



**RUSHING THE
EMERGENCY,
RUSHING THE
REBELLION?**

**STORY AND VISION
FOR XR IN 2020**

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CALLING ALL REBELS!

Over the last year and a half, you have come together and created something truly beautiful. You've put your heart and soul into it, and you've become a part of it. At times it has been stressful, painful and exhausting. But it has also been extraordinary and deeply moving, and collectively, as part of the climate movement, you have brought the climate and ecological emergency into conversations in homes across the globe. As a result, Extinction Rebellion (XR) is one of the top influencers globally when it comes to the climate and ecological emergency.

But right now, XR is at a turning point. What happens next is its most important decision to date. It could propel us all to new heights in 2020, or see us plagued by the incoherence that many of you have been feeling since last October's Rebellion.

This fork in the road is why the three of us agreed to write a pamphlet, albeit from the centre of XR. We apologise if you feel bombarded with information just now. Rest assured, we've done our best to make our key points in a short executive summary. We are keenly aware that some of what we put forward will make for uncomfortable reading. This is our gentle act of rebellion, because we believe XR is in a rush, and at risk of forgoing an untapped opportunity to grow the movement and inspire others outside of our numbers. We believe XR is rushing the 'emergency', which could belittle efforts to create the changes we desperately need at local, national, and global levels.

So this pamphlet is about how XR can grow and catalyse by first taking an honest and searching look at itself. What are our blind spots, tensions, and paradoxes that have produced success and incoherence in almost equal measure/amounts these past months? How can these issues be resolved so that XR can truly embody and embed the change it says it wants to be? These questions are why we absolutely encourage you to feed into the strategy consultation process that is ongoing right now. Your voice counts. And if you don't believe this, we will almost certainly fail as a movement.

Even if you don't read a further word of this pamphlet, please respond to the strategy team that is canvassing local and regional coordinators. Please share your vision for how XR might think the unthinkable and achieve it. If, like the three of us, you believe XR needs to be bolder, cleverer, more creative, and shapeshifting, then only good will come.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This pamphlet is an invitation for rebels to coalesce around a new story and vision, which we hope can lead to embodied actions. That story is human-centric, as opposed to environmental. It is nearer-term (as opposed to far-flung) as evidenced by the vulnerability of civilisation to locked-in unpredictable and extreme weather. We tend to forget that each of us lives in a world that has evolved as if the climate & ecological emergency (CEE) didn't exist.

The ramifications of this are our story untold. It is about how vulnerable the complex human systems that sustain our lives are to a near-term future characterised by shock, disruption, and even breakdown.

At the core of the new story is a vision for overcoming this vulnerability, by displacing inequality at the local, national, and global level. It is informed by the truth that no community, country or continent will be an island, to paraphrase John Donne, if business-as-usual is allowed to prevail. Despite what some billionaires believe, none of them will be looking down at the rest of us from a space station anytime soon. It is, above all, a story about how Mother Nature is making us all one.

Movement building in 2020

This pamphlet asserts that telling this story could be XR's central means of both movement building in 2020, and the wider catalysation of fellow travellers who don't yet consider themselves rebels. What follows, therefore, is intended as a departure from recent high-profile and overly polarising tactics such as XR co-founder Roger Hallam's leveraging of the Holocaust with mainstream media, and the Canning Town tube action of last October. Instead, the CEE becomes a universal lens for exacerbating everyday vulnerabilities felt by people in relation to their gender, age, ethnicity and class. Rooting the story in contemporary vulnerability helps connect the future with now.

Actions speak louder than words

A central theme of this pamphlet is that XR needs to not only tell this story but embody it through actions. In 2020, XR needs to include regenerative and restorative action so that our lived reality can pivot from vulnerability to radical equality. Actions that unfurl a vision for the future will tell a story of regeneration, rewilding, and repair. It means thinking more carefully and creatively about how actions might carry both the story of vulnerability and a vision for equality. Given such actions could be XR's primary means for movement building, creativity will be a must - alongside a broader invitation for participation. Within this resides the untapped opportunity to centrally frame actions with hundreds of decentralised affinity groups to create shape-shifting and nationwide impact. Inherent here is a shift in energy away from only regarding ourselves - or being typecast as activists driven by 'impossible demands'. It suggests finding a more gentle or nuanced energy essential for movement building and systems transformation.

The spirit of inquiry

The pamphlet therefore challenges XR's existing Theory of Change (ToC), not least around its guiding premise that we need only mobilise 3.5% of the population. That in itself creates tension with connecting and building regenerative cultures, internally and externally, through our messaging, story-telling, and actions. In response, XR needs the courage to honestly assess and evolve (not overthrow) its ToC. The April 2019 phase of Rebellion worked brilliantly but that may only take the movement so far. In the absence of a more compelling story and broader invitation to act, planning 'one more heave' on London's streets is a grave threat to the movement, and to the purpose to which XR is in service to. At the present time, the general public is unlikely to perceive XR's return to the capital as anything other than a source of big irritation. Participating rebels risk being no different from climate scientists clutching the findings of their latest models, earnestly telling one another that this time the government must surely listen.

Fast track to coherence

With the above in mind, we assert that embodying the full breadth of a new story could bring some urgent coherence to the unaddressed tension at the heart of XR. That tension being the observable conflict between XR's principles and values that speak to mobilisation on the one hand, and regenerative and inclusive cultures on the other. As this pamphlet will hopefully make plain, we seek to embody a vision of a brave and beautiful world.

CHAPTER 1: WHAT'S THE STORY?

We live and die by the stories we tell each other —
and that story on the streets of London is changing

Charlotte Du Cann, writing about October's Rebellion for the [New York Times](#)

The story might be changing but not nearly fast enough. This is despite XR achieving extraordinary first-year growth and external impact. Extraordinary, because XR was saddled with the burden of a decades-old story about climate change that spectacularly failed to cut through and trigger an urgent planetary response.

Telling the story handed down by climate scientists has been like driving with the handbrake on. As a species, we're not wired to respond to slow-moving distant-invisible threats timed to deliver Armageddon decades into the future. It is why competing chatter about emissions reduction pathways has failed to activate anywhere near enough people worldwide to reach a tipping point response. In its place, GHG emissions have risen by 1.5% a year for the past decade, according to the UN Environment Programme annual emissions gap report for 2019.

We do not dismiss that many thousands of people - perhaps yourself included - have been activated by the climate change story as told. We have only to look at Fridays For The Future or our own Rebellion. You are in rare company as these numbers are still small and show no sign of going exponential. Greta Thunberg herself has been honest enough to say the school strikes have achieved nothing.

As the authors of this pamphlet, we go as far to say that retelling the climate change story is essential for credibly framing XR's domestic (UK) and international targets for global net zero emissions. Not least because the existing story about the Climate & Ecological Emergency (CEE) rooted in incremental, long-term temperature rise which has failed to elicit anything like the mass consent required for a radical reduction of emissions.

This chapter is therefore an invitation for rebels to coalesce around a new external story. One that's human-centric as opposed to 'environmental'. And built around the near-term risk evidenced by the vulnerability of our civilisation to increasingly locked-in, unpredictable, and extreme weather. Above all, the aim of a new story is to inspire movement building a precursor for realising XR UK's strategy for accelerating the coming of system change.

Disrupting the story

Many people – inside and outside the movement – are now wondering what happens next. Not least because our Theory of Change or strategy is about trying to bring about system change – as embodied by our second demand – by pivoting off a story about the future that's been failing for decades.

