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CRIMINAL

REPORT BY

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WHO PARTICIPATED IN *THE BIG ONE?*

A PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS IN EXTINCTION
REBELLION'S APRIL 2023 ACTIONS



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Compiled by academics at four universities, in collaboration with Extinction Rebellion Street Research and Impact Evaluation teams, this report profiles the participants in Extinction Rebellion's (XR's) The Big One (TBO) demonstrations in April 2023.

This report draws on data consisting of face-to-face interviews with a random sample of 480 TBO participants, and 611 TBO participant respondents to an online survey. The online sample is weighted to approximate a random sample (see note in the Appendix). Where possible data are compared to results from surveys of participants in previous XR mobilisations.

HaSS Cornwall is a new interdisciplinary department on the Penryn Campus of the University of Exeter. It is focused on society, justice and culture in the past present and future. This work was facilitated by the Environmental Justice Research Cluster, which works with a broad range of partners to investigate and share potential solutions to environmental injustices at multiple, often intersecting, levels (global, national, and local) in a variety of contexts. We seek to preempt and prevent environmental injustices emerging from new infrastructural or environmental projects, and from emerging genetic, agricultural, and digital technologies. We argue that corporations and universities have an important role to play in the so-called fourth industrial revolution which, without careful foresight, may entrench existing environmental injustices and generate new ones in its quest for Net Zero.

Publication

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1 | HEADLINES

- This analysis is based on the survey responses of 611 participants in The Big One (TBO) demonstrations on the climate and ecological emergency in central London (21-24 April 2023) – see Appendix for more details on the survey methods.
- Extinction Rebellion (XR) staged the demonstration (it also engaged in police liaison, programming, stewarding, well-being, and providing food and toilets). It was the main mobiliser for TBO and most significant membership organisation by a long way. Over 200 organisations signed up as “supporters”,^[i] with Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and Just Stop Oil also identified by participants as key organisations taking part. Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth had the highest rates of shared membership with XR members. Christian organisations also mobilised significant numbers.
- Supporters of humanitarian organisations were relatively scarce at TBO, in contrast to the 2006 Stop Climate Chaos coalition. While some organisations joined as supporters – Tearfund, Fairtrade, War on Want – more could be done to harness collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships with humanitarian organisations (e.g. Oxfam, Save the Children). That humanitarian organisations broadly did not join as supporting organisations may be a reflection of XR’s previous reputation for holding non-violent but (now) illegal protests.
- More than half (57%) of the respondents had participated in climate change demonstrations less than 5 times, with 18% being first-time climate change demonstrators.
- Participants deemed TBO to be relatively successful at attracting a diverse array of supporters and at illustrating the value of non-violent direct action (NVDA). They were less convinced of its ability to persuade the government to adopt better policies or to establish citizens’ climate assemblies, and of its efficacy in relation to persuading bystanders of the importance of the cause.
- The majority of TBO participants were active in environmental organisations, and nearly half of them were active participants in community organisations. Nevertheless, membership in these groups was markedly lower than at previous climate change demonstrations and ‘Rebellions’.
- Low-risk forms of political action (e.g. petitions and ethical consumerism) have been commonly engaged in by participants, with slightly higher numbers of TBO participants claiming to be more likely to participate in these after their participation in TBO. Violent forms of action are unpopular.
- The government, large corporations and international institutions are deemed, by TBO participants, to have the most responsibility to fix climate change, but participants thought, on average, that the most important targets for action are not only government, large corporations and international organisations, but also the media.
- Participants came from a range of age groups. They were very highly educated (85% have or are studying for a degree); and women were slightly in the majority. Although we surveyed more non-binary participants at TBO, the representation of women is much the same as for XR’s first major ‘Rebellion’, in London in April 2019.
- Based on our own observations, TBO was more racially diverse than previous mass climate change demonstrations (and the proportion of dual heritage participants in TBO was higher than it is for the UK public in general). However, survey data suggests that people of colour remained under-represented compared to the UK population.

- We estimate that TBO participants had a median household income broadly similar to the national median, but this headline income level masks a diverse array of income categories, employment situations and job roles.
- Some of the highest numbers of participants came from Bristol, Oxford, and parts of London.
- Those who participated in two or more days of TBO actions were generally more embedded in protest networks, more left-wing, and yet more highly educated.



2 | INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of the survey of TBO participants from Friday 21 to Monday 24 April 2023. The survey methodology is outlined in the Appendix. The report covers mobilisation, political attitudes, socio-demographics and a comparison of the types of people who attended on the different days. Before we report on the results from our protest survey, we provide some context on the change in XR's strategy, which resulted in a large-scale set of demonstrations with a moderate action repertoire.

As a prelude to wider mobilisation in 2023, under the banner of "Festival for Resistance", Extinction Rebellion had planned a march from Marble Arch, and a (peaceful) weekend of "music, speeches, people's assemblies and much more" in Hyde Park from 10–13 September 2022.[ii] This was cancelled at short notice, following the death of Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September 2022.

On 31 December 2022, XR made what many felt was a shock announcement of its change of strategy entitled "We Quit".[iii]

[...] As we ring in the new year, we make a controversial resolution to temporarily shift away from public disruption as a primary tactic. We recognise and celebrate the power of disruption to raise the alarm and believe that constantly evolving tactics is a necessary approach. What's needed now most is to disrupt the abuse of power and imbalance, to bring about a transition to a fair society that works together to end the fossil fuel era. Our politicians, addicted to greed and bloated on profits won't do it without pressure.

We must be radical in our response to this crisis and determined in our efforts to address the climate and ecological emergency, even if it means taking a different approach than before. In a time when speaking out and taking action are criminalised, building collective power, strengthening in number and thriving through bridge-building is a radical act.

XR is committed to including everyone in this work and leaving no one behind, because everyone has a role to play. This year, we prioritise attendance over arrest and relationships over roadblocks, as we stand together and become impossible to ignore.

TBO was conceived as this bridge-building action: a lawful, peaceful, non-violent, family-friendly, four-day protest that could bring many aligned organisations together as the start of long-term relationships and alliances. The dates chosen – 21–24 April – included Earth Day [iv] on the Saturday, a traditional day for environmental protests since the 1970s, and the London Marathon on the Sunday – both of which would encourage a colourful and family-friendly atmosphere.

Perhaps the most radical step in planning, was to make the action a "come as you are" event. While XR did the almost all the behind-the-scenes preparations, the requirement of supporting organisations was minimal [v] and explicitly collegial:

Supporting The Big One doesn't mean joining XR – its intention is to be a time and a place for a movement of movements.[vi]

As a result more than 200 organisations signed up to support TBO.[vii] But to what extent did these supporting organisations mobilise individuals to participate?

3 | MOBILISATION

One of the most striking patterns in the survey data is the level of connection that most TBO participants have to XR. The XR website was the most frequently mentioned source of information for finding out about the actions (Figures 1 and 2).[viii] Similar to previous XR actions, social media was an important recruitment tool (Saunders et al 2020). Participants more frequently listed XR as an organiser of TBO and as an organisation of which they are a member compared to other organisations (Figures 3 and 4). Almost exactly two-thirds of respondents claimed to have participated in an XR demonstration before. Moreover, 34.8% claimed that they were mobilised by XR, compared to just 5.1% by Greenpeace, 2.5% by Friends of the Earth, 2.3% by Christian Climate Action (itself a part of XR), 1.9% by Just Stop Oil and 1.3% by the Green Party.[ix]

Figure 1: How did participants hear about TBO?

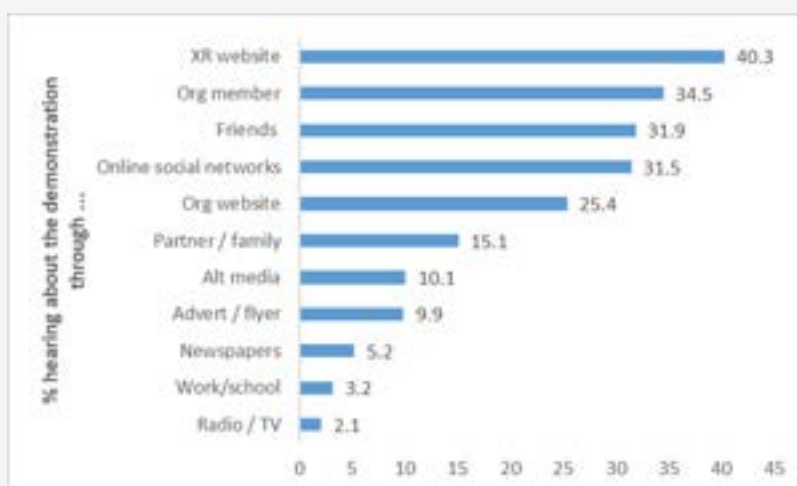
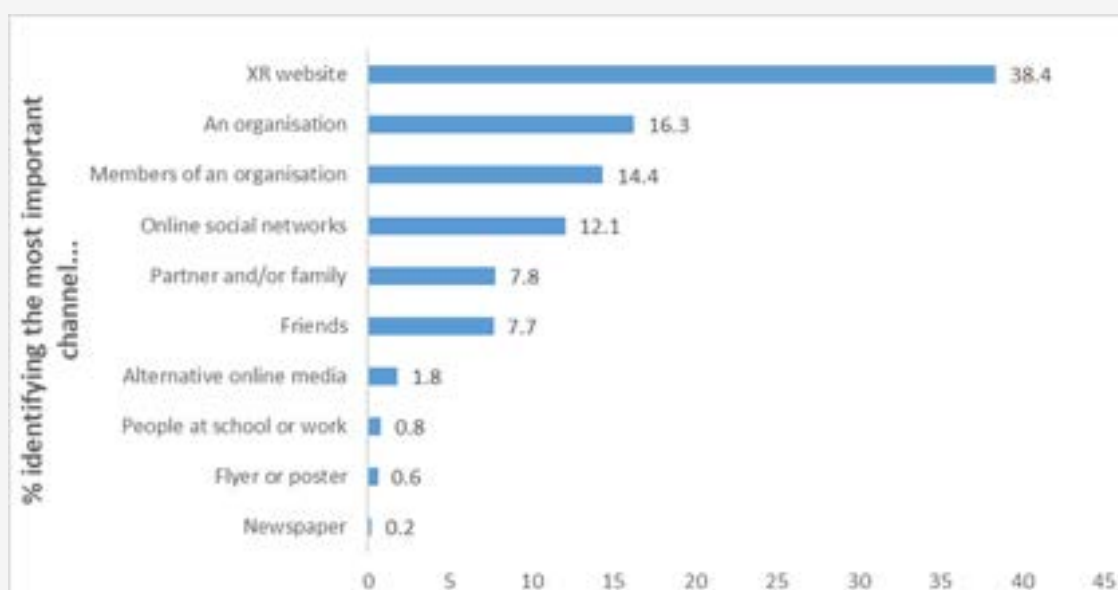


