"This is not a drill" - But is this a climate emergency?

On co-opted activist discourses, municipalism and institutionalized double realities in the city of Barcelona

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Abstract:

The worsening climatic condition, together with a renewed wave of climate movements have spurred declarations of climate emergency by governmental institutions worldwide. In the city of Barcelona, unique for its social movement history and activist city council, such a declaration was issued on January 15th, 2020. In this context, this thesis looks at the specific discourse on climate emergency by Barcelona's city council. Through a Critical Discourse Analysis of the Declaration and other related texts produced by the city council, as well as of the institutional speeches held on its presentation, it seeks to unravel how Climate Emergency is operationalized through discourse, the discursive and ideological struggles the CED reflects and the social implications it might have. While municipalism and the Right to the City appear to be key in defining the climate emergency, there are also traces of ecological modernization, techno-managerial approaches and a consequent depoliticization of discourse. In a constant back and forth between the post-political condition and a push for repoliticization of climate change through the local, I argue that there is some room for addressing the cultural trauma that climate change represents, but the risks of falling into social inertia prevail.

Key words: municipalism, right to the city, climate emergency, social inertia, double reality, techno-fetishism, climate justice, post-political, repoliticization

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List of abbreviations

BenC – Barcelona en Comú

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

CED –Climate Emergency Declaration

CEDs – Climate emergency declarations

CoM – Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy

COP – Conference of the Parties

GHG – Greenhouse Gases

EU – European Union

IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

LEZ – Low Emissions Zone

PPM – Parts per million

UN – United Nations

List of tables and figures

Table 1. Overview of the Roundtable on Climate Emergency

Table 2. Reference system for the speeches of January 15th

Table 3. Coding frame

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Figure 2. Dimensions of discourse

Figure 3. Example of layout in the CED. Pages 6 and 7

Figure 4. Front page of the CED and Table of Contents

Figure 5. Webpage of the CE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1   INTRODUCTION

> Without increased and urgent mitigation ambition in the coming years, leading to a sharp decline in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, global warming will surpass 1.5°C in the following decades, leading to irreversible loss of the most fragile ecosystems, and crisis after crisis for the most vulnerable people and societies. (IPCC, 2018)

The definition of climate change and its potential catastrophic impacts have been laid out by scientific research. According to the IPCC report, the future of the Earth looks bleak (IPCC, 2018). Besides a few sceptics, there is a wide-spread consensus of the existence of the human-induced phenomenon known as climate change and the threat it poses to humanity as a whole (Wainwright and Mann, 2018). Environmental destruction and global warming have been repeatedly said to be intrinsically linked to capitalist extraction and social reproduction (Malm, 2016, Hornborg, 2016, Harvey, 1996). Yet, this causal explanation is less present in the public sphere.

Across the planet, people have been mobilizing to call for the implementation of effective climate policies and put pressure on decision-makers (Garrelts and Dietz, 2014, Bond and Dorsey, 2010). While support for the emerging social movements that demand climate action seems to be on the rise, and, indeed, some discursive changes seem to be taking place, it has not yet achieved enough support to foster radical transformation. The challenge of constructing the cultural and material base necessary for the climate justice movement to become truly entrenched is still unlocked. Any progress has been, so far, too slow (Wainwright and Mann, 2018).

Even though academics have long warned of the irremediable consequences of global warming, 2019 marked a turning point in mobilizations to demand governmental action. Instead of acting accordingly, some governments made symbolic declarations to acknowledge the issue, normalizing the discourse around climate emergency (Rankin, 2019, Farand, 2019). The notion of climate emergency has even been enforced by the polluters that hold the biggest part of responsibility for and whose profits are rooted in the causes of the socio-ecological crisis, such as oil and gas companies (France24, 2020, Taylor, 2019, Swyngedouw, 2011). Nevertheless, this recognition has not translated into effective action.

In a wave started by Scotland in April 2019 (BBC, 2019), responding to the increasing pressure from rising climate justice movements, governments at the local, regional and national level started publicly declaring a climate emergency worldwide (Boyle et al., 2020). The first government to do so, though, had been Darebin, a city in the suburbs of Melbourne, already in December 2016 (Young, 2020). Yet, the phenomenon started to take off in 2019 quickly, especially among cities[1]. Likewise, among public universities and other institutions. Yet, declarations differed in scope and degree of tangibility (Rode, 2019). This move has been celebrated by the climate justice movements but also criticized by radical branches, who see them as mere words without any real material consequences.

In Barcelona, a city known for its strong activist movements (Rendueles and Sola, 2018), a municipalist coalition took office in 2015. Since then, quite innovative social policies have been implemented, notably in the housing area (Bazurli and Castaño Tierno, 2018). Previously eclipsed by the other salient social movements, a rather weak climate movement has recently gained momentum, following the global wave sparked by the young activist Greta Thunberg and the Extinction Rebellion formula. The discourse on climate emergency has also made it to the southern European countries such as Spain, and despite the climate movement is younger, smaller, and weaker than in other states such as Germany or France, it is rapidly growing (Pérez and Martín-Sosa, 2020). These emerging climate groups have increased the pressure on public authorities to, broadly, implement climate policies and, specifically, adopt climate emergency narratives.

In this context, Barcelona's city council issued an official declaration of Climate Emergency in January 15th, 2020. This case is explored in the present research. To do so, I structure the thesis in 6 chapters. After this introduction, I write a historical background (2) to contextualize the research. Then, it follows the theoretical framework (3) and the methodology (4) chapters. Finally, there is the analysis, which concludes with a discussion (5), and a closing chapter with final remarks (6).

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[1] Compiled in the local council's declaration of climate emergency online map. Available at https://www.climateemergency.uk/blog/map-of-local-council-declarations/

1.1 Relevance, aims and purpose

…civilization is not beyond the reaches of radical action—and it is certainly not beyond the reaches of radical critique (Crist, 2007)

The relevance of the present study arises from the primacy and originality of Barcelona's city council climate emergency declaration, as well as the particular context of municipalist politics in which it emerged. Differently than many other governmental authorities, such as the EU or the regional government of Catalonia, who have limited themselves to mere institutional communication around "the climate emergency", Barcelona's city council issued an official report containing 100 measures to be taken in the face of the newly-acknowledged situation labelled as "climate emergency".

The aims of this thesis are to understand how Climate Emergency is conceptualized in this document and, by extension, by the city council as institution, as well as the related social implications. Ultimately, the purpose of this study is to shed light on the social and cultural meanings of institutional practices in the face of an ever-accelerating socio-ecological crisis. Cities, as places fundamental to capital accumulation and related social injustices and environmental destruction, are, at the same time, sites of resistance and mobilization for social struggles (Harvey, 2012). In Barcelona, where anti-globalization social movements have been incorporated into the city's institutions through the governing citizen platform Barcelona en Comú (Barcelona in Common, henceforth BenC) (Islar and Irgil, 2018), it is especially interesting to explore how climate emergency is understood. Discursive practices conceal and give shape to material realities which cannot be ignored. To understand the extent to which a change in the institutional discourse, such as publicly acknowledging that we live in a "climate emergency", has re-shaped or holds the potential to re-shape the cultural understanding of climate change is a precondition necessary for achieving social change. Aside from the implementation de facto of the measures compiled in the CED, the analysis of discourse is relevant because it has material consequences (Barad, 2012, Fairclough, 2001b), such as: the gathering of all actors who participated in its creation, the meetings to follow-up, the mobilization of civil society around it, the publication of news articles talking about it…

This thesis is concerned with the emerging wave of climate emergency declarations (CEDs), and the meaning and material consequences of such declarations, in a context of (lack of)

effective action to tackle the threat posed by a warming climate. Given the novelty of the phenomenon, there are not many studies on CEDs from cities. The need for further research on how the warming climate is framed, represented and re-shaped in politics, and, in particular, in the recent phenomenon of climate emergency declarations across the globe and their implications for action on climate change has been recognized (Rode, 2019, Von Lucke et al., 2014).

1.2   Research questions

This thesis is guided by one research question and three sub-questions:

How is climate emergency operationalized through discourse by the City Council of Barcelona?

- ✓ Which key point(s) emerge from the CED to face the climate emergency?
- ✓ Which are the social implications of such conceptualization on broader city politics?
- ✓ To what extent is the CED (not) pushing for transformative climate action?

1.3   Delimitation

Following the presented research questions, and because of resource and time constraints, the study is framed within specific time and space. Succinctly, this is a study about the Climate Emergency Declaration (CED) issued by the City Council of Barcelona on January 15th 2020. While the declaration of climate emergency in Barcelona is understood as being part of a longer process involving several climate-related commitments, this thesis focuses on the time period leading up to the declaration of climate emergency on January 15th 2020. I consider the months that preceded, starting in July 2019.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that on July 16th, 2020, the first follow-up report of the CED was presented, which evaluated the first implementation of measures 6 months after the issuing of the CED as well as incorporated a statement about the recently changed context of the covid-19. Unfortunately, this report was issued when the frame for the current research had already been established and due to constraints in time and scope, I choose to actively exclude it.

Finally, it could also have been interesting to contrast the results with an investigation on the perceptions of citizens and social movements regarding the concept of climate emergency and the impact of institutional declarations acknowledging it. However, during the process of research design it became clear that conducting fieldwork and performing interviews could not be an option for the data collection process due to the unprecedented situation derived from the unexpected sars-cov-2 outbreak.

2   HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1   The debate about the planetary emergency

> Over the last few years one has to cede to the evidence: what was lived as a rather abstract possibility, the global climatic disorder, has well and truly begun (Stengers, 2015)

Before delving into the analysis of a specific climate emergency discourse, it is important to situate it within a broader discussion on climate change discourses and socio-ecological crisis. While some argue that climate change is at the top of the political agenda (Paglia, 2018, Hulme, 2019, Hodder and Martin, 2009), others state that it has not been given the centrality it requires (Brulle and Norgaard, 2019, Smart, 2019, Swyngedouw, 2011, Gills and Morgan, 2019, Malm, 2018). For this thesis, I argue in favour of the latter. Perhaps climate change is mentioned often in politics; yet, the political action taken to tackle it is alarmingly insufficient (Gills and Morgan, 2019, Malm, 2018).

It was in the first decade of the 21st century that the view of climate change as a crisis gained momentum. Politicians, intellectuals and influential journalists started using the terminology of crisis, while climate change was incorporated into the securitization agenda (Paglia, 2018, Dupont, 2019). Later, in 2007, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, defined climate change as a "global emergency" (Paglia, 2018). Nevertheless, the adoption of an emergency discourse did not translate into urgent action, since climate change was far from the only issue subject to securitization (Dupont, 2019).

Framing climate change as an urgent crisis has been seen as problematic (Crist, 2007, Hulme, 2019, d'Alisa, 2019). Some have compared these declarations to the frequent declarations of "state of emergency" in countries like Italy, often used to control populations and justify

repression and the use of military forces. It is said to be a dangerous and even counterproductive parallelism. While it promises the extraordinary mobilization of state resources to give a response to the emergency, it also sets the ground for further state control and repression (d'Alisa, 2019, Hulme, 2019).

Other critics argue that, the concept of climate emergency leads to a narrow focus on technological remedies to solve it and disregards many other issues. Biodiversity loss is happening at increasing speed and, yet, it appears marginally in the discourse. While climate change is accelerating the extinction of species, it is also because the biosphere has already been so damaged that it cannot contribute more to the mitigation of global warming. Climate change is perceived as a direct threat to humanity, due to rare weather events and increased frequency of natural disasters, which makes it a priority before the intangibility of biodiversity loss (Crist, 2007). This kind of narrative around climate change feeds the narrative of geoengineering as the solution to solve it (Crist, 2007, Markusson et al., 2014). Besides the unlikelihood that geoengineering would indeed be a feasible solution to implement on a global scale (Jackson, 2009), successfully removing CO_2 from the atmosphere and reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) would not necessarily entail solving the problems and injustices derived from the deeply entrenched socio-ecological configurations (Crist, 2007).

Furthermore, the concept of climate emergency is problematic for its high degree of uncertainty and "scientific subjectivity" (Markusson et al., 2014). This uncertainty, together with the ungraspable size of the phenomena might turn people into apathy and defeat, discouraging effective action to tackle it (Hodder and Martin, 2009). Moreover, it gives a reason to sceptics to dismiss the phenomenon, given that the language of apocalypse can be seen as an exaggeration. The use of fear to trigger action has been questioned because it often leads to denialism. Without clear solutions and feeling small and powerless, people choose to live as if the threat would not exist (Warner and Boas, 2019, Hodder and Martin, 2009). Because it brings polarization, normalizing the discourse on climate emergency might dismiss alternative viewpoints and, hence, be detrimental to democracy. Consequently, top-down policies become the only effective way to tackle the urgency of the crisis (Hodder and Martin, 2009). Differently, Smart (2019), while recognizing the existence of a climate emergency, asserts that the response to it is not compatible with liberal democracy, because democratic processes cannot be extended

to the economy. The public must be included and participate of decision-making in order to shape the necessary urgent transformation of our social and economic systems (Smart, 2019).

Nonetheless, critics of the climate emergency discourse argue that the slow unfolding of climate change make it difficult to be perceived as crisis or emergency[2]. Global warming is intangible, an thus, easy to dismiss for immediate (political) action (Paglia, 2018, Hodder and Martin, 2009). According to Paglia, social intervention has been crucial, thus, for shaping the climate crisis as such. Moreover, science has been essential in this *crisification* process, because it enjoys 'discursive authority' in society. Specifically, the use of numbers to justify and predict the impacts of climate change has been instrumentalized by influential voices (Paglia, 2018).

