (2020, 2-5), eco-anxiety became a buzzword in recent mainstream media as a result of the changing world. Yet little anthropological research has been done to this concept. However, I concur with Pikhakla, who argues that it is important to get a deeper understanding of this type of anxiety as it can cause, among other things, stress, and depression. Environmental researcher Glenn Albrecht (2012, 250) explains eco-anxiety as: "the generalized sense that the ecological foundations of existence are in the process of collapse." Susan Clayton, Christie Manning, Kirra Krygsma and Meighen Speiser (2017) continue and describe it as constant anxiety of environmental disaster. Even though the definitions slightly differ, scholars agree that eco-anxiety is related to the future since it is a possible threat that may occur (Pikhala 2020, 2). Oftentimes, social science link eco-anxiety to an unknown or uncomfortable shift in the social order of things (Pikhala 2020, 5). Anthropologist Kay Milton (2003, 148) adds that people are not only impacted by their social environment, but also by other-than-human agents such as water, animals, and land.

She argues that humans develop via social and natural relationships, whereas specific shapes of these interactions are determined by one's experiences throughout their life. Kari Marie Norgaard (2011, 138) agrees and argues that feelings of worry, and thus eco-anxiety, are multidimensional emotions. The emotions are created by alters in the physical environment, but also by subsequential responses of individuals.

We can engage with philosopher, anthropologist, and sociologist Bruno Latour (2017) to contextualize the changing world. He argues that we live in the "Anthropocene", an epoch of socioecological decline defined by unprecedented socioecological disruptions created by global capitalism's growth-oriented production and consumption habits. These habits already caused, among other things, heavier and more frequent storms, prolonged droughts, melting glaciers, raging wildfires, and rising seas. As a result, there are already human and other-than-human climate migrants around the world, causing rigid national, geographic, and conceptual boundaries which are increasingly inconstant (Latour 2017). Accordingly, the Anthropocene has ushered not only new biogeophysical alterations but has also triggered a philosophical earthquake, shattering the "tectonic plates of conceptual convention" (Johnson et al. 2014, 447). Michael Vine's (2018) article about learning to feel at home in the Anthropocene, agrees with the beforementioned authors. He also writes about anxiety, not specifically about eco-anxiety, but touches upon the notion of "the ecology of fear". This notion points to feelings of insecurity and instability in which ecological expectations and realities grow alarmingly. The author argues that responses to this insecurity and instability are just recovery activities, which would entail a return to a previous way of life. They are efforts to construct new ways of figuring out a way to live in the Anthropocene by focusing on the link between ethics, aesthetics, and emotion as a fundamental source of innovation (Vine 2018, 408).

Looking at this academic debate about eco-anxiety, I argue that many rebels experience this type of fear. Some interlocutors were very straightforward about their feelings, like Franka (introduced, p. 36). In addition to Franka, Eelke also agreed that he suffered from anxiety. Eelke is a rebel that has been participating with XR from the beginning of 2019. He explains that his engagement with XR has changed over the years depending on how much restless feelings he experienced. He stated:

> I can get overwhelmed, and it has a huge impact on my mood. I've had good days and bad days; it goes in waves. Sometimes I feel so shitty, and then I'm afraid of what might happen. Especially when I read about climate disasters, species extinction, forest fires, or something like that. Then the panic sets in that I feel in

my whole body. So, yeah, then I go to many XR actions… However, sometimes I simply have no time or space for this, for example, if I must finish something for work. At these moments, I try to put up a wall in my head and stop thinking about it. If I don't do this, I can't do anything at all. Bad eh.... (Eelke, interview, 23 March 2022).

This conversation with Eelke struck me as he has very strong emotions about climate breakdown. He describes that when he thinks or reads about alterations in the physical environment, he experiences anxiety. I argue that Eelke experiences eco-anxiety as he feels stress about ecological foundations that are in the process of collapse (Albrecht 2012, 250). Moreover, he feels this anxiety throughout his whole body which results in good and bad days. This resembles the idea of Norgaard (2011, 138) who refers to eco-anxiety as a multidimensional emotion which can be felt in different ways. Moreover, the way that Eelke is dealing with his fear is an example of what Vine (2018, 408) describes as new ways of figuring out to live in the Anthropocene. Eelke deals with his anxiety by going to medium-risk actions or creating a wall in his head that tries to ignore the anxiety in order to continue his work.