The story about climate change, as told, describes the wrong kind of emergency on just about every measure. And yet climate scientists and civil society have expected it, time and again, to peacefully deliver on the following:*

Over 1 billion people living across the minority world must accept a new normal for living.

Over six billion people living across the majority world make peace with an aspiration to one day live like those in the minority world.

**the two statements manifest a crude demarcation and omit acute levels of inequality and social exclusion throughout the minority world.*

Spanning both statements is the realisation that the climatic forces that human activity helped set in train will not discriminate. No country will be an island, to paraphrase John Donne, if business-as-usual is allowed to prevail. No billionaire will be looking down at the rest of us from a version of the space station Elysium. And good luck to any of them who think digging a luxury bunker in the New Zealand wilderness is going to give them a free pass. At last look, they were still trying to figure out how to avoid being murdered by their [security detail](#), before runaway temperature rise wipes them all out anyway.

In the shorter term, there will be chaos and misery on an unimaginable scale as the most vulnerable people on the planet will not dutifully stay put and wither. They will seek security for their loved ones as we all would. The global food system for example already [fails to properly nourish billions of people](#), and leaves upwards of 800 million hungry. On 1 November 2019, Reuters published a story with the headline: [Record 45 Million People in Southern Africa Facing Food Crisis in Next 6 Months](#). This is the result of severe droughts, floods, and storms. In a region already accustomed to extremes, a series of unprecedented events is already putting at risk unprecedented numbers of people - and these numbers will only increase. There are other populations across the majority world facing similar survival-level challenges.

It is a stark and contemporary reminder of the unresolved trauma that underpins calls for global justice and reparations. The recognition and resolution of this trauma therefore needs to be at the centre of any new story. But like the existing story about dangerous anthropogenic climate change, the story about inter-continental redress has also failed spectacularly to emotionally connect and achieve resolution. Re-framing global justice so that it speaks to minority world vulnerability is therefore a key part of a new story.

A dilemma for XR?

Rebelling against the story as told is an existential question for XR. Not least because the pre-conditions for a new story aren't to be found in Roger Hallam's [leveraging of the Holocaust](#) as a comparative framing device, or in the Canning Town tube action during last October's Rebellion. While the latter was admittedly focused on the more discreet demand of achieving economic disruption, it is the visceral display of dissonance that lingers. That dissonance being the image of two participants being dragged off the top of a train for expressing their vulnerability about the second half of the century, while the people on the platform below expressed their vulnerability about the next five minutes. None of this means the people on the platform aren't anxious about the future, even about the climate.

Taken together, the tube action and Roger Hallam's comments to German media neatly sketch out a dilemma for XR UK: meet people where they are and take them on the riskiest of journeys, or escalate tactics within an external story that's already contributed to a spectacular failure to act. With this dilemma in mind, increased public awareness of the climate emergency in the UK should be treated with caution.

We would go as far to say that rising awareness of the "Climate & Ecological Emergency" might actually be shrinking XR UK's ability to cut through, post-April 2019. This was the take-away message of polling compiled for XR UK pre- and post-October's Rebellion, while anecdotal evidence shared on platforms (including Basecamp post-October) suggests action attendance numbers are down and that coordinators are finding it hard to motivate their groups.

This appears to show our emergency messaging, as currently constituted, is the subject of diminishing returns when it comes to sustaining motivation and continually raising awareness. Recruiting rebels in 2020 is not the same as 2018/2019. It is set against the backdrop of mainstream media and the political class now banding about the phrase 'climate emergency' with meaningless abandon. Power in effect has fed the in-built 'natural' psychological reluctance of the population to fully engage by conceding something to each of our three demands. In retrospect, the amazing achievement of our April Rebellion last year was to get the public and power to give lip service to those three demands. The hard work of getting real action - i.e. system-changing initiatives that come anywhere close to achieving the urgent and essential task of reducing emissions - is going to require far deeper engagement with a far more powerful story.

So what's the story?

In this pamphlet, we concern ourselves principally with the UK, but a majority world-facing narrative is an equally important and urgent requirement. The new story will not be one about 'the environment' or 'green' issues. It will be human-centric and rooted in the indelible truth that we are living in a world that has evolved as if dangerous climate change did not exist. Bringing this realisation to life is our story untold. It says we don't all go from now to extinction sometime after 2080 with nothing else in between. We lose everything that matters to us on the way: our public services, our security, our community, our homes, our food, our water. And ultimately the people we love. It is a story of unstoppable loss unless we act now. It is a story that starts with eliciting vulnerability.

Of course, vulnerability as a trigger emotion is not to be taken lightly. So as part of the research into this pamphlet, we reached out to Professor Andre Spicer, Professor of Organisational Behaviour at Cass Business School. He in turn contacted a group of US academics, whom he described as world leaders in research on communications by social movements and about climate change. His full and referenced feedback is in Appendix 1 of this pamphlet. Below is a short excerpt:

"This message of vulnerability has some important strengths: It triggers loss-aversion, a strong cognitive bias which tends to drive people to engage in more risky behaviour. It makes an abstract issue into a real issue through fore-fronting everyday issues like feeding a family. It brings the threats posed by climate change into the immediate time frame (5 to 10 years) which means they cannot be easily discounted away by people."

Professor Spicer also raises some caveats to the above:

“When people are made to feel vulnerable it can connect with powerful emotions associated with other times in their life they have felt vulnerable (such as childhood or traumatic situations). Although this can stir up strong emotions which prompt action, it can easily back-fire through prompt denial, reject or even anger. Experiences of vulnerability are used as a first step to get people to accept a new group or set of values. For instance, when recruits are socialised into a group they are made to feel vulnerable by having their prior identity stripped away. However this is usually followed up by them being given a new identity through joining a group. This helps to make them feel less vulnerable.

As the professor underlines, it is foolish, if not dangerous, for a new story to be consumed as a one-off vulnerability ‘mind-bomb’. To leave people hanging in a state of uncertainty and pain is to provoke denial and invite authoritarian forces to fill the resulting vacuum.

So how might XR manage these risks and tell a new story that fuses vulnerability to a vision for addressing inequality at the local, national and global level? Well, in the first instance, the Climate & Ecological Emergency (CEE) needs to be repositioned as a lens for exacerbating everyday vulnerabilities felt by people in relation to their gender, age, ethnicity and class. Rooting the story in contemporary vulnerability helps connect the future with now. You can find an outline of this story in Appendix 2.

But ostensibly telling the story is all about embodied actions. That is to say actions that can carry a story. One consequence of the original genius of XR is that it is perfectly primed to do this, having fostered a network of hundreds of affinity and local groups. With support and framing from the centre of XR, each group can deliver disruptive and non-disruptive actions that embody both vulnerability and a vision for a post-vulnerable world. Part of our vision for 2020, therefore, sees groups across the country simultaneously coordinating centrally framed actions to aid movement building and open up non-physical spaces for the new story to take root and embed.

Picture a contemporary sports stadium with the spectators holding up coordinated coloured cards above their heads to create different patterns and messages. This is a metaphor for how actions could be both decentralised and choreographed to deliver shape-shifting mass impact and consciousness raising.

Such thinking is not without precedent: a year and a half before President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, more than 750 civil rights protests took place in 186 American cities, leading to almost fifteen thousand arrests. Demonstrating the enormous power of dispersed community focused direct action.

As such, the remainder of this pamphlet will explore how actions can embody a new story about rising vulnerability and how it might be overcome.



CHAPTER 2: CAN YOU *FEEL* IT?

Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out. Vaclav Havel

As the previous chapter hopefully set forth, XR needs to find a way of shifting our focus so that the system, which is making us all ever-more-vulnerable, is clearly perceived as the fundamental problem. XR's narrative and actions henceforth must bring out the failings of that system to keep us all safe.