In relation, the concentration of CO_2 has become the main indicator for assessing the danger of the climate crisis, measured in PPM (parts per million) (Swyngedouw, 2010, Paglia, 2018). Certain numbers of PPM have been discursively used for drawing red lines by certain levels of pollution on the atmosphere, connected to an increase of the global temperature. Paglia (2018) claims that the perception of climate change as a crisis has been co-constructed by different actors using data-based scientific discourses and qualitative apocalyptic narratives: "Climate crisis discourse is thus herein the nexus of scientific and social elements situated at the global level, with the IPCC […] as a key node." (Paglia, 2018:104).

Differently, Rode (2019) defines climate emergency as the opposite to the reformist approach to environmental issues that reigned in the last decades in the public debate. Given that now it is too late to implement measures gradually, we need to change our actions. According to his study of CEDs in several cities, declaring a climate emergency is seen as "telling the truth" about the consequences of a rapidly warming climate.

Rode observed a change in language in media outlets to fit the climate emergency narratives. Words like crisis, emergency, catastrophe or collapse have replaced the (now old-fashioned) terms of climate change and global warming. Adopting a climate emergency discourse would, in theory, justify taking action, while requiring a high degree of cooperation among a variety of actors with disparate interests. Differently to the recent Coronavirus outbreak, the climate

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[2] The author uses both terms interchangeably

emergency is a *long* emergency, in as much as it lasts long enough so that the responses become part of the new normality in everyday life (Rode, 2019).

According to Rode, an issue with CEDs at the city level is the limited scope of the measures that can be taken. A common baseline is establishing a date for being carbon neutral, that is, when all emissions are offset to a balance of zero. The role of cities is crucial in bridging social movements, appealed in emergency declarations, with national governments, appealed in ordinary climate policies. It remains to be seen whether the two can be assembled. So far, out of all the cities which issued climate emergency declarations, few have actually turned it into effective policy changes (Rode, 2019).

2.2   Situating the CED in time and space

2.2.1   Barcelona's City Council

The local politics in Barcelona experienced a shift in 2015 with the electoral victory of the newly-constituted party Barcelona en Comú (BenC). It started as a citizen platform stemming from the "Indignados" movement that occupied squares across the country on May 2011. Broadly, they demanded *real* democracy and social justice in the face of harsh austerity policies during the socio-economic crisis in Spain and increased discoveries of corruption cases among the political elites (Castro, 2019). Bringing together personalities from the academy, civil society and grassroots movements, a citizen platform was established that also incorporated members of the dissolving coalition formed by the green party and the United Left[3], among others. BenC was seen as a movement-party which aimed at winning the elections to take back key institutions and implement transformative policies (Barcelona, 2014, Islar and Irgil, 2018). They advocated for municipalism and bottom-up processes, with a strong focus on transparency, horizontality, the commons and dismantling corporate power (Barcelona, 2014, Gilmartin, 2018, Castro, 2019).

After winning the in the city council, BenC started from within the institution to implement all promised transformations. Ada Colau was voted as the mayoress and became the first woman to govern the city of Barcelona (Hancox, 2016). The first legislature managed to introduce several changes. They created a municipal electricity company, providing 100% renewable

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[3] Known as ICV-EuiA, which in Catalan stands for "Iniciativa per Catalunya els Verds i Esquerra Unida I Alternativa"

energy to public buildings and 20,000 households. They increased expenditure per inhabitant, introduced new criteria for public procurement based on justice and implemented several measures to tackle the housing crisis. Besides, feminism and solidarity with migrants have been central to city's politics (Castro, 2019, Bazurli and Castaño Tierno, 2018).

Yet, many obstacles appeared on the way to the desired transformation, especially in the re-municipalization of public services. Their alternative approach to politics and innovative methods have been met with cultural barriers and the strong influence of competing discourses (Blanco et al., 2020). Working from within the institution has its limitations, while the power of corporate lobbies is indeed strong and still influences policymaking (Castro, 2019). After a long legal battle, the control of city water remained in the hands of the company Agbar, and waste and sanitation services continue to be outsourced. Moreover, rental prices have continued to rise up at alarming speed, while the city continues to have tourism as one of its principal economic activities. The limited power and funding of local administration to take decisions over certain matters has become evident, and the frictions with the regional government have further hindered BenC's ambitious political program (Gilmartin, 2018, Bazurli and Castaño Tierno, 2018).

2.2.2 A municipalist approach

One of the pillars of the political formation that constituted themselves in BenC was a focus on real democracy and municipalism. The aim was to do politics differently by bringing the decision-making power to the streets, empowering citizens to participate and decide over the city they wanted to live in (Bazurli and Castaño Tierno, 2018, Islar and Irgil, 2018). They sought to bring about social change from the city, by seizing institutional power and boosting urban transformation while exerting pressure on upper level governments (Russell, 2019). They introduced participatory budgets, neighbourhood groups and open assemblies (Castro, 2019).

They have also recently developed new forms of participation. Complementing face-to-face participation forums, they also started to look at the possibilities offered by technological innovation. Together with civil society actors and scholars, they created the online open-source platform "Decidim" ("We Decide"), defined as an alternative to corporate technologies (Roth et al., 2018). The aim was to enable digital participation and involvement of anyone in shaping city policies (Castro, 2019). Furthermore, the platform is open to any other public

administration or organization who wants to use it for their own collaborative and participatory processes (Decidim, 2020).

The municipalist approach also had an important international aspect. BenC has dedicated some effort in networking with other cities with similar approaches, to bridge grassroots democracy with an international perspective. They believe that the city is the local arena for participating in global struggles. (Castro, 2019). BenC led the foundation of the network Fearless Cities, which aimed at bringing together cities worldwide which considered themselves as part of "the global municipalist movement". The core ideas of such movement where the Right to the City, radical democracy, feminist politics and clear opposition to far-right groups (Pisarello, 2018).

2.2.3 The city council and environmental sustainability

While sustainability has been one of the tenets of the new municipalist government (Bazurli and Castaño Tierno, 2018), the environmental aspect of the agenda is less known. Although several BenC party members had previously been active in ICV, the former green party, the implementation of innovative policies around issues like housing, the commons, or the focus on horizontal participation and transparency have been more salient to their mandate (Castro, 2019).

Nonetheless, since 2015 the city has redefined its image as global and committed to sustainability, also environmentally speaking. This commitment is reflected in its membership of Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (CoM), and the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group. During the Conference of the Parties (COP) held in Paris, the city council presented Barcelona's Commitment to Climate, a document containing several measures the city council would implement (Barcelona+Sostenible and Barcelona, 2015). They deemed the Paris Agreement insufficient to tackle climate change and were "worried" for the lack of binding mechanisms (Barcelona, 2015).

The attempts to make the city "greener" by BenC have been recognized internationally. Following after other European cities, they established, inter alia, a lower emissions zone (LEZ) to limit the most polluting vehicles, they built hundreds of kilometres of new bike paths,

improved significantly municipal public transport and constructed "super-blocks" – car-free zones (Bazurli and Castaño Tierno, 2018).

In 2018, the city council launched the "Pla Clima 2018-2030" ("Climate Plan 2018-2030"), following the commitment taken in the COP21 in Paris and the CoM (Barcelona, 2020d) to reduce 40% of CO_2 emissions per inhabitant, as well as increasing 1,6 km^2 of green areas –1m^2 per inhabitant. The four main areas were Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience, Climate Justice, and Promoting citizen action (Barcelona, 2018). The Pla Clima was partly co-produced with interested citizens through the participatory platform Decidim Barcelona (Barcelona, 2020b).

2.2.4 How the CED came into being

After the municipal election in the Spring of 2019, the new governmental coalition established the Department of Climate Emergency and Ecological Transition (Barcelona, 2019a). Shortly after, a participatory process started in July 2019, when Barcelona's City Council first voiced their recognition that we live in a situation of climate emergency. Using the platform Decidim Barcelona, the city council established a Roundtable on Climate Emergency (Barcelona, 2020b). Later, other neighbouring cities councils would take a similar approach (TOTSantCugat, 2020, elPeriodicio, 2020). The purpose of the Roundtable was to decide on the goals (and the concrete measures to achieve them) of the Climate Emergency Declaration together with all interested actors. The Roundtable became a working group of the "Consell Ciutadà per la Sostenibilitat" ("Sustainability Citizen Council") and would continue to work after the issuing of the Declaration to monitor and evaluate its implementation. Although in the Roundtable there were more than 300 people involved, the acknowledged author of the CED is the city council. Hence, for the analysis, I consider that it is the institutional voice of the city council what is reflected, beyond the inputs that different actors from the Roundtable might have had.

Building upon the Pla Clima, the Roundtable was to specify the Action Plan for the period 2020-2025 (Barcelona, 2019b). Four open participatory workshops took place during October and November, which brought together around 200 organizations, schools, academics, political parties, social movements and groups from the municipality, regional and national government (Barcelona, 2020b). During the workshops, several parallel sessions took place, 15 in total. The

themes for the workshop, which were decided upon before-hand by the organizers, were distributed as follows:

Sessions	Themes	Participants
1. October 3rd	-Water cycle and coasts -Much more green -Renewables: roof terraces and public spaces -Food sovereignty	174
2. October 17th	-People first: climate justice and heat -Mobility -Zero waste -Culture and Global climate Justice	107
3. November 7th	-Emissions and health -Sustainable urbanism: climate planning -Restoration: buildings better than new -Circular Economy and Responsible Consumption	104
4. November 28th	-Port and Airport -Interurban mobility -Climate taxation	81

Table 1. Overview of the Roundtable on Climate Emergency

The process culminated with the launch of the document "Això no és un simulacre" ("This is not a drill"), which contained seven *model changes* and two *adaptations*. These were deemed necessary, according to the document, to face the current climate emergency. The model change has to occur in the following sectors: urban, mobility and infrastructures, energy, economic, consumption and waste, food and culture and education. The adaptations have to take place in the areas of water, and health, wellbeing and environmental quality (Barcelona, 2020a). Noticeably, the CED raised the ambition from 40% to 45% reduction of GHG by 2030 (Barcelona, 2020a), in comparison to the goal set in the Pla Clima (Barcelona, 2018).

The CED was officially presented by the mayoress of Barcelona on January 15th, 2020. Besides the mayoress, the personalities who spoke in the event were the scientist Pep Canadell who is currently the Executive Director of the Global Carbon Project and who collaborates with the IPCC; Janet Sanz, deputy mayoress for Ecology, Urban planning, Infrastructures and Mobility; Jaume Collboni, deputy mayor for Economy and Finance, Work and Competitiveness; Eloi Badia, councillor for Climate Emergency and Ecological Transition and Gemma Tarafa, councillor for Health, Aging and Care (Barcelona, 2020c). After the presentation, the website

was launched, which contained the CED document in open access and three languages. This event took place in an eventful context shaped by the aftermath of the COP25 celebrated (last-minute) in Madrid, unprecedented and uncontrollable fires burning in Australia at the time of the presentation (BBC, 2020), and an explosion in the petrochemical industrial complex close to Barcelona on January 14th that killed 3 people and brought the environmental impacts of such industry to the public scrutiny (Calvó and Sans, 2020).

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Climate change in post-political times

I situate my theoretical framework within a reading of the current times as increasingly post-democratic and post-political (see summary in Figure 1). The post-political condition, dominant in governance nowadays, is characterized by a rejection of polarization and antagonism, and, consequently, the unquestionability of the neoliberal order (Mouffe, 2013). In this context, democracy is understood as consensus, with no room for antagonisms (Mouffe, 2018). The post-political condition has not only but importantly sank through climate change politics, founded on an environmental consensus (Swyngedouw, 2010, Swyngedouw, 2018b). This is part of a broader post-democratic regime, in which democratic rights have been eroded and corporate power is increasingly entangled with parliamentary decision-making (Crouch, 2000). Nevertheless, there are small clusters of politicized cities and movements that show opposition and struggle to challenge the widespread post-political condition and post-democratic institutions (Swyngedouw, 2018b).

In this context, climate change is widely recognized as a global problem, presented in a catastrophist narrative around a bleak and unhopeful future. This discourse, according to Swyngedouw (2010:219), is post-political populist, and part of "the new cultural politics of capitalism". Climate change becomes the external enemy against which we all together need to fight. The globality of the phenomenon depoliticizes the struggle, and the means to deal with it do not lie in the political but in the technological sphere (Swyngedouw, 2010). The capitalist socio-economic order is not questioned, since it is the elites who should orchestrate the response – governments become the managers of the crisis. While the discourse around the environment is apocalyptical, the hegemony of the neoliberal order remains unchallenged (Russell, 2012, Swyngedouw, 2018a). This is the climate *consensus*, the idea that climate change is a global

threat to be solved beyond ideology and political disagreements. The consensual approach to politics is post-political, inasmuch as it brings together actors from a variety of backgrounds to make decisions within the functioning of capitalism. In relation, another characteristic of the post-political condition is the use of empty signifiers, i.e. words that have no positive meaning to name climate change related action (Swyngedouw, 2010) .

Around arguments for sustainability, CO_2 has been pointed as the common enemy, thus, silencing latent and inherent conflicts. Hence, CO_2 becomes a *fetish* around which our apocalyptic fears spin, and our solutions are projected. Besides, it is the quantifiable indicator to measure the intensity of the problem and the accountability of each individual (Russell, 2012, Swyngedouw, 2018a). This externalization of the problem in one central homogenising enemy is also characteristic of populism (Žižek, 2006). Carbon dioxide is not only the external object around which climate change discourses and policies are formulated but also the commodity through which it has become financialized. Offsetting, first institutionalized in the 90s with the Kyoto Protocol, has been widely normalized as governance instrument (Swyngedouw, 2011, Ervine, 2012). Yet, this has, if anything, exacerbated the socio-ecological crisis (Böhm et al., 2012).

This commodification and, further, fetishization of CO2, is part of a wider commodification of the environment that started with the advent of capitalism (McCarthy and Prudham, 2004). This commodification is problematic because it obscures the power relations and social system embedded in it (Harvey, 1996), allowing for continued accumulation of capital and displacement of environmental harms (Harvey, 2005).

