

Article

All Shades of Green: The Anatomy of the Fridays for Future Movement in Italy

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Abstract: The Fridays for Future (FFF) movement has emerged as a critical force in environmental activism in response to pressing climate challenges. Despite its global prominence, few studies have delved deeply into the internal lines of thought within FFF communities. Our research fills this gap by exploring the diverse perspectives within the Italian FFF community and how these viewpoints influence the movement’s civic and political dedication to environmental sustainability. We are specifically interested in the *shades of green*, namely the internal variations of attitudes and beliefs of the FFF participants. We conducted empirical research with over 300 climate activists from the FFF movement in Italy, collecting data from March to October 2022 using a Web-based respondent-driven sampling technique (webRDS). The questionnaire, comprising 27 questions, covers topics such as political values, institutional trust, technological attitudes, climate knowledge, and personal lifestyles. We chose Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) for our analysis due to its valuable mathematical properties, capability for producing insightful visual representations, and efficient computational features. The analysis reveals four distinct groups within the Italian FFF community based on their attitudes and actions related to environmental sustainability. These groups include Activist Equalizer, Disillusioned Technophobes, Institution Trustee, and Laissez-faire Solitaries, challenging the prevailing notion that FFF activists solely fit the profile of Activist Equalizers often depicted in media and public discourse. Findings offer a novel picture of the FFF movement in Italy and contribute to a better understanding of how the internal diversity of FFF impacts the efficacy and future trajectory of environmental activism. This research offers new insight into the political role of FFF and its potential influence on climate-related political actions.

Keywords: Fridays for Future; climate activism; respondent-driven sampling; environmental sustainability; green movements



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1. Introduction

We live in times of social upheaval and great challenges, such as the climate crisis, which has taken on an increasingly important role over the years. Indeed, 2023 is on track to be the hottest year on record; just after 2021, it was the highest temperature recorded since the advent of the industrial era. To fight the climate emergency, new environmental movements have emerged worldwide. Among them, the Fridays for Future (FFF) movement is the biggest one, and its public impact is widely recognized. The FFF goal is to keep the attention focused on the issue of climate change in order to make it a priority for the international political agenda. FFF is a key case of non-institutionalized political participation and could significantly affect climate politics. Exposure to environmental protests increases the vote share of the Green parties, and repeated exposure to protests

increases this effect [1]. FFF represents a new wave of climate activism among the so-called green movements [2]. The differences between the first and the second generation of these movements are in terms of demographics, tactics, and the activists' understanding of climate-related issues and what to do about them.

The Fridays for Future movement, initiated by Swedish activist Greta Thunberg in August 2018, has emerged as a noteworthy youth-led climate action movement worldwide [3,4]. The movement involves young people taking time off from school on Fridays to participate in peaceful protests, calling for immediate action on climate change. The Fridays for Future movement has sparked interest and debate among academics and researchers, who have sought to understand its origins, impact, and implications.

The Fridays for Future movement experienced rapid diffusion across Europe after its inception in Sweden. With climate change protests becoming transnational, European youths resonated with the cause and rapidly embraced the movement. Various European countries, including Germany, France, Spain, and the United Kingdom, witnessed large-scale strikes and demonstrations led by young people. Schools, universities, and public spaces became the hubs of climate activism as thousands of students and young adults gathered to demand more ambitious climate policies and actions from their governments and the European Union. The European movement has also been characterized by international solidarity, with coordinated strikes and protests across different European countries and even collaborations on policy recommendations for the EU's climate action plans. The utilization of social media played a pivotal role in the rapid expansion and coordination of the movement throughout Europe [5].

The Italian Fridays for Future (FFF) movement adheres to the worldwide initiative's principles. Students and young activists across Italy organize and engage in strikes, protests, and other public events, generally on Fridays, to demand more action on climate change and environmental sustainability. The movement also aims to increase awareness about the effects of climate change and the significance of moving to more sustainable practices [6–8].

Strikes and demonstrations have occurred across Italy, including Rome, Milan, Turin, and Naples. Many of these protests have been marked by kids missing school to attend the rallies, reflecting Greta Thunberg's "school strike for climate" movement.

The FFF movement in Italy has been particularly outspoken in its support for renewable energy, national and international climate legislation, and the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Their efforts are also distinguished by a commitment to raising awareness of the effects of climate change and the necessity of switching to more sustainable practices [9].

A key facet of the Italian FFF movement is its astute utilization of social media as both a tool for engagement and a platform for advocacy. By harnessing the ubiquity and connectivity of platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, the movement disseminates information, galvanizes support, and orchestrates events, fostering a cohesive and dynamic community linking collective and connective action [10–12].