So what follows is a proposal for evolving (not overthrowing) XR's present 'theory of change' (ToC). We need, in the aftermath of last October's Rebellion, to make an honest assessment of the limits of the ToC we have been operating with so far. Within this, XR needs to consider that in 2020 it is still in movement-building mode on the journey towards system-change. Put simply: we need to grow rapidly - not shrink - if we are to win!

XR needs to both change up the story and tell this story principally through its actions. The ambition is to help dramatically build the movement so that it can go on to mobilise the kind of numbers present in successful uprisings overseas such as in the People Power revolution in the Philippines, as set out by the academic [Erica Chenoweth](#).

To do this, XR must first carefully distinguish between aspects of the academic research that apply to its purpose and those aspects that don't. Thus far, XR has sometimes displayed an unwise and indiscriminating reliance on academic research which does not necessarily transfer well from the domain where it was conducted to the domain in which it needs to operate. In particular, we need to take more seriously the point that the academic Erica Chenoweth's work (from which the ToC was grafted) does not necessarily apply to Western 'democracies', and that the oft-cited precedents of Gandhi, King etc, may not be as relevant as assumed. This is because XR's aim is not to induct a discriminated-against group into full citizenship (as per 20th Century struggles for civil rights and suffrage) but to realise system change so that all of humanity can live peacefully within planetary boundaries.

With the above in mind, there is a danger inherent in XR's strategy of aiming for 3.5% of the population, and equally in aiming at achieving X number of arrests and X number of people in prison. Causes like People Power in the Philippines were hugely popular movements, getting up to 3.5% onto the streets (remarkable, given the prospects of serious ill-treatment by the authorities). Yet that was not the main cause of their success, which was derived instead from huge public buy-in and increasing levels of defection from the regime. There is a danger that XR is creating the impression that if it gets 3.5% of the population 'on board', then it doesn't much matter if it alienates everyone else. This would be a false lesson to draw from Chenoweth's work. In reality, the successful movements she cites saw the 3.5% engaging in NVDA as only the visible part of an iceberg above the water. A majority of people - below the waterline - were not disconnected. Can the same, however, be honestly said of the British public when it comes to the CEE?

Correlation does not imply causation

XR co-founder Roger Hallam noticed that successful rebellions tend to get a small percentage of the population taking part in illegal action, a far smaller number arrested, and a far smaller number imprisoned. He reasoned that if XR attained those numbers, then rebellion will be successful. But that simply does not follow. It is what is known as a fallacy of misplaced concreteness. Aiming directly at those numbers will fail, if the actions undertaken in pursuit of the goal alienate much larger numbers.

Some of the above played out in October 2019. Numbers of arrests were up but this didn't cause greater success. In fact, success was clearly lower than in April. Public attitudes toward climate didn't continue shifting in XR's favour in October. XR's own YouGov polling, cited in the previous chapter, clearly shows this, with XR's own popularity falling to 5% - as also shown by the level of donations, email sign-ups, Facebook likes, etc.

This leads us to conclude that XR is already approaching terminal fatigue with its existing methods. Moreover, a vital part of a shift in strategy also needs to ensure that never again can a tiny unrepresentative sliver of the movement, in the name of the whole movement, undertake 'autonomous' actions hitting relatively poor communities (however brave and well-intentioned that sliver may be).

The 3.5% figure did give some of us genuine renewed hope that real change may be achievable, but we have learned now that this tactic will not succeed on its own. Thus, relying on this, if we don't diversify our offering, will lead to failure and burnout. Without abandoning the principles of mobilisation, it makes sense to foment, spread, and embody a story that will resonate with vast sweeps of the public. That is the *raison d'être* of the story set out in the previous chapter. A chance to build a movement both wide and deep. We need to encourage the iceberg to form below the surface.

By doing so, XR can look to the 3.5% through an entirely different lens. XR can see that the reason that getting people imprisoned works is that it's aligned with a great sympathy with the cause. That sympathy doesn't come simply from having people in prison! The public need to feel that it is genuinely sad/wrong/unjust that you are having your rebels imprisoned because they deeply identify with the reasons you sacrificed your freedom in the first place. This requires more than just a vague general sympathy; it requires being emotionally or/and intellectually on board. It requires story-led actions that make sense to the wider public so they too can understand and feel this as an emergency.

One more heave?

We are therefore sceptical that anything like the current strategy XR can attain 5,000 arrests on its proposed return to the capital's streets in 2020. Without a significant change of direction, getting even the same number of arrests as XR had in October 2019 will be problematic. We are also sceptical that 5,000 arrests would overwhelm the justice system anyway. The American justice system has easily coped with similar — in fact with far greater — numbers in the past. Consider especially the [May Day protests in 1971](#).

We think the 'one more heave' theory for 2020 is therefore flawed. It is premised on hoping something that is no longer working will work next time. For reasons set out in the first

chapter, even if XR achieved its aim of 5,000 arrests, the general public is (as things stand) unlikely to perceive this as anything other than a source of big irritation. Suffice to say, public sympathy for XR's cause will be negligible at best, and the sacrifice among those rebels arrested and imprisoned will be in vain.

You don't get sympathy by aiming for X numbers of arrests. You do so by doing something beautiful, powerful, intelligent, meaningful, and resonant, that challenges the authorities to either arrest you en masse - risking great public sympathy - or lets you get away with it.

So, using the shift in story suggested in the opening chapter, we propose we need to think hard about meaningful and resonant targets for actions. This is a step towards a story of change that could resonate more with rebels and with the wider public alike. Thereafter, XR will be in a position to reap the full benefit of the expertise it has developed around mass mobilisation.

In other words, what we are setting out here is a route by which we can achieve the goal of the original XR ToC. A route by which we can arrive at numbers so huge, and popular sentiment sufficiently-supportive, that mass mobilisation in the capital will be overwhelming.

Vulnerability and actions

As outlined in the previous chapter, the story of our collective vulnerability is key. The way to tell it requires actions that embody and transmit that collective vulnerability.

Our new story could therefore be framed as reversing the (neo-liberal) gamble humanity made on efficiency over resilience. A first draft of this story appeared in *The Conversation* in December 2019, by climate scientist Professor Will Steffen (lead author of *Hothouse Earth*) and systems expert Professor Aled Jones, who jointly highlighted how increasingly extreme weather events may soon become severe and frequent enough to cause what's called "synchronous failure".

This means a crisis in one country - given how interconnected our global system is - could lead to failure in many others. Examples include (most crucially) food production, global supply chain resilience, political risk, insurance, and finance, to name but a few. In most instances, the just-in-time cost-minimisation philosophy applies, which means there is no resilience or buffer in the system. It's why supermarkets evolved to not hold any stock onsite. And why they'll be three-quarters empty within three days, if not re-supplied.

This calls upon the centre of XR to combine its understanding of climate science with that of complex human systems that sustain our everyday lives. In Autumn last year, the BBC broadcast a three-part series called [What Britain Buys And Sells In A Day](#). It inadvertently showcased many of the vulnerabilities engineered into our food and manufacturing industries, which rely on a seamless, orderly, globally enabling environment to function.

The first step to designing actions to transmit these vulnerabilities would be for the centre of XR to reach out to systems experts, alongside the people who understand impacted industries and who can pinpoint the stories to tell. What for example will happen exactly when that smooth enabling environment gives way?