The predominant approach to facing climate change – i.e. reducing CO_2 emissions – relies on technology, without questioning social structures. The problem is presented as external to the workings of the neoliberal world order, and so must be the solutions. Once emissions are reduced by techno-fixes, (capitalist) life shall continue as usual (Swyngedouw, 2010, Russell, 2012).

This faith in technological progress is deeply rooted in the cultural understanding of our society (Hornborg, 2016). Almost magic powers are attributed to technological objects and rely on them to solve all of society's problems – also the challenges posed by a warming climate.

Techno-fixes are seen as unpolitical, a sign of human progress and the means by which humans can master the natural world. The social order and the interaction between humans and nature are embedded in techno-fetishes. Indeed, technology has been instrumental in the history of capitalism and, hence, of environmental destruction (Harvey, 2003). Furthermore, technology is the tool that allows for time and space appropriation to those who have access to it. Together with money, they constitute the means by which ecologically unequal exchange and environmental load displacement take place. That is, technology embodies social relations that are invisible (Hornborg, 2016). For instance, assuming that renewable energy technologies are completely clean is a fallacy; the materials to produce them involve the extractions of certain minerals and the use of labour power somewhere else (Hornborg, 2020). Hence, relying on technology as the means to tackle the socio-ecological crisis is not effective nor desirable (Harvey, 2003). How technology is framed in the CED might be relevant for assessing the social implications of the discourse.

While allowing for disagreement to a certain extent, in the post-political world social relations remain unchallenged (Swyngedouw, 2010, Swyngedouw, 2018a). The only avenue left for oppositional conflict to manifest itself is violence, or, in the best cases, in grassroots social movements advocating for radical democracy such as the "Indignados" in Spain (Swyngedouw, 2018a). Importantly, it is from this movement that BenC, the party governing the City Council of Barcelona, was born. This insurgent social movements, taking place in several cities across the globe, challenge the post-democratic consensus and hold potential to bring about the "return of the political" (Swyngedouw, 2018b).

As opposed to post-political populism defined above, and to avert the rise of right-wing populism, Mouffe (2018) advocates for a *left-wing* populism. According to Mouffe, only through left-wing populism can the necessary alternative to the current post-democratic hegemony be constructed. Left-wing populism criticizes neoliberal globalization and is a challenge to the post-political status quo because it aims at dismantling the economic oligarchy and it offers an opportunity to get democracy back, to renovate and expand it (Mouffe, 2018). Harvey (2012), following Lefebvre, argues that the site for such repoliticization are cities. Indeed, the municipalism advocated by BenC has also been read as left-wing populism at the municipal level (García Agustín, 2020, Kioupkiolis and Katsambekis, 2019), as well as a challenge to the post-political zeitgeist.

3.2   Climate change and social inertia

Connected to the post-political critique, and in order to investigate the social implications of the CED, I find particularly useful the conceptual framework proposed by Norgaard and Brulle (2019) (see Figure 1). They suggest that the explanation behind socially organized inaction in the face of the threat posed by an ever-accelerating climate change lies in the (unconscious) struggle to avoid the *cultural trauma* it implies to acknowledge its gravity. By cultural trauma the authors refer to the "social process that involves the systematic disruption of the cultural basis of a social order" – i.e. the neoliberal world order (Brulle and Norgaard, 2019:894). This cultural trauma is twofold: it stems from the turmoil caused by natural disasters and the deep questioning to society's norms. The need to avoid such trauma leads to *social inertia*, that is, failure to act in the face climate change, derived from an entanglement of cultural, institutional and individual mechanisms. Climate change is a (socially constructed) collective problem, which directly challenges the current social order (Brulle and Norgaard, 2019).

Social interactions take place at the individual, institutional and societal level. Stabilization mechanisms at the different levels interact to avert cultural trauma, leading to social inertia (Brulle and Norgaard, 2019). The responses each person gives to climate change are embedded in a broader social structure, which influence both personal beliefs and institutional norms (Norgaard, 2011). At the same time, individual beliefs also influence institutions and policies. Discourse plays a fundamental role in conceiving and maintaining the current social structures, because it creates and sustains a shared understanding of reality (Brulle and Norgaard, 2019). Therefore, this framework is adequate since the thesis is concerned with the analysis of a particular Climate Emergency discourse.

At the individual level, climate change represents a potential cultural trauma because it challenges our everyday life practices. To cope with a sense of failure, individuals might deny the existence of climate change and the relation to their habits. Others engage in *double reality* as coined by Norgaard (2011), which describes the inability to act while being aware of the consequences. At the institutional level, the cultural trauma arises from the challenge that climate change poses to organizational practices, which might create conflict in an institution.

Lastly, at the level of society, climate change represents a direct menace to the well-established neoliberal capitalist system. These processes at the different levels are, nevertheless, interrelated and embedded on each other (Brulle and Norgaard, 2019).

Addressing cultural trauma can lead to social change, but also to social inertia. At the individual level, it means to change how individuals and other actors interact; at the institutional, it requires new practices within existing organizations or creating new ones; at the societal, a construction of new cultural imaginaries is needed, a process in which social movements are key. Yet, the widespread response to climate change has taken place in the lines of ecological modernization (explained below), within the post-political, not engaging with existing power relations. This post-political response triggers stabilization mechanisms leading to social inertia. The opposite, more desirable (radical) response is led by grassroot social movements advocating for climate justice, who directly engage with confrontation and system critique (Brulle and Norgaard, 2019).

The need to deepen and expand this theoretical framework has been recognized (Brulle and Norgaard, 2019). Therefore, with the present research I hope to contribute to this purpose.

3.3 Key concepts

3.3.1 Ecological modernization

Closely connected to the post-political condition and the techno-fetishism described above, the ecological modernization discourse is relevant for the analysis. Also known as green Keynesianism (Wainwright and Mann, 2018), this is the optimist discourse about saving the environment without changing the system. It emerged in the 80s, having sustainability at its core and following the mantra of progress. Science played an important role in consolidating the discourse. Ecological Modernism advocates for increased efficiency, "green" solutions, technological innovation, and continued reliance on the market (Wainwright and Mann, 2018, Brulle and Norgaard, 2019, Harvey, 1996). It does not challenge the capitalist world order. Moreover, multi-level governance of environmental issues is also emphasized, involving local and international actors beyond the nation-state. The optimistic tone in face of climate catastrophe made it attractive to the masses; indeed, it is quite a (post-political) populist discourse (Harvey, 1996). This also makes it a target for discursive appropriation by corporate

actors, to the status quo. Nevertheless, it is deemed to failure given the inherent political contradictions it encompasses (Wainwright and Mann, 2018).

3.3.2   Global and urban climate justice

The notion of climate justice arises from social movements criticizing the unequal responsibilities in causing climate change as well as the unequal capacities to adapt and protect from its most adverse impacts of different groups of people across the globe. The world elites, most of them in the industrialized nations are held accountable, while the masses, especially in the Global South have hardly contributed to it, and, yet, will suffer the most from it (Della Porta and Parks, 2014, Bäckstrand and Lövbrand, 2019). Climate justice is the vision of the world we want to construct (Wainwright and Mann, 2018). Beyond a drastic reduction of emissions, this vision entails a reordering of power relations. Hence,

> only in a world that is no longer organized by capitalist value, and in which […] the political can no longer be defined by the nation-state's sovereign exception, is it possible to imagine a just response to climate change (Wainwright and Mann, 2018).

Climate justice has become a widespread concept among radical environmental movements across the planet. The climate justice movement(s) emerged in the 2000s from the frustration with failed climate negotiations and deployed a strong critique to capital accumulation as the main driver of climate change (Bond, 2014, Brulle and Norgaard, 2019, Garrelts and Dietz, 2014). They arose from within the environmental justice movement, which had originated in the United States in the 70s against the unfair allocation of toxic waste. Later, many movements adopted the concept worldwide, broadening its scope to denounce the unequal distribution of environmental benefits and harms between and within states, and the structural causes of these inequalities, as well as to demand access to decision-making (Martin, 2013, Martinez-Alier et al., 2014). While environmental justice is a broader framework and has consolidated into an academic discipline together with political ecology, climate justice remains a grassroots concept (Martinez-Alier et al., 2014). Nevertheless, since climate justice is the notion used in the CED, I use it too.

For the analysis, I find it appropriate to differentiate between an *urban* and a *global* dimension of climate justice. The above refers mostly to global climate justice, that is, between territories and peoples across the globe. Climate justice in urban spaces, on the other hand, refers to unjust

situations within the city. That is, it refers to how decisions are taken and the ability of people to be part of this process, to who benefits and who bears the burden of different city environments, and to who is recognized when taking action in the face of climate change (Bulkeley et al., 2014). Following Steele et al., (2012), I argue that urban climate justice embraces socio-ecological justice from a Right to the City approach. That is, recognising the role of a city in the global struggle to reduce the worst impacts of global warming while at the same time enhancing social justice in the city (McKendry, 2016). Urban climate justice movements demand cultural change, leaving behind the discourse on technological solutions as the means for a fairer city (Steele et al., 2012).

3.3.3 Municipalism and the Right to the City

Because this study analyses the discourse emanating from Barcelona's city council, governed by BenC since 2015, it is important to consider municipalism and the Right to the City to set the theoretical grounds. Both are central to their politics (Islar and Irgil, 2018, Russell, 2019), as well as closely connected to urban climate justice.

Municipalism and the Right to the City share many of the criticisms to the post-political condition, since they re-conceptualize democracy and challenge the existing power structures. The revolutionary character of the Right to the City is key to its significance (Purcell, 2002). The Right to the City, first coined by Henri Lefebvre, "implies radical transformation in the structures of political power" (Purcell, 2014:104). It involves reclaiming the urban space by all the people who live in it, the inhabitants – as an alternative to the limited and exclusionary category of citizens (Islar and Irgil, 2018). The city dwellers substitute the working class as revolutionary force (Harvey, 2012). Inhabitants are political subjects, active and mobilized. They come to collectively self-govern and co-produce urban space. By participating in urban politics, they gain awareness and want to participate more. Hence, the Right to the City is a starting point to sparkle urban and, by extension, wider societal transformation, rather than the end goal (Purcell, 2014, Harvey, 2012). While holding revolutionary potential, the Right to the City is an empty signifier; the meaning has to be filled with radical and transformative implications, beyond any reformist approach (Harvey, 2012).

Very connected to the Right to the City, the recent wave of municipalist initiatives focuses on the local level as a strategy and brings together different localities to build the theory collectively. Municipalism is also seen as a strategy and not an end goal (Russell, 2020).

Inspired by the anarchist thinker Murray Bookchin, municipalism demands grassroots radical democracy at the local level as an avenue for social change and ecological sustainability. Yet, it ""is not merely an effort simply to "take over" city councils to construct a more "environmentally friendly" city government" (Bookchin, 1991:17). To undertake the necessary counter-hegemonic venture to tackle the urgency of a warming climate, municipalism is said to be the right platform to collectively spur transformation (Russell, 2020).

Local institutions are to be "coordinated and manipulated" by municipalist movements, at the same time that they construct new ones. Local governments are not the only source of power, and other emerging initiatives beyond the state are also central to this approach. Municipalism advocates for the local as the platform for transformation. Yet, the challenge it faces is the co-optation by the deeply established institution (Russell, 2019). Many of the features of municipalism, especially the opposition to the neoliberal world order, fit quite well with the repoliticizing character of Mouffe's left-wing populism (2018). The resistance to neoliberal globalization is also common treat of municipalism, the Right to the City and of (global) climate justice struggles (Purcell, 2002).

3.3.4 Discourse

In addition to the above framework, I employ Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is considered to be both theory and method, and I explain this choice further in the methodology section. CDA is a theoretical viewpoint on semiosis, considered to be a component of the material social process. Language, that is, is entangled in social practices (Fairclough, 2010). Consequently, certain ways of analysing language as part of the analysis of social processes emerge (Fairclough, 2001a).

When employing CDA as theory, it is important to define what is meant by discourse. In this thesis, discourse is seen as a social practice, and at the same time as being socially constituted – discourses are in a dialectical relationship with the social world (Fairclough, 2010, Harvey, 1996). Together with five other moments identified by Harvey (1996) – namely power, social relations, material practices, imaginaries and institutions – discourses constitute a moment to social processes. Discourses are inherently related to power, ideology and hegemony, and, thus,

have social implications (Fairclough, 2010). Thus, I examine the discourse around climate emergency in relation to the different moments: the measures proposed to tackle it -i.e. the material practices-, power and inequalities, the city council and other government institutions, the social relations between different actors, and the predominant cultural beliefs and values.