Figure 2. The most important source of information about TBO

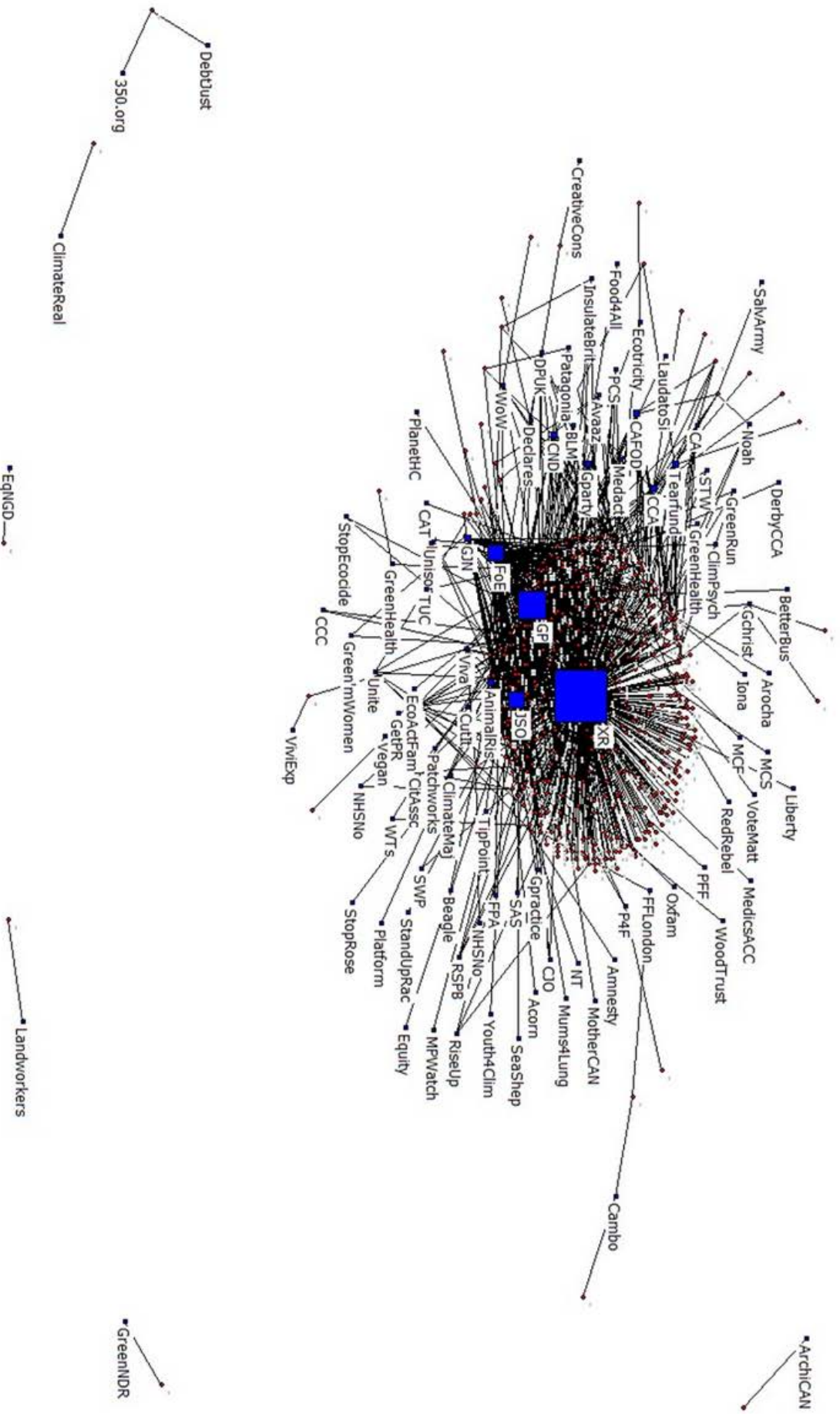


The majority of participants travelled to the demonstrations by train (71%), with buses being the next most popular mode of transport (15%). Only small numbers travelled by car (4%), bicycle (3%) or walking (2%). The rest travelled by campervan, tube and coach. Some of those travelling by electric car, or whom shared a lift with others, felt the need to select the category 'other' from the list of transport options and specify the nature of their car use.

The most popular day of events was Saturday 22 April. Over three quarters of our respondents participated then (76.6%). The next most popular day for action was Friday 21 April, in which 62.2% of respondents participated, compared to 26.9% on Sunday 23 April and 19.4% on Monday 24 April. We have not captured any participants who participated only on Monday, and only a small proportion participated only on Sunday. This may, however, be an effect of the weather, which deteriorated over the weekend.

In total, our participants named 99 organisations when asked to list the names of organisations that had staged the demonstration. The most commonly listed organisations are XR (78.8 % of participants), Greenpeace (38.1%), Friends of the Earth (19.4%), Just Stop Oil (19.3%), and Animal Rising (5.1%). We have put the results into a sociogram (Figure 3) where a square node represents an organisation and a circular node a participant. We used NetDraw in UCInet to give a graph theoretic layout (i.e. organisations at the centre of this two-way network appear visually at the centre of the diagram). We scaled the size of the nodes to reflect the number of times they are mentioned. The diagram shows the centrality of XR, followed by Greenpeace (GP), Friends of the Earth (FoE) and Just Stop Oil (JSO). The density of the sociogram indicates a significant overlap in the mentioning of these key organisations – many individuals who listed Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and Just Stop Oil also mentioned XR.

Figure 3. Two-mode sociogram of respondents and the organisations they listed as being organisers of TBO.



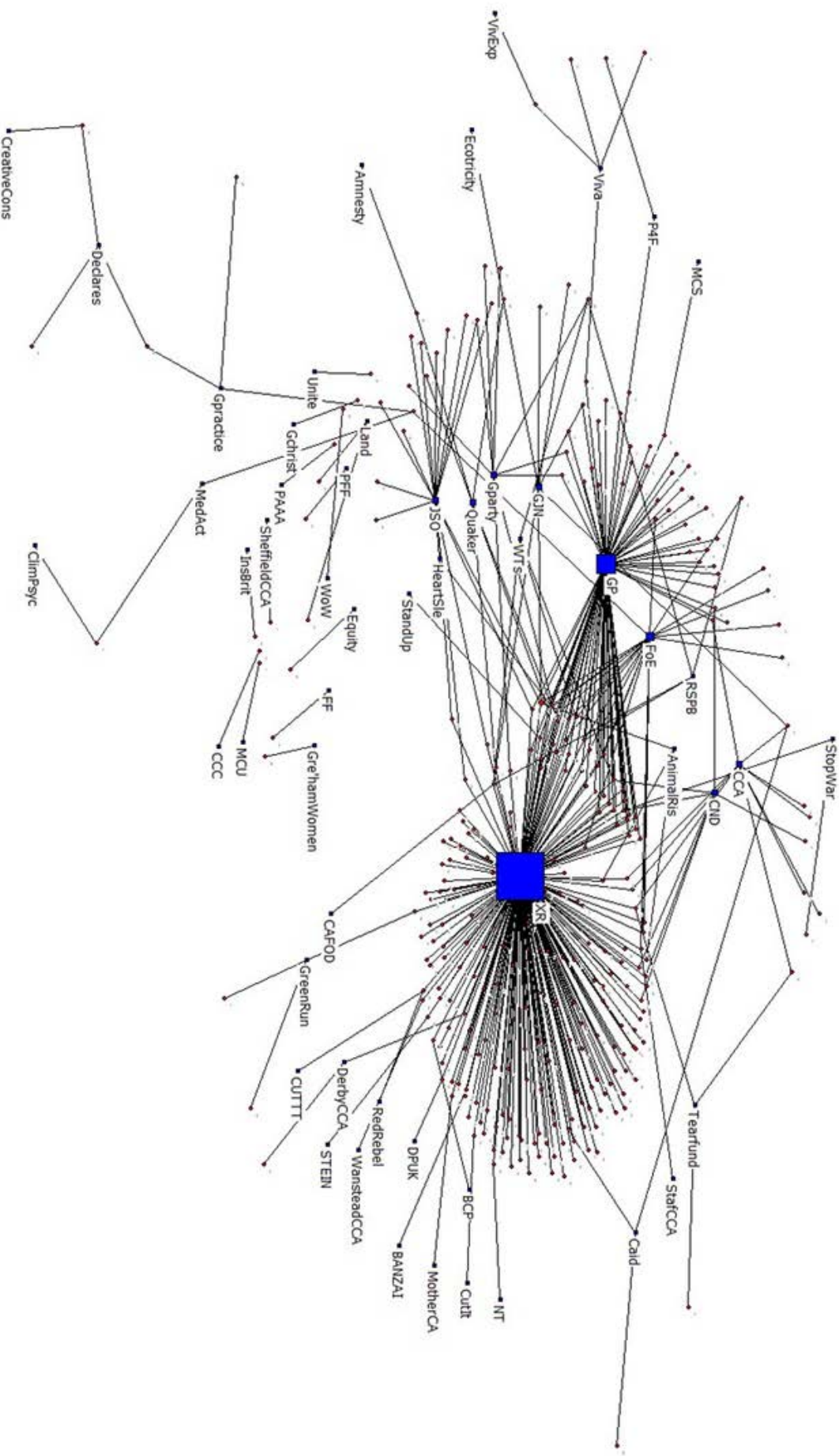
In total, participants named 55 different organisations of which they were members. The most frequently mentioned organisations are XR (41.2% are members of a local or national XR group), Greenpeace (12.9%), Friends of the Earth (3.5%) and Just Stop Oil (2.9%). Christian organisations were also relatively popular. Two per cent said that they were members of XR's offshoot Christian Climate Action but other Christian organisations were also mentioned (albeit by a small minority): CAFOD, Tearfund, Green Christian and Christian Aid.