Of course, designing actions that embody vulnerability is more complex and inevitably carries risk. We are not advocating, for example, that groups of rebels across the UK simply head out

and block a supermarket depot to disrupt supermarket deliveries across their region. Such an action would need to be very carefully designed, and would need to embody recently leaked damning information (see below) highlighting the precise vulnerability, so as not to fall into the bear trap of previous 'head-turning' actions such as the Canning Town tube action. Rather, the type of embodied actions we envisage will flag up vulnerability, and will be nuanced, piloted, and built around inconvenience rather than outright disruption.

Decentralised and coordinated actions would therefore still affect working people but, if framed by XR correctly, wouldn't be overwhelmingly perceived as targeting working people in the same way stopping public transport does. XR would instead be issuing a smart wake-up call. Front running Mother Nature, if you will, by disrupting in a relatively small but widespread way, now, so as to highlight and ultimately help prevent vast disruption in future.

Addressing interests that maintain vulnerability

That some of us will have to change way more than others - starting with the wealthiest - is part of embodying the new story. It is the [polluter-elite](#) in the UK (and all other countries) who are most responsible for the climate & ecological crisis through their luxury consumption and their investments in polluting companies. The polluter elite - alongside other vested interests and central government - can and should be positioned by XR as blockers to the resolution of vulnerabilities that will be exacerbated by climate change-induced shocks.

The polluter elite are [billionaires and their multi-millionaire kin](#), who profit the most from the economic system that's destroying the planet. We envision XR making this visible in a different way to what has gone before. This is vital, since previous attempts by environmental NGOs, and other civil society groupings, have largely failed.

One possible way is for XR to leverage the existence of [TruthTeller.Life](#), an online gateway for whistle-blowers - developed by XR in 2019 - to tell their truths about the future through the anonymous disclosure of confidential information or leaks. If supported by embodied actions, TruthTeller.Life could help realise XR's first demand by encouraging truth-tellers working inside the system to become invisible rebels by leaking withheld information.

Above all, it's essential that actions embody the new story by also calling in rather than calling out the targets of planned actions. In essence, be loving as well as raging, which is not a big stretch for XR, as we have consistently, successfully achieved this in the manner of our protests (with only a few exceptions that have drawn disproportionate media attention). This pivot to a new story will be essential for movement-building in 2020, as XR seeks to shrug off the tag of being 'elitist, middle-class and out of touch'. The intention is to demonstrate we are on the side of working people without coming across as ideologically-motivated class warriors. This underscores the shift in storyline and its telling through embodied actions.

It says: if you're a believer in social justice, and deeply concerned by the real threat of climate breakdown, be part of XR. If you would like capitalism to evolve beyond its destructive

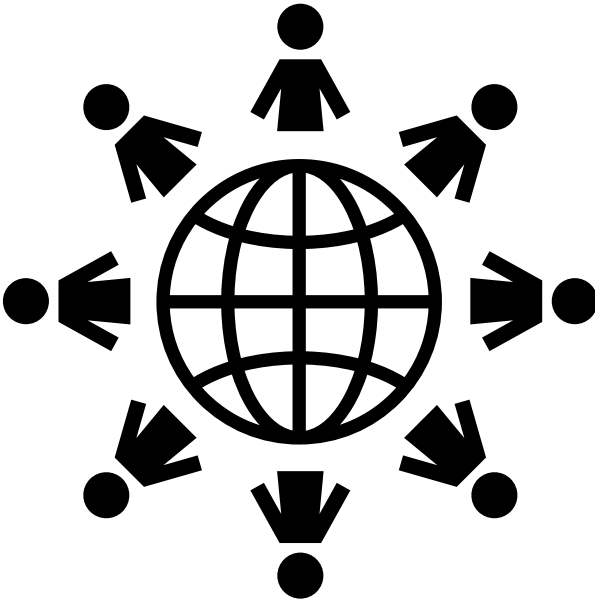
tendencies, and are deeply concerned by the real threat of climate breakdown, be part of XR. But you don't have to be either, or anything else. You just have to believe in non-violence and the need to act now because of the climate emergency. The ambition is for us as a society to really feel this emergency at last. If the polluter elite go on as they are, then it's curtains for humanity. That is not ideology. It is plain and simple fact. This is what the somewhat misleading slogan 'beyond politics' really means: that very radical action is now needed in order to enable us to hold on to any of what we got. That action will involve the creation of a more equal society - not for reasons of ideology, but for reasons of survival.

A vision of post-vulnerability

It's incredibly difficult to face up to this awful climate reality even as it becomes more obvious all over the world. It's also going to be incredibly difficult to change this system as per the reasons set out in this chapter and the last. It is why the new story also holds a vision for what the future might look like when today's sources of vulnerability are resolved.

For the reasons just set out, we believe this is rooted in visioning a significant shift toward equality at the local, national and global levels. That shift is part-symbolised by the (non-rancorous) targeting of the polluter elite at each level.

But the exacerbation of contemporary vulnerability is in effect just the nose of the new story. It is why, in 2020, we envisage XR elevating the relevance of adaptive and regenerative measures at local, national and global levels. This invites us to consider how XR might embody a vision for a post-vulnerable world, and is the subject of our closing chapter.



CHAPTER 3: CAN YOU DREAM IT?

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” - *Eleanor Roosevelt*

As the opening chapter set out, XR needs a story - and a broader invitation to act - that speaks to non-environmentalists. We therefore envisage a Rebellion that appeals to social, emotional and cultural yearnings. One that not only links people to their core values spanning respect, fairness, morality and love, but one that connects the personal with the political - or societal - backdrop that holds so many people in check.

The phrase “shit life syndrome” is now a commonly used term for that backdrop among the nation’s general practitioners. It describes conditions of patients arising from poverty and record levels of loneliness and isolation, now recognised as a leading cause of disease and death. Indeed, our separation from ourselves and each other seems only to accelerate in line with the speed at which humanity surpasses planetary boundaries.

But it’s really beneath such statistics that XR needs to focus: on the everyday and unsung stories of disconnection and vulnerability that might not be the stuff of headlines, but are nevertheless deeply held and painfully felt. At first glance, this can feel very different from the defiant and visible energy of rebels sounding the climate and ecological emergency (CEE).

A tale of two invites?

Both these energies were arguably present during October’s Rebellion when, alongside the dominant energy of occupation and disruption, a parallel story emerged about a deep awakening to the reality and pain of the violence and harm humans are causing to each other and the natural world. This story took the form of a 25,000-strong ‘grief march’ that snaked its way through the rain soaked streets of London’s West End on the middle Saturday of Rebellion.

For some rebels camped out in the cold and damp for five days already, it probably looked like just another march that wasn’t going to change anything. But then there can be no shrinking from the fact that 3.5% of the population (from which we shall assume the marchers were drawn) need another way to collect and express their solidarity. This was a regenerative, movement-building action that contributed to our second principle and value:

Principle 2: We set our mission on what is necessary—mobilising 3.5% of the population to achieve system change by using ideas such as “momentum-driven organising” to achieve this. But perhaps this unearths a creative tension - or even a paradox - with our third principle and value:

Principle 3: We need a regenerative culture - creating a culture that is healthy, resilient, and adaptable.

When we say we need to mobilise only two million people, how does that connect with building a regenerative culture internally and externally through our messaging, story-telling and actions?

Because a healthy, resilient, adaptable culture depends on ALL, or at least most of us, being in healthy relationships with one another and the earth. We can't live in a microcosm. Any regenerative cultures we pursue or cultivate have to live in deep empathy with those that it comes into contact with. A culture that cultivates self-awareness, inner knowledge, and agency, as it seeks to engage and collaborate across differences and divides. A culture of belonging and community connectedness where each community supports values of respect and kindness towards the 'other', undivided from the natural world. This is about leading an undivided life that recognises the pluriversality and complexity of all life and its ecology. It needs everyone to feel acknowledged and appreciated. Our third principle and value (P&V) demands we communicate with more than 3.5% of the population.