3.4 Overview

I created the following flow chart to visualize the proposed analytical framework and how the different concepts and theories proposed interrelated with and complement each other. A zoomed version of the flow chart and detailed description of it is available in Appendix D.
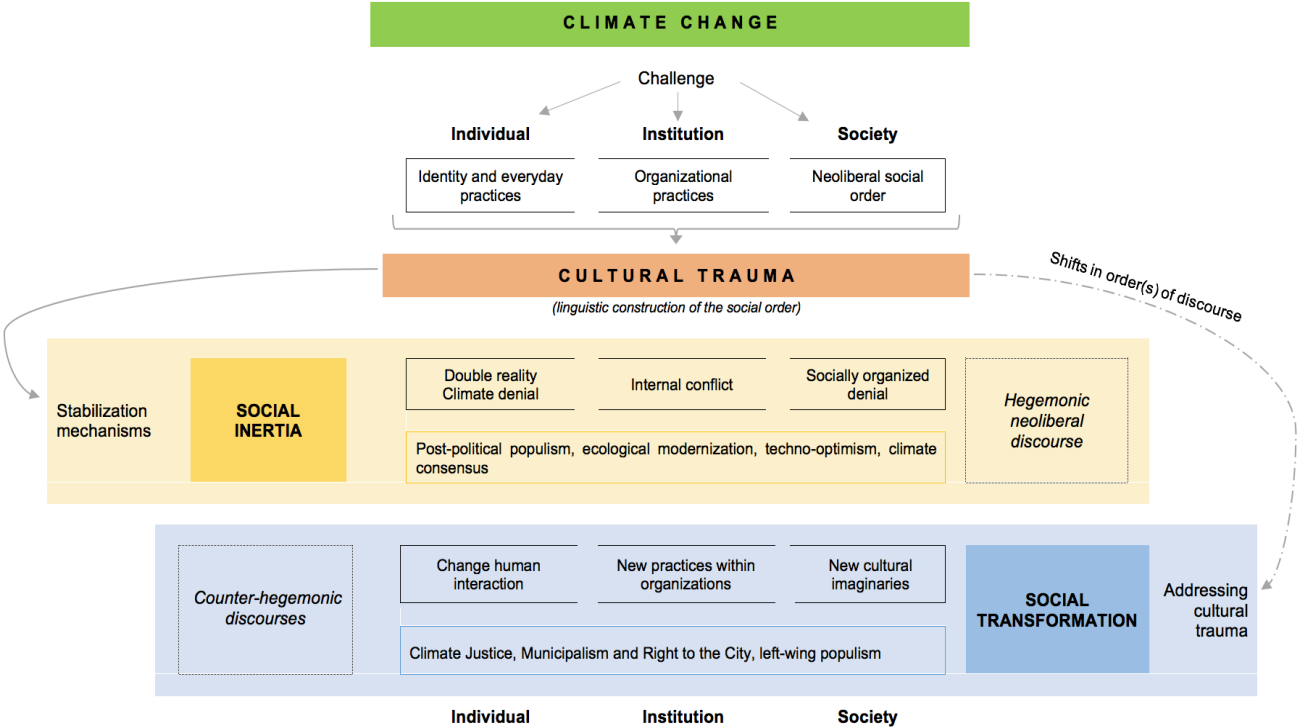

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Positionality and reflexivity

This research is impregnated by my personal concern for the consequences of global warming and environmental degradation, as well as for social and climate justice. I do not aim to disentangle my activist self from my research. I see myself as scholar-activist, because I am

part of the political struggle to change the system to avert the worst effects of a climatic change (Borras, 2016). That is, I believe that research can be a tool for social transformation (Russell, 2015).

My involvement with social movements striving for political and societal change has shaped my interest in climate action and institutional responses to civil society pressure. Moreover, the choice of the study reflects my past: I grew up in Barcelona, but I joined climate justice movements abroad. Further, my academic background in political science, human geography and, most importantly, human ecology are reflected on the present research.

My ambition is to contribute to the broadening and strengthening of the climate justice movement in Barcelona, by providing an improved picture and enhanced understanding of institutional responses to the threat posed by climate change and the discursive elements of it. In this framework, "research becomes the art of producing tools you can fight with" (Russell, 2015:222). I believe it important to understand how climate emergency is conceptualized by local institutions to achieve the necessary social and cultural change to avoid climate breakdown. This especially so because this wording was an explicit demand from emerging transnational social movements such as Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion.

4.2   Philosophical stand

I depart from a critical realist ontological and epistemological stand. Coined by Roy Bhaskar, critical realism asserts the existence of a reality "out there" that can be partially uncovered by human knowledge (Laclau and Bhaskar, 1998). The purpose of science is, thus, to get an improved and a closer picture of it, and, yet, it never manages to unravel it in its entirety (Sayer, 1999). It was, therefore, relevant to acknowledge my background since the analysis is contingent upon my interpretation. I understand knowledge as partial, situated and, yet, valuable and necessary for contributing to social change.

While climate change is a real phenomenon, so is the discourse around it. Discourse is shaped by and reinforces the existing social structures. The meaning attributed to supposedly objective numbers is, indeed, subjective (Sayer, 1999). A certain increase in global temperature can be said to be a climate emergency; or it can just be described as a natural process not posing any

threat to human life. Truth, and discourses, are situated and contingent upon the local context (Sayer, 1999, Barad, 2003). Power relations and social contexts influence the production of knowledge, rendering subjective any interpretation of an objective reality. Nonetheless, knowledge and discourses are real, because they have tangible, material effects (Malm, 2018).

Interactions occur between different people, and between society and people. Nevertheless, while agents –people– are capable of transforming the structure –society–, they mainly reproduce it unintentionally (Collier, 1994). The structure influences the agents' actions (Elder-Vass, 2007).

Critical realism regards the possibility of deriving real and objective moral premises from scientific findings, which is known as explanatory critique (Sayer, 1999). CDA is an example of this explanatory critique, as it is a problem-based approach, looking at the obstacles to solve the problem, the consequences these have on perpetuating social structures and the possibilities to remove these same obstacles (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). Hence, critical realism is compatible with CDA, which also shows how semiosis plays a role in shaping and consolidating social structures (Fairclough et al., 2002). People access reality through language (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). CDA is a useful analytical approach here, since it also has an emancipatory component and considers context and the production of meaning (Fairclough, 2010).

I see ideology as constructed through discourse, and as contributing to the enhancement of existing power relations. Ideology is related to broader social practices (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999), and hence, relevant to the present investigation. I seek to explore whether and how the discourse on climate emergency by Barcelona's city council contributes to the consolidation of social practices and, consequently, the maintenance of the social order they are part of.

4.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

To answer the proposed research questions, I conducted a qualitative case study of the local climate emergency discourse in Barcelona. Specifically, I used CDA. The aim was not to generalise about climate emergency worldwide. Rather, I intended to delve into the

phenomenon of declaring a climate emergency in Barcelona – to understand how language was used and its social implications for the city (Creswell, 2011, Taylor, 2001a).

As mentioned before, CDA is seen as being both a theory and a method (Fairclough, 2001a). As a theory, CDA does not provide a complete framework for the analysis of social practices. Hence, it needs to be put in dialogue with other social and cultural theories – which, for this thesis, were outlined in the previous section (see Figure 1).

CDA departs from a societal problem, which for this research is inaction in the face of climate change. Specifically, CDA seeks "to show how language figures in social processes" (Fairclough, 2001b:229), since language is believed to be central in the reproduction of capitalism, and, subsequently, the acceleration of global warming. Language, non-verbal communication and visual objects constitute a discourse (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). As inherently transdisciplinary, CDA fits well with the purpose of the research: to put the analysis of language in dialogue with theories of cultural and societal change (Fairclough, 2001c). Discourse is socially embedded – that is, shaped by social structures and practices (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). Yet, at the same time, knowledge, identities and social relations are reproduced and changed by discourse. Moreover, "texts are often sites of struggle in that they show traces of differing discourses and ideologies" (Wodak and Meyer, 2009:11). Discursive practices might generate and reinforce power inequalities, and, thus, perpetuate the established social order. It is these asymmetries that CDA seeks to challenge; that is, the aim is to contribute to social change by seeking to unravel how certain discursive and non-discursive practices consolidate or, instead, challenge, the social norm (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002).

Because CDA is an open and flexible method, I selected the tools I deemed adequate for the analysis that would help in answering the proposed research questions (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). For the analysis, I followed Fairclough's model which regards three dimensions of language use (see Figure 2). First, I analysed the text, in regard to its linguistic characteristics and other semiotic aspects such as images. Colour and layout were considered as complementary to fulfil the discursive purpose of the text (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001). Then, I moved to analysing the discourse practices, which are related to the production, distribution and consumption of the text. Discourses do not exist in isolation but in relation to other texts. Hence, it is important to look at the interdiscursivity of the text; i.e. how it draws

from previous discourses, styles and genres and how these are articulated, and to intertextuality -i.e. how it relates with other texts in a broader sense (Fairclough, 2010, Fairclough, 2001a).

Finally, I analysed the wider sociocultural practice to which the text belongs. The social order is constituted by interlinked social practices – both discursive and non-discursive, the semiotic aspect of which is called order of discourse (Fairclough, 1992). That is, an order of discourse "is a particular social ordering of relationships among different ways of meaning making, i.e. different discourses and genres and styles" of an institution (Fairclough 2010:265). The tendencies in an order of discourse shape individual identities but are, nevertheless, also influenced by local or institutional orders of discourse. In a particular order of discourse, some discourses dominate over others. Yet, this order is open to change, subject to shifts in hegemony (Fairclough, 1992). These shifts are of special interest to CDA (Fairclough, 2001a). I seek to identify the dominant discourses in the selected texts.

Figure 2. Dimensions of discourse. Retrieved from Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002

4.4 Empirical material

I see discourse as constituting realities; it is, therefore, the object of analysis in itself (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). The choice of the CED as the central document for the analysis emerged from the research questions themselves. To understand the conceptualization and implications of the discourse on climate emergency it is precisely this specific CED that appears relevant; the choice is not aimed at representativeness (Taylor, 2001b). The CED cannot be understood as isolated but as part of a process undertaken by the city council. The analysis considers the document in its entireness, that is, not only the text but also the display and layout, as well as the related texts presented below. Since most of the documents analysed are only available in Catalan, any translations of the quotes that appear in English are my own. All empirical material has been listed in Appendix A
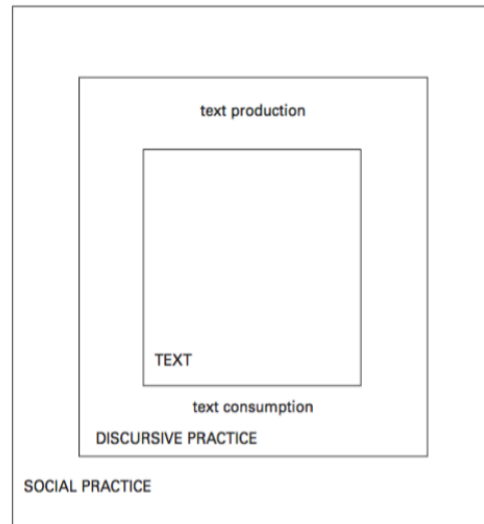
First, I analysed the document "Emergència climàtica. Compromís i crida a l'acció" (Climate Emergency. Commitment and call for action), which constituted the Roundtable on Climate Emergency on July 2019, to understand the participatory process leading to the CED. In the analysis, I refer to the specific document as 2019b. Second, I analysed the document "Això no és un simulacre", that is, the CED itself. In relation, I also considered the content of the website from which the CED can be retrieved, which included a promotional video. In addition, I also considered the display and layout of 2019b and the CED and related materials, since they have a multimodal component which should not be ignored. The interaction between visual and verbal components of a text has been recognized as relevant when conducting CDA (Jancsary et al., 2016). I looked at the colours and images employed as signifiers, the meaning of which was shaped together with the design and verbal discourse (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001).

Finally, the speeches made by the mayor of Barcelona and several deputy mayors, recorded during the official event held on January 15th in which the document was presented were also analysed. The reference system used for the different speeches is described in Appendix A. Following Fairclough (1992), I coded the content of these texts theoretically.

4.5 Coding

After several initial readings of the listed material to get familiar with the texts, I coded them using themes emerging from the theories presented. First, I did some preliminary descriptive coding to identify main themes. Next, I coded only considering the language. Finally, I did some inferential coding, based on the preliminary codes and the theory to grasp the implications of the discourse (Miles et al., 2014). In some instance, several codes were given to the same piece of text. That is, I coded looking at global and urban climate justice, the post-political, municipalism, and climate change and social inertia (see Appendix C).

For practical reasons, I used the software NVIVO. Coding helped me to identify patterns and tropes in the text, and enabled the comparison of the 2019b, the CED and the speeches held on January 15th to appreciate any changes in the discourse.

4.6   Limitations

CDA has been criticized for being biased and lacking neutrality (Widdowson in Fairclough, 1996). Yet, as Fairclough assures, CDA explicitly states the position where it departs from, since it is impossible to not have prior value judgements. Furthermore, results are always open-ended, and thus subject to future amendments (Fairclough, 1996). Due to the interpretivist nature of the present research, I recognize that the results are contingent upon the researcher. From a critical realist understanding of science, this is not a problem but a strength.

Furthermore, the research has been conducted within the borders of my little experience in conducting CDA. Besides, language has also been a both a strength and a limitation. While the ability to speak and understand Catalan has been key for accessing and analysing the data, not being a native English speaker is another limitation to the presentation and description of the results.

5   ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.1   Three dimensions of discourse

Different types of analysis are required to examine texts following the three-dimensional model proposed by Fairclough. I analyse the text, the discourse practice and the sociocultural practice. The textual dimension entails a linguistic analysis (grammar, modality, transitivity…) of 2019b, CED and related materials and the speeches held on January 15th (henceforth, 15J speeches), which I put in dialogue with an analysis of the visuals of the CED. Language can be used in many different ways which denote and reinforce certain ideologies to the detriment of others (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). The analysis of the discursive and social dimensions is less standardized. For the discourse practices it looks at the production and consumption of the text. The analysis of the social practices involves an explanation of how they relate with the discourse practices (Fairclough, 2010).