It is interesting to note that the numbers of people with membership of Just Stop Oil is significantly lower than the numbers of people who mentioned it as a key organisation staging the demonstration. Figure 4 shows a 2-mode network diagram of respondents (circles) and the organisations of which they are a member (squares). As with Figure 3, the square nodes are scaled to represent the number of times they are mentioned by participants. Once again, XR is the most central node. Although many Extinction Rebellion members are not also members of Greenpeace, most of the Greenpeace members in attendance are members of XR.[x]

Note the high density of the network diagram where a significant cluster of participants who are Greenpeace members are linked also to XR. Friends of the Earth participants seem to overlap more with the membership patterns of Greenpeace than with those from XR. In contrast, Just Stop Oil members are not embedded in dense overlapping membership networks (see the Just Stop Oil node to the South West of the diagram, only marginally more central than Amnesty International). Another cluster of membership lies around the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) which, despite not being an official supporter of TBO, is close in the diagram to Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace. Christian environmental and humanitarian organisations are also relatively central: CAFOD and Christian Climate Action, in particular.

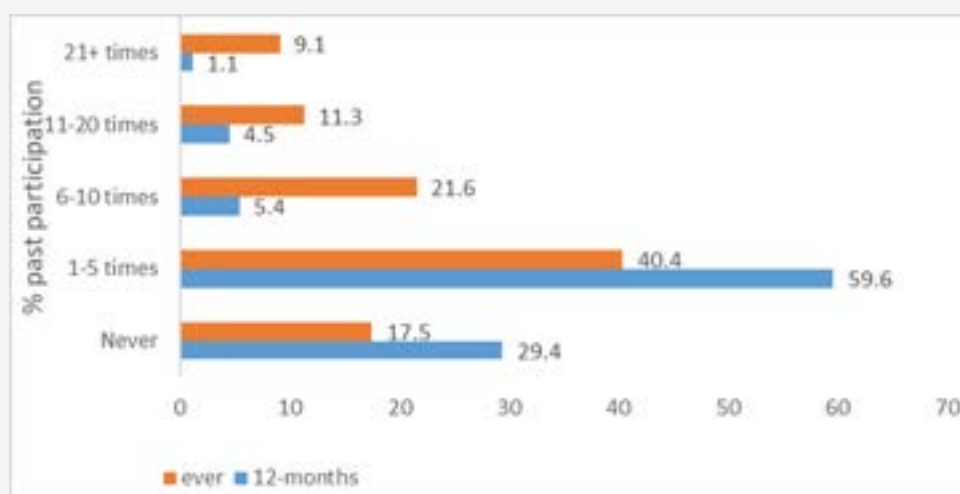


Figure 4. Two-mode sociogram of respondents and the organisations in which they are members



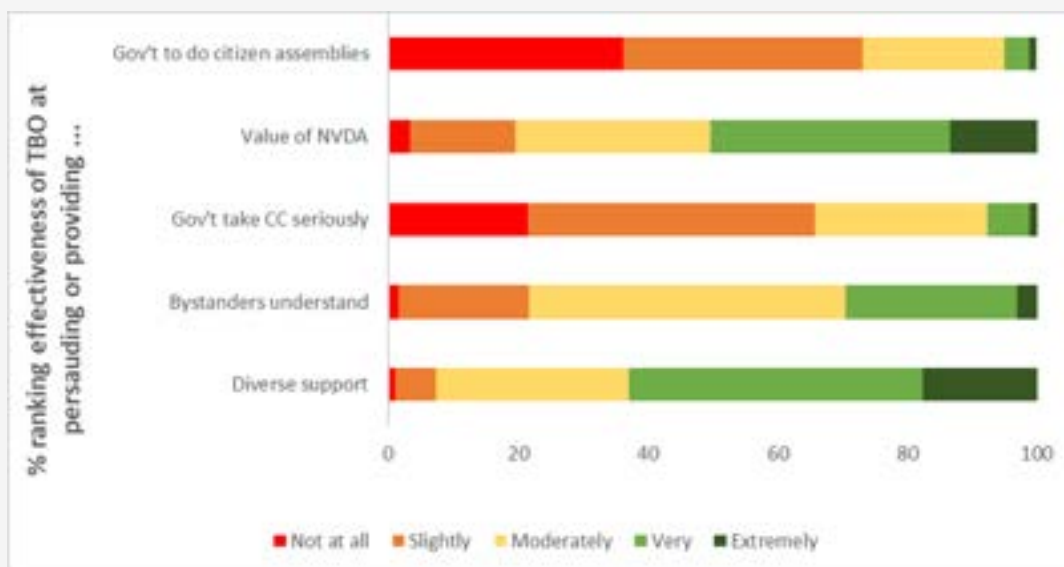
A sizeable portion of those we surveyed had never previously participated in climate change demonstrations (18%). Two-fifths had only participated 1-5 times. Established veterans (those who have participated 21 or more times in climate change demonstrations at any point) constituted less than 10% of participants. During the past year just over 10% had participated in a climate protest 6 times or more but for 29% of participants TBO was their first climate demonstration in the previous year. 60% had participated in between 1 and 5 climate demonstrations, in the past 12-months indicating that most participants in TBO do not have a high frequency of participation in climate protests (see Figure 5). In previous climate demonstration surveys, we asked about participation in demonstrations in general, not specifically in climate change demonstrations, but some figures are included here for broadly comparative purposes. Only 10% of participants in XR's April 2019 rebellion, and 11% of participants in XR's October 2019 rebellion, had never (ever) participated in a demonstration (on any issue). In this sense, it seems that TBO may have attracted more protest novices, although due to the question wording we do not know if TBO participants had previously participated in demonstrations on issues other than climate change.

Figure 5. Previous participation in climate change demonstrations



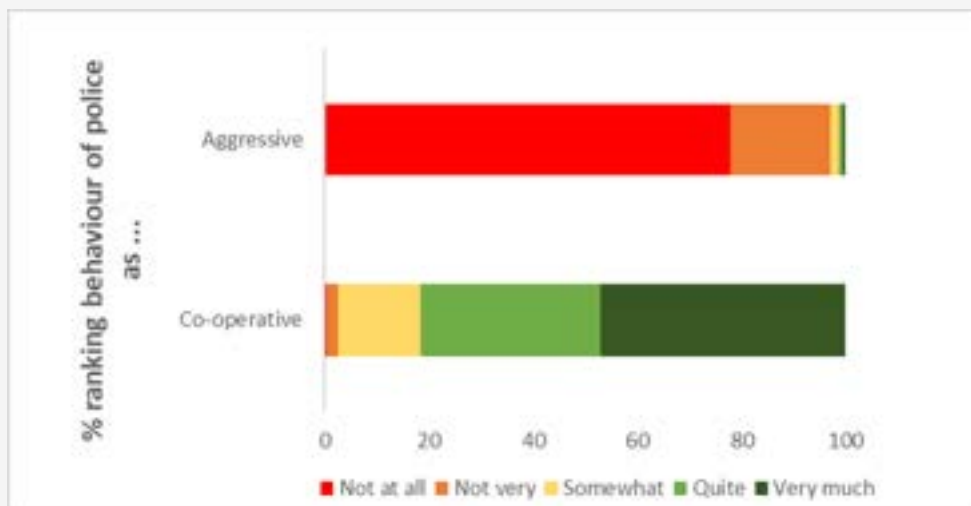
Participants felt that TBO was most successful in terms of generating a diverse range of supporters – 60% of respondents thought it was very or extremely successful in this way. They also, on aggregate, considered it to be successful in terms of showcasing the value of non-violent direct action (NVDA) – 50% of respondents thought it was very or extremely successful in this way. They were moderately praiseworthy of the ability of the demonstrations to help bystanders understand the cause, with close to a quarter of them believing TBO to be not at all or only slightly successful in this regard. But participants were most sceptical about the ability of TBO to influence the government. Nearly two-thirds said they thought TBO was not at all or only slightly effective at persuading the government to take climate change seriously, and nearly three-quarters thought the same about TBO's ability to persuade the government to institute independent citizens' assemblies. Given that the surveys of XR in 2019 indicated scepticism about the ability of the government to deal effectively with climate change, there is continuity in the negative evaluation of government, and it seems likely that TBO participants took part despite their pessimism about its likely impacts on government.