While the impact and spread of the FFF movement in Italy are patent, there is a lack of knowledge on the internal composition/heterogeneity of the movement. Consequently, this work aims to analyze and delineate this internal diversity and to understand how it shapes the group's civic and political commitment toward environmental sustainability.

Therefore, our research questions are as follows:

R1: What are participants' different attitudes and beliefs ("shades of green") in the Italian FFF community?

R2: How do these attitudes and beliefs shape activists' motivations, behavioral perspectives, and collective strategies?

The study aims to ascertain how the different lines of thought within the movement affect its approach to environmental advocacy. By mapping out these perspectives and examining their interrelations, this research intends to provide insights into the intricacies and dynamism of the Italian FFF movement and to discern the implications of this diversity for both the movement and the broader environmental campaign.

This will be achieved by empirically assessing the traits, motivations, and attitudes driving these young activists and examining how economic, social, and political contexts interplay with their varied individual motivations and collective strategies.

Multiple methods, including surveys, interviews, and content analysis, will be employed to glean insights into the movement's participants, motivations, and the strategies they adopt. Specifically, we engaged with over 300 climate activists from the FFF movement in Italy, collecting data from March to October 2022 using a Web-based respondent-driven sampling technique (webRDS). The administered questionnaire, comprising 27 questions, delves into political values, institutional trust, technological attitudes, climate knowledge, and personal lifestyles.

To decipher these data, our chosen analytical tool was Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), primarily for its beneficial mathematical properties, aptitude for creating insightful visual representations, and computational efficiency.

Our analysis reveals four distinct groups within the Italian FFF community based on their attitudes and actions related to environmental sustainability. These groups are *Activist Equalizer*, *Disillusioned Technophobes*, *Institution Trustee*, and *Laissez-faire Solitaries*. This challenges the prevailing notion in media and public discourse that FFF activists predominantly fit the profile of Activist Equalizers.

The findings will serve as a lens through which policymakers, academics, and other stakeholders can comprehend and engage with this burgeoning force in the environmental sphere.

2. Literature Review

The Fridays for Future movement started in August 2018 when 15-year-old Greta Thunberg protested outside the Swedish parliament. Since then, the movement has grown to involve millions of young people worldwide, who have organized strikes and protests to demand action on climate change [13,14]. The Fridays for Future movement has been the subject of several recent scientific papers that have sought to understand its motivations, characteristics, and impact [15].

To begin with, Berker et al. [16] examined the responses of 19 political parties in Austria, Germany, and Sweden to the Fridays for Future movement. Using Qualitative Comparative Analysis, they found that parties' responses were primarily guided by their ideological stances and environmental preferences rather than party competition. Notably, the study found that despite the movement's moderate demands, it did not receive broad support from center-right parties. Wahlström et al. [5] also used a comparative framework and conducted a comprehensive investigation into the characteristics of the Fridays for Future movements, including the profile of protestors, the web of mobilizations, and the motivations behind participant involvement. The scope of this study spanned across 13 European cities.

A national case study is used by Maier [17], who conducted a study to understand how German Fridays for Future protestors define their activism. Using framing theory and an analysis of protest signs from ten German cities, the research revealed protestors' focus on climate change-related political issues and their demand for intergenerational climate justice. In addition, Huttunen and Albrecht [18] conducted a case study on Finland's Fridays for Future (FFF) movement, specifically investigating how the movement frames young people's environmental citizenship. This study focused on media coverage and Twitter discussions in Finland and revealed three frames: sustainable lifestyle, active youth, and school attendance. These findings highlighted the diverse facets of environmental citizenship expressed by the youth within the FFF movement. The research significantly advances our understanding of this global movement, catalyzing youth engagement in civic activities in Finland and globally.

On the new media side, Brünker et al. [19] investigated collective identity formation and its impact on collective action on social media, specifically in the context of the social movement Fridays for Future. The authors applied automated text classification tech-

niques to Instagram communication related to the movement and analyzed 1137 comments. The findings suggest that individuals mainly express Group Cohesion and Emotional Attachment rather than Solidarity by commenting on Instagram. The paper presents a proposed model of collective group/social identity of collective action and aims to enhance the classification and test the model in future research. Similarly, Boulianne et al. [20] analyzed the movement's use of digital media (tweets), how it has engaged with politics and policy, and its impact on public opinion and awareness of climate change. The authors argue that the Fridays for Future movement has successfully raised awareness and mobilized young people, but its effectiveness influences policy and political change. Marquardt [21] examined the self-understanding of the movement and the media discourse surrounding these demonstrations in Germany to study various conceptions of social life and political order within and related to FFF. The research shows that contemporary school demonstrations are not only about climate change but also represent more basic political conflicts over divergent theories of how society will develop in the face of climate change. However, the demonstrators' heavy emphasis on science-based politics runs the danger of obscuring these more extensive social discussions, which might stabilize the market-based, technocentric justification for taking action on climate change. Padilla-Castillo and Rodríguez-Hernández [22] analyzed the network structure in Twitter by interactions created about the 23 September 2022 demonstrations regarding the #FridaysForFuture movement. The authors have individuated the characteristics of social networks in the days before and after the demonstration, the opinion leaders, and the conversations generated.