5.1.1   The text

5.1.1.3 Visual analysis

The CED is a document made for the citizenry to read. The CED takes the form of a report, with a design and layout which are reader friendly while also evoking certain feelings. Colours

are signifiers, with different cultural meanings and in relation to the discourse context in which they appear (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001). The document has red, black and white. There are two instances when red is used for colouring the background. First, on the page called "Barcelona and the climate crisis" in which it is recognized that we are in a situation of emergency with examples at the local level (see Figure 3). Second, on the page calling for collective action, which refers to shared responsibility in front of climate change. The heading of the page states that "we need to work together". By having red on the background in these two pages, the attention of the reader is drawn immediately. This reinforces the message of these sections. All the other pages have a white background. It is important to note, nevertheless, that black, white and red are also the official colours of the logo of Barcelona's City Council.
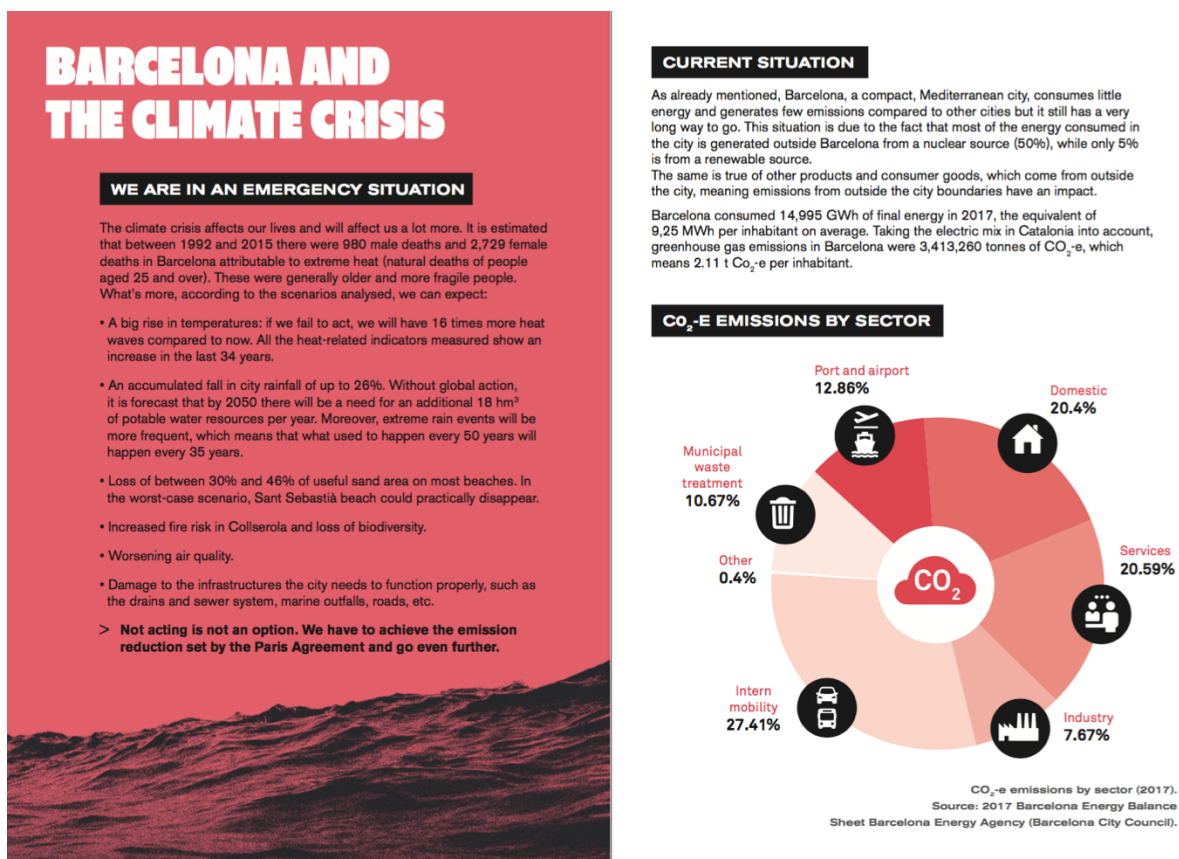
BARCELONA AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS

WE ARE IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION

The climate crisis affects our lives and will affect us a lot more. It is estimated that between 1992 and 2015 there were 980 male deaths and 2,729 female deaths in Barcelona attributable to extreme heat (natural deaths of people aged 25 and over). These were generally older and more fragile people. What's more, according to the scenarios analysed, we can expect:

• A big rise in temperatures: if we fail to act, we will have 16 times more heat waves compared to now. All the heat-related indicators measured show an increase in the last 34 years.

• An accumulated fall in city rainfall of up to 26%. Without global action, it is forecast that by 2050 there will be a need for an additional 18 hm³ of potable water resources per year. Moreover, extreme rain events will be more frequent, which means that what used to happen every 50 years will happen every 35 years.

• Loss of between 30% and 46% of useful sand area on most beaches. In the worst-case scenario, Sant Sebastià beach could practically disappear.

• Increased fire risk in Collserola and loss of biodiversity.

• Worsening air quality.

• Damage to the infrastructures the city needs to function properly, such as the drains and sewer system, marine outfalls, roads, etc.

> Not acting is not an option. We have to achieve the emission reduction set by the Paris Agreement and go even further.

CURRENT SITUATION

As already mentioned, Barcelona, a compact, Mediterranean city, consumes little energy and generates few emissions compared to other cities but it still has a very long way to go. This situation is due to the fact that most of the energy consumed in the city is generated outside Barcelona from a nuclear source (50%), while only 5% is from a renewable source.
The same is true of other products and consumer goods, which come from outside the city, meaning emissions from outside the city boundaries have an impact.
Barcelona consumed 14,995 GWh of final energy in 2017, the equivalent of 9,25 MWh per inhabitant on average. Taking the electric mix in Catalonia into account, greenhouse gas emissions in Barcelona were 3,413,260 tonnes of CO_2-e, which means 2.11 t CO_2-e per inhabitant.

CO_2-E EMISSIONS BY SECTOR

Port and airport 12.86%
Domestic 20.4%
Municipal waste treatment 10.67%
Services 20.59%
Other 0.4%
CO_2
Intern mobility 27.41%
Industry 7.67%

CO_2-e emissions by sector (2017).
Source: 2017 Barcelona Energy Balance Sheet Barcelona Energy Agency (Barcelona City Council).

Figure 3. Example of layout in the CED. Pages 6-7

Besides, a picture of the sea serves as a background in several instances: on the letters of the title on the cover page "This is not a drill", on the background of the table of contents, on the pages with red background, on the page showing "Emissions saving and action budget" and on the back cover. The CED website has a matching layout to the document. Dark red, black and white are the main colours and a picture of the sea is in the background of the homepage (see

Appendix A). The sea appeals to the fact that Barcelona is a coastal city and that, when the sea levels rise, parts of the city might disappear. It reminds the reader that Barcelona will be directly hit and affected by global warming. This corresponds with the content of the text as explained below.

Lastly, it is important to point out the repeated use of tables, and different kinds of graphs and figures to visualize the scientific data presented and the impact of the proposed measures, a technique that has been previously identified as strengthening the validity of the data and the related arguments (Jancsary et al., 2016).

5.1.1.2 Linguistic analysis

The CED is available in three languages: Catalan, Spanish and English. It is structured as follows: three introductory sections, the action part which contains seven model changes and two adaptations, and a final summarizing table with CO_2 savings and budget (see table of contents in Figure 4 – Appendix A). Each of the model changes contains an explanation of why it is important in the context of the city of Barcelona, the challenges it faces, the desired measures to achieve it and the institution responsible for implementing them. The same structure is followed for the adaptations. In total, it contains 100 measures distributed in the model changes and adaptations. The other institutions responsible are the regional government, the national government and several public enterprises. Interestingly, in the count of GHG reduction, the measures that other administrations besides the city council are expected to take are also included. Consequently, it is presented as if there is no guarantee that the expected reduction will occur without the commitment of the other administrations involved.

The CED is both imperative, and, at the same time, conciliatory: blame is externalized but there is also an emphasis on the need for collaboration. It has a focus on identifying responsibility for the measures while, at the same time, emphasizing the need to build partnerships with other governing bodies and actors. These reflects the existing tensions between the local and the regional government, and to a lesser extent with the national government. The city council of Barcelona has shown, since 2015, discrepancies with the politics of the regional government (Bazurli and Castaño Tierno, 2018). The 100 measures proposed by the CED are not attainable without the compliance of the regional and the national level since the city council does not

have the competences to implement all of them. Hence, there is a column next to each proposed measure which identifies the responsible actor for implementing it.

Measures and actions are presented as *necessary* steps - as the only possible path to follow. The modal verbs 'need', 'have to' and 'must' are frequently used. In the CED, every change of model entails certain necessary actions, such as the need for "a radical change of the mobility model [...] on a local and regional scale, and, at the same time, a more rational use of major infrastructures, such as the port and airport" or "to have access to sustainable, sufficient and suitable diet with healthy habits" (Barcelona, 2020a). Similarly, the councillor for Climate Emergency and Ecological Transition claimed that "we must change the energy model" and "accelerate the total implementation of renewable energies in Catalonia" during the CED's presentation (15J EB). Also in 2019b, it was stated, inter alia, that "we need a drastic intensification of action in the next 10-15 years" and "we need to provide a quick and effective response to youth movements".

The use of rhetorical techniques such as metaphors appears in both the 15J speeches and the CED. Mainly, metaphors are used for signalling movement forward, such as "we have started a path, a path that has no way back, and we need to speed up even further" (15J AC). Besides, there is a militarized view of climate change, presented as something to "fight" against, while life on earth is to be "protected". This fits with the rhetoric used by climate movements demanding governments to publicly acknowledge that we are in a situation of a climate emergency. In the CED, there is a recurrent anaphoric figure, connected to each of the measures proposed and how the future city is envisioned: "we want a city ...". Thus, the reader becomes aware that the CED is about defining the desired city.

In terms of transitivity, it is relevant to see how agency is constituted throughout the text (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). Instead of passive voice, there is a broad use of first-person plural – we –, in all three texts analysed, especially in the document 2019b and in the speech held by the mayoress and several deputy mayors during the presentation of the CED in January 15th. This makes the audience feel included, as being part of the narrative. The personal and close tone used by the mayoress and deputy mayors during the speeches of January 15th is also present in the CED. Instead of passive voice, the "we" form predominates. While abstract form is used to describe the external events, that is, global warming and its causes, first-person plural

is used to talk about responsibility and action. In this sense, not only the city council but also the readers – i.e. the citizens – are included in the tackling of climate change, alluding to shared responsibility.

Lastly, modality analyses the extent to which the producer of the text is committed to the statements it contains. In the CED, the description of potential impacts of climate change shows high affinity epistemic modality (Fairclough, 2010). The identified causes of the current emergency and the forecasts about the future consequences done by scientists are presented as facts. Namely, expressions such as "[w]ithout a doubt" or "will be" are used often throughout the text. This positions science as a superior system of knowledge that cannot be questioned (Fairclough, 1992). Scientific calculations are also used to describe the impact of the proposed measures in terms of GHG emissions reduction. Yet, when explaining the emissions derived from the activity of the port and the airport, modality is low. "the emissions from their activity (of the port and the airport), […] *could* be four times the city's GHG emissions." (emphasis added) (Barcelona, 2020a).

There is also certain objective modality, in the CED, since claims are made about the impacts of climate change and the causes of it without clearly stating whose vision is being presented but rather presented as universal truths (Fairclough, 1992). For instance, in the statement "We have 10 years to avoid 1.5ºC degrees increase, the tipping point which, if exceeded, will have irreversible effects" (Barcelona, 2020a).

In her opening speech, Colau asserted that "cities […] have a big responsibility for the emissions that generate this climate emergency, and, therefore we must be the first ones to act immediately" (15J AC). On repeated occasions she uses the first-person to speak on behalf of the city. Differently, in the CED, the city in itself is an agent of change. Or, rather, *the* agent of change. The city is referred to in third-person singular: "We want […] [a] city that learns" or "We want […] a city that is capable of adapting". Barcelona has responsibility and much leeway to act (Barcelona, 2020a).

5.1.2 Discourse practices

While discourse practices are embedded in and shaped through social practices, it is appropriate to separate them to enhance the clarity of the analysis (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). The discursive dimension concerns the production, distribution and consumption of the texts (Fairclough, 2010).

There are a few differences in the two text documents analysed that respond to their distinct purposes. The headlines suggest their different nature. "Climate emergency. Commitment and call to action" (2019b) has different implications than "This is not a drill. Climate emergency declaration" (CED). The first entails a promise and acknowledgement of responsibility, while the second draws more attention, because it starts with a slogan borrowed from youth climate movements. Differently than in the CED, in the document calling for action which recognized the situation of climate emergency and established the roundtable, there are no pictures nor figures. It is an informative official statement, with the purpose to convene the roundtable and explain the reasoning behind it. In the CED, on the other hand, the text has a promotional purpose, showing a marketization of discourse typical of contemporary societies as identified by Fairclough (2010).

A similar feature appears in 15J speeches. The official presentation of the CED took place in Saló de Cent, a venue used for formal institutional acts. In the beginning of her speech, the mayoress pointed out that Saló de Cent was everybody's home. "Welcome everybody to your home, in this Saló de Cent, the hall of this city" (15J AC). With a friendly, close tone, she made a solidarity note with the relatives of the people who died the day before in the explosion at the petrochemical complex in Tarragona. This might be seen as an example of instrumentalization of discursive practices, which is performed through the simulation of conversational communication while she was holding an official institutional speech. Moreover, another visible feature of the generalization of promotional discursive practices is the video that introduced the event (see script in Appendix B). The video seems to be oriented to "sell" the ideas contained in the CED and improve the image of the city council to the audience (Fairclough, 2010).

The structure of the CED and 2019b is somewhat similar: first they describe the problem -i.e. that we are in a situation of climate emergency – and then they proceed to explain the actions

taken to face it. Yet, their purpose is different, and this is also reflected in the structure. While the CED is structured in changes and adaptations to be taken to tackle the climate emergency, 2019b has a section explaining the process of definition of and shaping measures for the climate emergency -which would later lead to the issuing of the CED. It also has a final section describing measures which are already in place.

Furthermore, a specific domain was given to the website: aixonoesunsimulacre.barcelona, which translates to thisisnotadrill.barcelona. This seems to be aimed at reinforcing the message that the city council is taking serious action. The website is available in Catalan, Spanish and English. Being available in English is not a common feature of all webpages of the city council. Thus, the fact that the CED webpage is available in this language shows, again, their international commitment and the influence of globalization (Fairclough, 2010).