In contrast, XR's second P&V evokes what the late American cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead had to say about social change: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Has such thinking inadvertently given some rebels permission to close their ears and hearts to the majority of the general public, because supposedly the latter aren't needed? Has this in turn created licence within XR for alienating working people and people of colour? Put another way, how did the Canning Town tube station action fit with XR wanting to be part of birthing a paradigm shift where people are able to embrace interdependence and live in regenerative cultures? Are we in fact telling ourselves that XR can co-lead a march to radical equality, reconciliation, and deep collaboration, at the same time as it separates itself from the perceptions, stories, culture and needs of 96.5% of the population? If so, are we back to trying to operate on thin ice without a solid iceberg beneath us?

Our full ToC recognises that we are here to create a polarisation phenomena. So yes, in its own way XR is necessarily a divider and, given its tactics, have and will continue to be perceived by some as confrontational and unreasonable. Perhaps a through line for XR is offered up by what authors Mark and Paul Engler had to say in their book *This is an Uprising*: "For polarisation to pay off, the positive must outweigh the negative. And here the reaction of the general public – those not already aligned with either side – is critical. When the process works, members of the public are alienated by the extremism of reactionary opponents." This means that we are counting on a broad base of sympathy at the same time as unreasonable reactions from the state. Building this base is going to be enormously hard for XR in 2020 when the means of communication are so tightly controlled and manipulated by a few organisations with gigantic systemic power.

Thus, XR also needs to look at an engagement strategy that works with frustrated journalists, advertising agencies, and businesses, aware or open to the challenge of circumventing mainstream media while also trying to fence with it. This is where centrally-framed co-ordinated actions can also add value, because it will be much easier for people in the UK to find sympathy with the purpose of XR if both the story, and the invitation to participate in non-violent action, is local.

Who are the 3.5%?

So far, XR hasn't chosen to specifically target a certain demographic in terms of rebel recruitment. XR hasn't chosen a magic 3.5% so to speak. What XR has observed - and been lambasted internally and externally for - is that most rebels are white and middle class, using

their power and privilege to demand change. XR can be enormously grateful for the efforts of such rebels while taking credit for providing them a unique space to come together and collectively embody their anxiety about the future through loving and courageous discussions and actions. The quadrillion dollar question is how to scale up this precious invitation and make it more diverse.

Right now, as demonstrated by XR's current strategy process (ongoing at the time of writing), growing that invitation is frustrated by a consistent lack of space, recognition and championing of diverse ideas and voices in the centre of XR. In its place, power is wielded through structures, co-founder power, strategy and tactics formation by a very small group of people.

With this in mind, authors Zack Exley and Becky Bond reflected on the failures of the last Bernie Sanders campaign in their book *Rules for Revolutionaries*. They dedicated a chapter to their conviction that revolutionary campaigns must be co-led by the most marginalised voices in society, not least because such people are able to better see the blindspots that oppression and prejudice garner for those benefiting from systems set up to serve white or elite privilege. We feel XR would do well to take this on board, so as to genuinely embody our seventh P&V:

Principle 7: We actively mitigate for power - breaking down hierarchies of power for more equitable participation.

And maybe this P&V is a gateway, as it's only by committing to the above that XR can genuinely embody the following PVs:

Principle 1: We have a shared vision of change

Principle 4: We openly challenge ourselves and our toxic system

Principle 6: We welcome everyone and every part of everyone

A shared vision of change literally needs to be shareable and relatable, which requires an inherent and identifiable commitment to representation and redistribution of power. To challenge our toxic system, we need to challenge the oppression and dehumanisation of those that don't fit into white privilege and be honestly welcoming everyone. We need to deliberately and consciously make space for those that are different from us.

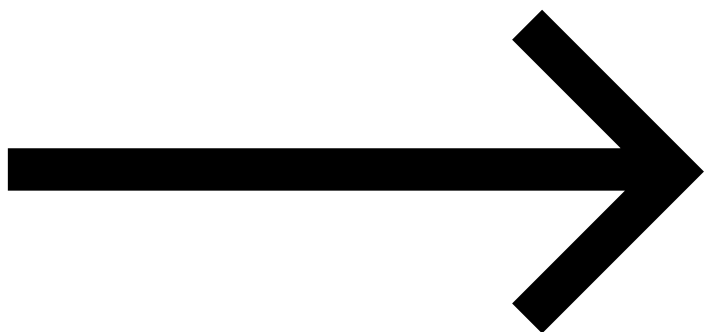
This could also naturally relieve any tension between our 2nd and 3rd P&V outlined above - that we need an early small minority of people (3.5%) to support our ask alongside building mass awareness and empathic connection among the wider population. It tells us that the complex and comprehensive work of reconnection and reconciliation cannot be shunned. It is the process by which our inner work lights our shadows to connect with the outer work of taking us out of our separation and powerlessness, and into regenerative cultures. It's where we know we have to decolonise our attitudes and behaviours if we are to enable planetary repair.

The requirement for reconnection and reconciliation (R&R) cannot be underestimated. Below are six levels of R&R work that XR could choose to embody through story-telling, networking, and actions. It is our R&R work that will enable our bold and beautiful visions to begin to create power and energy enough for transformation.

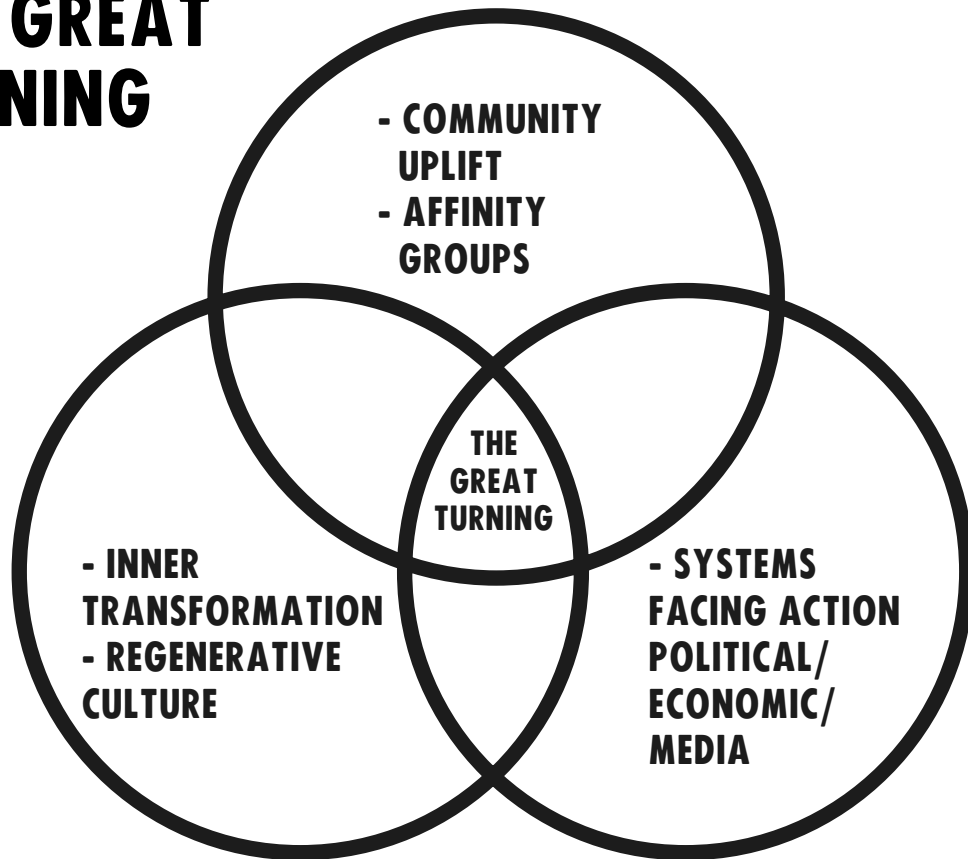
- 1) Inner reconciliation - reconciling with our truth, grief, fear and rage, with self-care.
- 2) Community Reconciliation - supporting community cohesion and belonging.
- 3) National and Global Reconciliation - supporting the reconciliation of divided communities and facilitating reconciliation work between and within over-consuming and lower-consuming countries.
- 4) Earth Reconciliation - encouraging renewed relationship with and respect for non-human life and earth elements, (air and water).
- 5) Reconciling with those we have difference or view as 'the other'.
- 6) Reconciling and encouraging relationship with greater consciousness or that which we don't know through our minds.