Figure 6. How effective was TBO demonstration at ...

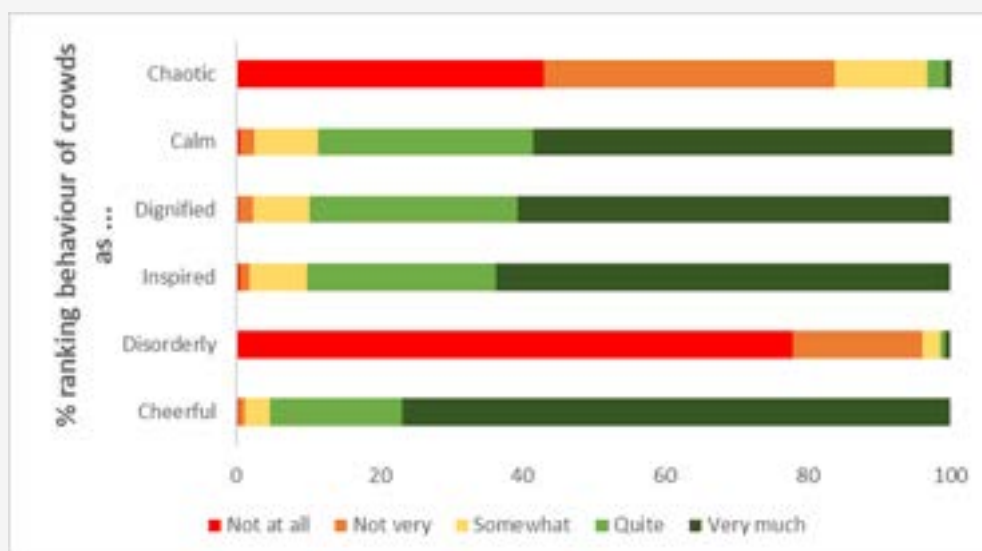


The police were rated as more cooperative than aggressive at TBO. Less than 2% found the police to be quite or very aggressive, whilst 82% claimed the police were quite or very cooperative (Figure 7). It is important to note that TBO was not planned as a civil resistance or NVDA protest, and prior police liaison had been extensive.

Figure 7. How participants rated the behaviour of the police



It is not surprising, therefore, that participants largely claimed that they were among crowds of calm, dignified, inspired and cheerful fellow participants (Figure 8). Very few considered the actions to result in chaotic and disorderly crowds and only 11% thought that TBO demonstration was seriously disruptive whereas most disagreed that it was seriously disruptive (49.4% strongly disagreed and 28.6% somewhat disagreed).

Figure 8. How participants rated the behaviour of the crowds**Table 1. Organisational membership profile of Big One participants**

Organisational type	Donates (%)	Active member (%)
Environmental organisation	25	55.8
Community organisation	5.3	47.7
Charity or welfare organisation	42.3	29.0
Sports organisation	2.8	20.6
Anti-racist organisation	16.4	19.5
Trade union or professional organisation	12	18.2
Church or religious organisation	3.9	15.6
Human rights organisation	22.7	15.3
Third world or global justice organisation	35.3	13.1
Peace or anti-war organisation	10.5	11.3
LGBTQI+ organisation	3.6	11
Women's organisation	5.5	7.5

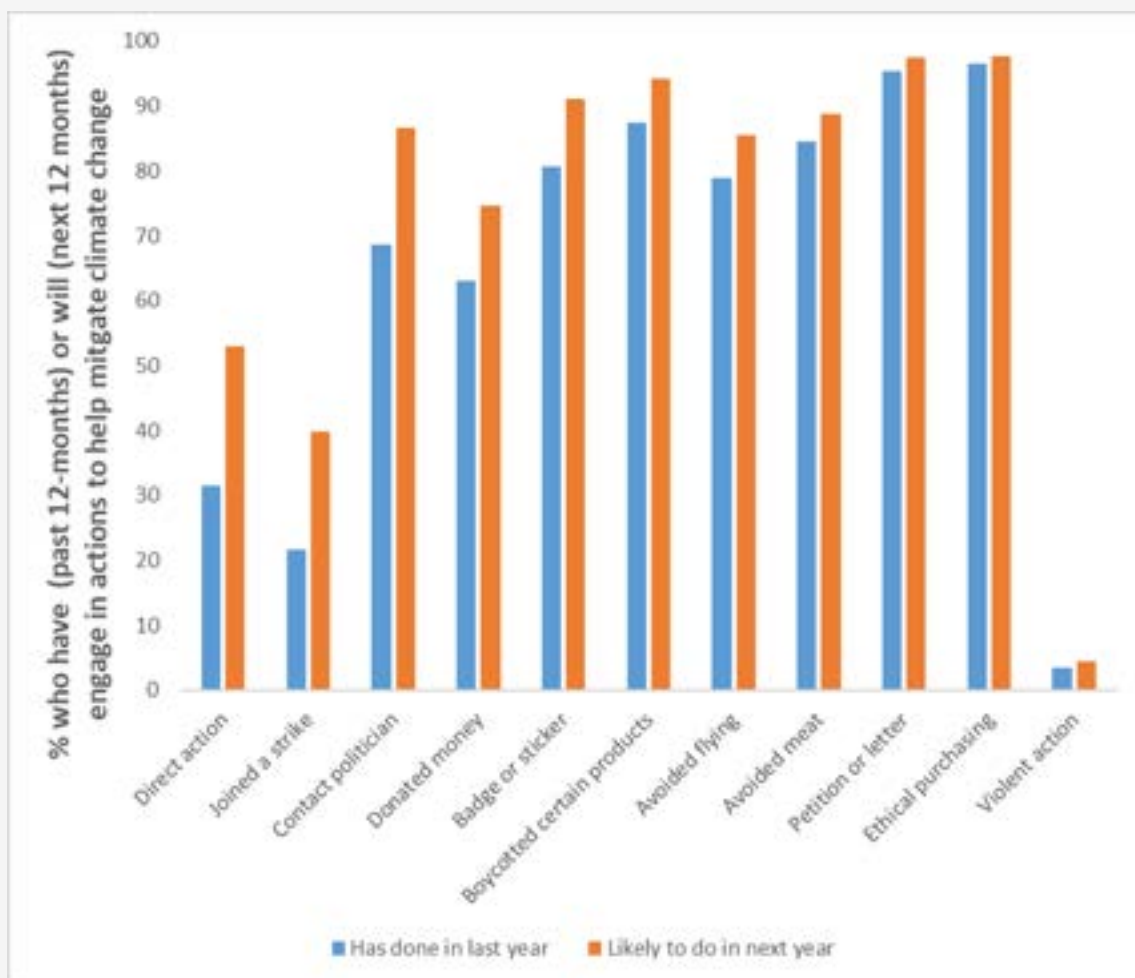
Table 1 shows the types of organisation that TBO participants reported being active in or donating to. The Table lists the type of organisations in order of the proportion of active members they have (from the category with the most active memberships at the top, to the least active at the bottom). By far the most popular organisational type for active membership was, perhaps unsurprisingly, environmental organisations (56% of our respondents are active members). Third world (13%), peace (11%) and gender organisations (11% for LGBTQI+ and 8% for women's) are, respectively, ranked lowest. One interesting observation from Table 1 is that some of the organisations that were less popular as membership organisations were more popular for donations. Third world or global justice organisations, for example, were donated to by 35% of respondents, but only 15% were active in them. Human rights organisations also have a higher proportion of donors than active members. This is likely to reflect the ways organisations such as Oxfam or Amnesty International engage with their supporters, with a strong concentration on fund-raising to support aid projects or professional human rights advocacy.

In contrast, for environmental organisations, many more TBO participants were active members (56%) than donors (25%). In the April 2019 Rebellion, 61% of participants were members of environmental organisations, and in October 2019, 81% were (Saunders et al 2020). Despite, as we have seen, the centrality of XR in recruiting participants in TBO, the overall proportion of participants claiming to be members of environmental organisations was therefore lower than for the 2019 Rebellions, and much lower than for the October 2019 Rebellion.