The CED is written from an informative and pedagogic genre, displaying a didactic approach to facts and numbers. The target audience are citizens; the text is easy to follow and does not contain any specific policy measures, but rather broad summaries of the actions planned. Thus, while appearing informative, it also seems to be persuasive, because it combines a series of rhetoric figures with arguments supported with scientific numbers (Fairclough, 2010), to convince the reader of the necessity to declare such a climate emergency, of the will of the city council to do the best they can, to engage in climate action and to accept and positively asses the measures proposed.

Considering vertical intertextuality, that is, the relation of the text with other contemporary texts, a relation is manifested with the IPCC report and the Paris Agreement, both explicitly and implicitly in the CED and 2019b. When it comes to horizontal intertextuality, the CED is also part of a re-orientation of the city council to take climate change seriously, and part of a sequence of official actions such as the publication of the Pla Clima in 2019 (Fairclough, 1992). Several of the measures contained in the CED correspond directly to actions detailed in the Pla Clima.

The terminology referring to climate change, its consequences and the way to tackle it reproduces the wording employed by international institutions such as the UN in the Paris Agreement or the IPCC reports. The CED states that "We must raise ambition and establish the

necessary tools and mechanisms to decarbonize the economy and be carbon neutral by 2050"
(Barcelona, 2020a). At the same time, it reproduces the activist terminology deployed recently
urging governments to act in front of climate change. This is notorious in the following quotes
extracted from the CED: "Now… or never" or "Not acting is not an option". On January 15th,
Colau claimed that: "This is not a drill. This is a solid commitment to defending life in our city"
(15J AC).

Regarding interdiscursivity, the CED shows hybridity through the combination of different
genres and styles, and recontextualization of other discourses. It combines both advocative
arguments, to convince the reader of how critical the situation is as well as with analytical
genres to explain the causal links underlying the climate change process. Some parts of the
IPCC report and the Paris Agreement are recontextualized, explained from the local context of
Barcelona. Appealing to scientific knowledge, the measures are legitimized (Fairclough, 2010).
In addition, quite unsurprisingly, the CED shows interdiscursivity with both 2019b and the 15J
speeches.

5.1.3 Social practices

The analysis of social practices is concerned with power, ideology and hegemony, and, hence,
with the established orders of discourses and related shifts (Fairclough, 2010). In this section, I
identify the main discourses which potentially reproduce or re-build certain social practices,
and thus, the current social order. This is further developed in the concluding discussion, which
connects with the theoretical framework (see Figure 1).

5.1.3.1 Scientifically urgent times

An *apocalyptic discourse* is present in all materials analysed. The urgency to act is recurrently
mentioned both in the CED and in the 15J speeches. As the title of the CED states, the climate
emergency is *not* a drill. From this, it is implied that it is *real*. Besides, the terms "crisis" and
"emergency" are used indistinctively throughout the text. The goal of the Declaration is stated
in the text: "The climate emergency must spur us on to make changes in order to achieve a
development model that respects the Earth's ecological limits and ensures a decent life for all."
(Barcelona, 2020a). That is, the CED should serve the purpose to activate the citizens to
embrace climate action.

The CED recognizes that cities will not be able to tackle the climate crisis alone. The necessity to involve actors and governments at different institutional levels is continuously stated. This will to collaborate with other actors was already made clear in 2019b. Despite the differences between Barcelona's city council and the regional level, the need to cooperate is also recognized in the CED and expressed by Ada Colau in her introductory speech. The elimination of discrepancies among political groups to enable operative action has been identified as a characteristic of the neoliberal hegemony (Fairclough, 2010).

In the different texts, numbers are used to describe the emergency (2019b, Barcelona, 2020b, 15J GT). Increases in mean temperature, connected to extreme weather events and related deaths, as well as the transformation of the landscape, are frequently mentioned. Importantly, it is repeatedly pointed out that the beach of Sant Sebastià, a symbol of the city, will disappear (Barcelona, 2020a). Also, in the promotional video of the CED, the beach appears to remind the leader of its potential loss (see Appendix B).

A *scientific discourse* is employed to justify certain measures, quantify necessary GHG reduction and bring climate change to the local level. Describing how the city spaces will be directly impacted is used as a strategy for stressing the urgency to act (15J AC, 15J EB, 15J GT, Barcelona, 2020b). The crisis is global, and, indeed, Barcelona will also suffer the consequences of a warming climate. Moreover, the CED links climate science and activism: "Irrefutable scientific evidence and the climate change effects we are already suffering have created a big social movement all around the globe which is calling for strong and urgent measures" (Barcelona, 2020a). In response, the city council declares the climate emergency. In turn, this urgency justifies the measures taken and the need for everyone to be involved. It seems, hence, that scientific "facts" are used to legitimize the proposed measures (Fairclough, 2010).

The climate emergency is presented as a global problem for which we all have shared responsibility. In the words of the mayoress, "Nobody, absolutely nobody, can sidestep this responsibility" or "we have an enormous responsibility in front of future generations, and, some day […] we will have to explain what we did and what we did not." (15J AC) (15J AC). In the CED promotional video, the off-voice states that "[i]t doesn't matter who you are. It doesn't

matter what you think. It doesn't matter what you believe." (Barcelona, 2020f). In relation, the importance of working together is pointed out several times (Barcelona, 2020b, 15J AC). These statements stress the collective nature of climate change and insist on ignoring differences to prioritize climate action.

5.1.3.2   *Greening and technology – the remnants of ecological modernization*

In line with international agreements, the CED is geared towards reducing GHG emissions. As stated in the following quote "We have 10 years to reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gases emissions by 45%" (Barcelona, 2020a). All different model changes are quantified with a certain reduction in emissions. This reflects the fetishization of CO2 coined by Swyngedouw (2010). Although the situation is described as critical and the need for immediate important changes for reducing GHG emissions is recognized, the measures proposed in the CED are mostly reduced to technological innovation and greening the city, reflecting an *eco-modernist discourse*. This is clear with regards to the port and the airport of Barcelona. While it is acknowledged that they are by far the largest emitters of the city, the proposed measures are quite modest, such as electrifying the port to reduce its emissions. There is no mention of the need to reduce the traffic or the amount of cruise ships. Paradoxically, one of the measures is, literally, "to push for the Port of Barcelona to be a base port for cruise ship lines", which rather suggests the opposite – an increment in traffic. Other measures, to directly reduce the traffic in both infrastructures, are not mentioned. Indirect measures with reduction effects are attributed to other governmental levels, said to be beyond the reach of the city council's competences (Barcelona, 2020a).

Differently, the Deputy mayoress for Ecology, Urban planning, Infrastructures and Mobility stated that the amount of flights must be reduced. She explained that all the staff from the city council would start leading by example, stopping to take flights for trips shorter than 1000km when there is a train alternative that takes less than 7 hours (15J JS). In the CED, nevertheless, it is only stated that this measure will be studied, with no binding implications (Barcelona, 2020a).

Electrification is also seen as central for mobility, while all energy production should shift to renewables. Instead of talking about the need to decrease energy consumption, the CED describes the need to change the sources of energy as well as increasing efficiency in use

(Barcelona, 2020a). This approach ignores that the shift to renewable energies has not, in other territories, led to reduced use of overall energy (Hornborg, 2019). Besides, the socio-environmental impacts of performing the shift to renewables are overlooked.

In addition, greening is also central to the measures proposed. *Green* is the buzz word in the CED. Currently Barcelona lacks green areas, but the CED envisions a city where this has changed. Several of the measures refer to increasing green spaces and reducing local pollution, for instance around public schools in the city (Barcelona, 2019b, Barcelona, 2020a). While these measures have an impact on global emissions, they are directed to improving the local environment and ensuring citizens' wellbeing. It is recognized that the presence of trees does have a positive effect on air pollution and overall GHG emissions, but the narrative of the CED focuses, instead, on the effects on local environment. The CED mixes acknowledging a global problem affecting the earth as a whole with the detrimental environmental effects that polluted urban spaces like Barcelona have on local people. The (global) problem is presented as being an increased concentration of CO_2 in the atmosphere and, yet, part of the solution consists of creating green spaces and removing local emissions in order to enhance life quality of the cities' citizens (Barcelona, 2020a).

Additionally, green is not only used to refer to the presence of trees and other vegetation in the city but also as the desired adjective to describe the future energy, taxes, employment and the economy overall. Comically, even festivals are envisioned as becoming green (Barcelona, 2020a). Green is an empty signifier, the use of which reflects some traits of post-political populism (Swyngedouw, 2009).

5.1.3.3   Avenues for transformation – towards Climate justice?

The structuration of the CED in model changes suggests an acceptance that tackling the climate crisis requires to go beyond previous environmental policies; it must entail a transformation in seven areas: urban, mobility and infrastructure, energy, consumption and waste, food and culture and education. Each model change is connected to a certain vision of how the city should be. Not only the gravity of a warming climate is acknowledged but also the obsolete socio-economic system that caused it. Namely,"[w]ithout a doubt, the global ecological crisis and the climate crisis in particular are largely due to the excessive consumption of the part of the rich countries" (Barcelona, 2020a). This reflects a *climate justice discourse*.

In relation, social movements, and, notably, youth climate movements are acknowledged for their role in pointing at system failures and pushing for climate action:

> Indeed, we must thank all young people that in a neoliberal, individualist, consumerist and against-trend context have raised their voices to say 'this system does not represent us and we want to change it radically because it endangers sour life and future (15J AC)

The need for both economic and cultural transformation is openly stated, both by the mayoress and the CED. Life on earth must be protected, and this should be a priority (15J AC). Eternal economic growth, over-exploitation of resources and consumerist culture are criticized (Barcelona, 2020a). Yet, whether this translates into transformative policies remains to be seen. As Fairclough (2010:364) pointed out:

> Whether or not change in discourse leads to change in beliefs or habits of action, as well as change in organizations, is a contingent matter. Change in discourse may for instance be rhetorically motivated […] or it can be ephemeral

The 15J speeces were overall complementary among them and with the CED, and, yet, there were some contradictions. The need to fundamentally change the economic model is recognized in the CED, since it is "unsustainable and unfair" (Barcelona, 2020a). Yet, the deputy mayor for Economy, Finance, Work and Competitiveness, put an emphasis on the creation of value to generate prosperity, which does not imply any "fundamental" change and reminds of the *neoliberal discourse* (15J JC). Although this focus on prosperity is not present in the CED, it appears to be at odds with the suggested shift in the economic logic necessary for tackling climate change (Barcelona, 2020a). The CED, instead, puts emphasis on the need to move towards a circular economy. Yet, the transformative potential of such a shift has been questioned, and it is said to be an oxymoron which allows for maintaining current consumption levels and social relations (Kębłowski et al., 2020, Zink and Geyer, 2017).

Climate justice as such is mentioned several times in the CED, as well as by Colau on January 15th. The mayoress draws a connection between climate injustice, the current economic model – although without specifying – and the lack of real democracy. Instead, we need to prioritize the common good and protect life (15J AC). In the CED, the principle of "common but

differentiated responsibilities" (UN, 1992)[4] is implied in relation to (global) climate justice. Moreover, climate justice is mentioned when describing the change in the consumption and waste model as well as in the cultural and educational model. The concept is also central for the adaptation regarding health, well-being and environmental quality (Barcelona, 2020a).

Likewise, there are several more instances that refer to urban climate justice. On January 15th, the importance of increasing green spaces for citizens' health was pointed out, as well as the need to reduce air pollution (15J JS). This is reflected in the measures contained in the CED, such as the implementation of a Low Emissions Zone (LEZ) in the whole city to remove local air pollution. Coincidentally, the LEZ came into force in January 2020, coinciding with the launch of the CED. Moreover, the need to protect the most vulnerable citizens to the impacts of the climate crisis was mentioned (15J GT). In the CED, almost all model changes incorporate elements to acknowledge the need to not leave anybody behind, to reduce inequalities and vulnerabilities and increase accessibility of the most vulnerable to a healthier environment and sustainable food (Barcelona, 2020a).

5.1.3.4 The insurgent city

The city is very central to both the CED and related documents, and in the speeches held on January 15th. Although it resembles international agreements on climate change and it adopts activist narratives, the particularity of the Climate Emergency Declaration of Barcelona lies on the evident *municipalist discourse*. The participatory approach was central to crafting the CED (2019b). This also appears several times throughout the text: the will to involve inhabitants, to work together with all different actors, to promote participation and civic engagement to take action (Barcelona, 2020a). The mayoress stated that "We are willing to perform this co-leadership together with citizenship and social movements that historically have drawn the path" (15J AC). She differentiates themselves from top-down approaches, to stress that, although from within the institutions, politics should be shaped from the grassroots. This participatory nature of the production of the CED reflects features of municipalism; the idea that urban space and politics should be co-produced by the people who inhabit it (Purcell, 2014). Furthermore, the words "citizen" and "inhabitant" are used interchangeably throughout the text (Barcelona, 2020a), denoting the Right to the City approach characteristic of BenC that defends

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[4] First acknowledged by the UNFCCC in 1992 in the Earth's Summit in Rio de Janeiro UN 1992. United Nations Framework convention on Climate Change..

the right to inhabit the urban space regardless of the limited category of citizenship (Islar and Irgil, 2018). This is actually a political stand because it includes everybody beyond the artificial category created by the nation-state, thus reinforcing urban justice.

To motivate the citizenry to embrace the proposed actions, the CED describes the impacts that global warming will have on the city. Exemplified by the disappearance of Sant Sebastià beach and numbers referring to extreme weather events, the text explains how climate emergency materializes in the city (Barcelona, 2020a).