More qualitative studies are the ones by Wallis and Loy [23], who used interviews with young activists in Germany to explore the Fridays for Future movement and the broader youth-led climate activism it represents. Pickard [24] offers crucial insights into this specific young cohort's environmental concern, agency, efficacy, collective involvement, and protest acts through semi-structured interviews with school climate strikers (FFF and Extinction Rebellion). The author argues that due to their unique shared experiences, many young people now constitute a generation unit engaged in Do-it-Ourselves (DIO) politics, particularly environmental activism. The essay contains both theoretical and quality information.

The connection between attitudes and collective action is analyzed in several studies. Svensson et al. [25] explored how Fridays for Future protestors perceive and communicate the issue of climate change—an aspect termed 'prognostic framing'. They employed a mixed-methods approach to examine participants' responses to an open-ended survey query about suggested strategies to tackle climate change. This research offered valuable insights into the potential long-term influence of the Fridays for Future initiative and the evolution of the broader European climate movement. Furthermore, the paper provided an in-depth qualitative examination of the primary prognostic frames from the collected data. Van der Heyden et al. [26] comprehensively review the FFF movement and its objectives. They delve into the movement's challenges, including the need for worldwide unity and the struggle to respond to immediate political actions through media channels swiftly. The study underscores the significance of grassroots democracy and the need to shift towards an ecologically sustainable economic paradigm. de Almeida Barbosa et al. [27] analyzed the environmental attitudes of young students in Germany and Brazil; in particular, the authors tried to understand the environmental knowledge and attitudes of the students and if they changed according to the participation in environmental movements, such as FFF.

In the same way, Kowasch et al. [28] have investigated the motivations of students in Austria and Portugal to participate in the movement and the solutions proposed by the students to fight climate change. Authors found that awareness raising concerning climate change contributes to engagement in political dialogue and scientific knowledge. Brügger et al. [29] used a large sample of young people in Switzerland; the authors showed that social identity is most strongly associated with participation, beliefs about the effectiveness of youth strikes, level of education, and worry about climate change. From social movements literature, de Moor et al. [7] analyzed both elements of change and continu-

ity in who participates and how in FFF and Extinction Rebellion climate activism, while Zamponi et al. [30] explored the forms of action adopted by participants in two FFF strikes, focusing on the repertoires of action of young climate justice protesters.

The scope and extension of the existing literature are broad, sound, and diverse. It goes from large-scale data analysis to qualitative case studies in a number of fields (new media, social movements, collective action, strikes, etc.) We build on these contributions, adding a specific perspective on the internal diversity of FFF, an analytical viewpoint very rarely—if ever—considered in the existing literature. We are specifically interested in the *shades of green*, namely the internal variations of attitudes and beliefs of the FFF participants. We believe this is a novel angle of analysis that, to be properly exploited, requires a well-calibrated data collection technique.

3. Data and Methods

Figure 1 shows the methodological framework employed, comprising different phases:

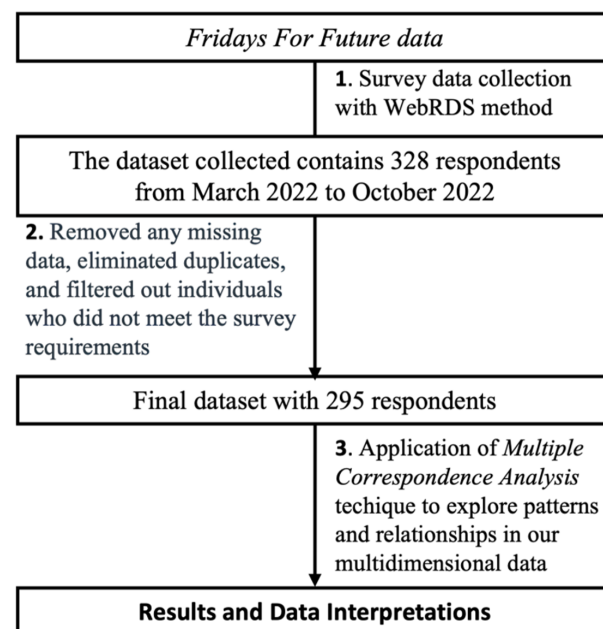


Figure 1. Methodology framework.