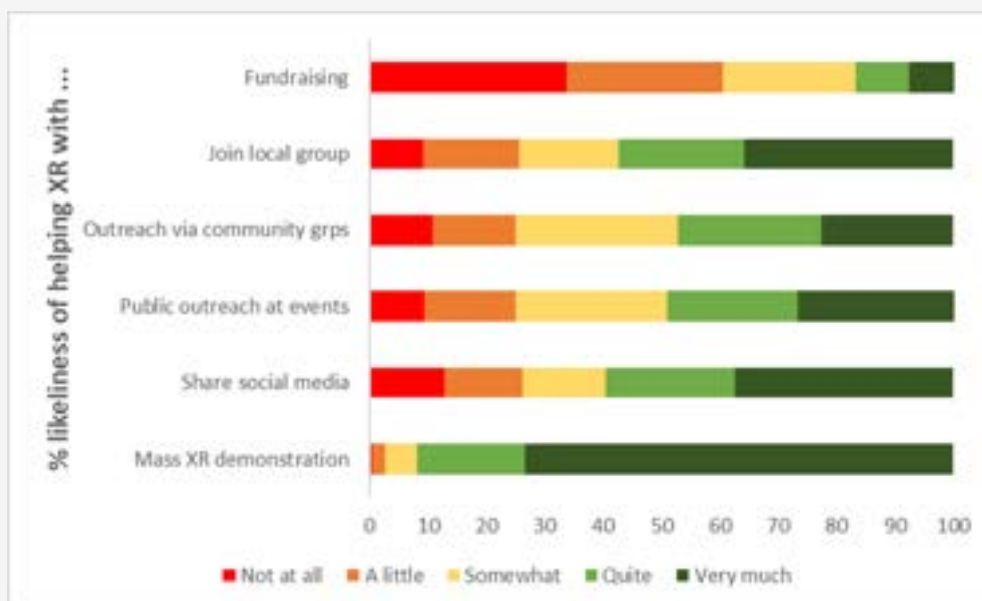
TBO participants claimed that they were, across a range of ways of influencing on climate change, more likely to engage in political activism on climate change after their participation in TBO compared to the preceding year. The differences were marginal for some of the more popular forms of activism (e.g. 97% already claimed to engage in ethical consumerism, but 98% said they would do so in the next year; and 95% of participants had signed petitions in the past 12 months, a similar proportion to the 98% who said they would do so again in the next 12 months). The differences were also marginal for violent acts (3% said they had committed some form of politically motivated violence in the past 12 months, and 4% said they would do so in the next 12 months). Despite the calm tone of TBO, the proportion of people who professed willingness to engage in direct action was markedly higher than the proportion of people who said they had done so in the past 12 months (32% reported to have participated in NVDA the past 12 months, whereas 53% said they would do so in the next 12 months, a difference of 21%). Predictions of increased activity also applied to joining a strike (up by 18%), donating money (up 12%), wearing a badge or sticker (a 10% increase), boycotting products and avoiding flying (both up by 7%). Thus, for most participants, taking part in TBO was synonymous with them expecting to take more political actions over the next 12 months. It is important to note here that a majority of TBO participants already claimed to have engaged in most of these non-violent forms of political action in the year preceding TBO (see Figure 9).



Figure 9. Actions Big One participants have done in the past 12-months and claim that they will do in the next 12-months to help mitigate climate change



Many TBO participants were keen to support XR's mass demonstrations in the future: 92% claimed that they were quite or very much likely to do so. In contrast, 60% said that they would quite, or very much, support XR in the future through social media, which was the second most popular category of actions for future support. Around half said they would join a local group (57% quite or very much) or follow up on their TBO participation with further participation in public outreach at events (49% quite or very much) and in the community (45%). Fundraising was by far the least popular activity – over a third said 'not at all', and only 8% were very keen to help raise funds (see Figure 10).

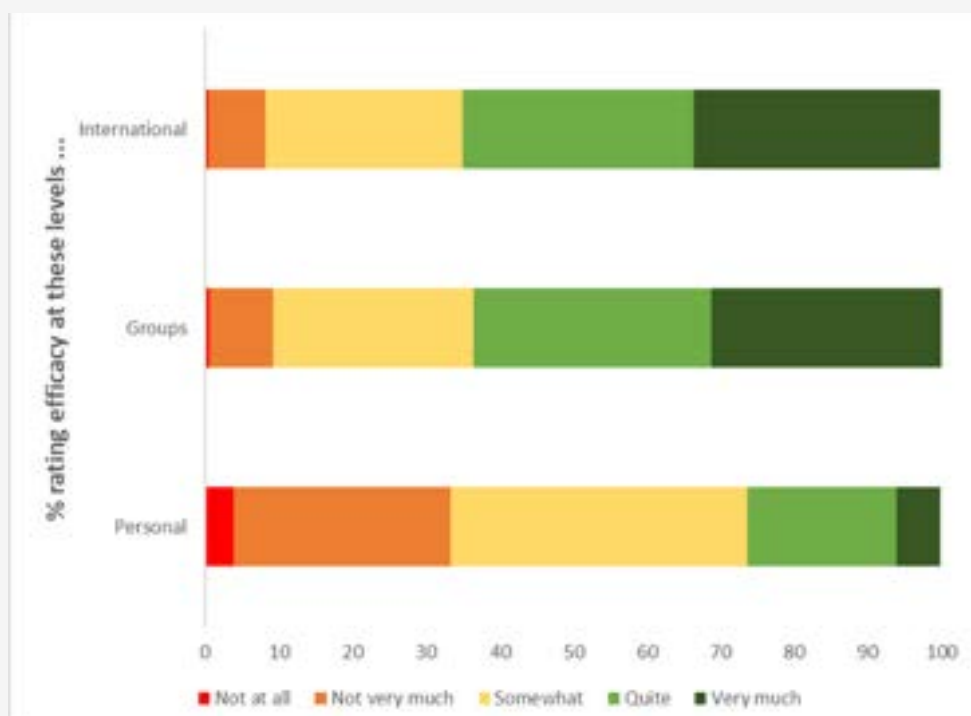
Figure 10. Likelihood of participants helping XR in a variety of ways after The Big One

4 | POLITICAL ATTITUDES

The political parties most closely identified with by TBO participants were the Green Party (preferred by 48%) and Labour (24%). Only a minority identified with the Liberal Democrats (4%), other parties (4%), and almost none with the Conservatives (0.3%). Just over one-fifth claimed that they do not identify with any political party (21%). There is an interesting contrast here with participants in the 2019 XR Rebellions, of whom only 15.5% identified with Labour and 59.1% with the Green Party (Saunders et al 2020). The change in 2023 seems consistent with other evidence that TBO mobilised some new groups compared to the 2019 Rebellions.

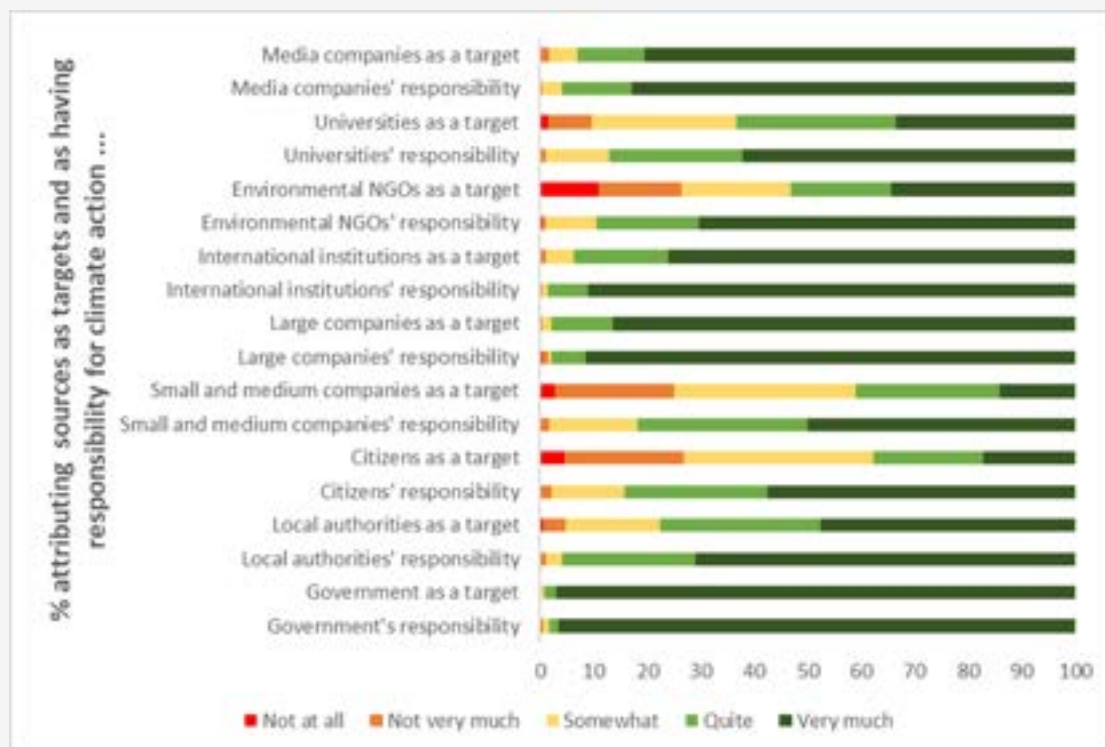
TBO participants in 2023 mostly identified with the left (82% place themselves between 0 and 3 on an 11-point left-right self-placement scale [LRSP]), whilst only a few are centrist (9% score 4-5 on the LRSP scale), and just 2% identify with the right (with a LRSP between 6 and 10). A further 7% said that they did not want to put themselves on the LRSP scale (a view that has been common among Green Party supporters in the past). For the 559 participants that did place themselves on this scale, the average (mean) LRSP score is 3.75, with a standard deviation of 2.9. As in the surveys of XR in 2019, when there were very similar results on left-right placement (Saunders et al 2020), TBO participants can be classified as overwhelmingly on the left and, to a large extent, on the green left.