Through our principles and values and vision, we wonder if we can model what the future is asking of us all by being genuinely prefigurative. If we can lean into the creative tensions and conflict outlined above, and apply new ways of transforming what is violent, difficult, and stuck, perhaps we can make a genuine contribution to the work of R&R as a precursor for building truly regenerative cultures. If XR seeks to be the transformation it is asking of the world, then we might catalyse the pre-conditions for a leap in empathy consciousness required to deliver on XR's second demand, which is tantamount to system change.

With this in mind, overleaf is a diagram, included in our original DNA training for rebels: This Venn Diagram above is based on the thinking of Gandhi, as interpreted by Chris Moore Backman and Joanna Macy, founder of ['The Work that Reconnects'](#). It has been adapted for XR to guess at what the most enormous change in human history might involve.



THE GREAT TURNING



The diagram suggests that we cannot hope to secure the vast transformation of systems and relationships that we need without three strands of inner and outer action happening all at once. We need personal, local, national, and global change. Harm and violence exist in all three domains, and we simply cannot change one without the other as they all trigger and feedback on one another.

In a UK context, the very opposite played out during the December 2019 general election. It illuminated a mass sense of powerlessness where the highly manipulative messages, “get Brexit done” and “take back control”, nonetheless successfully attracted 45% of voters. Powerlessness, as discussed by international teacher Miki Kashtan from the Non Violent Global Liberation Community, is one of the components of Toxic Patriarchy. The other two being the Separation and Scarcity stories. Combined, they have arguably been the origin of colonialism, class war, racism, militarism, and most recently, neoliberalism.

We all carry this story in our DNA. Ultimately it is the reframing of this story, and the rewiring of the heartache it feeds, that will generate the reconciliation and collaboration now necessary for deep adaptation and resilience.

So how can XR go about dreaming, suggesting, and embodying such a vision for a post-vulnerable world? To date, our commitment to emergency-mode messaging has been almost exclusively focused on one of its three stages set out by clinical psychologist Jane Morton:

1. Tell people there is an emergency.
2. Tell people change is possible: inspire them with a vision of change.
3. Ask people to act according to their values.

Evolving our response to stage one (as per chapters 1 & 2) and extending into stages two and three means XR committing to a very different kind of polarisation. It means having the courage to divide people from business-as-usual with a courageous story of our collective vulnerability and our collective moral instinct to love and respect.

In accordance with the views of Professor Andre Spicer in the opening chapter, it means being sensitive about evoking a fear that sends people into despair further fuelling a paralysing sense of powerlessness. Rather, we need to deploy a generous and emotional story about what makes us all vulnerable and equal in our drive to move from surviving to thriving. We can remind people that all life wants to grow and thrive and that life can adapt to the harshest conditions. That we are all necessary. That we can dare to be great (as the late lawyer and ecocide campaigner [Polly Higgins](#) used to say). Rooted in truth and love, drawing on our nobility and grace, acting with fierce courage and not turning our face away from the suffering already in high command, we can move through this moment. We can do what is beyond the furthest lights of our imagination but within all possibility.

This means telling - and remembering and feeling and modelling - stories of togetherness, trust and empathy. It means describing the known and imagined beauty of radical equality and resilience through word, image, sound, and performance.

So instead of bowing to the ‘scarcity’ story, we share a vision of ‘abundance’ that naturally resolves our vulnerability. Not an abundance of stuff and things, but an abundance of what is vital to life: good food, good community, living in congruence with our values, in honest relationship with the natural world, everything that gives meaning and more.

Inherent here is a shift in energy from only regarding ourselves - or being typecast - as activists driven by ‘impossible demands’. It suggests a more gentle or nuanced energy for also becoming activators that will be essential for movement building and systems transformation. It is, if you will, #BeyondActivism.

This may sound clichéd to those of you who’ve been involved in politics, but this shift will begin in earnest from a place of listening to and understanding the public. It will be working with a movement of movements, including UK equality networks, to listen for the relationship and empathy needed from XR. To build a mass movement, XR will need to create a relatable story for different segments of the public by borrowing from the best that political communications has to offer. A story that means something to people who will not suddenly care about man-made climate change because there’s another [forest fire overseas](#), or a [domestic flood 200-miles away](#).

The same people, however, care about and are interested in doing “the right thing” by the people they love and want to protect. Just like the alienated commuters on the platform at Canning Town tube station. XR needs to tell a story that activates these instincts that lead to the withdrawal of consent from the bankrupt and broken systems that are destroying what people love, or at least sympathy with those people in active rebellion.

Regenerative actions

The central theme of this pamphlet is that XR needs to not only tell the new story but embody it through actions. In 2020, XR needs to include regenerative and restorative action so that our lived reality can pivot from vulnerability to radical equality. It de facto means thinking more

carefully and creatively about how actions might carry both the story of vulnerability and our vision for its resolution. Given such actions will be XR's primary means for movement building, creativity is a must alongside a broader invitation for participation.

Actions that unfurl a vision for the future might tell a story of regeneration, rewilding, and repair. One idea, contributed by Professor Jem Bendell (author of [the most downloaded climate change paper of all time](#)) sees XR affinity groups occupying popular local green spaces to plant fruit, nut trees, and vegetables. A pop up allotment so to speak. The action could be coordinated nationally and be timed to be part of other actions around vulnerability, as suggested in the previous chapter.

Regenerative actions might also start with a mass sing or choir and end the same way. How would it be if XR called Friday or Sunday Assembly actions (as well as citizen assembly actions) around reconciliation. Or, as already has been suggested elsewhere, XR could invite rebels to come together and volunteer for clear-up operations in natural disaster areas or food bank support work. The point to emphasise here is that the authors of this pamphlet aren't expert at designing either mass-coordinated actions or local engagement.

Our ideas are merely intended to help cajole, and if we're fortunate enough, inspire those already working at the centre of XR (UK), alongside many thousands of rebels across the UK, to take on the story and make it their own. As such, we envision the movement's regenerative cultures and visioning circles working in a more integrative and collaborative way, with XR Communities, XR actions, XRLiberation, XRISN and XRIST.

Going global

While this pamphlet is not without ambition when it comes to challenging XR, perhaps the biggest ask of all is that a new story needs to extend far beyond the UK. XR's growing international network therefore needs to be part of developing, evolving, and tailoring the story across numerous countries. It is a recognition that the future of everyone in the UK will depend on global responsibility, will, and solutions. Thus XR needs to inspire global visioning that tells a story that further ignites global NVDA, as part of the telling of our interdependence as a source of near-term vulnerability but ultimately longer-term reconciliation. That is to say, a very different vision for globalisation.