Moreover, the city is presented as the platform from where to tackle the challenges posed by global warming. The emergency is a global problem, but which will affect the city and it is from the city that action will be spurred. As Colau put it, "the revolution is clearly an urban one" (15J AC). These words resonate with Harvey, who drawing on Lefebvre stated that "the revolution in our times has to be urban - or nothing." (Harvey, 2012:25). Colau described how the city has a big carbon footprint but also how it is the right platform to lead the necessary change – not only in Barcelona, but in all cities worldwide. This prioritization of the urban as the platform to propel societal transformation reflects the influence of municipalism and the Right to the City (Harvey, 2012, Purcell, 2002).

5.2   Concluding discussion

> We have not taken to the streets for you to take selfies with us and tell us that you really admire what we do.
> (Thunberg, 2019)

The repeated allusion to the loss of city beach fits well with what seems to be the purpose of the CED and related material: to describe the climate emergency, connect it to the local level, justify the measures proposed and appeal to the citizens to act accordingly. Because "[w]ith stable definitions of social reality, members of society have a basis for acting together" (Brulle and Norgaard, 2019:893), declaring a climate emergency by powerful institutions, such as a city council, is a promising act. In Barcelona, climate emergency is defined as a collective, global problem for which the municipality, together with the citizenry, must take responsibility for and lead the necessary transformation to face it. It is a global threat to be fought against from the urban local level. While the recognition of the gravity and urgency of the phenomenon

indicate an open acknowledgement of the *cultural trauma* that climate change represents, the findings regarding the potentialities for social change are, at best, mixed.

The publication of the CED could be read as an expression of the post-political condition by Barcelona's city council, as defined by Swyndegouw (2010) in his account of climate change policies by governments using apocalyptic discourses. Despite its symbolic character, implying to be in a constant "state of emergency" is indeed an expression of the post-political (Swyngedouw, 2018b). The wording and use of language observed also seem to support this inference, with an emphasis on science to prove the magnitude of the catastrophe. However, it is not clear from this analysis that the CED follows a completely post-political logic. At the same time, many features of municipalism are indeed in place, such as the emphasis on co-leadership and focus on the city as the platform from which to implement transformative change. This fits quite well with the repoliticizing character of Mouffe's left-wing populism (2018).

The local level is central to the declaration; the municipalist perspective that characterises the city council impregnates their understanding of climate emergency. While it is about reducing global CO_2 emissions, it is equally central to protect local people's health and well-being. The Right to the City is inferred continuously and, yet, not explicitly referred to. Although the responsibility of the city in producing GHG emissions is clearly recognised, at the same time, the city is seen as a site full of potential for transformation. The local is a platform to fight from and from where to construct new imaginaries; it is the antidote to the global crisis. Thus, the climate emergency is approached from Barcelonian municipalism.

The producers of the text of the CED, in this case, the city council, seem to have chosen to deliberately incorporate more radical discourses from activist domains. However, in other parts of the text, the CED draws on different discourses, and the proposed measures are not matching the radicality of the language. Whether this leads to any discursive, and most importantly, societal change is yet to be seen. The participatory approach that led to the manufacturing of the CED might be related to the use of "activist discourses" throughout the text. While the authorship of the document remains solely the city council, the participation of different civil society organisations, groups and individuals have most likely influenced the framing of the crisis as well as the choice of measures to tackle it. Moreover, the institutionalization of social

movements that has characterized the mandate of BenC since its inception might now be happening with climate movements. I suggest that the co-optation of discourses observed might show the incorporation of new climate movements in the local institutions. Nevertheless, the participatory approach to policy-making allows for debate on one issue – climate emergency – , but within a set frame. The co-optation of discourses and involvement of different actors in policy making to a certain extent, stops opposition to the proposed policies from manifesting itself, thus reinforcing political stability and little questioning of existing social relations. Furthermore, the use of the terminology of emergency might reconceptualize the problem but also poses the danger to normalize it and emptying it of meaning. The risk is to change language without actually challenging the orders of discourse nor the derived social practices.

Other aspects identified reflect the influence of the post-politcial conditions. Climate change is framed using apocalyptic language, and as a global threat requiring the involvement of all kinds of actors. Moreover, there is a belief in innovation and reliance on technical inventions to tackle global warming, because CO_2 emissions are fetishized (Swyngedouw, 2018a). Additionally, the emphasis on shifting to renewable energies denotes a faith in technical fixes, and ignores the time and space appropriation directly connected to their manufacturing and existence as such (Hornborg, 2020). This technological optimism also fits with the ecological modernization discourse, as well as other features identified such as: the definition of climate change as a collective problem, the emphasis on collaboration and multi-level governance and the insistence on green solutions (Harvey, 1996). While they do not go as far as to advocate for green growth, the will to green everything might be read as following the superficial imperative "to be green" also characteristic of ecological modernization and post-political narratives (Russell, 2012). Green is an empty signifier that has no tangible implications (Swyngedouw, 2010).

However, the hegemony of the ecological modernization discourse is contested; both in the CED and in the speeches of January 15th I have identified shifting orders of discourse. I argue that there is a critique of current unequal power relations and a timid opposition to the capitalist social order. The understanding of the current economic system as the root cause of climate change is implicitly acknowledged (15J AC, Barcelona, 2020b). Moreover, there is still a strong *politization* of responsibilities. The inherent tensions between BenC and the regional government are evident in the CED. Beyond the narrative of cooperation and collaboration

there seems to be blame and resentment (15J AC). This is, partly, a challenge to power relations, at least between different administrations. The identification of responsible actors for implementing the proposed measures compromises their implementation, because they do not depend on the city council. Proposing measures, the implementation of which cannot be guaranteed, is problematic. This strengthens the symbology of the CED but not its effectivity. It is true, though, that there are limitations to the abilities to act from the city level, which with the CED becomes apparent. This potential conflicts with other governmental institutions are an expression of the disruption of the social order that recognizing the cultural trauma in the form of a climate emergency entails (Brulle and Norgaard, 2019).

Furthermore, in terms of climate justice, the text shows some incoherencies. It is acknowledged that rich countries are the main responsible for environmental and global warming, and hence should take the lead in reversing the situation. Climate justice is presented as something desirable and necessary (Barcelona, 2020a). Yet, several of the measures seem to be in direct opposition to attaining climate justice, such as the emphasis on shifting to renewable energy sources which is not coupled with a decrease in overall energy consumption. This entails an imperative increase in extraction from countries producing the materials needed for such a transition, displacing the environmental load and hence, being incompatible with climate justice (Hornborg, 2019).

Another example is to be found regarding urban climate justice. The implementation of a Low Emissions Zone, which forbids certain (older) vehicles of circulating in the city, could accentuate social injustices. While it might improve the city's air quality, this measure could lead to a more stratified use of public transport, since those with lower incomes will not be able to acquire a newer vehicle. They state, nevertheless, a will to do the transition of mobility without accentuating current inequalities, but there is no concretion about how this would be done (Barcelona, 2020a). Again, fomenting the acquisition of new vehicles implies increases in material extraction elsewhere. The impacts on global and urban climate justice remain yet to be seen.

I perceive a mismatch between the definition of climate emergency and its consequences, on the one hand, and the measures proposed to tackle it, on the other. While the situation is defined as an urgent crisis, rooted in the economic system, the measures stay comfortably within the

boundaries of the system. The emergency, is, hence, a "soft" one. This is reflected, inter alia, in the emphasis on green measures and the use of environmental economics language qualifying the detrimental effects of the socio-ecological crisis as "externalities" which explains the repeated use of taxation to correct individual behaviour (Barcelona, 2020a). Another example is the commitment to the circular economy without clear statement on a parallel down-sizing of the economy. Resembling the ecological modernism discourse, this conceptualization does not allow for a challenge to the root of the capitalist system intrinsically linked to the socio-ecological collapse.

The forces pulling in opposite directions identified in the materials are seen to be mirroring the struggle to cope with the cultural trauma posed by climate change (see Figure 1). While the post-democratic institutional frameworks exert pressure toward social inertia, there are a few currents pulling towards change. In the face of a cultural trauma, the query is whether and how the municipality addresses it. At the individual level, the climate emergency discourse appeals to the guilt of the citizens, but it does not directly challenge their self-identity. At the institutional level, the CED reflects tensions and confusion within and between governmental institutions. For instance, the will to change internal practices in the city council is stated (15J JS) but not translated in the CED. As Brulle and Norgaard (2019:902) put it, "the cultural trauma of climate change also plays out in institutional conflicts". Lastly, the CED challenges the current social order by demanding a change in the economic system and insisting on the need for a cultural change. Moreover, the acknowledgement of social movements in pushing for the CED (15J AC) reflects their role in constructing new cultural imaginaries. Nevertheless, at the same time, some of the measures resemble ecological modernism, denoting techno-optimism and green-reformist approaches to the economy (Barcelona, 2020a) (Wainwright and Mann, 2018).

The oscillations between implicit critique of the neoliberal world order and defence of climate justice on the one hand, and green narratives mirroring ecological modernization on the other, mirror the inner ideological struggles of the text (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). They also reflect the conflicts and turbulence that arise from disrupting the social order and organizational practices of institutions (Brulle and Norgaard, 2019). There is a back and forth between social change and social inertia as a response to cultural trauma (Brulle and Norgaard, 2018). While openly acknowledging that "[i]naction involves much bigger risks than having the courage to

make the changes that would put us on the road to achieving a more sustainable, fairer system",
the CED reflects a double reality and fails to propose adequate measures, influenced by post-
political condition. Moreover, there is a recurrent expression of double reality in the materials
analysed, when it is repeatedly affirmed that we still have time left (15J AC, 15J JC, 15J GT,
Barcelona, 2020b), in spite of all scientific evidence presented pointing to the contrary. This
inertia might be reinforced if the (insufficient) measures proposed do not materialize because
of any potential future constraints. Rather than allowing for conflict to arose and disrupt the
social order to eventually transform society and move beyond social inertia, the CED seems to
hamper this development.

6   FINAL REMARKS

> A mere change of words does little if the connotations and associations build back into identical
> configurations of meaning. […] This does not mean that the struggle to change discourse is redundant, merely
> that such a struggle function as a necessary but not sufficient moment for changes to occur elsewhere
> (Harvey, 1996:89)

In this thesis, I have addressed a specific climate emergency declaration, seen as part of a
worldwide wave of declarations, in a context shaped by the emerging climate justice
movements, in the face of insufficient action to tackle the threat posed by climate change. I
looked at the case of the city of Barcelona with its unique context and characteristics. This was
not aimed at providing an exhaustive picture of the complexities related to the Declaration of
Climate Emergency in Barcelona. Rather, I focused on the discourse and its social implications.

The analytical framework constructed following Brulle and Norgaard (2018), Swyngedouw
(2010), Harvey (2012) and other authors, put in dialogue with the tools provided by
Faircloughs' approach to CDA has proved useful to assess the operationalization of climate
emergency through discourse by the municipality of Barcelona and provided insights for further
debate. This thesis hopes to be an entry point to opening up the debate on climate emergency
and related declarations.

Climate emergency in Barcelona is defined in terms of time, needs, shared concerns,
responsibilities and impacts on the local environment. Additionally, municipalism is key; there
is a clear focus on local impacts and how the city should be. Because cities play a central role

in tackling climate change, Barcelona should take the lead. After the analysis, I conclude that social inertia is the most likely outcome from the discourse on climate emergency adopted by Barcelona. The dichotomies are manifold; catastrophism is coped with what I call "soft" measures. By engaging in institutionalized double realities, as part of a wider integrated process of social stabilization, the acknowledgement of the gravity of climate change does not translate to effective enforcement of measures to address it (see Figure 1). This is reflected by the title of the CED itself: "This is not a *drill*". Although the municipalist approach is surely present and it opens up avenues for repoliticization, this process is not straightforward. The tenets of the post-political condition seem to be in place, reinforcing an insufficient climate consensus. This challenges "climate emergency" as an all-encompassing concept and its adequacy for facing current socio-ecological problems. Yet, the adoption of climate emergency discourse and the emerging debates around it might become a platform to open up to changes in current orders of discourse and, eventually, leading to social transformation.

Given the limited scope of this thesis, the avenues open for future research are multiple. Because the adoption of a climate emergency is an ongoing process that just recently started in Barcelona, it would be relevant to see, in future research, how it evolves over a longer time-span and whether the new conceptualization of climate change as an emergency sinks in the public debate and society's imaginaries. The interaction of the climate emergency debate with other critical issues, such as the housing or, the more recent, sanitary crises has been beyond the scope of this research and yet, holds potential for future investigations. The new context created by the recent coronavirus outbreak might influence the CED's implementation and should also be considered in future research. Furthermore, a comparison of whether there are any discursive shifts between the emerging climate emergency discourse with the previous predominant sustainability discourse, and the related implications, would surely be relevant. Finally, a comparative study across cities of different CED , using the fame analytical framework, could definitely contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon from a global perspective.