TBO participants, on aggregate, thought that organised groups and transnational activist networks were more likely than their own individual actions to be effective at bringing about changes to public policy. 91% thought that organised groups were at least somewhat efficacious and 92% also thought this about transnational networks. This compares to almost exactly one-third who considered that their own individual participation had little (not very much or not at all) effect on public policy (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Big One participants' senses of efficacy

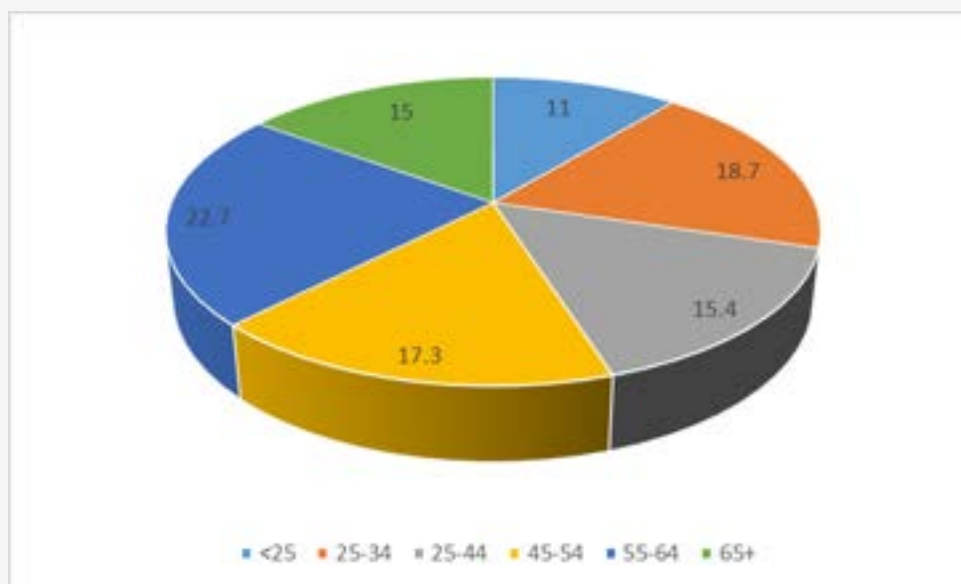
Government and large companies are almost ubiquitously recognised as being responsible for climate change and as targets for climate protest. Nearly everyone who answered said that these institutions were very much responsible and very much to be targeted. They were followed by media outlets and international institutions. Curiously, fewer TBO participants thought that international institutions should be targeted for protest than those who thought these institutions were responsible. Their view, on aggregate, is that responsibility for climate change should be shared across a wide range of actors and institutions. Universities, environmental NGOs and citizens are among the least preferred targets for climate protest, but still around half claim they have at least quite a lot of responsibility for solving climate change and should be targeted.



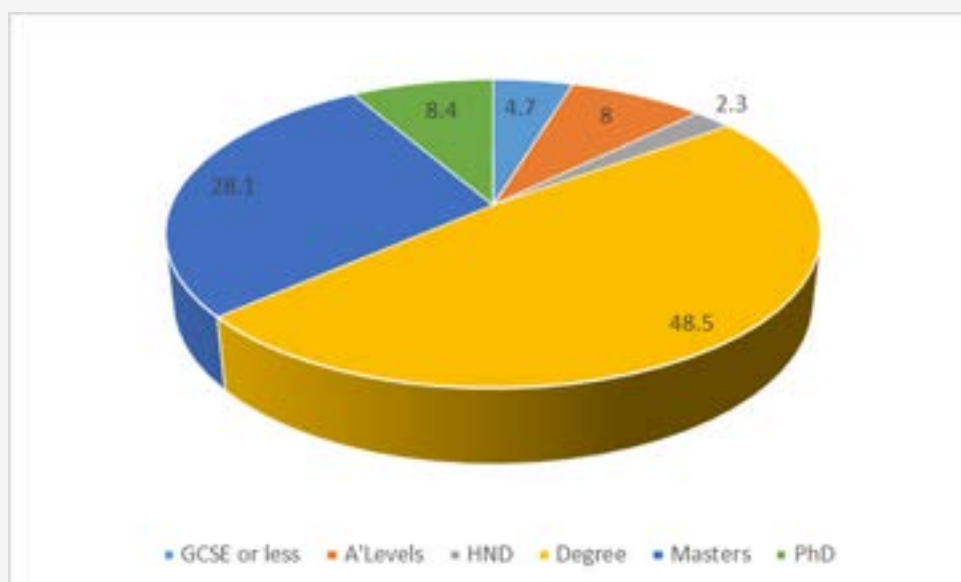
Figure 12. Responsibilities and targets for climate action

5 | SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS

TBO was hugely successful at mobilising people across a range of age groups. Most of the age groups we categorised represent about 15-20% of the crowd, with the outliers being younger people (aged 24 or less) who made up only 11% of participants, and those in the 55-64 age group who made up 23% of those present. The age profile of participants in TBO is more similar to that of UK climate demonstrations in general than to previous XR Rebellions. UK climate demonstrations (data aggregated from a variety of years) over the age of 65 usually comprise around 15% of participants (see Saunders et al 2020). For the Rebel actions in London in April and October 2019, the proportion of people older than 65 years was much smaller (8.9% in April 2019 and 7% in October 2019). But the Rebel actions of 2019 did proportionally attract more younger people, especially in April 2019 (24% were under 25 years, compared to just 11% of TBO respondents).

Figure 13. Age categories of Big One participants

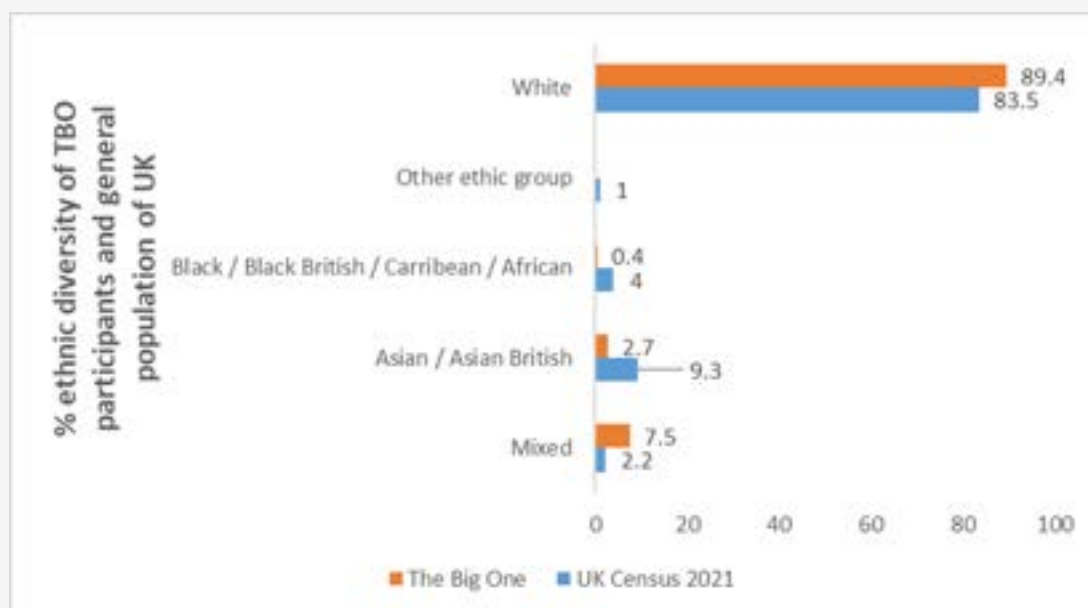
The participants are very highly educated: 85% had either completed or were currently engaging in University education. Nearly half had a university degree as their highest level of education, 28% had a Masters, and 8% a PhD. Note that these are extraordinarily high levels of education (equating to more than double the level of graduates in the general population: the 2021 census indicates that 34% of the population have a degree or higher), but they are broadly comparable to the educational profiles of those attending UK climate demonstrations and previous XR Rebellions (Saunders et al 2020).

Figure 14. Highest level of education of Big One participants

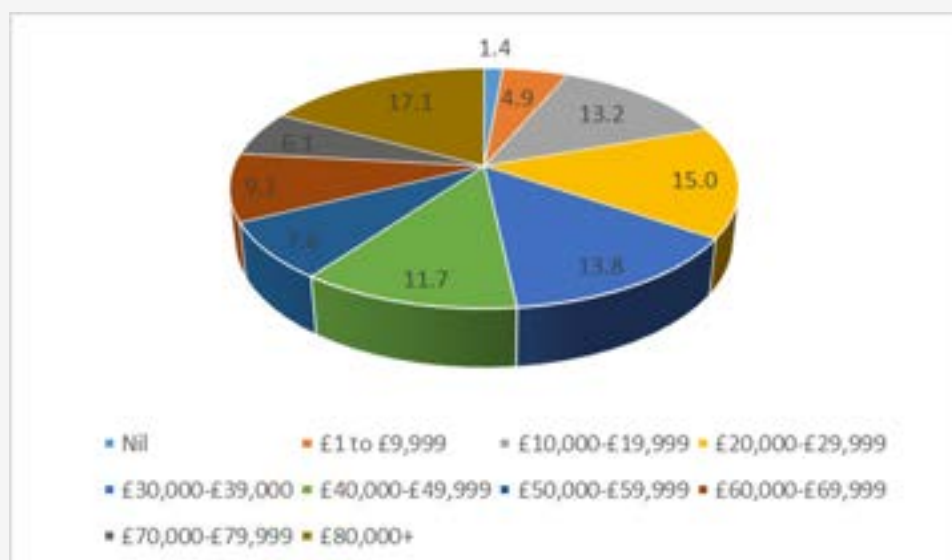
As is usual with environmental demonstrations (see Saunders et al 2020), more women participated than men (56% female, 40% male). Those identifying as non-binary comprised 4% of participants (up from only one survey respondent in April 2019 who identified as non-binary, Saunders et al 2020). Only 2 respondents (0.4%) preferred not to let us know their gender.

