

Picturing the Future: A Visual Analysis of Fridays For Future's Climate Discourses

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The Fridays For Future (FFF) movement, led by school youth, has emerged as a prominent climate activist organization advocating for urgent action on climate change to elevate its significance on the global political agenda (Tomnyuk et al., 2023). Despite being just five years old, FFF has become a subject of considerable interdisciplinary research. While only two studies focus on socio-technical aspects in FFF's future imagination concerning written communication discourses (Buzogány & Scherhauser, 2022; Marguardt, 2020), this study aims to delve deeper into the imaginaries communicated by the movement. It explores the socio-ecological future imagination of FFF, considering visual communication discourses in photographs, overlaid texts on photographs, posters, banners, songs, and short documentaries on its Instagram account. Understanding these imaginings is crucial to comprehend the current state of the world amidst the ecological crisis, envisioning and engaging in meaningful discussions about possible futures (Moore & Milkoreit, 2020), creating strategies for transformative collective and subjective empowerment (Malm, 2014), and nurturing a hopeful alternative vision of the future while sustaining motivation for activism (Herbert, 2021). Incorporating the theoretical framework 'A Natural Social Contract' and the analytical framework 'Transformative Social-Ecological Innovation (TSEI)' outlined by Patrick Huntjens, and utilizing visual discourse analysis, the themes of 363 visual posts are analysed in alignment with the four fundamental dimensions of Huntjens' concepts: ecological, social, economic, and institutional. Preliminary findings indicate that FFF portrays the extensive scope of the current climate crisis, highlighting its impacts and causes while also envisioning a sustainable, regenerative, fair, and equitable future as actions and solutions. In the ecological dimension, FFF illustrates the environmental systemic collapse through visuals depicting heavy flooding, landslides, heatwaves, wildfires, droughts, tropical storms, and hailstorms, employing the 'The Climate Breakdown' discourse (Figure 1) as an impact frame, and emphasizing the 'Smile for Future' and 'Embracing Indigenous Knowledge towards a New Future' discourses as action and solution frameworks. In the social dimension, FFF utilizes the 'Communities are Suffering' discourse and proposes the 'Stand with People' and 'Education for Futures' discourses as action and solution frames. FFF portrays the profit-driven capitalist system in the economic realm, which exploits nature, humans, and other living beings for profit and relies on fossil fuels, highlighting the 'Fossil Fuels are Killing the Planet' discourse as the root cause of the climate crisis, and calls for action with the discourse 'To Turn the System Upside Down.' In the institutional dimension, FFF exposes the greenwashing by political leaders, governments, and international organizations by employing the 'Our So-Called Leaders' discourse as a cause frame and using the 'Time to Act' and 'Count Every Voice' discourses as action and solution frameworks. Both FFF and TSEI identify the capitalist economic system as the primary cause of climate change. While FFF calls for the dismantling of the capitalist system, it does not propose an alternative system. In contrast, TSEI suggests local, circular, and sharing economic models. The socio-ecological future envisioned by both FFF and TSEI emphasizes the guidance provided by Indigenous knowledge, the importance of strengthening solidarity in times of crisis, climate change education for the future, and solutions based on deliberative democracy, climate justice, human rights, and the polluter pays principle (Figure 2).



Figure 1: The connotation of this image within the ideological norms of FFF indicates the devastating impact of the climate crisis on the world's significant biodiversity of flora and fauna.

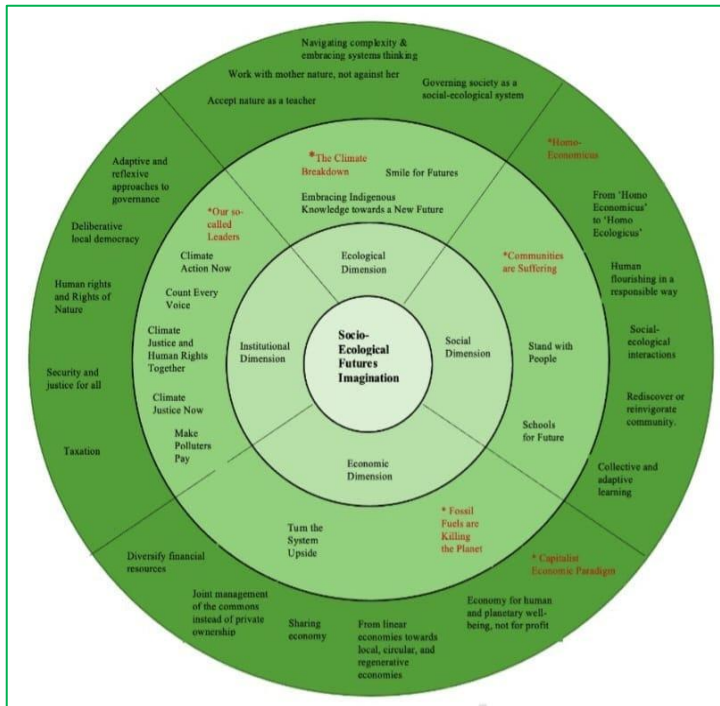


Figure 2: Circle 3: The discourses of FFF / **Impacts / Causes of Climate Change*
 Circle 4. The outlines of TSEI / **Impacts / Causes of Climate Change*

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