Other rebels did not express the word "eco-anxiety" explicitly. However, I argue that they do express signs of this type of anxiety as they experience stress and were trying to find ways of dealing with it. For example, Suus (introduced, p. 24) describes her emotions regarding the future as follows: "If I don't integrate for a week, I lie awake and then suddenly the fear is there again, like BOOM (…) For me, integrating new rebels helps a lot." (Suus, interview, 16 February 2022). I argue that Suus experiences fear regarding the world where we live in and a possible future. By participating in XR, and integrating, she enables herself to get a good night's sleep. So, for her, participating with XR – collectively anticipating – helps her deal with these emotions (Bryant and Knight 2019, Vine 2018).

⊗

This chapter has displayed that the workings of futural imaginations translate into different orientations in the rebels' lives. The orientation of hope emerged in different forms; for some, there is hope for a positive futural outcome: a climate just future, for others hope emerges when participating with like-minded people of XR. However, for most rebels hope entails more than just hoping for something that is not yet here, it is a multi-layered phenomenon that still incites

action. Hoping for something can give the rebels a sense of being a certain kind of moral person that fits the ethics and morals of XR. Moreover, it gives a form of meaning in life. Another prominently present orientation is anticipation - in the form of eco-anxiety. Many rebels feel anxious about their futures, and this causes, among other things, depression, stress, and sleepless nights. Interestingly, despite having all of these feelings it does not paralyze the rebels, they actively participate in the movement. By collectively anticipating, they can alleviate their restless feelings. This chapter has illustrated different temporal and futural orientations, the next chapter will elaborate more on what these rebels actually do, analysed via the notion of acts of citizenship (Isin 2009, 368).

"Can I handle this fear for the police?"

Interlude 2

On the cloudy and cold day that February 22, 2022, was, I jumped into the train to the Hague. During this one-hour train ride, I prepared myself for my first Solidarity Demonstration. I read on XR's Telegram channels that three rebels of XR had to appear in court. According to XR, this was an extraordinary event, since it was the first-time rebels stood trial for eight actions at the same time, and it would be a new step in the criminalization of peaceful citizens. Consequently, XR feared higher penalties for the rebels

When I arrived at the courthouse, I saw a group of about thirty people diverse in colour, age, long and short hair, clothes, profession, etcetera. I joined them standing in front of the courthouse. Everywhere I looked I saw the police: in busses, by bikes and by foot. I felt nervous, even intimidated and the adrenaline rushed through my body. I realized that I consider the police as an authority. Accordingly, my natural response was wanting to turn around and obey. But I had to do exactly the opposite, to stand there and create unrest. To alleviate my fear, I went to a rebel that was there as well, Mylene. I told her that I was scared and if she wanted to tell me more about the procedure. This was the first moment that I actively asked myself if I chose the right research population. Can I do this? Can I handle this fear of the police? Do I want to risk getting arrested? Even though it was a low-risk demonstration, I felt uncomfortable. I asked Mylene about the practicalities of the demonstration and referred to the police. Mylene responded that the police were here to protect and guide us through the centre of The Hague. After my small chat with Mylene, I wanted to talk to the police myself. The police officer confirmed what Mylene had said. They were just here to guide us and that if we would behave "correctly", nothing bad would happen... Hearing these words made me head back to the group. When I told Mylene about what the police officer said to me, she reacted sheepishly: "Yes, they always say that, in fact, they just don't want us to be seen and they find us bloody annoying."

After standing in front of the courthouse for two hours, we marched through the city centre while shouting and singing. People were looking at us and I had the feeling that they saw us as crazy. Meanwhile, I was constantly looking around, where are the police? What are other rebels doing? Where can I leave the group if someone does something illegal? I realized that if someone breaks the law, you can be held responsible for that. As a member of XR, you are in it together, as a movement, as Extinction Rebellion (Fieldnotes, 22 February 2022).

"I simply can't sit at home and think there's nothing I can do"
Chapter 3

The little pink handbook kept on holding me. I found it written intriguingly and it made me feel both frightened and hopeful. I kept reading and came across the following sentence: "In accordance with these values, the virtues of truth and the weight of scientific evidence, we declare it our duty to act on behalf of the security and well-being of our children, our communities and the future of the planet itself" (Extinction Rebellion 2019, 1). Reading this sentence twice, made me notice the straightforwardness of the quote. The phrase appeals to individual citizens' sense of responsibility stating that it is a "duty" to act on behalf of the security of all life on the planet – for a future. The word duty lingered for a minute; I grabbed my laptop and googled the definition, it stated: "a responsibility to do something because it is legally or morally right to do it" (Cambridge English Dictionary 2022). Reading this definition made me curious about what then "our duty" is? Wondering this, I kept on reading… (Fieldnotes, 14 February 2022).