Along with the other observers carrying out the survey, we noted the relative racial diversity of TBO compared to previous climate change demonstrations, which had been almost wholly white. In Figure 15, we show the ethnicity of participants compared to the UK census. Note that the survey did not capture the 'other ethnic group' category, who represent 1% of the UK population. Proportionately, there were more dual heritage (the UK census uses the term 'mixed race') people participating in TBO events than in the UK population. Black and Asian groups, however, are under-represented.

Figure 15. Ethnic diversity of TBO compared to ethnic diversity of the UK in the 2021 census



In 2022, UK median household income was £38,100 (Office for National Statistics 2023). In the TBO survey, we only asked for broad income categories. From these, we estimate the median income category for TBO participants at £41,453.^[xi] This is higher than the median national household income for 2022, but not by much when we account for inflation. In interpreting this disparity, we must remember that TBO participants are highly educated relative to the national population (Figure 14). Note that the reporting of the median conceals disparity in income across TBO participants, as it does for the population of the UK in general. £80,000+ is the most frequently listed category (i.e. the modal category) among TBO participants (17% of respondents were in this category). The next largest category was £20,000-£29,000, to which 15% of TBO respondents belong (Figure 16). Thus, there were also significant numbers of higher and lower income participants, as well as mid-ranged ones; indeed, overall, there was considerable variety in the income brackets of participants. This variety is probably explained by the employment profile of participants: nearly one-third are in full-time work, just over one-fifth are self-employed, and just under one-fifth are in part-time work. A significant proportion are retired. There are relatively few students and homemakers, and fewer still self-employed people with staff (see Table 2).

Figure 16. Total household income categories of Big One participants**Table 2. Employment status of Big One participants**

Employment status (n=602)	% of respondents
Work full-time	31.6
Free-lance / self employed	21.8
Work part-time	19.1
(Early) retired	17.5
Study full-time	7.0
Work at home for my family	2.8
Study part-time	1.7
Unemployed / between jobs	1.5
Self-employed with employed staff	1.0

Note: the column adds to more than 100% because we allowed participants to select as many boxes as were applicable.

TBO participants came from a range social classes. We classified the jobs that participants wrote that they were doing according to Oesch 8.[xii] The most popular class was socio-cultural (semi) professionals, which made up nearly one-quarter of respondents. Service workers and technical (semi) professionals – IT workers, engineers, scientists – were just shy of one-fifth of respondents in each category. Self-employed professionals made up 13% of respondents, but smaller numbers of TBO participants were clerks, (associate) managers, production workers and small business owners (see Figure 17). Note that this is relatively consistent with the subjective social class positions that XR rebels assigned to themselves in the 2019 (April and October) rebellions. Around two-third of those rebels self-described as middle class. We did not ask for details of their occupations in 2019, only their self-identified social class (Saunders et al 2020).

Figure 17. Oesch 8 social class classification of participants



Figure 18. The home postcode of UK-based XR participants

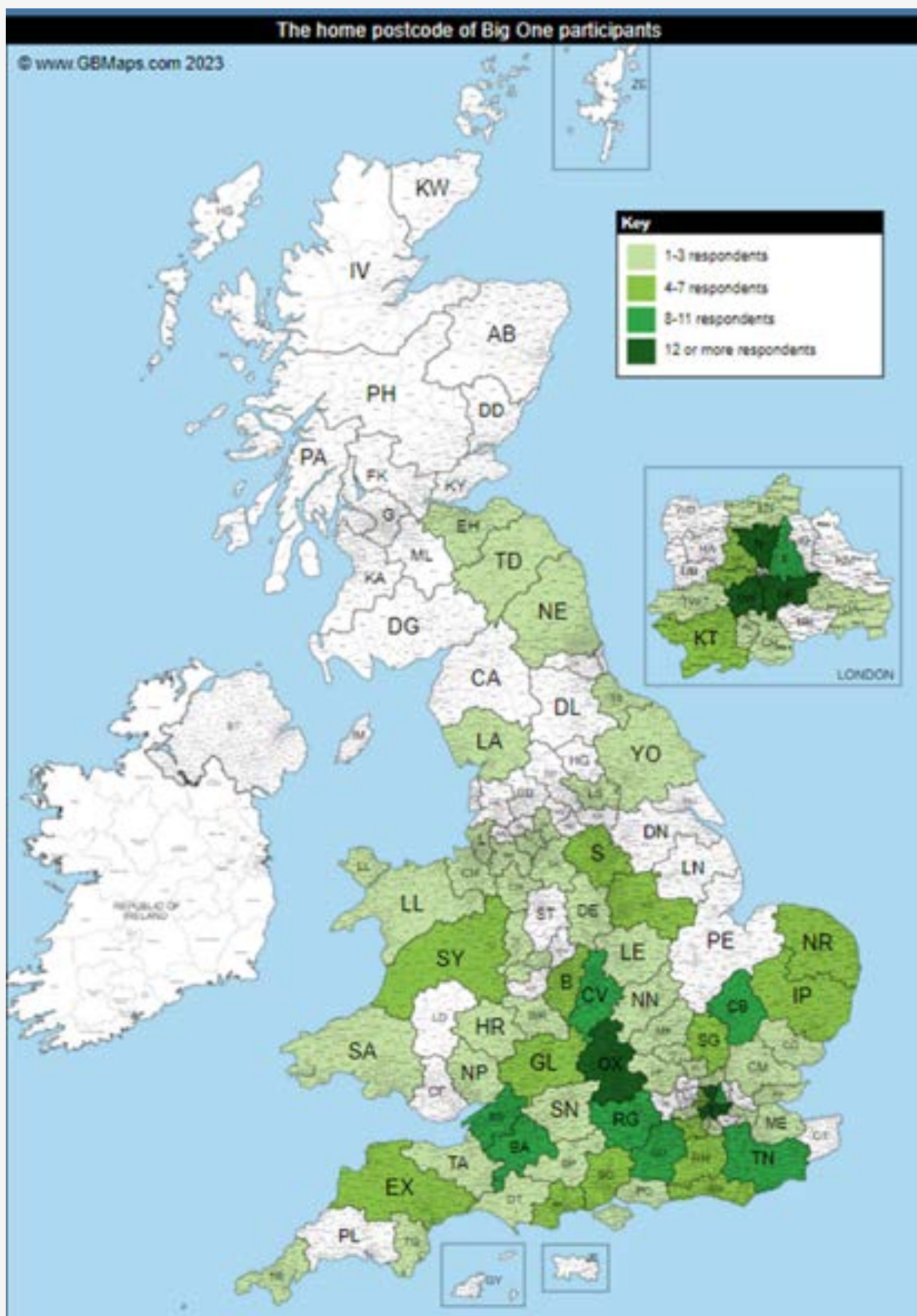


Figure 18 visualises the locations that mobilised the highest proportions of TBO participants. The most popular location, Oxford (OX by postcode) mobilised 3.8% of surveyed participants in TBO (15 respondents). Other popular areas were within Greater London (see Figure 15). In the diagram, we present the areas from which higher numbers of participants came in darker shades of green and those with lower in pale green (those with none are in white). By way of example, eleven were from postcode GU (Guildford), 10 from CV (Coventry, coded in the next darkest shade from OX and BS (Bristol)). In contrast, only 1 surveyed participant came from LL (Llandudno) and another one from NP (Newport). This compares to some locations (e.g. KW (Kirkwall) and TS (Teesside/Cleveland) that did not have any respondents. To some degree the map shows that participants were more likely to live close to London, with very few from Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland or Northern England but there are also areas in North East, East and South London and others close to London, such as East Kent and Buckinghamshire, that had no respondents. This seems to indicate limits to the mobilisation that TBO achieved in many parts of the country. Many participants came from areas with relatively strong Green Party support, such as Oxford, East Anglia, Sussex, and Bristol and Avon.

6 | COMPARING THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED ON DIFFERENT DAYS

Nearly half of the respondents participated in TBO on only one day, and none participated only on the Monday. We now compare those who participated on Friday (pickets and faith march), Saturday (biodiversity march) and Sunday (Unite to Survive and migrant justice) with those who participated in 2 or more days of action (including Monday, The March to End Fossil Fuels). Note that the sample for Sunday only is very small (n=5) and so the proportions given are likely to be skewed by small sampling errors.

Table 3. Active membership in organisational sectors by day(s) of participation

	Friday only n=101	Saturday only n=182	Sunday only n=5	2+ days n=298
Environment	55.4	33.5	40	72.8
Community	51.5	44	20	51.3
Sport	26.7	15.4	20	22.7
Charity	25.5	28.2	20	32.4
Church	23.5	14.9	0	14.2
Anti-rascist	17.8	16.5	20	23.1
Human rights	15.8	13.7	0	17
Peace	14.9	6	0	14.1
Third world	14	4.9	0	18.6
Union	12.9	20.8	0	19.5
LGBTQI	10.9	8.8	50	13.1
Women's	5.9	6.1	0	8.9

Table 3 shows active membership in organisational sectors cross-tabulated by the day(s) of participation in TBO. Most notably, it shows that those who participated in two or more days of action were more likely than the rest of the sample to be active participants in environmental organisations (73% compared to 55% or lower on the other days). Active sports membership was less common on those who attended TBO actions on Saturday only (15% compared to 27% attending Friday only and 23% on more than one day), but this might be because some active sports players did not turn out on Saturday due to commitment to their sporting activities. Union membership was notably lower among Friday only participants (at 13%) whereas it was at around one-fifth of the participants on Saturday and more than one day. This may be because Friday was a standard working day for union members in the sample.

Table 4 shows past climate change demonstration participation (ever) by the day of participation compared to participation on multiple days. Those participating in multiple days of action were markedly less likely to be newcomers (only 10% of them had never participated in a climate change demonstration before compared to one-fifth or more of those participating in single days). Around one-third of those participating in two or more days of TBO had participated in climate demonstrations at least 11 times, compared to 10% of Friday only participants and 4% of Saturday only participants. There is thus some indication that the most committed and persistent climate change demonstrators participated in TBO on multiple days.

Table 4. Past climate change demonstration (ever) by day(s) of participation

	Friday only n=101	Saturday only n=182	Sunday only n=5	2+ days n=298
Never	30.9	22.6	20	9.6
1-5 times	41.5	53.5	60	31.9
6-10 times	18.1	19.5	20	24.5
11-20 times	2.1	3.1	0	19.4
21+times	7.4	1.3	0	14.6

In Table 5, we show the party most closely identified with cross-tabulated with the day(s) on which demonstrators participated. Identification with the Green Party was slightly higher on Friday and for those participating in actions on multiple days. Those identifying most closely with Labour came out to the streets in higher numbers on the Friday and Saturday. Liberal Democrat supporters were less likely to attend two or more days of action. A higher proportion of participants who said that they do not identify with any party turned out on multiple days than on a single day, followed by those on Saturday.

Table 5. Party most closely identified with by day(s) of participation

	Friday only n=101	Saturday only n=182	Sunday only n=5	2+ days n=298
Green	53.1	43.3	40	52.1
Labour	29.6	30.9	20	18.3
Liberal democrat	5.1	5.6	20	2.0
Conservative	0	0	0	0.7
Other	1	3.9	0	4.8
None	11.2	16.3	20	22.1

Friday's day of action had proportionally fewer post-graduates than the other days. There were also proportionately fewer post-graduates participating in TBO actions on more than one day. Across all days of action, the huge majority of participants were university educated (see Table 6).

Table 6. Highest educational level by day(s) of participation

	Friday only n=102	Saturday only n=181	Sunday only n=5	2+ days n=299
GCSE or less	1.0	3.3	0	7.4
'A' Level	10.8	7.2	0	8.0
HND	3.9	2.2	0	2.0
Degree	48.0	45.9	60.0	47.8
Masters	27.0	31.5	20.0	27.8
PhD	10.0	9.9	20.0	7.0

Table 7 shows that the class profile of participants is similar across all of the days of action (exempting, of course, Sunday, about which it is difficult to make any conclusions).

Table 7. Oesch 8 class classification by day(s) of participation

	Friday only n=95	Saturday only n=160	Sunday only n=5	2+ days n=298
Socio-cultural (semi-) professionals	23.2	25.6	0	25.7
Service workers	23.2	16.3	0	20.4
Technical (semi-) professionals	16.8	21.3	60	17.7
Self-employed professionals (Associate) managers	12.6	10.6	20	14.7
Clerks	9.5	8.1	0	7.2
Small business owners	8.4	10.6	20	6.8
Production workers	4.2	1.3	0	2.3
	2.1	6.3	0	5.3

The age profile of participants is similar across all of the days of action (Table 8), except for Sunday only, for which we do not have sufficient data to generalise.

Table 8. Age category by day(s) of participation

	Friday only n=101	Saturday only n=182	Sunday only n=5	2+ days n=298
24 or younger	9.8	11	0	12.2
25-34 years	19.6	24.2	20	16
35-44 years	12.7	20.3	40	13.2
45-54 years	18.6	14.3	20	14.7
55-64 years	21.6	17.6	20	27.2
65 years and older	17.6	12.6	0	16.7



7 | REFLECTIONS

- Participant profiles are similar to previous non-radical climate change marches, and are slightly more diverse than XR rebellions. This suggests that XR is making some progress at delivering “attendance over arrest and relationships over roadblocks”. [xiii] In relation to this, many participants claimed to be likely or very likely to support XR at future mass demonstrations, perhaps because of TBO’s lawful and peaceful tactics.
- Many major environmental and humanitarian NGOs agreed to support TBO, but failed to mass mobilise their members. This may be because they were distrustful of XR because of its previous engagement in illegal and radical actions. The lack of arrests at The Big One might now facilitate closer working relationships with these organisations, who can help mobilise even broader constituencies. A wider range of more conservative NGOs may now be approached.
- Stronger links could be made with LGBTQIA+ and women’s organisations.
- Peace and anti-war organisations might be encouraged to think through more clearly on the environmental implications of war and mobilise their members to these events.
- Participants considered that government is responsible for climate change and should be targeted, but they did not feel that TBO had been effective at encouraging the government to take responsibility. Is it time to think through more effective ways to influence government as well as other important targets like corporations and the media? There is some recent evidence from actions widely supported by XR – Global Fight to End Fossil Fuels[xiv] and Oily Money Out[xv] – that this is already taking place.[xvi]
- While TBO participants donated substantially in person at TBO, they seem least keen on contributing to XR by helping with fundraising. Is there work to be done in raising awareness of the costs of running actions and the organisation to make this work appear more necessary?
- Participants felt that TBO was effective at reaching a diverse public, but there is more work to do here. Green and Labour Party supporters are over-represented and Black and Asian communities are still under-represented. There is significant work to be done with and through Black and Asian community networks and local political parties.

References

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Office for National Statistics (2023) Effects of taxes and benefits on UK household income: financial year ending 2022, released 18/07/2023.

Saunders C, Hayes G and Doherty B (2020) 'A New Climate Movement? Extinction Rebellion's Activists in Profile', Centre for Understanding Sustainable Prosperity, Working Paper Series, Number 25. Available at: <https://cusp.ac.uk/themes/p/xr-study/>. Last accessed 24 November 2023.

Appendix: A note on methodology

The survey team used a modified version of the Caught in the Act of Protest survey methodology (Klandermans et al 2009). We handed out 3082 leaflets that linked to an online survey that participants completed in their own time on the survey platform called Qualtrics. Approximately one in five of these leaflets were linked with a short face-to-face survey that we have used to measure (and weight for) response rate bias. The idea is that the face-to-face survey consists of a fairly random sample of people in the crowd because a) we selected one protester in every 5 who were randomly give a questionnaire as respondents; b) 98% of people approached for an interview responded to the survey and c) a "pointer" is used to select participants randomly to avoid interviewer selection bias. Put differently, there is only minimal response rate and interviewer bias with face-to-face interviews. In contrast, our response rate to the online survey is only 20% - at the time of analysis, we received 611 responses. We were then able to compare responses from the two samples. We found that three variables had statistically significant differences between the online and interview samples. These are age, participation in Extinction Rebellion demonstrations before and education. The mean age for online respondents was 49.8 years, compared to 46.5 for the interviewed sample ($t=3.1$, $p=0.002$). The online respondents were significantly more highly educated (Pearson's Chi 15.6, $p=0.008$). 44% of online respondents had a post-graduate education, compared to 37% of those interviewed. The biggest bias was in the proportion who had participated in Extinction Rebellion demonstrations in the past: 60.5% of online respondents had participated in them before, compared to only 39.5% of those we interviewed (who constitute a random and therefore more representative sample). To fix these response rate biases, we used an iterative step-wise solution to manually generate weights. We then applied the weights to all of the analysis except for the sociograms (for sociograms, weights to not make sense as it is not possible to represent a person - a circular node - as a proportion of a node).

End notes

[i]<https://extinctionrebellion.uk/the-big-one/supporters/>

[ii]<https://extinctionrebellion.uk/event/september-2022/>

[iii]<https://extinctionrebellion.uk/2022/12/31/we-quit/>

[iv]<https://www.earthday.org/history/>

[v]<https://extinctionrebellion.uk/the-big-one/supporter-agreement/>

[vi]<https://extinctionrebellion.uk/the-big-one/support-the-big-one/>

[vii]<https://extinctionrebellion.uk/the-big-one/supporters/>

[viii]XR's sign up form for TBO did not require a potential participant to join XR: most smaller supporting organisations did not feel the need to develop their own sign up forms

[ix]For legal reasons, the Green Party was not a supporter, though Caroline Lucas was a speaker at the event: <https://www.londonworld.com/news/extinction-rebellion-chris-packham-caroline-lucas-the-big-one-4106641>

[x]The situation may change, however: XR reports that many participants signed up to Greenpeace at the event, perhaps reflecting Greenpeace's re-found enthusiasm for NVDA - see e.g. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-66391947>

[xi]We estimate the median income of TBO participants by assuming an even distribution of income across the median income category of £40,000-£49,000

[xii]https://people.unil.ch/danieloesch/files/2020/11/Oesch_2006_Redrawing_the_Class_Map_full_book.pdf

[xiii]<https://extinctionrebellion.uk/2022/12/31/we-quit/>

[xiv]<https://fightfossilfuels.net/>

[xv]<https://www.oilymoneyout.uk/>

[xvi]And see <https://extinctionrebellion.uk/press/>