Data collection: To collect the data, we employed Web-based Respondent Driven Sampling (WebRDS) as our primary data collection method. In this phase, the seed selection was undertaken.

Data pre-processing: To ensure the responses' uniqueness, we remove duplicate entries based on unique identifiers such as I.P. address or user I.D. Missing survey data points were addressed through case deletion to prevent any skewing of the subsequent analyses. Moreover, in this phase, data encoding is performed to make the data more suitable for statistical analyses.

Application of Multiple Correspondence Analysis: Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) is applied to understand the patterns and relationships in our multidimensional data. MCA is particularly useful for categorical data and is employed to identify the underlying dimensions that explain the variability in the data.

3.1. Data Collection

The study included 328 activists from the FFF movement in Italy, recruited between March and October 2022 using the WEB-Respondent-driven sampling (Web-RDS) technique. RDS [31,32] is designed explicitly for sampling rare or hard-to-reach populations and, in general, populations for which a sampling frame is not available.

The basic idea behind RDS is to recruit initial participants, or “seeds”, from the target population and then ask them to refer other members of their social networks to be included in the study [33]. The referrals create a network of participants that is not limited to the initial seeds and is more representative of the target population. RDS differs from traditional snowball sampling methods because it uses a mathematical model to adjust for the biases that can occur when participants are not randomly selected [34]. This adjustment is based on information collected about the participants’ network size and the likelihood of being selected for the study based on network connections.

The post-stratification process typically occurs in two steps. First, the raw sample is adjusted by dividing the sample into “waves” of recruitment and using the network size of participants to estimate the probability of selection at each wave. Second, a post-stratification adjustment is applied to ensure that the weighted sample matches the distribution of key demographic and behavioral characteristics of the target population [35,36].

Web respondent-driven sampling (WebRDS) is a sub-variation of respondent-driven sampling (RDS) that uses online social networks to recruit participants. In WebRDS, participants are asked to share a study link with members of their social network who meet eligibility criteria and to encourage them to participate in the study [37,38]. WebRDS has several advantages over traditional RDS [39,40]. First, it can be less expensive and time-consuming to implement since participants can be recruited online and participate in the study remotely. Second, it can reach a larger geographic area and a more diverse population since it is not limited to a specific location. Third, it can be more feasible to study populations that may be more difficult to reach in person, such as individuals with disabilities. Fourth, it is especially suitable to reach people without a digital divide, such as young FFF activists.

Participants for this study were required to meet two entry criteria to fill in the survey: (i) they must be active members of the Fridays for Future movement; (ii) they must be at least 16 years old. These criteria were clearly outlined on the introductory page of the survey to ensure that the sample was representative of the population being studied.

The questionnaire consists of 27 questions investigating the following areas: political values, trust in institutions, knowledge of climate change, religion, conceptions of individual freedom, personal lifestyles, and behavioral attitudes.

We also collected sociodemographic data, including gender, age, geographical origin, and family cultural and economic capital. This information is crucial for understanding the background of the participants and assessing how these factors might influence their perspectives and actions within the movement.

The questionnaire was structured around seven primary themes (Table 1), which were carefully selected to offer comprehensive insights into the participants’ views, beliefs, and actions concerning climate change and the movement:

Table 1. Survey Dimensions and Questions.

Dimension	Questions	Label	Options
Individual Actions What actions did you take in 2020 to combat climate change?	Contacted a politician, government, or local government official?	<i>Engagement</i>	
	Signed a petition/public letter?	<i>Support</i>	
	Donated to an organization or group?	<i>Contribution</i>	
	Boycotted certain products?	<i>Boycott</i>	1. Yes
	Worn or displayed a campaign badge/sticker?	<i>Display</i>	2. No
	Taken an active stance on social media?	<i>Advocacy</i>	
	Participated in a strike/demonstration?	<i>Demonstration</i>	
Engaged in direct actions (such as blockade, occupation, civil disobedience)?	<i>Activism</i>		

Table 1. Cont.

Dimension	Questions	Label	Options
Climate Change Consequences Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:	Climate change threatens human survival by the end of the century	<i>Survival_threat</i>	1. Agree 2. Neutral 3. Disagree
	New technologies can solve climate change	<i>Tech_solution</i>	
	Climate change primarily affects the poor and marginalized.	<i>Disproportionate_impact</i>	
	No solution to climate change; only adaptation is possible	<i>Unsolvability</i>	
	Wealthy are less affected by climate change consequences	<i>Economic_privileged</i>	
Trust in Institutions Please rate your level of trust in the following types of institutions:	Parliament	<i>Parliament_trust</i>	1. High 2. Medium 3. Low
	Political Parties	<i>Parties_trust</i>	
	Judiciary	<i>Judiciary_trust</i>	
	European Union	<i>EU_trust</i>	
	European Parliament	<i>EUP_trust</i>	
	United Nations	<i>UN_trust</i>	
	Mass Media	<i>Media_trust</i>	
Environmental Groups	<i>Env_group_trust</i>		
Municipality	<i>Municipality_trust</i>		
Climate Change Solutions Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:	Modern science can resolve environmental issues	<i>Science_solution</i>	1. Agree 2. Neutral 3. Disagree
	Governments can tackle our environmental issues	<i>Government_solution</i>	
	Businesses and markets can help address environmental issues	<i>Business_solution</i>	
	Voluntary behavior changes key to stopping climate change	<i>Individual_action</i>	
	Protect the environment even if it slows the economy and costs jobs	<i>Environment_priority</i>	
Economic and Environmental Policy Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:	Government should shift wealth from rich to poor	<i>Income_redistribution</i>	1. Agree 2. Neutral 3. Disagree
	Private companies should manage public services and key industries	<i>Privatization_services</i>	
	Increase taxes on oil, gas, and coal	<i>Fossil_tax</i>	
	Use public funds to support wind and solar energy	<i>Renewable_energy</i>	
Society Type These five descriptions illustrate different types of social structures based on wealth distribution and social class. Please read the descriptions and decide which one you think best describes Italy:	Small wealthy elite, few middle class, large lower class	<i>Elitist</i>	1. Elitist 2. Pyramid 3. Diamond 4. Middle-Majority 5. Upper-Majority
	Small elite, larger middle class, largest group in lower class	<i>Pyramid</i>	
	Small elite, large middle class, small lower class	<i>Diamond</i>	
	Most people in middle class, smaller upper and lower classes	<i>Middle-Majority</i>	
	Many are near the top, smaller middle class, and few in the lower class	<i>Upper-Majority</i>	
Perceived Autonomy and Control	What level of control and authority do you believe you have over your choices and the consequences of your life?	<i>Personal_agency</i>	1. High 2. Medium 3. Low

Survey dimensions and questions assessing FFF participants' perspectives and actions on climate change. Each dimension has related questions, which were transformed into labels for easier visualization of results and respective response options.

Individual Actions: This dimension captures the various initiatives and actions participants took in 2020 to address climate change. This dimension encompasses various actions, including engaging with government officials, participating in public demonstrations, contributing financially to relevant organizations, consumer behavior, and utilizing social

media platforms for advocacy. This allows for an understanding of the participant's level of involvement and the methods they employed in tackling climate change.

Climate Change Consequences: This section evaluates participants' beliefs regarding the implications and severity of climate change. Through a series of statements, participants are asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on topics including the existential threat of climate change, the role of new technologies in addressing climate change, the disparate impact on different socio-economic groups, and the potential for solutions versus adaptation.

Trust in Institutions: This part measures the degree of trust that participants place in various institutional bodies. This includes national political institutions, judicial bodies, international organizations, media outlets, and environmental groups. By assessing trust levels, this dimension helps understand these institutions' perceived reliability and credibility in the context of climate change and broader societal issues.

Climate Change Solutions: This dimension captures participants' attitudes toward various potential strategies to combat climate change. Participants are presented with a series of statements and are asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. The statements encompass a variety of themes, including the role of scientific innovation, governmental intervention, market-based solutions, individual behavioral changes, and the consideration of economic trade-offs in environmental protection.

Economic and Environmental Policy Preferences: This part captures the participants' inclinations towards specific economic and environmental policy measures. This dimension is operationalized through a series of statements where participants are asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. The statements encompass wealth redistribution by the government, privatizing public services and industries, and promoting renewable energy sources through various fiscal measures.

Types of Society: Participants were asked to reflect on the type of society they aspire to live in and how this vision aligns with environmental sustainability. This included questions on social values, economic systems, and governance structures.

Perceived Autonomy and Control: This dimension assesses participants' beliefs regarding their ability to control their life choices and the consequences. This dimension is centered around the concept of agency and measures the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as autonomous actors capable of influencing their life trajectories.

The survey's structure around these seven themes facilitated a nuanced understanding of the internal diversity within the Fridays for Future movement and how this shapes the participants' civic and political engagement in environmental advocacy.

3.2. Sample Description

Table 2 illustrates the descriptive analysis of demographic characteristics. Concerning gender, 64.8% of the respondents were female, and 32.1% were male. The age profile shows that 54.4% of the participants were included in the 16–20 years category, 20.2% were from the age group of 21–25 years, and 25.4% were from the age group of 35 years and above.

Table 2. Sociodemographic characteristics.

Variables	%	N
Age		
16–20	54.4	166
21–25	20.2	108
Over 25	25.4	49
Gender		
Female	64.8	167
Male	32.1	142
Prefer not to answer	3.1	14

Table 2. Cont.

Variables	%	N
Geography		
North-west	35.4	118
North-east	22.8	66
Center	20.6	69
South	21.2	69
Family Cultural Capital		
Low	5.76	17
Medium	29.15	86
High	47.46	140
Upper High	17.63	52
Family Economic Capital		
No one parent work	5.43	16
One parent work	25.42	75
Both parent work	69.15	204

Geographically, the North-west region has the highest representation with 35.4%, followed by the North-east, Center, and South regions, each accounting for approximately 20–22% of the sample. Family cultural capital reveals that most respondents come from families with high cultural capital (47.46%), followed by medium cultural capital (29.15%), and upper high cultural capital (17.63%). Regarding family economic capital, most respondents (69.15%) come from families where both parents work. In comparison, one parent working is reported by 25.42%, and a small portion (5.43%) come from families where no parent is employed.

To analyze the internal differences and composition of the Italian FFF community and investigate how different attitudes influence the movement's civic and political mobilization in connection with environmental sustainability, we relied on a Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) for its mathematical properties, interpretative graphical displays, in addition to its high computational efficiency.

MCA aims to identify patterns and relationships between the categories in the data [41]. To do this, MCA creates a plot showing the categories' relationships. The plot is created by first computing a matrix of standardized residuals. This matrix measures the deviations of the observed frequencies from the expected frequencies under the assumption of independence between the variables. The expected frequencies are computed assuming that the variables are independent so that the frequency count for a given combination of categories is the product of the marginal frequencies of the corresponding variables [42]. Next, MCA performs a singular value decomposition (SVD) of the matrix of standardized residuals. The SVD decomposes the matrix into three matrices: a matrix of left singular vectors, a matrix of singular values, and a matrix of right singular vectors [43]. Consequently, the following decomposition holds:

$$[A] = [U][\Sigma][V]^T. \quad (1)$$

Matrices $[U]$ and $[V]$ consist of the left and right singular vectors of $[A]$, and the diagonal elements of $[\Sigma]$ are its singular values. The left singular vectors represent the row points, which correspond to the observations in the data set. The right singular vectors represent the column points, which correspond to the categories of the categorical variables. The singular values represent the importance of each singular vector in explaining the variation in the data. Finally, we can plot the row and column points in a two-dimensional space, using the first two left and right singular vectors as the x and y coordinates, respectively. This plot provides a visualization of the relationships between the observations and the categories [44]. This method helps explore the structure of categorical data, identify association patterns among variables, and reduce the data's dimensionality. One of the

strengths of MCA is its ability to handle large data sets and discover complex patterns and relationships between variables [45,46]. Additionally, MCA simplifies data visualization and interpretation by reducing dimensionality [47].

4. Results

Table 3 provides detailed information regarding the two main axes that collectively account for over 33% of the cumulative adjusted variance rates. Axis 1, responsible for 22.5% of the variance, exerts a more significant influence on the data’s structure compared to Axis 2, which represents 11.4%. This indicates that the first axis plays a more prominent role in shaping the data than the second axis. Subsequent dimensions, starting with Axis 3, diminish in significance, with Axis 3 explaining only 6.69% of the variance.

Table 3. List of dimensions, related eigenvalues, and percentages of explained and cumulative variance.

Dim.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
Var	0.017	0.008	0.005	0.004	0.003	0.003	0.002
Var %	22.55	11.41	6.69	5.63	4.50	3.63	3.13
Cum %	22.55	33.96	40.65	46.28	50.78	54.41	57.54

Figure 2 displays the outcomes of our MCA analysis. To assess how well each category of variables is represented, we examine their contributions to the analysis. In general, categories positioned farther from the center of the plot offer clearer graphical representation [48]. The categories most closely characterize the survey participants are those indicated by warmer colors.



Figure 2. MCA factor map of most contributing variables.

For dimension 1, we can find two distinct groups of individuals. In the first group (Disillusioned Technophobes), located in the top left, we find individuals with low trust in institutions such as the Italian Parliament, Judiciary, Political Parties, European Union, United Nations, and European Parliament. Additionally, they disagree that “We can rely

on governments to solve our environmental problems. We also find individuals who disagree that: “Climate change is solvable through the invention and application of new technologies”. In the same group, we find individuals who have indicated that Italian society is unequal, which corresponds to a society where most individuals are at the bottom, and a small elite is at the top. Finally, they have low personal agency/locus of control. They also disagree that private enterprises should manage public services and significant industries. They agree that climate change does not have significant consequences for those with the financial resources to cope with it.