In conclusion, XR needs to live and breathe its principles, values, and vision in a more synthesised and coherent form. The value of the power we have created lies in us helping to birth a tremendous collective change of heart that sits at the core of our P&Vs and Vision. It is why XR now needs to build greater solidarity and coherence especially with its international groups, so that it can go on to embody a global story that disrupts international institutions and their toxic pillars. Whilst we cause disruption, we need to kindle togetherness so that we might also inspire the greatest conflict transformation and peace process the world has ever known. We are holding a most beautiful paradox. A place where love protects and says no and a place where love says yes and shows its infinite care.

BACK TO YOU...

Congratulations if you made it this far! As the title of this pamphlet laid bare, we think XR risks rushing its response to the 'emergency' in 2020. It sounds the most incongruent of phrases, we know. But we see no substitute or shortcut for the more patient demands of storytelling and movement building by way of embodied actions. In particular, we point to the courage and commitment needed from all of us set out in the closing chapter.

We need to diversify the energy that propelled XR to success in April last year by way of creativity, shapeshifting and visioning. How else will we embody a resonant story that not only teases out vulnerability but also embodies humanity's journey towards equality at all levels?

In the vast transition that is coming, everything will have to change. But those that will have to change the most are those with the most. Those who have most responsibility for making us all vulnerable need to feel that sense of crisis that we help create. Eventually, we can come back to London and take to the streets in such huge numbers, and with such popular backing and understanding, that the authorities are simply overwhelmed.

We sincerely hope we didn't overwhelm you in reading this pamphlet. If you agreed with some of what is set out here - or even if you didn't - please circulate this pamphlet among the rebels you know. Our aim is to support a national conversation among rebels while XR's strategy takes shape and is tested in the coming months.

But in closing this pamphlet, we go back to the beginning. Not all of us have the time and resources to sit down and write a pamphlet. We did so because this moment will be defining for XR. And so defining for you as an existing or would-be rebel. So please have your say if that is your intention. If you don't already have it, the email address below is being used by XR's Strategy Stewardship Team to collect feedback ahead of strategy being agreed for 2020. Please use it.

Email: xr.uk.sst@gmail.com



APPENDIX 1

Pro bono report on Extinction Rebellion Communication Strategy 31 October 2019 by Professor Andre Spicer, Professor of Organisational Behaviour at Cass Business School

1. Assessment of Current Communication Strategy

Extinction Rebellion (XR) had been remarkably successful at communicating the message of climate emergency. It has cut through a crowded news agenda. The key components of this success are: (1) simplicity in messaging, such as the three key demands, (2) clear, consistent and compelling visual identity, (3) use of emotional appeals – in particular use of emotions like grief, (4) connection with wider moral concerns such as intergenerational justice.

During the demonstrations, XR was criticised for (1) Being a white, semi-elite movement. (2) Being disruptive of the lives of ordinary people. (3) Focusing on the wrong targets such as public transport.

Some within XR have argued that there remain some important short-comings which need to be taken into account in future actions: (1) The time horizon of the message is too long (eg. 25 years). This means people engage in ‘temporal discounting’, mentally cut back the cost of catastrophic outcomes in the distant future. (2) The message can be too abstract, feeling like it is about big issues that are difficult to think about on an immediate human scale.

XR needs to carefully consider some other issues: (1) The moral framing around ‘justice’ tends to appeal to those on the left, but turns off centrists and those on the right (2) Messages of grief are good for prompting rethinking and some mobilisation but they often need to be paired with messages of hope to encourage a mass movement, (3) Stoking a sense of anger is good for mobilising people already committed but it can alienate potential allies who are already working within target organisations.

2. Vulnerability: A New Message?

In order to address some of the issues raised above, some in XR have suggested focusing on a message of ‘vulnerability’. This would be made real through pointing the vulnerability of just in time (JIT) supply chains and climate risk associated with these. This message could be embodied in very real and local issues such as how climate change will make it difficult to put food on the table.

This message of vulnerability has some important strengths: (1) It triggers loss-aversion, a strong cognitive bias which tends to drive people to engage in more risky behaviour. (2) It makes an abstract issue into a real issue through fore-fronting everyday issues like feeding a family. (3) It brings the threats posed by climate change into the immediate time frame (5 to 10 years) which means they cannot be easily discounted away by people. (4) The message resonates with XR in-groups such as climate policy experts and activists. (5) Research shows messages of vulnerability open people up to moral claims - by showing images of vulnerable people, individuals are more willing to ‘do good’ even at a personal cost. (6) The message resonates with wider celebration of vulnerability in popular discussion (see for instances Brené Brown’s very popular TED talk on the topic). (7) Vulnerability immediately connects with the issue of ‘resilience’. The resolution to the challenge of ‘vulnerability’ would be to offer new ways of becoming more resilient.

There are some important questions to ask about how useful the theme of vulnerability actually is: (1) When people are made to feel vulnerable it can connect with powerful emotions associated with other times in their life they have felt vulnerable (such as childhood or traumatic situations). Although this can stir up strong emotions which prompt action, it can easily back-fire through prompt denial, reject or even anger. (2) Experiences of vulnerability are used as a first step to get people to accept a new group or set of values. For instance, when recruits are socialised into a group they are made to feel vulnerable by having their prior identity stripped away. However this is usually followed up by them being given a new identity through joining a group.

This helps to make them feel less vulnerable. Once you make people feel vulnerable, you need to give them something else which is going to help them deal with that vulnerability. If you don't, you simply leave them in an anxious and unresolved state which could provoke a strong backlash. (3) Experiences of vulnerability can help people to 'open up', but only if they believe that they have a 'holding environment' which is safe and accepting where they can then express their own feeling, mixed emotions and so on. Simply making them feel vulnerable and then offering a pre-packaged message is likely to miss out this middle stage of exploring one's own ambivalences and uncertainties about an issue. (4) Who is going to be made to be vulnerable? Seeing ourselves as vulnerable can make us scared. Seeing others who are like us but weaker (eg. Babies, the elderly) as vulnerable can make us feel like we want to save them. (5) How does the message of vulnerability fit into a wider narrative of the movement? In moving from grief to vulnerability, where are you taking the public narrative? What would be the obvious next steps beyond vulnerability? How does this fit into well-known and very deeply rooted narrative structures like 'the hero' journey?

There are some important questions to ask about focusing on just in time (JIT) supply chains: (1) The connection between climate change and supply chains could be too abstract. This means people don't get the connection and too much explanation is required. (2) There is a danger in targeting something which most people see as a social good rather than a social bad which is tolerated. (3) Companies will talk about how their supply chains are already being made more sustainable through electric delivery vans etc. (4) The public will want to see a clear and realistic alternative to current JIT supply chains. (5) there may be a lack of a clear call to action or point of resolution which can be used as a natural end point in this chapter. What do you want to achieve beyond getting headlines? There needs to be some kind of practical achievement which is meaningful. (7) Focusing on supply chains could bring up messages which are similar to themes brought up during the Brexit debate. If the much talked about Brexit food shortages don't materialise, then the public is likely to be very cynical of a similar message a second time around.

3. Alternative Messages?

There is now a significant body of evidence which explores which messages get people engaged climate change. The research has repeatedly found messages used by XR such as 'climate justice' tend to appeal to people who are already convinced about the importance of climate change. Doubling down on these messages will help to mobilise existing believers (with more left-wing values), but it will turn off the uncommitted as well as sceptics. This poses a big question: does XR want to select a message which will keep your existing activists engaged or does XR want to reach new audiences?

Messages which focus on 'locality' and/or 'human health' tend to appeal across the political spectrum. Locality messages make climate related issues real and relate it to local conditions. A locality based message would mention things like local water storages, local car pollution and local flooding. Human health messages emphasise the effect of climate change on individual health. For instance, a health base message would mention the toxicity of car fumes and impact on children and elderly health. These messages need to be local, visceral and real to work.

Messages which emphasise 'waste' and 'patriotism' tend to appeal to right of centre individuals. Waste messages appeal to values of 'scrimping and saving'. They could point out the unnecessary resource use involved with an unsustainable life-style. Patriotism make appeals to the nation. For instance they could point to the potential for 'great British energy' which comes from inside the UK like wind and wave. Other patriotic messages about saving Britain from climate change could be used too.

The source of a message has a big impact on whether it is accepted. XR has used 'typical spokes-people' such as climate scientists, environmentalists, young people and the elderly. However, these 'usual suspects' can be discounted by some. One US study found the most credible sources for pro-climate messages were 'unusual sources' (who you would not expect to give climate messages) such as athletes, conservative politicians and military leaders.

One under-used source in climate debates is the insurance and actuarial industry. Most insurance companies know climate change will lead to big costs. Actuaries could be mobilised as unusual and objective spokes-people to emphasis messages about the cost of climate change. It could be linked to very direct and personal things like rising cost for home insurance and the increasing number of uninsurable homes. This is a message which will cut through to middle class people. People from across the political spectrum are more likely to engage with messages which involve some element of hope and also have do-able practical actions attached to the.

XR needs to map out the wider 'ecology' of social movement messages around climate change. It needs to think about which niche it occupies within this ecology, and how it can work with other movements. It is likely that XR plays the role of expanding the window of what's possible and thinkable in the climate debate ('the Overton window'). It may be that XR is not well positioned to offer solutions which would get wider popular backing. If that is the case, then XR needs to work alongside other movements who might offer solutions. That means co-ordinating campaigning with other groups. When XR undertakes an action and offers radical challenge, a range of other climate focused groups need to be primed to come in and offer solutions. For instance, if XR runs a campaign about supply chain vulnerability, it might work with a few other campaigning organisations (which are independent of XR and politically diverse) to offer solutions to make supply chains more resilient and sustainable. Doing this will exploit a well-known feature phenomenon of social movements called 'the radical flank effect'. This is the idea that social change happens through a radical group posing a question or challenge and then a more moderate seeming group offering a solution.

4. New Methods

Irrespective of which message XR decides to adopt, there needs to be further change in how those messages are developed into a final campaigns. The current approach seems to be a process of dialogue among the political and media circles leading to fairly clear messages which are then pushed out. In addition, there is some experimentation and ongoing democratic dialogue through which this process evolves.

There are some strengths to the current process: (1) Democratic deliberation means the message is more legitimate for activists and it is also likely to be stress tested during those dialogue processes. (2) The input of various experts in crafting and disciplining the message means it is clear, consistent and has the ability to cut through the news agenda.

There are some dangers with the current approach: (1) The main input to developing messages comes from within the movement and friendly groups. This creates a danger of establishing an echo-chamber. Messages are developed which appeal to existing activists rather than appealing to potential participants who might be looking for something slightly different. (2) Messages could misfires when it is not tested against the substantial evidence around communication and climate. (3) Resources and energy could be prematurely invested into a single message when there is no sense of how it will be received when it is actually pushed out.

To address some of the problems, it is worth considering adding a more experimental approach to message development. This would typically involve the following stages: (1) Reflection on past actions and messaging. XR needs to ask what has worked and what has not. Ideally these points will be evidenced with things like public opinion polling and analysis of social media. XR needs to look honestly at which messages have cut through and resonated and which have not. (2) Deliberation where this information is fed into movement and non-movement participants to reflect on what works and what alternative themes might be. (3) Generation where-by the results of the deliberation process are narrowed down to a short-list of compelling messages and themes. (4) Evidencing where a review of existing evidence and literature on each of these themes is undertaken to identify how they might be communicated in practice and what the likely results might be. (5) Dry testing whereby a selected group of themes will be tested out using samples you can gain from an online subject pool. The aim would be to see how people react to different campaigns. (6) Piloting whereby a few of the campaigns would be tests out in small scale and low risk actions to see what reactions are on the ground. This allows for further adjustment of the message. (7) Final launch whereby a campaign possibly involving a few different themes is run. The themes which pick up attention can be reinforced while those which can be downscaled.

There are some potential problems with this strategy: (1) It can be resource and time intensive. This can be mitigated by developing a fairly quick cycles and finding volunteers with skills in these areas. (2) The professionalised and step-wise nature of the process can easily alienate activists who are more driven by an ethos of direct action. This will remain a tension. The tension could be addressed by explaining to front-line activists that it is a way of mitigating some risks. Activists would not undertake an action without testing their gear, so it makes sense that the movement would not launch a campaign without testing the message.

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APPENDIX 2

Below is the scaffolding of an unsourced narrative that could help evolve XR's 'Heading for Extinction' talk:

1) Where am I now?

Who is the audience and where are they emotionally? How is the audience struggling in day-to-day life? (Billionaires will tell you they suffer, too!) Pan out to societal crises spanning mental health, austerity and Brexit. We're all surviving rather than thriving. We're disillusioned, deliberately divided, lied to and manipulated. It's normal now.

2) What has this got to do with 'climate change'?

Nothing. The story about reducing carbon emissions has never connected with you this way. Simply being asked to panic about the emission of an invisible gas that will probably lead to Armageddon but decades from now, was never going to cut it.

3) Me and interdependence

But because the story about climate change didn't work for you, we ended up building a world to live in as if climate breakdown didn't exist. Where cost-efficiency always trumped resilience. And where we've become dependent on remote and increasingly vulnerable people. You're already struggling but it's going to get harder to survive. Much harder. It's why some billionaires are digging luxury bunkers or hoping to get into orbit.

4) What do I do?

This is what you're thinking right now: it just won't happen, there'll be a tech-fix, we'll stop migration, grow all our own food, back a strong leader. [Let the audience off! Give the audience time to feel it]. But there is no bunker. Not even for those billionaires who are still trying to work out how to stop their security detail from doing away with them once money is worthless. Mother Nature is making us all one.

5) What do I really want?

You want the people you love to be OK. You want to stop feeling lonely or anxious and not to have to strive so hard. You want a liveable future for your children. You want to rest. But for you to have all that, everyone will need to have it too... This is the march to equality. And everybody can have that. Everyone needs to have that, or nobody gets it at all. That's how it works now. Because the story you were told about the future didn't work. And it wasn't your fault.

6) Me and the future

What does greater equality mean at the community, national and global level? What power - political, cultural & social - do you have to embody this vision for the future? Let's vision a world where the future is not just about survival.

7) Who needs my help to deliver this vision?

Listen to what more marginalised and vulnerable voices have to say about their circumstances at the local, national and global level.

8) Who's blocking me from realising this vision?

This is where the carbon reduction/divide & rule/polluter elite story goes. Made up of national govts, fossil industry, finance & insurance, agri-business, multilateral governmental bodies, etc.

9) How do I challenge those who block us?

Introduce the power of civil disobedience in telling this story and embodying the vision. In rebellion, there is emotional and physical connection. We are helping to connect the planet to its people and people to each other. We are here to help enable a movement of movements to deliver a global social, political and economic transformation.