Reading the booklet and speaking to the rebels about their futural imaginations and the orientations that go with them, I slowly noticed what participation in XR looked like on a more practical level. To better comprehend it I decided to study the strategy that XR employs. From there, I asked the rebels individually how they implement this. Therefore, this chapter discusses how XR aims to reach another possible future by using the tactic of "non-violent civil disobedience" (Extinction Rebellion 2022a). I argue that this strategy can be analysed via the notion of "activist citizenship" (Isin 2009). Furthermore, I identify and present two different layers of activist citizenship. The first layer represents how rebels collectively oppose, for example, the government and or corporates. Whereas the second layer represents, how being a member of XR translates into the individual lives of the rebels. I study these layers via the notion of "acts of citizenship" (Isin 2009).

The way to go

XR has a specific idea about getting to "what might be": the climate just world (Khasnabish 2020, 1718) (as elucidated in chapter 1). They make three demands: First, the government must tell the truth about the ecological and climate crisis that threatens life on earth and emphasize the need for immediate action. Second, the government must act now to prevent biodiversity

loss and achieve by 2025 net-zero greenhouse gas emissions in a fair and just way. Third, the rebels want a citizen's assembly (Extinction Rebellion 2019; 16).

When XR was founded in 2018, it declared itself in a public state of rebellion against the government. According to the rebels, the governments fail their duty to protect their citizens and thus they break the Social Contract (Seabright, Stieglitz, and Van Der Straeten 2021, 7,8,9). In fact, XR states that the governments are endangering the lives of citizens by financing "business as usual" and hence they fail to take proper action against the impending climate crisis and mass extinction (Extinction Rebellion 2021). Therefore, the rebels argue that they have a right to employ their strategy: non-violent civil disobedience. This strategy is aiming for both economic and civil disruption to unsettle the present political structure (Extinction Rebellion 2021).

Citizenship and Anarchism

A question that arises from this is what non-violent civil disobedience looks like. I argue that citizenship is a useful framework for understanding how the rebels see themselves and how they resist the current system. However, in the case of XR, it is important to substantiate my choice for the concept of "citizenship", as the movement is often associated with anarchism due to their decentralised horizontal structure.

Figure 1: "The Social Contract." In *An Extinction Rebellion Handbook: This is not a drill. Pictured on 09.05.2022*

Anarchism reflects the idea that there is a society without hierarchy (Sovacool and Dunlap 2022, 3,4). One could approach the structure of XR as anarchistic since they aim to delegate authority to multiple individuals in positions with concise mandates allowing them to act on issues without the need for group consensus (Extinction Rebellion 2022a). However, diving into XR's discourse, I only encountered a loose reference in their handbook: "There are numbers of names you can give this: direct democracy, mass democracy, municipalism or even
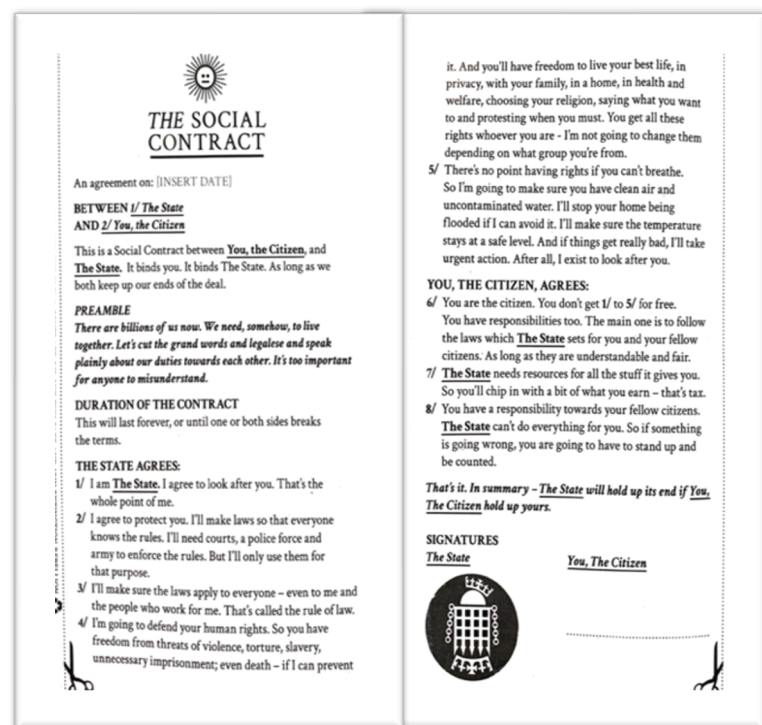
anarchism. But the basic idea is the same: everyone gets a shout in decisions about things that matter to them." (Extinction Rebellion 2019, 177). So, because of XR's ideas of the structure of the movement they can be seen as anarchists. However, I argue that the concept of citizenship is still useful. The movement is aware of them being part of a wider societal context as they operate within nation-states, where they are citizens. Within this context, they explicitly refer to the Social Contract – which exemplifies how the relationship between the state and its citizens should be – and they propose a citizen's assembly as being an improvement of democracy (Fieldnotes, 26 February 2022; Extinction Rebellion 2019). XR practices anarchists' principles within the movement, while they acknowledge being citizens in the wider context. Hence, I argue that citizenship and anarchism are not in contradiction, they are entangled in this context, and therefore the framework of citizenship can be used.

As already discussed in the introduction, we can understand the actions of the rebels via processes and performances as a form of agency vis-à-vis the complexities of the collective (Holston 2009; Isin 2009; Lazar and Nuijten 2013; Muehlebach 2018; Razsa and Kurnik 2012; Rasch and Köhne 2016; Scholtz 2006; Yuval-Davis 1997). Hence, I first specify the debate, zooming in from the broader concept of citizenship to the approach of Isin (2009, 371) regarding "activist citizenship". I argue that the rebels are activist citizens that are not a priori recognised actors in the law. However, by enacting themselves through acts of citizenship, they have an impact on the law that misrecognizes them. Studying the "acts of citizenship" enables me to demonstrate how new actors –rebels –, scales, and places of citizenship, pop up and change. Additionally, it exemplifies the events by which the actors – the rebels – position themselves (and others) as citizens with rights (Isin 2009, 371-382).

The acts of the rebels

My time in the field taught me that the rebels collectively perform acts of citizenship, but these actions do not stop at joint actions. The acts of citizenship also take place in everyday social life. Hence, I argue that there are different layers of citizenship.

Firstly, I will elaborate on how XR collectively opposes and performs activist citizenship – *the first layer*. I demonstrate this, by using the example of the "Rebellion against the fossil industry".[9] During the Rebellion the rebels created multiple blockades. Rebels from all over the

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[9] The Rebellion is a national week of action that usually lasts a week. The week consists of lectures, actions, a march, panel discussions and regenerative meetings. This year the Rebellion was organised in Rotterdam from 19 to 24 May 2022.

Netherlands were invited to partake in the action. According to XR (2022), the 2022 IPCC report demonstrates that humans have only a few years to prevent the worst consequences of the climate and ecological crisis. Therefore, XR demands the end of the fossil industry and a climate just transition for the workers in the industry. They argue that the government does not sufficiently act against the big polluters and hence they take massive and economically disruptive action (XR Nederland 2022). Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the rebellion myself, but through the messages on XR channels, the live streams on Instagram, and the written accounts of the actions, I was able to get a good feel for it.

While sitting in the library on 24 May 2022 around 12:30, I saw an Instagram notification that announced XR Netherlands's live stream. I quickly turned on my phone, opened all the XR Telegram channels and watched. I saw that more than three hundred rebels had set up four blockades in the port area and city centre of Rotterdam. The first blockade was on the industrial railway line stopping coal transport. The rebels had chained themselves to the railway with rail lock-ons that could not come off without special equipment. The second and third blockades were on access roads to the Onyx coal plants and the European Mass Transhipment Office (EMO). The fourth blockade was on an important traffic artery in the centre of Rotterdam opposite the headquarters of Shell Netherlands. The rebels used lock-ons shaped like pipelines and oil drums filled with cement. XR argued that blocking these major polluters was well thought out, as it served as a statement against the whole fossil industry. The spokesperson argued: "After decades of greenwashing, there is no doubt that the fossil industry is deliberately destroying life on earth. Governments must radically force the end of the fossil industry. Please know that our actions are never directed against workers. We support the workers and trade unions. It is the CEOs and shareholders who must give in for a climate justice transition."(XR Nederland 2022). Watching the live stream and reading the channels gave me goosebumps but also a smile. The rebels were causing massive disruption but seemed to be having a great time together. There was music and singing and there were rebels from the Regenerative circle walking around to provide food, drinks, or if necessary, a chat. Seeing this, I was impressed that the rebels were able to keep such a calm ambiance. This "being impressed" came from the fact that during my fieldwork and actions with XR, I found the police very intimidating when they surrounded us. I read on the Telegram channels that the

rebels only had a permit to protest until 15:00, but this was not heeded. Consequently, the rebels were cautioned, but instead of standing up and cooperating, they glued themselves to the street. As a result, the rebels were dragged off the street by the police with coke and ice scrapers. After the dragging, the rebels were arrested and escorted to a bus that would take them to the detention centre. Meanwhile, they received great applause from their fellow rebels (Diary notes, 14 February 2022; Fieldnotes, 24 May 2022).

This situation in the field made me realize that performing activist citizenship – creating disruption together, which is an exciting undertaking – is somewhat bearable by focusing on the regenerative principles and each other. I argue that the rebels claim rights by causing disruption, ignoring both the rules of their permit and the police, and by trying to get as much attention from the public and media as possible. However, as I was studying the news articles and the channels about the Rebellion, I did not encounter a report that evaluates the concrete results of the disruption.

Besides opposing as a collective, I also explore another layer of activist citizenship. I argue that this *second layer* reflects the individual day-to-day "acts of citizenship". I consider this important since the rebels showed me that being an activist does not end in the streets, it translates also into their daily (social) life and differs per person. Whereas some rebels only follow the channels of XR, some participate in circles, some in actions, and some a combination of the three. Also, there are differences in, for example, time investment: ranging from participating once a year to thirty hours a week. Moreover, there are also different types of acts, for instance, operating "behind the scenes" such as planning and logistics, or doing low-, medium-, and high-risk actions. Participating in XR is in constant flux depending on how much time and energy one has (Fieldnotes, 7 February until 29 April 2022).

This became apparent when I walked through Amsterdam with Mannes (introduced, p. 33). Mannes took me to some places where he had done actions for XR. When we were nearby Vondelpark we sat down for a moment on a very cold bench, and while we looked at passers-by, Mannes told me how he constantly finds himself between being comfortable and uncomfortable – when employing non-violent civil disobedience:

I have not been arrested yet, but last October I did participate in an action where I could have been. I was prepared for it. However, I prefer making an impact without

getting arrested, so yeah, more the low-risk actions. I am a more behind-the-scenes-type of person who arranges things, plans, works out ideas, you know. Unfortunately, I think that arresting is part of the deal… That's just how the media and legal system work. Eventually being behind the scenes will not be enough, I must go further... Danique, having yourself arrested is very unpleasant, but does that outweigh the disaster that we are facing? We are at a point where we are threatened with extinction and that is so much worse than me sitting at a crossroad feeling uncomfortable. So yeah… When Mannes looked at me, he shrugged his shoulders and doubted, he continued: It's just hard, I want to do everything, but where am I in the story? Of course, you can say no as well – love the regenerative culture – but that's not it. The situation is becoming more and more pressing, do I even have a right to say no? I mean, the excuse that I don't have time to be in jail because I have to study is not valid, when making a career in a world that is broken (Mannes, interview, 19 March 2022).

Listening carefully to Mannes made me realize that not everybody is comfortable employing the non-violent civil disobedience strategy of XR, and so every rebel makes personal decisions in terms of engagement. Mannes prefers to do low-risk actions and wants to be a more "behind the scenes-type of person", referring to for example arranging the logistics of an action. Moreover, he argues that getting arrested is uncomfortable. Yet, he acknowledges this "unpleasantness" does not outweigh the futural disasters. So, due to the current "pressing situation" and his ideas of the future, Mannes feels the urgency to engage with high-risk actions, almost like not being able to escape from it. He constantly reorients his open-ended telos: participating in low- or a high risk- action, while his actions in time are informed by his imaginations of the future (Bryant and Knight 2019, 17-20). Thus, he continually outweighs his boundaries versus his ideas about what should be necessary to change the future.

Another rebel, Jet, also refers to the unpleasant consequences of getting arrested. Jet currently participates thirty hours a week and partakes in many high-risk actions. She is extending her studies because she feels that engaging with activism will teach her much more about the world than her education does. When I asked her about her feelings when doing actions and getting arrested, she explained:

I find it exciting when police officers saw you out of a lock-on with a chainsaw (…) I was arrested twice now and spent the night there. Luckily, I was not afraid of being

there, in fact, I was quite cheeky. The police officers are like robots, and I noticed that the more emotionally involved you are, the harder it is. Once, I was there and I realised that I had to ask my mother to feed my cat. The officers said that they would be back, but they never came, and yeah, my cat never got his food. Also, I didn't get my medication for 18 hours, bizarre right?! Some people get very panic-stricken by this, which I understand (…) Oh, and they are also just sexists; the better you look, the better off you are (…) Activism entails a lot. For example, in terms of freedom and timewise. Sitting in jail just pauses my whole life. But also, in terms of privacy, did you know that the NCTV keep a record of possible "terrorists"? Haha, they are watching us… (Jet, interview, 20 April 2022).

Talking to Jet exemplifies the strategy of XR's non-violent civil disobedience. Sitting on the ground with a lock-on around her arm only to be sawn off, is a public, physical action to cause economic disruption. Furthermore, Jet explains that she experiences anger towards police officers since they do not fulfil her basic needs such as providing medication, letting her call her mom, or being respectful towards her by, for example, making sexist comments. Moreover, by sitting in jail the police officers literally take her freedom and put her life on pause. The same goes for institutions such as the NCTV, she feels like they infringe on her privacy.

The acts of citizenship of Jet differ from Mannes'; whereas Mannes prefers doing things from behind his laptop facilitating and planning the actions, Jet participates in them. Thus, the rebels have different "places" where they perform their acts: from behind the laptop, to the streets, in front of companies, up to in detention (Isin 2009, 371). Meanwhile, they experience different feelings. Whereas Mannes experiences fear of getting arrested and its practical consequences, Jet is not afraid of getting arrested but experiences more anger and frustration towards the police apparatus.

It both alienates and connects

My interlocutors have shown me that the acts of citizenship are not only limited to participating with XR, it also continues in their daily social lives, the second layer. This became clear when I spoke to Maxime (introduced, p. 34). In her daily life, she encounters struggles with friends, oftentimes feeling the "tiring climate girl" when she wants to tell her friends more about the climate crisis. Therefore, she finds it hard to connect: "I don't want to come across as pedantic towards my friends, then you get situations like 'oh there's Maxime again'. What I try is to give

some friends a small push, so I ask them to grab a coffee, and come to a low-key demonstration, like a social event". While saying this, Maxime had to laugh at her own devised trick, simultaneously she expresses her worry: "You could say that it both alienates and connects" (Maxime, interview, 15 February 2022). This quote exemplifies that being a rebel does not end after an action, it also translates into personal lives. Maxime wants to raise awareness among her friends to connect. However, due to her friends' resistance, she has to think up a "trick". In this sense, her acts of citizenship entail trying to engage her friends in the topic of the climate crisis besides participating herself.

The conversation with Maxime reminded me of Jet. Jet told me earlier that she also struggles with combining friends and XR, especially concerning time distribution and missing valuable moments. She told me, clearly touched, that the time she now spends with people from XR, she would normally spend with friends. Her friends gave her feedback about this; they felt replaced. The feedback made Jet upset. However, she felt that this is her path, also if that means doing time-consuming activities. Accordingly, Jet explained another incident that occurred: the tenth anniversary of her group of friends in Bali. Jet did not want to fly there just to: "immerse herself in the party life with a group of mostly white girls and, of course, neglect the CO2 emissions" (Jet, interview, 20 April 2022). She argued that missing these events was hard since travelling is a big part of their friendship. All in all, Jet feels misunderstood by her friends when she wants to participate in time-consuming events with XR. She implies that she wants to engage with XR and cannot act differently because of the climate crisis. Consequently, there is tension between her life with XR and her life with friends outside XR.

The conversations I had with Maxime and Jet represent many other rebels. It became clear to me that rebels do not feel understood by friends and family which in turn creates feelings of alienation. However, besides alienation, rebels experience connection and belonging while being with fellow rebels doing acts of citizenship. I witnessed this connection, for example, when I joined the weekly dinner at De Sering. Here, I realized that joining XR is not only participating in actions, but a significant part is about being together with like-minded people. It is about the ability to share thoughts and feelings regarding the climate crisis, but also to not talk about it. Just being in an environment where one feels that your feelings and ideas are understood, in a regenerative culture (as elucidated in chapter 1, page 20) (Fieldnotes, 28 March 2022). Eelke exemplifies this, he argues:

Knowing that you understand each other at a certain level that not everyone understands. And yeah, a lot of other rebels say, which also applies to me, that you

join XR to be a solution to the climate problem. At the same time, if the climate crisis becomes so bad that we lose everything, we have a community of people looking after each other, being some kind of safety net, a kind of raft that you can sit on with everyone else (Eelke, interview 23 March 2022).

Eelke argues that he tries to be part of the solution to the climate crisis by doing acts of citizenship. However, if that fails then his fellow rebels will look after him, they are his "safety net". For him, being a rebel entails feeling united by a shared set of values and aspirations and in turn providing feelings of belonging and safety. I also read on an Instagram story, that one of the rebels confirmed Eelke's feelings: "So grateful for this community 💕. No one I'd rather live through the apocalypse with" (Fieldnotes, 24 May 2022). This message demonstrates that the rebels feel that there is a safe space, a community they can live within while going through climate breakdown, "the apocalypse". Sociologists Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diana (2006, 27) confirm these feelings; exemplifying that the sense of collective belonging is often based on loyalty and solidarity that exist between individuals. Joost, another rebel that I spoke to during one of the XR actions in front of Gazprom also elucidated this. He argued that XR is his life and provides him with a completely new group of friends. Therefore, the participation and doing acts of citizenship are often fun: "I feel solidarity and togetherness. Singing and standing there together is good for everyone!" (Joost, interview, 18 March 2022). This demonstrates that social movements can create feelings of "one-ness" and "we-ness" among a collective that fosters senses of shared agency which in turn can motivate collective action (Roggeband and Klandermans 2017, 18).

Both processes, feeling alienated, but at the same time feeling connected with fellow rebels is elucidated by sociologist Barbara Epstein (1991:8). She argues that "a community that is formed in the process of struggle is a very precious thing, and fulfils a lot of needs that are not met in daily life". This is exactly what the rebels say, for them engaging with XR and doing acts of citizenship is time-consuming and creates awareness that is not always understood by friends and family. This creates feelings of alienation. However, at the same time, rebels feel connected with fellow activists since there is a common set of shared values which creates a safe environment where one is understood without disagreeing on certain topics.

This chapter has demonstrated XR's strategy; namely employing non-violent civil disobedience. The strategy allows rebels to oppose and unsettle the current governmental apparatus to create both economic and civil disruption and raise awareness among the public. In a certain way, the rebels claim citizenship by employing their strategy and making their demands. This leaves the traditional approach of seeing citizenship as a membership status insufficient. In this case, the rebels act, and try to impact the law that misrecognizes them. Hence, they can be approached as "activist citizens". Furthermore, by identifying two layers of activist citizenship, I first demonstrated how XR collectively opposes the government and certain corporates. Then, by zooming in on an individual level, one can see how this activist citizenship is translated into a more individual layer of citizenship that comes with different "acts of citizenship" and different feelings. It enabled me to exemplify how new actors – the rebels –, the scales, and places of citizenship, pop up and change. Moreover, it illustrated how the rebels, all in their own way, position themselves as citizens with rights. Practically, you see differences in time investments, in "intensity" of actions, relations with friends in – and outside XR and experiencing different feelings when doing these acts of citizenship.

Conclusion

Chapter 4

We, all living beings, find ourselves in a rapidly changing world. Humanity can no longer deny that it is the one doing the damage, having an indisputable impact on our planet. The effects of these changes are becoming increasingly unpredictable but one thing is certain: this century is a time of rapid and irreversible changes in the web of life (Chakrabarty 2021, 83, 84; Patel and Moore 2018, 1,2). Exactly this pressing situation frightened and stimulated me to explore what the future might hold.

Hence, this thesis has depicted imaginations of climate futures and how these futural imaginations of members of XR Amsterdam translate into activist citizenship. By using a triangulation of ethnographic methods, I studied XR – as a movement – and the rebels within this movement. Consequently, this thesis has aimed to understand how futural imaginations and their different working out of orientations and acts of citizenship are multi-layered and inextricably linked. Portrayed in vignettes, interviews, and supported by autoethnographic interludes, I have tried to depict and describe the lives of the rebels and the intertwined processes at the heart of their efforts. This has allowed me to better grasp what is required for them to encourage action for a more sustainable future.

By first outlining the futural imaginations of both XR – as a movement – and the individual within the movement, I demonstrated that there are different ideas about the future. The movement has portrayed two strong dichotomous futural imaginations: going extinct or surviving. Rebels demonstrate that if one does nothing there will be more catastrophic consequences and possible mass extinction. Therefore, XR members plead for immediate action and radical systemic change to reach a climate just future. However, encountering individual rebels within the movement, exhibited that we cannot perceive XR as a homogenous group as they demonstrate that their futural ideas are personal, multi-layered, and more nuanced (Roggeband and Klandermans 2017). The rebels do recognize facets of the communal portrayed future, however, there are various ideas about the timespans of these catastrophic events and the meaning of the word "extinction". Therefore, I suggest to ethnographically nuance this view and move beyond the collectively portrayed dichotomous futural scenarios of either extinction or survival.

In this thesis, different ideas regarding the future emerged. These imaginations trigger feelings and cause rebels to orientate differently towards the future and thus I argue that there were differences in the workings of the imaginations in the rebels' lives. Two orientations that

strongly emerged were hope and anticipation – in the form of eco-anxiety (Bryant and Knight 2019; Pihkala 2020). Hope has emerged in different forms. For some rebels, there is hope for a positive futural outcome meaning, a climate just future. Whereas other rebels argued that hope emerges when participating with like-minded people of XR. Besides just hoping for a hypothetic future, and something that is not-yet-there, hope entails more. It is a multi-layered phenomenon, that incites to act and stimulates commitment, despite its often catastrophically futural ideas. Furthermore, hoping for another future can give the rebels a sense of being a certain kind of moral person that fits the ethics and morals of XR and provides meaning in life.

Another orientation that has emerged prominently is anticipation – and in particular in the form of eco-anxiety (Bryant and Knight 2019; Pihkala 2020). Many rebels experience fear regarding the deterioration of the environment and, as a result, the future of civilisation. This type of fear is explained as eco-anxiety. This fear severely impacts the lives of the rebels, causing depression, stress, and sleepless nights. By actively participating, the rebels found a way to alleviate their anxious feelings and find a community which they can trust in case a catastrophic future lies ahead.

These futural imaginations and orientations that go with them impact the way of being and acting in the present. Resultingly, XR employs a strategy to oppose and unsettle the current governmental apparatus creating both economic and civil disruption while raising awareness among the public, namely "non-violent civil disobedience" (Extinction Rebellion 2022a). Analysing XR via the concept of "activist citizenship" enabled me to see how rebels claim citizenship by employing their strategy while making their three demands (Isin 2009). This leaves the approach of seeing citizenship as a membership status insufficient. Moreover, by zooming in on an individual level I was able to study the translation of activist citizenship into different "acts of citizenship". It has exemplified how new actors – the rebels –, the scales, and places of citizenship, popped up and changed. Moreover, it has illustrated how the rebels, all in their own way, position themselves as citizens with rights (Isin 2009). All rebels participate differently – regarding the "intensity" (high-risk or low-risk) of actions, time investment, relations with friends in - and outside XR, and finally the feelings involved while doing these acts of citizenship.

Reflecting on the research question outlined in the introduction of the thesis, studying the ideas of the future through the eyes of the XR rebels broadened the knowledge of how perceptions of the future impacts being in the present. All in all, I argue that one can see an activating process among the rebels: The heterogenous futural imaginations affect rebels being in the present. These diverse imaginations activate them as they become activist citizens. In

turn, the rebels hope that by becoming activist citizens they can live a worthwhile life while being a moral person that fits the ethics and morals of XR and maybe, somehow, influence the future.

A final note

This thesis is a contribution to the academic debates on futural imaginations, orientations, activist citizenship, and acts of citizenship. By using these concepts, it attempted to portray a picture of the life of rebels of XR Amsterdam. Nevertheless, there are some limitations. For instance, many of the rebels allow themselves to be arrested; I chose not to because I did not feel comfortable doing so. One could say that the research would have been more profound had I experienced this myself.

Moreover, due to time constraints and the COVID-19 pandemic, I experienced limitations in terms of interactions. I had to do multiple interviews via an online connection which did not enhance the trust and rapport. I stress that this is important because topics such as eco-anxiety are intimate and sensitive subjects. Therefore, I argue that more time and offline meetings would have resulted in better rapport and would have allowed me to dive further into the topic.

Another limitation is the sparse existing work on eco-anxiety which makes it harder to study this phenomenon. There is no existing link yet between the frameworks of anthropology of the future, social movements scholarship, and eco-anxiety. For instance, the existing framework of anthropology of the future focuses mainly on temporal aspects. I argue that temporal aspects are relevant when looking at eco-anxiety since the fear is driven by a kind of unfolding possible catastrophes somewhere in the future. However, I want to emphasize that eco-anxiety encompasses much more, it at least impacts emotions, well-being, and social relations. So, stepping back and bringing in a more meta-perspective, I argue that the frameworks that I used allow me to partly understand this understudied concept. Therefore, I would like to underline the importance of future research on the concept to get a full perspective.

Finally, beyond academic curiosity, this thesis responds to an important societal issue: We find ourselves in an unpredictable situation in which we see an increase in people suffering from eco-anxiety, severely impacting our well-being (Usher 2019, 1234).

With love and rage, I am wondering, what, and if, there is any hope for a future.

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