In the second group (Institution Trustee), we find individuals who—on the contrary—highly trust institutions (Italian Parliament, Judiciary, Political Parties, European Union, United Nations, and European Parliament). In the same group, we find individuals who have indicated that Italian society is a “Type E”, corresponding to a society where most individuals are at the top and only a tiny portion are at the bottom. Furthermore, they believe in having complete freedom of choice and total control over their lives (strong locus of control/agency). Additionally, they agree that “We can rely on governments to solve environmental problems”. In the same group, we find individuals who disagree that climate change primarily affects the poor and marginalized. They also agree that climate change is solvable through the invention and application of new technologies.

In the second dimension, in the third group (Activist Equalizers), we find individuals who disagree that “Stopping climate change should be primarily achieved through voluntary lifestyle changes by individuals”. Additionally, we find individuals who have declared that they have signed a petition/public letter, donated to an organization or group, boycotted certain products, worn or displayed a campaign badge/sticker, taken an active stance on social media, and participated in a strike/demonstration. They also agree that government should shift wealth from the wealthy to the poor.

In the fourth group (Laissez-faire Solitaries), we find individuals who have responded that they have not donated to an organization or group, participated in a strike/demonstration, engaged in direct actions such as blockades, occupations, civil disobedience, signed a petition/public letter, taken an active stance on social media. They also answered neutrally regarding renewable energy, which corresponds to using public funds to support wind and solar energy, and income redistribution, which corresponds to shifting wealth from rich to poor. We also find individuals who agree that “Stopping climate change should mainly be achieved through voluntary changes in individuals’ lifestyles”.

The results of MCA analysis reveal interconnection between the four groups. In particular, we can distinguish two dimensions of individual actions and confidence in institutions. Within these dimensions, the concept of ‘agency’ plays a crucial role. In sociology and psychology, ‘agency’ refers to feeling in control of your actions and their consequences [49,50]. When individuals feel they have ‘strong agency’, they believe they have a high level of control and influence over their lives and even societal issues. On the other hand, ‘weak agency’ describes a state where individuals may still feel in control of their own actions but perceive those actions to have a limited impact on the world around them [51].

Table 4 provides a matrix that categorizes survey participants based on their activity levels and confidence in institutions.

Table 4. Climate Action and Institutional Confidence Matrix.

	Confident	Disillusioned
Strong agency	Activist Equalizer	Disillusioned Technophobes
Weak agency	Institution Trustee	Laissez-faire Solitaries

The matrix intersection represents a distinct group within the FFF community, characterized by their combination of climate action intensity and institutional trust levels.

This matrix can help visualize the categorization of survey participants based on their action levels and confidence in institutions.

Activist Equalizer (Confident, agency-based): Individuals in this group are proactive and believe in the power of *collective action* to bring about change. They are often involved in various forms of activism, including signing petitions, participating in demonstrations, and engaging in social media campaigns. They are optimistic about the potential for societal transformation and often advocate for policies that promote social equality and environmental sustainability. Their confidence may stem from a belief in the ability of individuals and groups to influence political decisions and public opinion. They might also favor government interventions that reduce income inequality and ensure equitable access to resources.

Disillusioned Technophobes (Disillusioned, agency-based): People in this group are actively involved in *individual efforts* to combat climate change. However, they harbor skepticism regarding the role of technology and institutions in solving environmental problems. They might perceive technological solutions as too slow, unreliable, or even part of the problem. Similarly, they might view political institutions as compromised by corporate interests or bureaucratic inertia. Despite their disillusionment, they engage in actions like boycotting certain products. They might focus more on immediate and radical changes, as they may believe that incremental reforms are insufficient.

Institution Trustee (Confident, weak agency): Individuals in this category highly trust institutions such as the government, judiciary, and international organizations. They believe these institutions have the knowledge, resources, and authority to address climate change effectively. They are confident but *do not feel the need to take personal action*, as they think this responsibility lies with institutions. They may support the role of science and technology in finding solutions to environmental problems. They might also be inclined to believe that market mechanisms and technological innovations can significantly mitigate climate change without necessitating drastic changes in individual behavior or lifestyle.

Laissez-faire Solitaries (Disillusioned, weak agency): Those in this group are characterized by a hands-off approach to climate change. They *do not engage in significant action* to combat climate change or have faith in institutions or technology to provide solutions. This lack of engagement could stem from various factors, including a sense of powerlessness, skepticism regarding the efficacy of individual or collective actions, or other priorities taking precedence in their lives. They might also have a fatalistic view, believing climate change is inevitable or its consequences are uncertain and possibly overstated. This group might be less informed or less interested in the issue, and their focus is more likely on immediate personal concerns rather than long-term global challenges.

In response to the first research question (R1), our investigation aimed to discern the range of attitudes and beliefs or the “shades of green” present within the Italian FFF movement. Through the results of our MCA analysis, we identified four distinct groups, each holding unique perspectives on climate change, environmental activism, and the roles of institutions and technology in combating environmental challenges. These “shades of green” underscore the nuanced and varied opinions inherent within the movement.

Addressing the second research question (R2), our findings indicate that the attitudes and beliefs of each group shape their approach to climate activism. There are discernible differences in their trust in institutions, their perceptions of the urgency surrounding climate issues, and their degrees of engagement in both individual and collective actions.

5. Discussion

Our empirical findings from the analysis of the FFF green movement in Italy shed light on the complex landscape of beliefs, attitudes, and engagement levels among respondents. The varying levels of trust in institutions, perceptions of societal structure, and willingness to participate in climate-related actions reflect the diversity of perspectives on addressing climate change. The novelty of the analysis is mainly twofold. First, it is based on the application of RDS, proposed in the mid-1990s by Heckathorn [31], and has since been successfully applied in dozens of studies [33]. This is the first application to the FFF movement, to the best of our knowledge. It should be stressed that RDS is substantially less

accurate than generally acknowledged, and RDS might perform poorly when traits cluster in cohesive subpopulations [52,53]. This is not the case for FFF; nonetheless, a cautionary note should be underlined here.

Second, our work substantially improves the state-of-the-art on general green movements, particularly FFF. It analyzes the internal diversity and heterogeneity of the FFF in Italy. As we illustrated in the existing literature very rarely, if ever, addresses in depth the internal diversity of FFF green movements. The four types we singled out—Activist Equalizer, Disillusioned Technophobes, Institution Trustee, and Laissez-faire Solitaries—disentangled the problem of agency from the topic of confidence, which is often intertwined. This allowed us to challenge the idea that FFF activists are the first type (Activist Equalizers), the dominant narrative in the media and the public debate. As we argued, active members of the FFF movement are also driven by *technophobic* attitudes, *trust* in science/institutions, and *skepticism* regarding the efficacy of collective actions. These results call for further empirical analysis, for instance, concerning the communicative strategy of FFF leaders, who must balance different instances and priorities for such a diverse membership.

Finally, our research helps to shed light on the challenge of the new green social movements in the face of global polycrisis and prefigurative politics, namely a type of politics that represents and embodies, in the present, the society desired for the future [54,55]. The concept of global polycrisis refers to the coexistence of active crises in multiple systems of global reach that intertwine in ways that endanger humanity's prospects for flowering—if not survival itself. The negative effects of the polycrisis have a greater impact than the sum of the single isolated crises. Explosion of the emergency, mass migrations, technological shocks, economic and financial crises, erosion of the legitimacy of democratic institutions, pandemics, wars, laceration of the bonds of solidarity between classes, territories, and generations. Intertwined crises that shake the foundations of our world and whose solutions question us not as individuals living in the present but as a community questioning our shared future. The FFF movement is an active part of this challenge in connection to the climate crisis, but its internal diversity poses doubt on its capability to prefigure a coherent and encompassing future. The internal differences in attitudes and beliefs towards technology, institutions, and collective action we highlighted call for a strategy not only or mainly built on the communicative power of Greta Thunberg. The shout of Greta emotionally addresses the need to create the conditions to give voice to the burning forests, melting glaciers, dry rivers, crumbling coasts, and the suffering created by the organized cruelty of the agro-food and to the cry of pain of disappearing species. This call has the power to mobilize young people emotionally, but it leaves aside the need to find a shared synthesis to build the different future that FFF climate activists strive for.

6. Conclusions and Future Development

Our study provides a unique insight into Italy's FFF movement through the use of the Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS) technique and Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA). These methods have offered valuable insights into the different lines of thought within the FFF movement and its approach to environmental advocacy. It is important to acknowledge its limitations regarding accuracy and potential biases, particularly when dealing with cohesive subpopulations. Although we have identified distinct activist categories within the FFF, there is scope for additional nuances to emerge with further research. Expanding our sample beyond the FFF activists and exploring diverse methodologies is essential for a more comprehensive understanding. Given the internal heterogeneity in attitudes towards technology, institutions, and collective actions within the movement, in-depth future studies are warranted. Additionally, this internal diversity underscores the need to examine the FFF's strategies thoroughly. While our research offers insights into Italy's FFF movement, its findings might not be universally applicable to FFF movements in other countries or to broader global perspectives.

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