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8   APPENDICES

8.1   Appendix A – List of empirical material

- ✓ Call out to consitute the Climate Emergency Roundtable in July 2019. "Emergència climàtica. Compromís i crida a l'acció" (Barcelona, 2019b)

- ✓ Speeches held during the institutional event of January 15th 2020 in Barcelona, when the CED was officially presented. The video of the event is available at:

   https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/premsa/2020/01/14/declaracio-demergencia-climatica-de-barcelona/ (Barcelona, 2020c)

References	Name	Position
15J speeches	All	
15J AC	Ada Colau	Mayoress
15J JS	Janet Sanz	Deputy mayoress for Ecology, Urban planning, Infrastructures and Mobility

15J EB	Eloi Badia	Councillor for Climate Emergency and Ecological Transition
15J GT	Gemma Tarafa	Councillor for Health, Aging and Care
15J JC	Jaume Collboni	Deputy mayor for Economy and Finance, Work and Competitiveness

Table 2. Reference system for speeches held on January 15th 2020

✓ Climate Emergency Declaration (CED) issued on January 15th 2020. "Això no és un simulacre. Declaració d'emergència climàtica" (image: front page) (Barcelona, 2020a)
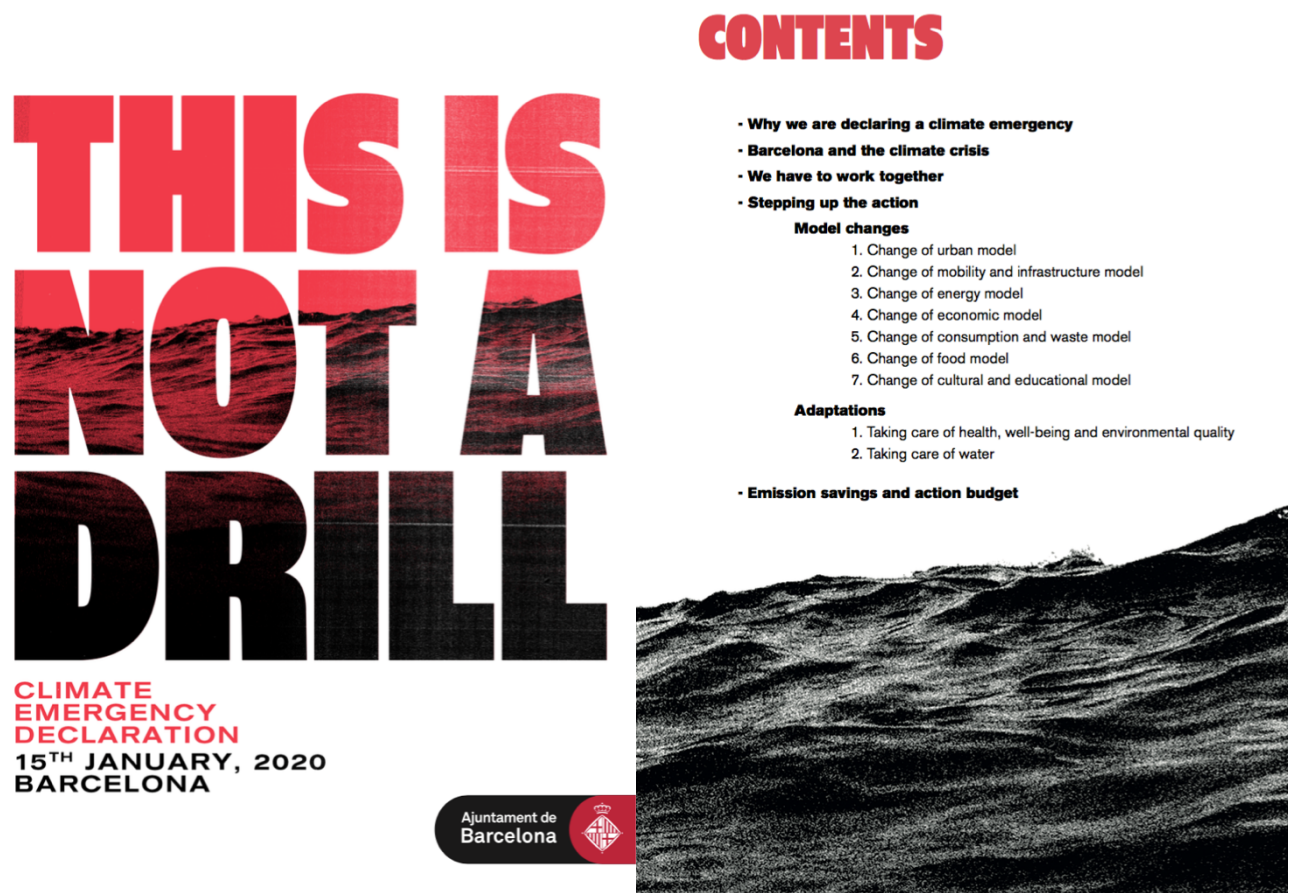

Figure 4. Cover page and Table of contents of the CED

✓ Video to promote de Climate Emergency Declaration. Available at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=io5lD41YDjk&feature=youtu.be (Barcelona, 2020e)

✓ Website with a spcecific domain for the CED: aixonoesunsimulacre.barcelona
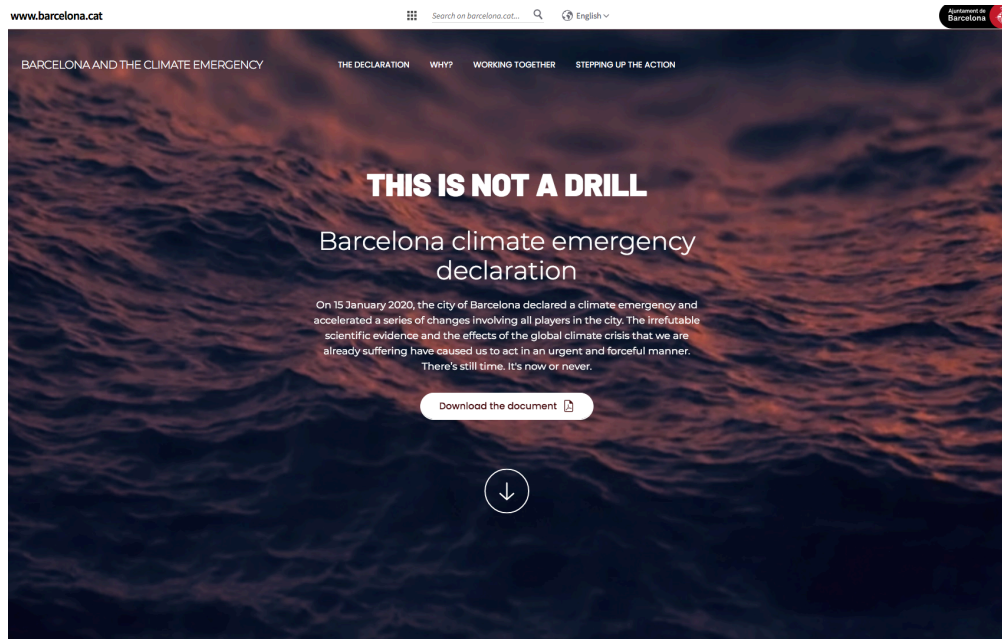
Figure 5. Webpage of the CED

8.2 Appendix B – Video to promote the Climate Emergency Declaration

[script]

Perhaps you don't know.

But you're going down in history.

Yes, you.

Whether you want to or not.

Because you're part of the generation that can still take on the climate change.

According to scientists, whatever we do in the coming ten years — or whatever we stop doing — will have consequences for centuries.

The temperature's not yet a degree and a half higher but Barcelona's beaches have already lost two metres. If we don't make a U-turn, a chain of points of no return will follow which could make the planet uninhabitable.

We can't keep on waiting any longer.

It doesn't matter who you are. It doesn't matter what you think. It doesn't matter what you believe.

Whether or not we do something, we're going down in history.

It all depends on us just how.

THIS IS NOT A DRILL

DECLARACIÓ D'EMERGÈNCIA CLIMÀTICA

January 15th 2020, Barcelona

8.3 Appendix C – Coding frame

The codes from the second layer of coding have been summarized in the following table. The shadowed boxes indicate that the corresponding node was found one or more times in the text.

Nodes	Sub-nodes	2019b	CED	15J speeches
Climate justice	Urban			
	Global			
Right to the city	Local level			
	Co-production			
The post-political	Techno-optimism			
	Fetishization of CO_2			
	Science			
	Consensus			
	Individualism			
	Populism			
Climate change and social inertia	Business as usual			
	Shared responsibility			
	Urgency to act			
	System critique			

Table 3. Coding frame

8.4 Appendix D – Theoretical framework

I created the flow chart in Figure 1 to visualize the proposed analytical framework and how the different concepts and theories proposed are interrelated with each other. I drew mainly on Brulle and Norgaard (2019), but also on Norgaard (2019), Fairclough (1992), Fairclough (2010), Harvey (1996), Harvey (2012) and the rest of the authors mentioned throughout the theoretical framework chapter. Yet, it is important to note that the illustration is based on my own understanding of the theory and that it is a simplified version of complex theories.

Climate change challenges individual sense of identity, institutional practices and the social order of a society. These different challenges, if acknowledged, lead to a disruption of the social order, and hence, a cultural trauma. There are two avenues to react to such disruption. If the cultural trauma is correctly address, there is hope for social change. Yet, because of several stabilization mechanisms operating at the different levels, the outcome is more often social

inertia. The grey arrows imply causality. The reason why there is a discontinuous arrow between Cultural Trauma and Addressing cultural trauma (blue box) is to show that the likelihood of Social Change to materialize is less than is the case for Social Inertia (yellow box).

The flow chart considers three levels: individual, institution and society. Each level and the related effects are shown in a different column, following a vertical logic. Yet, according to Brulle and Norgaard (2019), these three levels are distinct but not independent from each other. Rather, they integrate into one another and therefore, this has been visualized with an open box. The individual, institutional and societal level are embedded in each other.

Discourses appear in boxes with a discontinuous frame. Hegemonic discourses reproduce and reinforce social inertia (yellow box), while counter-hegemonic discourses, hold the potential to change practices at the different levels and, eventually, lead to social transformation (blue box).

A reproduction of the flow chart contained in Figure 1 can be found in the following page.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Challenge

Individual   **Institution**   **Society**

| Identity and everyday practices | Organizational practices | Neoliberal social order |

CULTURAL TRAUMA

(linguistic construction of the social order)

Shifts in order(s) of discourse

Stabilization mechanisms

SOCIAL INERTIA

| Double reality Climate denial | Internal conflict | Socially organized denial |

Hegemonic neoliberal discourse

Post-political populism, ecological modernization, techno-optimism, climate consensus

Counter-hegemonic discourses

| Change human interaction | New practices within organizations | New cultural imaginaries |

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Addressing cultural trauma

Climate Justice, Municipalism and Right to the City, left-wing populism
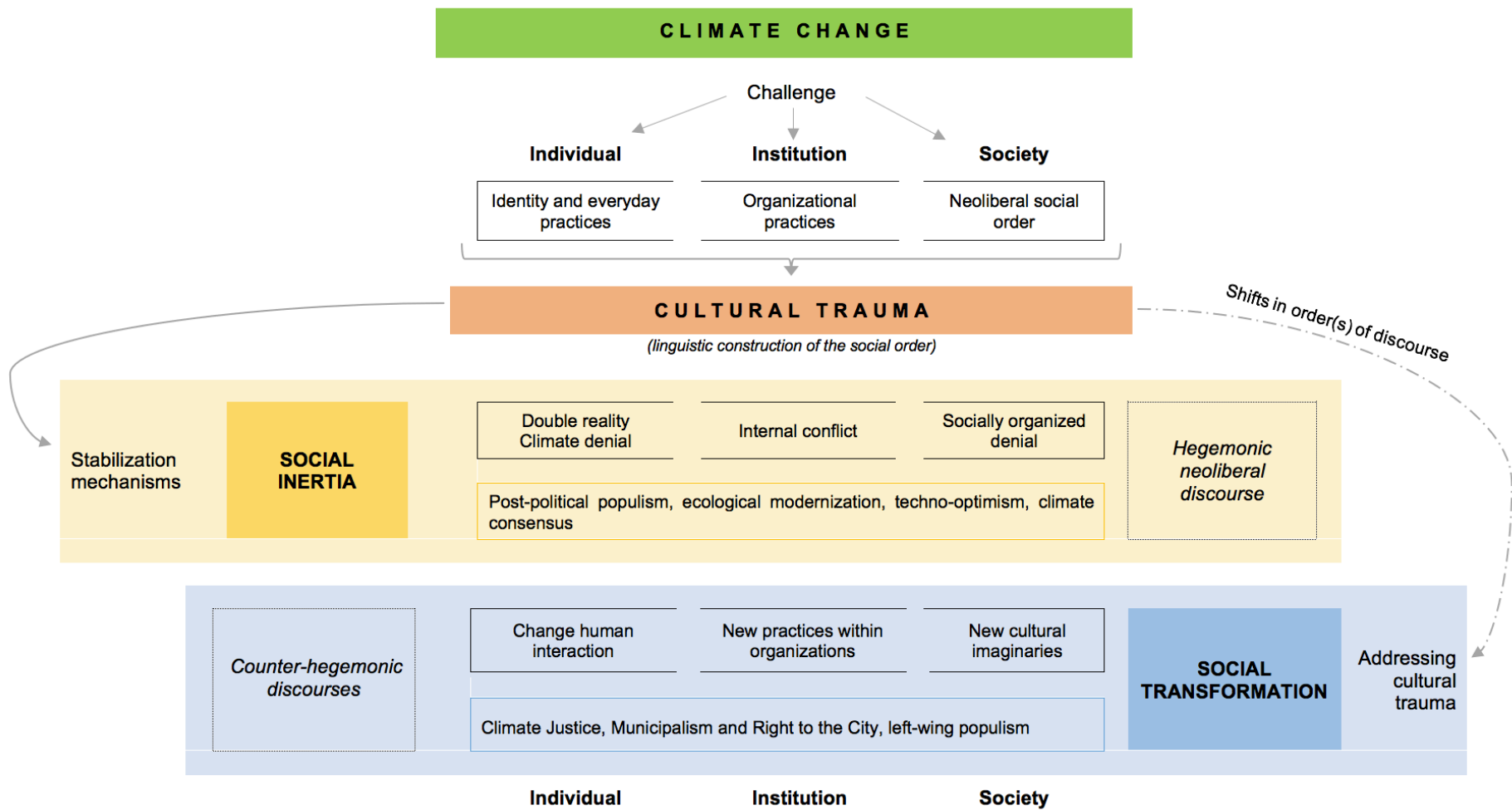
Individual   **Institution**   **Society**

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework