Slow Emergency – Urgent Action?

Exploring the role of municipal climate emergency statements in Sweden

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Abstract

In recent years, more than 2000 jurisdictions worldwide have declared a climate emergency, which covers over 1 billion people. While such declarations have been found to have the potential to spark transformative climate action, the scholarly knowledge of this emerging phenomenon remains limited and there is much disagreement about the merits and effects of climate emergency framings. Moreover, no studies have been conducted on the topic from a Swedish perspective. This study addresses this research gap by exploring the 'climate emergency statements' issued by the Swedish cities of Lund, Malmö, and Kalmar. Specifically, the study focuses on the political implications of the statements, and the extent to which the climate strategies of the three municipalities correspond to what is considered a climate emergency mode. To gather data, 14 semi-structured interviews with relevant local actors were conducted, as well as a review of climate strategy documents of the municipalities.

The findings indicate that the political implications of the climate emergency statements are perceived to be rather limited. However, it appears the statements, at least to some extent, have empowered the climate movement, and invited reflections on the capacity of municipalities to act on the climate crisis. Moreover, the document review suggests that the cities exhibit – at least implicitly – most of the suggested key attributes of a climate emergency mode. However, there seems to be a lack of prioritization of climate issues in the municipal strategies, and a perceived gap between stated goals and concrete action. Thus, rather than driving transformative change per se, this study suggests that the climate emergency statements shine light on challenging aspects of municipal climate action – aspects that arguably need to be considered in a 'climate emergency'. The study concludes that if symbolic acts such as the statements are to assist transformative change, they must be coupled with political and practical action.

Keywords: Climate change framings; climate emergency declarations; Swedish municipal climate action

Executive Summary

As a response to the ongoing climate crisis, there has been a drastic rise in recent years of cities issuing declarations of a climate emergency. Since the first municipal climate emergency declaration (CED) was issued in 2016, thousands of cities all over the world – representing over 1 billion citizens – have followed suit, often as a result of demands from social movements and climate activist groups.

While the debate around the merits and effects of climate emergency framings is inconclusive, there is evidence suggesting that municipal CEDs have the potential to advance urban climate action. However, the scholarly knowledge of this emerging phenomenon remains limited and many uncertainties remain. For instance, previous studies show significant variety in the scope, commitments, and implications of municipal CEDs issued to this date, and not much attention has been paid to the underlying reasons behind the various ways in which CEDs are operationalized and understood. There is thus a need for building on the understanding of the effects of municipal CEDs in different contexts – such as in Sweden, where no studies on the topic have been conducted as of yet.

To address this research gap, this thesis seeks to explore the phenomenon of municipal CEDs in relation to Swedish urban climate action. Specifically, the focus is on the three Swedish municipalities that formally have stated that there is a climate emergency – the City of Lund, the City of Malmö, and the City of Kalmar. Two research questions have guided the study:

- RQ1: What are the political implications of the Swedish climate emergency statements from the perspective of relevant local actors in the concerned municipalities?
- RQ2: To what extent are climate emergency response attributes present in the climate strategies of the Swedish municipalities that have stated a climate emergency?
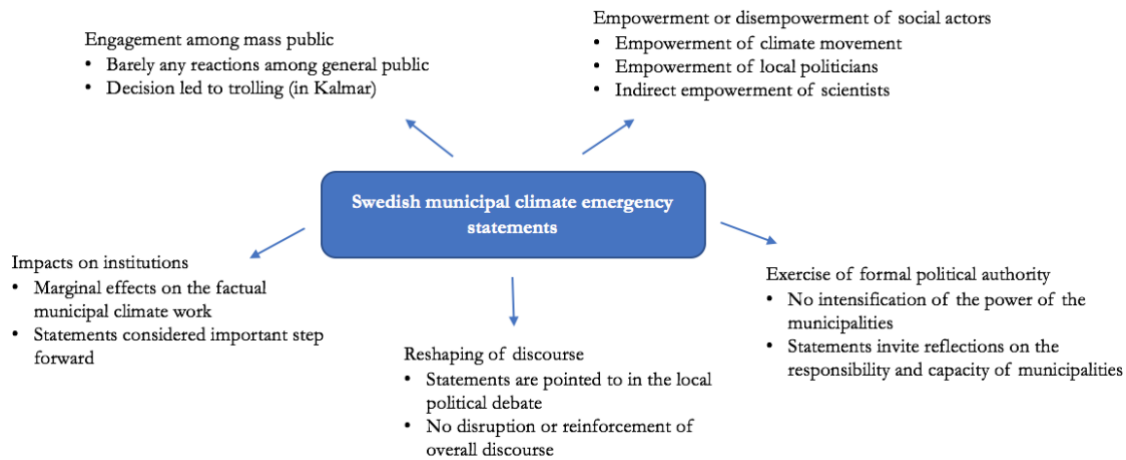
The study is addressed through a qualitative, exploratory design, consisting of 14 semi-structured interviews with local politicians, civil servants, and climate activists in the concerned municipalities, as well as a review of the main climate strategy document of each municipality.

To help explore the data collected – and to build on the current conceptual understanding of CEDs and the implications of climate emergency framings – two recently developed frameworks are applied and tested: the typology of political effects of emergency framings by Patterson et al (2021), and the climate emergency response attributes framework by Davidson et al (2020). While the former framework was selected in order to contribute to the understanding of if and how climate emergency framings can spark transformative change in different contexts, the latter was selected as a means to position the statements in relation to municipal CEDs issued in other parts of the world.

Key findings

With regards to RQ1, the findings indicate that the political implications of the climate emergency statements are perceived to be rather limited. From the perspective of relevant local actors, there have barely been any reactions to the statements among the citizens in the concerned cities, and the statements have neither disrupted or reinforced the overall discourse. Moreover, there are no noticeable shifts in the factual operations of the municipalities as a result of the statements – the effects on the municipal climate work and the political authority or the municipalities are perceived to be marginal. However, it seems like the statements, at least to some extent, have empowered the climate movement as well invited reflections on the capacity and responsibility of municipalities to act on the climate crisis. In other words, the merits of the

Swedish climate emergency statements seem to mainly be tied to their symbolic value. An overview of the key perceived political implications of the statements – across Patterson et al (2021)'s suggested five key dimensions of political effects – is provided in the figure below.

Engagement among mass public
- Barely any reactions among general public
- Decision led to trolling (in Kalmar)

Empowerment or disempowerment of social actors
- Empowerment of climate movement
- Empowerment of local politicians
- Indirect empowerment of scientists

Swedish municipal climate emergency statements

Impacts on institutions
- Marginal effects on the factual municipal climate work
- Statements considered important step forward

Reshaping of discourse
- Statements are pointed to in the local political debate
- No disruption or reinforcement of overall discourse

Exercise of formal political authority
- No intensification of the power of the municipalities
- Statements invite reflections on the responsibility and capacity of municipalities

Key perceived political implications of the climate emergency statements.

To answer RQ2, the review of the climate strategy documents of the three cities suggests that they exhibit – at least implicitly – most of Davidson et al (2020)'s climate emergency response attributes. While some criteria are explicitly incorporated in all three documents, such as social mobilization, restoring a safe climate, and plan for informed action, other attributes are rather only partly or implicitly embedded. For instance, none of the strategies states that climate action should be prioritized, and while the importance of collaboration is explicitly pointed to in all three cases, the advocacy aspect is only implicitly mentioned. As similar levels of fulfillment of the criteria are found in reviews of factual climate emergency plans issued by cities elsewhere, it could thus be argued that the climate strategies of Lund, Malmö and Kalmar do not differ significantly from such plans.

In terms of the role of the climate emergency statements in Swedish urban climate action, rather than driving transformative change per se, this study suggests that the (merely) symbolic value and (a)political character of the statements shine light on important and challenging aspects of municipal climate action – aspects that arguably need to be considered in a 'climate emergency'. As such, by invoking reflections on the capacity and responsibility of cities, the statements might be considered potential stepping stones for transformative urban climate action.

Recommendations

If symbolic acts such as the Swedish municipal climate emergency statements are to assist transformative change, they must be coupled with political action. The findings of this research point to a lack of prioritization of climate issues in the municipal strategies, and indicate a gap between stated goals and concrete action. To close that gap – and to do so in a democratic and socially just way – it is not unlikely that a re-evaluation of the capacity and responsibility of cities is needed. Here, lessons could be drawn from other recent 'emergencies', such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, to take advantage of the public demand for radical climate action, municipalities are recommended to enhance their commitment to involving citizens in the transition, and to dedicate time and resources to develop and find new strategies for meaningful citizen dialogue.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Abbreviations

CED – Climate Emergency Declaration

CERAF – Climate Emergency Response Attributes Framework

EU – European Union

FFF – Friday For Future

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

IIIEE – International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics

IPCC – International Panel on Climate Change

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

RQ – Research Question

SDG – Sustainable Development Goals

UN – United Nations

XR – Extinction Rebellion

1   Introduction

In order to avoid irreversible damage to ecosystems and human societies, urgent action to mitigate and adapt to climate change is needed (IPCC, 2021). Here, cities are commonly and increasingly considered central players (Bulkeley, 2021). Climate change measures have been on the agenda of local governments since the 1990s (Bulkeley, 2010), and urban climate action is often seen as essential for implementing mitigation strategies (Mi et al., 2019). Moreover, the role of cities in climate change mitigation and adaptation is likely to grow even more important in the future, considering that the world is increasingly urbanized – while cities today generate 70% of human-induced greenhouse gases and shelter half of humanity, 5 billion people are projected to live in cities by 2030 (Cities – United Nations Sustainable Development, n.d.). However, despite the increasing recognition of the importance of cities in tackling climate change, previous research on sustainable urban transformation suggests that cities have not managed to undertake the radical changes that are needed for "decisively shifting urban development in a sustainable, resilient and low-carbon direction" (McCormick et al., 2013, p. 4). According to Davidson (2020), cities need to go "beyond business as usual towards a more complex emergency response for climate change" (p. 14).

The urgency of the situation, underlined by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (IPCC, 2021), can be understood as one of the reasons for the increasing use of emergency framings in current climate change science, politics, and debates (Patterson et al., 2021; Wilson & Orlove, 2019). While the term 'climate emergency' is not entirely new – already in 2007, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) Ban Ki-Moon described climate change as an emergency requiring emergency action (UN Chief Makes Antarctica Visit, 2007) – there has been a drastic rise in recent years of more formal declarations of climate emergency (Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021). As of January 2022, 2,059 jurisdictions in 37 countries – representing over 1 billion citizens – have issued such declarations (*Climate Emergency Declaration*, 2022). While these climate emergency declarations (CEDs) have been issued by a wide range of organizations (e.g. universities, companies, national governments, museums) (Howarth et al., 2021), local governments are considered particularly important actors in the CED movement. Rode (2019) calls the emergence of CEDs an urban-led mobilization, pointing to the fact that cities were among the first public institutions to declare a climate emergency, as well as to the high number of cities that have issued declarations. The first CED was issued by the city of Darebin, Australia, in 2016 (*CED Timeline*, 2021). Since then, cities all over the world have followed suit, often as a result of demands from social movements and climate activist groups, such as Extinction Rebellion (XR) and Fridays for Future (FFF) (Dyson & Harvey-Scholes, 2022; Howarth et al., 2021; Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021).

1.1   Problem definition

While it is suggested that CEDs have the potential to impact urban climate action (see e.g. Dyson & Harvey-Scholes, 2022; Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021), the scholarly knowledge of this emerging phenomenon is limited – both in terms of number of academic articles on the topic, and the geography of CED research – and many uncertainties remain (Chou, 2021; Gudde et al., 2021). For instance, previous studies show significant variety in the scope, commitments, and implications of municipal CEDs issued to this date (Chou, 2021; Davidson et al., 2020; Gudde et al., 2021; Harvey-Scholes, 2019). There are examples of cities that, following the CED, have released an associated climate emergency plan (Davidson et al., 2020), but most cities have not adopted any new plans or initiatives as a result of the declaration (Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021). While the issue of whether CEDs should be regarded as 'performative' or 'constative' acts has been discussed on a general level (Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021), not much attention have been paid to the underlying reasons for why CEDs are operationalized and understood

differently – as mere statements or as a political moves to be followed by concrete action – in different contexts. Moreover, little is known about why some cities choose to not declare a climate emergency (Howarth et al., 2021; Rilling & Tosun, 2021).

Furthermore, it is suggested that the implications of emergency framings are context-dependent (Hurlbert, 2021; Patterson et al., 2021). As Patterson et al (2021) point out, "sustainability scholars, policymakers and civil society should not be too quick to embrace nor discard the notion of emergency, as its utility may vary across contexts (for example, in interplay with existing debates […])" (p. 842). Thus, as the use of climate emergency framings is likely to persist (Patterson et al., 2021), studying their specific implications in different contexts is of importance.

Therefore, to contribute to the understanding of how municipal CEDs are operationalized in different contexts, how they interact with other existing debates, and why certain cities chose to not declare a climate emergency, I will explore the phenomenon of CEDs in relation to Swedish urban climate action. The context of Sweden is particularly interesting for contributing to this knowledge gap, since most Swedish municipalities have chosen to not declare a climate emergency. While the issue has been discussed in numerous Swedish city councils (*Fler Kommuner Vill Utlysa Klimatnödläge*, 2020), all municipalities except the City of Malmö, the City of Lund, and the City of Kalmar have decided to not make such statements (*Klimatnödläge råder*, 2020; *Kommunfullmäktige Har Konstaterat Klimatnödläge*, 2020; *Lund erkänner*, 2019). However, instead of 'declaring' a climate emergency, these three cities have all chosen to 'state' that there is a climate emergency. Exploring these 'climate emergency statements' and what they entail would thus contribute to the understanding of why some cities are hesitant to declare a climate emergency, as well as to whether the implications of stating a climate emergency – which could be understood as a 'constative' framing (Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021) – differ from the implications of declaring one. Moreover, considering the relatively high ambitions, long-term commitments, and rigid plans to tackle climate change already implemented by many Swedish cities (see e.g. *Klimatkommunerna*, 2022; *Viable Cities*, 2022), Swedish municipalities is a relevant context for CED research with regards to studying the interplay between climate emergency framings and other existing debates and policies.

In order to build on the current conceptual understanding of CEDs and the implications of climate emergency framings, I will apply and test two recently developed frameworks; Patterson et al (2021)'s typology of political effects of emergency framings, and Davidson et al (2020)'s climate emergency response attributes framework. While the former framework was selected in order to systematically explore the political implications of the Swedish climate emergency statements, the latter was selected as a means to position the statements in relation to municipal CEDs issued in other parts of the world. By expanding the geography of CED research to Sweden in this way, I seek to both contribute to the general understanding of the extent to which (if at all) climate emergency framings can spark transformative change in different contexts, as well as to provide new insights to Swedish practitioners involved in advancing urban climate action.

1.2 Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this master thesis is to explore the phenomenon of CEDs in cities from a Swedish perspective. Specifically, I will explore the role of climate emergency framings in Swedish urban climate action by studying the climate emergency statements by the City of Malmö, the City of Lund, and the City of Kalmar from two perspectives. First, I will explore the political implications of the climate emergency statements. Second, I will explore the extent to which the climate strategies of these three municipalities correspond to what is deemed an appropriate response to climate change from an emergency perspective. Therefore, two research questions (RQs) will guide the study:

- RQ1: What are the political implications of the Swedish climate emergency statements from the perspective of relevant local actors in the concerned municipalities?
- RQ2: To what extent are climate emergency response attributes present in the climate strategies of the Swedish municipalities that have stated a climate emergency?

While the first RQ aims to contribute to the understanding of if and how climate emergency framings can spark transformative change in different contexts, the second aims to position the Swedish climate emergency statements in relation to municipal CEDs issued in other parts of the world.

1.3 Scope and delimitations

The scope of this study is set to the three Swedish municipalities that formally have stated that there is a climate emergency[1]. There are two main reasons for focusing on the specific context of Sweden. First of all, Sweden is – as discussed in Section 1.1 – a particularly interesting scope for studying climate emergency framings. Second, while others have studied implications of climate emergency framings in the Swedish context from a securization perspective (Elander et al., 2021), and in relation to local and social media discourses (Egan Sjölander, 2021; Roloff, 2020), no studies on municipal CEDs in Sweden have been performed to this date.

While the research problem could have been addressed by including all Swedish cities where the issue of whether to declare a climate emergency or not has been raised, limiting the scope to the municipalities that have made formal climate emergency statements was deemed appropriate considering the timeframe of the thesis project. Additionally, by studying only a few cases, rather than producing more of a general overview of several municipalities, I aim to generate more in-depth, context-dependent knowledge of CEDs in cities. Apart from being a suitable approach when seeking to conduct in-depth analyses (Blaikie & Priest, 2019; Flyvbjerg, 2006), case studies can be considered particularly appropriate for studying emergency framings, considering the suggested context-dependent nature of their implications (Hurlbert, 2021; Patterson et al., 2021). The three cases in questions will be explored through interviews with relevant local actors as well as through a review of policy documents. 'Relevant local actors' refers to actors in the concerned municipalities that in one way or another have been involved in the propagation of or the decision regarding the statement. The policy documents to be reviewed are limited to the main climate strategy document of each of the municipalities. Furthermore, it should be noted that while 'political implications' is a broad term, my use and understanding of it is – for the purpose of this study – based on the typology of Patterson et al (2021), and thus limited to five key dimensions. A further discussion on methodological choices is provided in Section 3.1.

1.4 Ethical considerations

This study has been reviewed against the criteria for research requiring an ethics board review at Lund University, and has been found to not require a statement from the ethics committee. Moreover, the study is not funded by any external organization, and there is no cause to believe that the participants will suffer any disadvantage from participating, nor that the outcomes of the research will be harmful in any way. However, an ethical consideration of relevance for this study is the responsibility towards the participants in terms of consent, confidentiality and courtesy. Therefore, prior to each interview, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and how it would be conducted. Furthermore, the participants were informed that they had the right to cancel their participation at any time, that the interview would be recorded,

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[1] Since the start of my research project, a forth Swedish municipality has decided to state a climate emergency – in April 2022, a climate emergency statement was made by the municipality of Falun (Falu Kommun, 2022). However, considering the narrow time frame of the thesis project, it was decided to not include this statement in the analysis.

and that their participation would be anonymous (but that their role – when relevant – would be disclosed). The participants were then invited to verbally give their informed consent to participate by confirming that they had understood their rights and the purpose of the study. With regards to the handling of the collected material, the interview data have been treated confidentially and have been used for scientific reasons only. All collected empirical data have been safely stored on a password-protected computer.

1.5 Audience

Through this study, I aim to generate knowledge of relevance to local policy makers and civil servants involved in Swedish municipal climate work, the environmental movement and other advocators for CEDs, and urban sustainability scholars. The study may shine light on potential areas of improvement in existing policies, and suggest how the public demand for CEDs potentially could be used as a tool in accelerating urban climate action. For policy makers and civil servants, learning more about the vision and demands of climate activists and other advocators of CEDs could also be relevant with regards to increasing citizen involvement in municipal climate work. For advocators of CEDs, an increased understanding of Swedish municipal policies from a climate emergency perspective may help them sharpen their demands as well as their ability to hold city councils accountable for what they promise. Lastly, as the study will test newly developed frameworks in a new context, the findings could be of relevance also for the scientific community, by contributing methodologically to the body of CED research.

1.6 Disposition

This thesis is organized in the following way. *Chapter 1* introduces the topic, the identified research problem, and the aim of the study. It also describes the scope and delimitations of the research, as well as the intended audience. In *Chapter 2*, an overview of current knowledge of relevance to the topic of municipal climate emergency statements is provided. Significant aspects of literature related to climate emergency framings is summarized, the main research gaps are outlined, and two frameworks identified as suitable for addressing the identified gaps are introduced. *Chapter 3* presents the research design and the methods used for data collection and data analysis. *Chapter 4* provides a background to the findings of the study by describing some aspects of Swedish municipal climate action, including the rise of the CED movement, and by introducing the three case municipalities and how their respective climate emergency statements came to be. In *Chapter 5*, the main findings of the study are presented and analyzed using the two frameworks. The significance and relevance of the findings are interpreted and discussed in *Chapter 6*, where I assess my contribution to the research gap by discussing my findings against what is already known about climate emergency framings and CEDs, and reflect upon my methodological and analytical choices. Lastly, in *Chapter 7*, I present the main conclusions of the work, provide recommendations for actors involved in Swedish urban climate action, and outline some areas for future research.

2 Literature review

This chapter provides an overview of current knowledge of relevance to the topic of municipal climate emergency statements. While Section 2.1 summarizes significant aspects of literature related to climate emergency framings and indicates what gap my research seeks to address, Section 2.2 describes two conceptual frameworks identified through the literature review as particularly suitable for helping to address and understand the indicated research gap. Conclusions are drawn in Section 2.3, where I re-iterate and justify my research questions based on the key takeaways form the literature review.

2.1 Current knowledge related to climate emergency framings

In the following sections, I outline what is currently known about climate emergency framings. After setting the scene by providing a brief overview of the current scholarly understanding of urban climate action (subsection 2.1.1), I synthesize some key aspects of the existing literature on framings in general and climate change framings in particular (subsection 2.1.2). Following this, I turn to climate emergency framings (subsection 2.1.3), before outlining key findings from the body of research on the specific phenomenon of CEDs issued by cities (subsection 2.1.4). Finally, I conclude by summarizing key aspects of the reviewed literature, and by identifying a research gap that my study seeks to address.

2.1.1 Transformative urban climate action

Cities are commonly considered central players in combatting climate change (see e.g. Bulkeley, 2021; Mi et al., 2019). Since climate change measures first appeared on the agenda of local governments in the 1990s (Bulkeley, 2010), the role of cities in climate change mitigation and adaptation has become increasingly recognized. Previously being considered a global issue requiring global solutions, the problem of climate change has over the last 30 years increasingly been understood as a transnational, personal, networked, regional – and urban – problem. (Bulkeley, 2021). With regards to how urban climate action has evolved during this time, Bulkeley (2021) describes three waves of 'climate urbanism'. In the early 1990s, urban responses to climate change were largely voluntary – local governments set their own targets to decrease emissions. This first wave of climate urbanism, 'municipal voluntarism', was then superseded by a second wave, characterized by cities starting to recognize the strategic importance of climate action as a means for economic and urban development (Bulkeley, 2021). With the rise of 'strategic urbanism', the issue of climate change became not only more prioritized for cities, but also more complex and contested (Bulkeley, 2021). Today, Bulkeley (2021) argues that we see a third wave, 'the climate connected city', alongside the two previous ones, and points to three particular connections: climate change is increasingly and explicitly connected to issues of urban consumption, to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and specifically the goals of biodiversity, energy, food, and water, and, lastly, to questions relating to social justice.

Also Castán Broto and Robin (2021) describe a contemporary climate urbanism, interlinked with social justice, "that both exposes the production of further inequalities associated with urban responses to climate change and provides new radical forms of practice for more progressive urban futures" (p. 715). Along similar lines, Long and Rice (2018) argue that we see a new paradigm of climate urbanism, in which cities are recognized as the most viable and appropriate sites of climate action, and that is distinguished from previous paradigms in terms of e.g. a stronger focus on social justice as well as on the economic motives for protecting cities from climate change.

However, despite the increasing recognition of the importance of cities in tackling climate change, and despite the increasing priority of climate change on urban agendas, the consensus view seems to be that cities have not managed to undertake sufficient action (Bulkeley, 2021;

Burch et al., 2014; McCormick et al., 2013; Wolfram, 2016). Consequently, drawing on transformation and transitions research (see e.g. Hölscher et al., 2019; Köhler et al., 2019; Scoones et al., 2020) there is a rapidly growing literature on what factors are responsible for this situation, as well as what aspects may facilitate and catalyze just and effective urban climate responses. Among the suggested key conditions for transformative change are new modes of governance (Glaas et al., 2019; McCormick et al., 2013), a deeper understanding of the economic, cultural and political aspects of power dynamics in the city (Gorissen et al., 2018; Romero-Lankao et al., 2018), systems thinking (Burch et al., 2014; Wolfram, 2016), community experiments and innovation (Bulkeley, 2021; Glaas et al., 2019; Gorissen et al., 2018), and creating shared local visions (Bernadett et al., 2021; Hodson & Marvin, 2010). There is also evidence for public participation (Cattino & Reckien, 2021) and collaboration – both within the city (Gorissen et al., 2018) and with external actors (Glaas et al., 2019) – being important drivers for transformative local climate action. With regards to what kind of knowledge that is required to accelerate urban sustainable transformation, McCormick et al (2013) point to the need for an interdisciplinary approach. Similarly, Romero-Lankao et al (2018) argue that an urgent research priority is to "effectively and inclusively incorporate multiple forms of knowledge and methodology from the arts, humanities, practitioners and local communities everywhere" (p. 755-756). Among several identified knowledge building blocks for catalyzing transformative local climate action, one specific issue requiring more attention is suggested to be how climate change framings can work to create more effective and inclusive urban climate change responses (Romero-Lankao et al., 2018).

2.1.2 Framing climate change

The concept of frames – a common analytical lens applied and explored in contemporary social sciences – has emerged within multiple fields, including language studies, psychology, political science, and sociology (Benford & Snow, 2000; Borah, 2011). In what is considered the earliest formal work on the concept, frames are defined as words and nonverbal interactions that enable actors to "locate, perceive, identify and label" (p. 21) specific events and occurrences (Goffman, 1974). Along similar lines, others have described frames as a way of interpreting a complex reality (Rein & Schön, 1996), and as a tool for sense-making, organizing, and storytelling (van Hulst & Yanow, 2016). While the term discourse – another concept commonly applied in social sciences – refers to a broader landscape of ideas and practices (Hajer, 1997), frames can thus rather be understood as specific interpretive tools, situated within the discourse (Patterson et al., 2021).

Building on these definitions, Chong and Druckman (2007) mean that the term 'frame' often is used in two different ways – either, it refers to the way a certain issue is communicated to an audience ('frames in communication'), or to the way that an individual conceptualizes the issue ('frames in thought'). Since people's way of understanding information is influenced by the words and presentation style used to convey messages, 'frames in communication' have an effect on 'frames in thought' (Chong & Druckman, 2007) – a process that has been called the framing effect (Stecula & Merkley, 2019). Indeed, many scholars describe framing as a dynamic, evolving process of meaning-making (Benford & Snow, 2000; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Slothuus & de Vreese, 2010; van Hulst & Yanow, 2016), involving many actors (Allan & Hadden, 2017; Junk & Rasmussen, 2019; Mintrom & Luetjens, 2017). While the terms frame and framings are used interchangeably by most, van Hulst and Yanow (2016) use the very notion of process to make a distinction between the two: "'frame' signifies a more definitional, static, and potentially taxonomizing approach to the subject; "framing" offers a more dynamic and, in our view, potentially politically aware engagement" (p. 93). However, for the purpose of this thesis, I will – similarly to most scholars – use these two words interchangeably.

Chong and Druckman (2007) are not alone in their view that the way issues are framed shape public opinion in powerful ways. For instance, frames and framing processes are considered to be of fundamental importance in lobbying (Junk & Rasmussen, 2019), in driving policy change (Juhola et al., 2011; Mintrom & Luetjens, 2017), and for understanding social movements (Allan & Hadden, 2017; Benford & Snow, 2000). Moreover, as Nisbet (2009) puts it, "there is no such thing as unframed information, and most successful communicators are adept at framing, whether using frames intentionally or intuitively." (p. 15). Another consensus view in the literature on framing is that a certain frame can have different effects on different people, depending on, for example, their political affiliation (Slothuus & de Vreese, 2010; Wiest et al., 2015), their knowledge of the issue in question (Chong & Druckman, 2007), their cultural context (Caillaud et al., 2020), and their preexisting beliefs and worldviews (Goffman, 1974; Nisbet, 2009).

With regards to climate change specifically, there is ample literature on different framings and their effect on public opinion (see e.g. Bernauer & McGrath, 2016; Nisbet, 2009; Stecula & Merkley, 2019; Wiest et al., 2015). This is perhaps not surprising, considering the very nature of the issue in question – as Stecula and Merkley (2019) point out, the "complexity [of climate change] provides journalists, parties, and interest groups tremendous latitude in framing the issue to serve their interests and beliefs" (p. 2). As an example of this, in their study on the framing power of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Allan and Hadden (2017) show how NGOs, by actively adopting a climate justice framing, have managed to increase the focus on issues of loss and damage in global climate politics. Others have studied the implications of framing climate change as a threat (Caillaud et al., 2020), as a local versus a global problem (Wiest et al., 2015), and in apocalyptic versus post-apocalyptic terms (Cassegård & Thörn, 2018). While this research is premised on the assumption that framing matters – i.e. that different framings of climate change play a crucial role for climate policy development (Juhola et al., 2011; Wiest et al., 2015) and for raising public concern around climate action (Egan Sjölander, 2021; Nisbet, 2009; Stecula & Merkley, 2019; Stripple et al., 2021) – there is also evidence questioning this assumption. In their study on whether justifying climate change mitigation by pointing to the socio-economic benefits of taking action – instead of framing it as risk reduction – makes mitigation efforts more engaging and appealing to citizens, Bernauer and McGrath (2016) conclude that "simple reframing of climate policy is unlikely to increase public support" (p. 680).

Risk reduction is considered by many to be the dominant way of framing and justifying climate change mitigation in contemporary politics and debates (Bernauer & McGrath, 2016; Stecula & Merkley, 2019), and adaptation is found to commonly be framed in similar ways. Fünfgeld and McEvoy (2014) suggest the dominant adaptation framings to be 'avoiding disasters', 'community resilience' and 'averting organizational risk', while Juhola et al. (2011) in a similar fashion find them to be 'planning', 'economic risk', 'vulnerability' and 'existing measures'. In Sweden, particularly, it is suggested that climate change mitigation and adaptation commonly is framed in terms of "strategies [that] imply slow, micro-steps forward based on a combination of social-liberal, 'circular' and a touch of 'green growth' economies" (Elander et al., 2021, p. 2).

However, there is growing support for the view that these conventional ways of framing climate change are insufficient in order to appropriately address the complexity and scale of the problem (Aldunce et al., 2016; Fünfgeld & McEvoy, 2014). One suggestion of how to address this complexity is provided by Nisbet (2009). He argues that successful framing of climate change entails "remaining true to the underlying science of the issue, while applying research from communication and other fields to tailor messages to the existing attitudes, values, and perceptions of different audiences, making the complex policy debate understandable, relevant, and personally important" (Nisbet, 2009, p. 14). Others suggest that the most appropriate way

of framing climate change is to call the situation an emergency (Gilding, 2019; Gills & Morgan, 2020; Ripple et al., 2019).

2.1.3 Climate emergency framings

Over the past years, the term climate emergency has gained ground among journalists, social movements, and policy makers (Davies et al., 2021; Wilson & Orlove, 2019). However, there has been much debate around the merits and effects of this specific way of framing climate change (see e.g. Patterson et al., 2021). In the following section, after introducing some aspects relating to the current scholarly understanding of the notion climate emergency, I synthesize the main features of the scholarly debate around the implications of climate emergency framings.

In literature on crises and emergencies, an 'emergency' is commonly understood as a sudden and to some extent unexpected situation, with properties of danger and immediacy, that demands urgent action (Markusson et al., 2014; Neocleous, 2006). According to Neocleous (2006), the term is used to "describe a condition close to war in which the normal constitution might be suspended" (p. 207). Emergency frames – defined by Patterson et al (2021) as "a sense-making lens that conveys the meaning that a given set of circumstances constitutes an emergency" (p. 841) – can thus be understood as inherently political (McConnell, 2020; Neocleous, 2006; Patterson et al., 2021). McConnell (2020) argues that this political nature is reflected by the multiple and diverse ways in which societies and political actors tend to frame extreme events.

Indeed, many scholars have sought to unpack the meaning of emergency framings by studying them in relation to other crisis related terms, such as 'risk', 'accident', 'urgency', 'disaster' and 'catastrophe' (Hurlbert, 2021; McConnell, 2020; McHugh et al., 2021; Wilson & Orlove, 2019). In the literature discussing interconnections between these terms, a common theme brought up – more or less explicitly – is the aspect of time. For instance, Wilson and Orlove (2019) describe the concepts of crisis, emergency, and urgency as time pressure framings, and McHugh et al (2021) bring in the aspect of time in order to make distinctions between different terms; risks happen in the future, emergencies and crises happen now. Thus, emergency framings are suggested to contribute to "significant shifts in people's perceptions [of the situation]: one from 'future risk' to 'current crisis.'" (McHugh et al., 2021, p. 3). Similarly, in his study on the use of emergency framings in relation to the Black Lives Matter protests in the United States, Anderson (2017) argues that such framings "enact a particular style – or form – of relation between past, present and future" (p. 463) that creates a sense that the time to act is now. Patterson et al (2021) propounds a slightly different view on emergency and temporality, suggesting that emergency framings are used to convey messages about current as well as future risks. Specifically, they argue that emergency framings are employed in two distinct ways in contemporary science and politics: either as a response to impacts that have already occurred ('emergency-as-reaction'), or in order to avoid impacts likely to happen in the future ('emergency-as-strategy') (Patterson et al., 2021).

With regards to 'climate emergency' specifically, this way of framing climate change could – to use Patterson et al (2021)'s distinct categories – be understood in terms of 'emergency-as-reaction' as well as 'emergency-as-strategy'. While the situation may be considered an emergency due to the consequences of climate change (increased risk of heat stress, flooding, water shortage, etc) (see e.g. Chou, 2021; Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021), it may also be framed as an emergency due to the immediate actions required to mitigate future climate change. This latter frame – 'emergency-as-strategy' – seems to be the most prominent way of framing climate emergency in the literature.

However, it should be noted that there is no common understanding of the term 'climate emergency' among scholars (Chou, 2021; Gudde et al., 2021; Markusson et al., 2014). While some authors give no explicit definition, others point to definitions found in grey literature[2] (Chou, 2021), or in encyclopedia[3] (Howarth et al., 2021). Another common approach is to draw on research from the field of emergency management. For instance, Howarth et al (2021) describe climate change as a 'slow emergency' – a concept introduced by Anderson et al (2020) – thus emphasizing the insidious, slow-burning and global nature of the threat in question. In a similar fashion – and drawing on Handmer and Dovers (2013)'s classification of emergencies as being either 'routine', 'non-routine' or 'complex' – Davidson et al (2020) frame climate change as a complex emergency, considering its unpredictable nature and interdependent environmental, political and social impacts. Yet another perspective on the meaning of climate emergency is provided by Wilson and Orlove (2019), who suggest that it both describes a phenomenon (i.e. a growing gap between what experts assess has to be done and what policies are in place), and intends to change behavior (based on the premise that time pressure will motivate action). As Chou (2021) points out, these varying ways of understanding climate emergency, and the lack of a common definition, might be due to the fact that the scholarly knowledge of climate emergency framings remains limited.

In addition to providing different views on how to define climate emergency, scholars disagree on whether framing climate change in such a way is an effective tool to advance climate action (for an overview, see Patterson et al., 2021). While subsection 2.1.4. below discusses what has been found to be the implications of municipal CEDs specifically, I will in the coming paragraphs on a more general level summarize the main features of the inconclusive debate around the merits and effects of emergency framings.

On the one hand, there is a widespread view in the scientific community that the world is facing a climate emergency. In January 2020, pointing to worrisome trends across Earth system processes, a climate emergency warning was signed by over 11,000 scientists, urging decision-makers and all of humanity to widely declare a climate emergency in order to "better allow policymakers, the private sector, and the public to understand the magnitude of this crisis, track progress, and realign priorities for alleviating climate change" (Ripple et al., 2019, p. 11). From this point of view, framing climate change as an emergency is believed to accelerate climate change mitigation and adaptation. According to Gilding (2019), the widespread use of climate emergency framings might even be "our best shot at action ever. Humans are slow to respond to threats, but can achieve amazing things when a problem almost overwhelms us" (p. 311). Specifically, emergency framings are suggested to assist transformative change by creating conditions for more comprehensive policy responses (Koppenborg & Hanssen, 2021), by imbuing hope and inspiration (Anderson, 2017), and by enhancing citizen engagement (Hurlbert, 2021). However, a common view is that while emergency framings can be beneficial, it depends on the context. To account for their effects, attention must be paid to the social, political and geographical landscape in question (Hurlbert, 2021; Patterson et al., 2021).

On the other hand, there are scholars who rather argue that climate emergency framings are dangerous (Asayama et al., 2019; Hulme, 2019) or at least risky (Hodder & Martin, 2009; Markusson et al., 2014). According to Hulme (2019), declaring a climate emergency renders public policy worryingly focused on a single goal, while the challenge of climate change rather "demands a proliferation of diverse policy goals, the very opposite of what states of exception

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[2] The most complete description of what climate emergency means for cities can, according to Chou (2021), be found in *Understanding Climate Emergency & Local Government* by Spratt (2019).

[3] According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2021), climate emergency is "a situation in which immediate action is needed to reduce or stop climate change and prevent serious and permanent damage to the environment."

bring into being" (p. 23). Furthermore, Hulme (2019) questions why an emergency should be declared for the planet, but not for other pressing sustainability challenges. Along similar lines, Hodder and Martin (2009) argue that a potential disadvantage of climate emergency framings is that climate change thus becomes prioritized over other important issues. It is also suggested that this reductionist approach to the problem risk to marginalize alternative worldviews and approaches (McHugh et al., 2021), and consequently be used as a justification for going forward with large-scale solutions instead of opening up for constructive deliberations (Markusson et al., 2014). In that way, climate emergency framings may be used to justify a depoliticization of the climate change challenge (Creasy et al., 2021). Asayama et al (2019), on their hand, base their critique of climate emergency framings on the closely associated aspect of 'climate deadline-ism' (i.e. setting a fixed deadline after which interventions are deemed to be too late), arguing that such a framing "might incite cynical, cry-wolf responses and undermine the credibility of climate science when an anticipated disaster does not happen" (p. 571). Moreover, it is suggested that while the time pressure aspect may resonate with certain groups (e.g. people already concerned about climate change) (Asayama et al., 2019), it may disempower others by creating feelings of exhaustion, anxiety and guilt (Patterson et al., 2021), thus undermining people's motivation to act (Hodder & Martin, 2009; Wilson & Orlove, 2019). Therefore, it is argued that climate emergency framings are likely to polarize beliefs and actions (Wilson & Orlove, 2019). Scholars cautioning for the use of climate emergency framings also point to the fact that emergency framings historically have been used as a tool for political oppression (Neocleous, 2006). Lastly, as climate emergency framings not necessarily translate into further action (Elander et al., 2021), it is argued that they may be used for greenwashing (Fitzgerald et al., 2021).

As several scholars conclude, there are thus no simple answers to whether climate emergency framings assist transformative change or not (Davies et al., 2021; McHugh et al., 2021; Patterson et al., 2021; Wilson & Orlove, 2019). Studies of the effects of climate emergency framings are only just emerging (Hulme, 2019), and a consensus view is that more research is needed in order to understand how different political and social actors in various contexts perceive and respond to such framings. As Patterson et al (2021) point out, "sustainability scholars, policymakers and civil society should not be too quick to embrace nor discard the notion of emergency, as its utility may vary across contexts (for example, in interplay with existing debates, and depending on the presence of safeguards against adverse consequences) and over time" (p. 842).

2.1.4 Climate emergency declarations by cities

One manifestation of the increasing use of climate emergency framings in climate change science, politics, and debates is the drastic rise in recent years of formal declarations of a climate emergency (Patterson et al., 2021; Wilson & Orlove, 2019). As of January 2022, 2,059 jurisdictions in 37 countries – representing over 1 billion citizens – have issued such declarations (*Climate Emergency Declaration*, 2022). While these climate emergency declarations (CEDs) have been issued by a wide range of organizations (e.g. universities, companies, national governments, museums) (Howarth et al., 2021), local governments are considered particularly important actors in the CED movement. Rode (2019) calls the emergence of CEDs an urban-led mobilization, pointing to the fact that cities were among the first public institutions to declare a climate emergency, as well as to the high number of cities that have issued such declarations.

With regards to the scholarly understanding of the specific phenomenon of CEDs issued by cities, it should be noted that the current academic knowledge of it is limited – both in terms of number of articles on the topic, and the geography of the research (Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021). Apart from one global review by Ruiz-Campillo et al (2021), most studies of municipal CEDs have so far focused on the UK (Dyson & Harvey-Scholes, 2022; Gudde et al., 2021; Harvey-Scholes, 2019; Howarth et al., 2021) and Australia (Chou, 2021; Davidson et al., 2020; Greenfield et al., 2022). Others have studied municipal CEDs in the context of Germany (Rilling

& Tosun, 2021), New Zeeland (Davidson et al., 2020), Canada (J. Sutton, 2020), and Spain (Custodio, 2020). Here I outline key findings from this novel body of research, including common motivations for issuing a municipal CED, and implications of doing so. I conclude by summarizing significant aspects of what is already known about climate emergency framings, and by describing what research gap my study will seek to address.

When it comes to why cities choose to issue CEDs, the main motivations are found to be political positioning, pressure from civil society, and specific local concerns. Drivers referring to political positioning include declaring a climate emergency as a response to inadequate climate action at the national level (Chou, 2021; Howarth et al., 2021; Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021); as a response to international policy, pointing to e.g. the Paris Agreement or EU directives (Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021); and as a result of wanting to follow what other, neighboring local governments already have done (Howarth et al., 2021; Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021). The second set of drivers refers to pressure from civil society. Ruiz-Campillo et al (2021) mean that CEDs can be understood as "the culmination of social movements' efforts to raise the climate change profile in public policy" (p. 18), pointing to petitions, protests and demands from groups such as Rise for Climate, XR, and FFF. Also Dyson and Harvey-Scholes (2022) and Howarth et al (2021) show that local activism and grassroots movements have played an important role for the emergence of CEDs. The third set of drivers refers to more place-based concerns, such as having a history of being committed to sustainability issues, or acknowledging previous, current or future climate risks threatening the city (Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021).

However, little is known about why cities choose *not* to declare a climate emergency. Indeed, Howarth et al (2021) state that "[r]ather than succumbing to emergency rhetoric, some local authorities are taking a different approach to the challenge without declaring a climate emergency but still thinking and delivering climate action in their own way" (p. 14), and Rilling and Tosun (2021) acknowledge that some cities have "declared climate emergency without using the term itself" (p. 102), but not much attention has been given to this matter.

Regarding the implications of declaring a climate emergency, several studies indicate that issuing a CED has the potential to accelerate local climate action. There seems to be two main reasons for this finding. First, declaring a climate emergency is suggested as a way to change the political agenda of the city by making the issue of climate change more prioritized (Dyson & Harvey-Scholes, 2022; Harvey-Scholes, 2019; Rilling & Tosun, 2021; J. Sutton, 2020). Examples of measures taken as a result of issuing a CED include setting a deadline for decarbonization and establishing a climate action plan (Harvey-Scholes, 2019), as well as making climate impact assessments mandatory (Dyson & Harvey-Scholes, 2022). Second, CEDs are suggested to lead to changes also in terms of political positioning. While Chou (2021) and Harvey-Scholes (2019) show that CEDs can amplify the mandate and role of local governments vis-à-vis the national government, the findings of Rilling and Tosun (2021) suggest that CEDs can lead to changes of power within the city as well: "the administrative actors are now in a stronger position vis-à-vis the political ones as they can de facto veto projects or policy proposals" (p. 100). Furthermore, municipal councils' relations to the local community have also been found to be impacted. Apart from committing the council to engage more with the local community, it is argued that declaring a climate emergency can lead to increased accountability: "there are early, promising signs that the increased engagement between civil society and policymakers can continue, with citizens monitoring policy progress and expressing their (dis)approval" (Dyson & Harvey-Scholes, 2022, p. 56).

In contrast, some studies indicate that CEDs mainly are symbolic, with only minimal impact on municipal operations. Instead of making cities go beyond doing what was originally planned, the declarations are aligned with already existing climate policies (Chou, 2021; Custodio, 2020;

Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021; J. Sutton, 2020). However, as Chou (2021) points out, the importance of symbolic politics should not be underestimated, especially considering the novelty of the phenomenon of CEDs, and similar conclusions are drawn in several of the studies. For example, in their global review of municipal CEDs, Ruiz-Campillo et al (2021) underline the symbolic importance of the declarations since they build social mobilization momentum around climate action. Similarly, the findings of Custodio (2020), Dyson and Harvey-Scholes (2022), and Howarth et al (2021) suggest that issuing a CED can be seen as a preparation for future climate action. It is also argued that in some cities, declaring a climate emergency has served to invite a reflection process in the local parliament (Custodio, 2020; Rilling & Tosun, 2021).

However, the CEDs under scrutiny in the reviewed literature are very varied. While the CED of some cities have clear goals and detailed action plans, others are much less stringent in terms of commitments, deadlines, funding and delivery plans (Chou, 2021; Davidson et al., 2020; Greenfield et al., 2022; Gudde et al., 2021; Harvey-Scholes, 2019). There are examples of cities that have released an associated climate emergency plan following the CED (Davidson et al., 2020; Greenfield et al., 2022), but most cities have not adopted any new plans or initiatives as a result of the declaration (Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021). While the issue of whether CEDs should be regarded as 'performative' or 'constative' acts has been discussed on a general level (Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021), not much attention has been paid to the underlying reasons for why CEDs are operationalized and understood differently – as mere statements or as a political moves to be followed by concrete action – in different contexts.

To summarize, while the reviewed literature indicates that framing matters and may play a role in advancing transformative change in cities (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Romero-Lankao et al., 2018), there is much disagreement around the merits and actual effects of climate emergency framings. Moreover, while it is suggested that municipal CEDs have the potential to impact urban climate action (see e.g. Dyson & Harvey-Scholes, 2022; Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021), the scholarly knowledge of this emerging phenomenon remains limited and many uncertainties remain (Chou, 2021; Gudde et al., 2021). For instance, previous studies show significant variety in the scope, commitments, and implications of municipal CEDs issued to this date (Chou, 2021; Davidson et al., 2020; Gudde et al., 2021; Harvey-Scholes, 2019), and little is known about why some cities choose to not declare a climate emergency (Howarth et al., 2021; Rilling & Tosun, 2021). Furthermore, implications of emergency framings are likely to vary across contexts, for example depending on how they relate to already existing policies and debates (Hurlbert, 2021; Patterson et al., 2021). There is thus a need for building on the understanding of how CEDs are operationalized in different contexts, how they interact with other existing debates, and why certain cities chose to not declare a climate emergency. Moreover, no studies have as of yet been conducted on CEDs in relation to Swedish municipal climate action. Therefore, this study seeks to address this research gap by exploring the phenomenon of municipal CEDs – manifested in this particular context as 'climate emergency statements' (*Klimatnödläge råder*, 2020; *Kommunfullmäktige Har Konstaterat Klimatnödläge*, 2020; *Lund erkänner*, 2019) – from a Swedish perspective.

2.2 Frameworks of relevance to understand climate emergency statements

Over the course of the literature review, two conceptual frameworks were identified as particularly relevant perspectives to explore the research gap described above; Patterson et al (2021)'s typology of political effects of emergency framings, and Davidson et al (2020)'s climate emergency response attributes framework. While the former (see subsection 2.2.1) was considered helpful in order to systematically explore the political implications of the Swedish climate emergency statements, the latter (see subsection 2.2.2) was considered relevant to apply

in order to position the statements in relation to municipal CEDs issued in other parts of the world.

2.2.1 The five dimensions of political effects of emergency framings

To contribute to the lack of understanding of the implications of emergency framings, and as an answer to the scholarly disagreement surrounding them (see subsection 2.1.3), Patterson et al (2021) propose a typology of the key dimensions of variation in their political effects. The typology was developed through an exploratory dialogue with an interdisciplinary group of social scientists, and by reviewing interdisciplinary social science literature on the topic. In contrast to the framework by Davidson et al (2020) (see subsection 2.2.2 below), Patterson et al (2021) look at emergency framings in a broader sense. The focus is on emergency framings in the field of environmental sustainability, especially with regards to climate change (CEDs are explicitly discussed) and biodiversity loss, but insights are also drawn from other sustainability related fields such as social justice, security studies, and COVID-19.

Through their review, Patterson et al (2021) found the political effects of emergency framings in sustainability to vary across five key dimensions (see Figure 2-1). The first dimension, *engagement among mass public*, includes how emergency framings – "by generating attention and political activism, changing perceptions of urgency and risk, and building support for action" (Patterson et al., 2021, p. 844) – influence people's emotions, motivations and behaviors. The engagement of mass public may increase or decrease, and vary between different individuals. The second dimension, *empowerment or disempowerment of social actors,* refers to how emergency framings can strengthen or weaken the power of different societal groups, and create patterns of inclusion and exclusion. For instance, while some actors (e.g. scientists and social movements) have been found to gain a stronger voice through the use of emergency framings, others have been found to be disempowered (e.g. certain businesses, lobbyists, and poor and/or minority communities) (Patterson et al., 2021). The third dimension, *exercise of formal political authority,* includes effects on rule of law, legitimacy, and democratic accountability. As such, in contrast to the second dimension, which refers to shifts in power among various different groups, this dimension refers to "the use or intensification of power by a particular (core) actor: government" (Patterson et al., 2021, p. 845). The fourth dimension, *reshaping of discourse*, captures how emergency framings may reinforce or disrupt existing discourses, by e.g. introducing new political imaginaries or embedding new ideas. The fifth dimension, *impacts on institutions*, refers to the effects of emergency framings with regards to strengthening or weakening institutions, and introducing new decision-making and steering mechanisms.
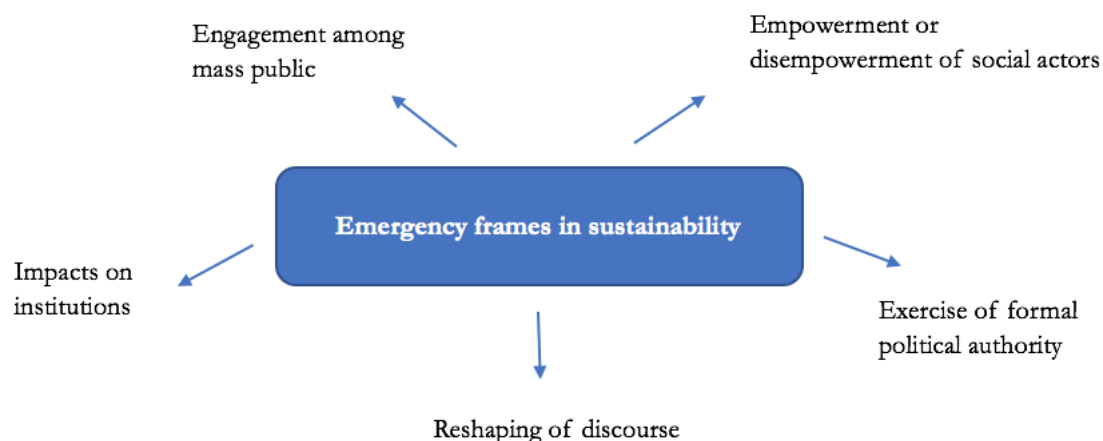

Figure 2-1. The dimensions of political effects of emergency frames in sustainability.

Source: Own elaboration based on Patterson et al (2021).

In this thesis, I will apply Patterson et al (2021)'s typology to systematically analyze the perceived political effects of the Swedish climate emergency statements. The five dimensions are therefore reflected in the interview guide (see Appendix I), and guide the coding process of the interview data (see subsections 3.2.1 and 3.3.1). It should be noted that the typology – just as Davidson et al (2020)'s framework – is only recently developed. Therefore, in addition to provide insights into the effects of climate emergency framings in the specific context of Sweden, I intend my application of the typology to build on Patterson et al (2021)'s work by testing it in a new context and possibly suggest contributions for future applications.

2.2.2 The climate emergency response attributes framework

In order to examine how local governments operationalize their climate emergency declarations, Davidson et al (2020) propose a conceptual framework for examining the attributes of climate emergency plans. Specifically, this climate emergency response attributes framework (CERAF), was created in order to assess the degree to which a new type of climate governance – a climate emergency mode – is embedded within municipal climate emergency plans. By climate emergency mode, Davidson et al (2020) mean "a move away from routine approaches, instead encouraging action that goes well beyond business as usual by demanding a radical, urgent mobilization of economic and social resources at an abnormal level of intensity and scale so to appropriately address the climate crisis and ensure a safe climate" (p. 2).

CERAF builds upon Handmer and Dovers (2013)'s *Handbook of Disaster Policies and Institutions: Improving Emergency Management and Climate Change Adaptation* and Aldunce et al (2016)'s *Is climate Change Framed as 'Business as Usual' or as a Challenging Issue? The Practitioners' Dilemma.* Additionally, in order to identify attributes of the climate emergency mode, Davidson et al (2020) reviewed previous work of climate emergency scholars (Fünfgeld & McEvoy, 2014; Rode, 2019) and CED advocators (Gilding, 2019; Silk, 2016; Spratt, 2019; P. Sutton, 2017). The 10 attributes of the framework are thus corresponding to the general understanding of what is considered an appropriate response to climate change from a climate emergency perspective. Consequently, Davidson et al (2020) mean that if a city's climate change response fulfills the 10 criteria, it demonstrates that the municipality has moved beyond "business as usual to a complex emergency response for climate change" (p. 14). To reflect the need for both effective decision-making as well as scientifically informed action on climate change, CERAF includes both governance-related and climate-related criteria. Moreover, given the complexity and interdependency of the issue at hand, Davidson et al (2020) stress that the attributes should not be considered mutually exclusive. An overview of the attributes is presented in Figure 2-2.

The Climate Emergency Response Attributes Framework
1) **Purpose of action**
2) **Urgency of action**
3) **Prioritization of action**
4) **Institutional resource mobilization**
5) **Social mobilization**
6) **Restoring a safe climate**
7) **Adapting to a changing climate**
8) **Plan for informed action**
9) **Coordination, partnerships and advocacy for action**
10) **Equity and social justice**

Figure 2-2. The climate emergency response attributes framework.

The *purpose of action* attribute refers to clearly defining 'climate emergency' by describing the reason for why the city perceives there to be an emergency, as well as stating who is responsible for taking action. *Urgency of action*, on the other hand, refers to plainly stating that rapid action is needed to address the situation. With the attribute *prioritization of action*, Davidson et al (2020) mean that the city should ensure that climate actions have socio-governmental priority, i.e. that they should be prioritized over policies that are incompatible with decarbonization. Based on the recognition that climate emergency action must be supported by governmental resources, *institutional resource mobilization* refers to the allocation of economic funds and other resources such as technical capacity towards climate action. The *social mobilization* attribute refers to empowering the local community to demand and support climate action. Providing education about climate change causes and consequences, as well as what societal changes and possible trade-offs that are required, is also considered part of mobilizing the local community. With regards to the more directly climate-related criteria, *restoring a safe climate* refers to efforts to mitigate climate change, such as reducing and sequestrating emissions, while *adapting to a changing climate* refers to building resilience and preparing the community for transitions. Both these attributes refer to the 'how' of the climate emergency mode, and "should ultimately encourage societal, economic, environmental and cultural transformations" (Davidson et al., 2020, p. 4). Moreover, to demonstrate a climate emergency mode, the climate change response should be based on current scientific research, allow for revisions of targets, actions, and monitoring should the scientific base evolve, as well as encourage research and innovative solutions. These aspects are covered by the *plan for informed action* attribute. Further, *coordination, partnerships and advocacy for action* is based on the recognition that collaboration and capacity-building is essential for achieving effective climate action. The local government should advocate for radical climate action on the national level, build capacity on the local level across councils and communities, and collaborate with neighboring cities. Lastly, the attribute *equity and social justice* refers to ensuring that mitigation and adaptation efforts are not adversely affecting vulnerable communities. Instead, the impacts of climate change and climate action should be "equitably shared across local, national and even international communities" (Davidson et al., 2020, p. 5).

Davidson et al (2020) used CERAF to review the climate emergency plans of Auckland (New Zeeland) and the City of Darebin (Melbourne, Australia). These two cities were chosen as their climate change responses, among all cities that have released a climate emergency action plan in association with declaring a climate emergency, were considered the most comprehensive. By evaluating the current standard of the climate emergency responses of these 'unique cases', Davidson et al (2020) seeked to provide insights into climate emergency framings, and how they might lead to better or promising practice to be incorporated by city planners in future climate plans.

In terms of operationalizing the framework, Davidson et al (2020) looked for both explicit and implicit incorporations of the attributes in the climate emergency plans:

> "Applying a 'search and find' method, we first searched for exact key words representing the attributes, and then applied close synonyms (for example, we first searched for 'urgency/urgent', and then for 'speed', 'rapid', 'accelerate'). Following this, we performed a close read of the actions, strategies, and other sections for content that aligned with, made reference to, or demonstrated a clear grasp of the broader definition of the attribute as per our climate emergency response attributes framework. This constituted 'implicit' acknowledgement and/or incorporation of the attribute. Consideration was also given to introductory, context and other

general sections of the plans and included in our analysis of each plan as related to the attributes." (p. 5).

Similarly to Davidson et al (2020)'s study of Auckland and Darebin, I will for the purpose of this thesis apply CERAF to review the climate change responses of Malmö, Lund and Kalmar. However, as neither of these cities have released any climate emergency plans following their climate emergency statements, I will expand the application of the framework beyond Davidson et al (2020)'s assessment of climate emergency plans, to climate strategies in a more general sense. By doing so, I seek to understand the degree to which there are signs of a climate emergency mode in the Swedish municipalities that have stated a climate emergency. I recognize that there are limitations associated with applying a newly developed framework, and to apply it in a slightly new way. However, by building on and expanding the initial conceptual understanding of CEDs in this way, I intend my application to offer an increased understanding of the concept 'climate emergency mode' and, specifically, its presence in Swedish municipal climate policies.

2.3 Summary

This literature review has shown that while there is an inconclusive debate around the merits and effects of climate emergency framings (see e.g. Hulme, 2019; Ripple et al., 2019), there is evidence suggesting that municipal CEDs have the potential to advance urban climate action (see e.g. Dyson & Harvey-Scholes, 2022; Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021). However, the scholarly knowledge of this emerging phenomenon remains limited and many uncertainties remain (Chou, 2021; Gudde et al., 2021). Specifically, there is a need for building on the understanding of how municipal CEDs are operationalized in different contexts (such as in Sweden, where no studies on the topic have been conducted as of yet), how they interact with other existing debates, and why certain cities chose to not declare a climate emergency – a research gap that I will address by exploring the 'climate emergency statements' issued by the Swedish cities of Lund, Malmö, and Kalmar.

Specifically, based on the identified research gap, two RQs will guide the study. Since it is suggested that different climate change framings may play a role in advancing transformative change (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Romero-Lankao et al., 2018), RQ1 aims to contribute to the understanding of if and how climate emergency framings can spark transformative local climate action by exploring the perceived implications of the Swedish climate emergency statements. And since no studies have been conducted on these statements until now, RQ2 aims to unpack these by positioning them in relation to municipal CEDs issued in other parts of the world.

- RQ1: What are the political implications of the Swedish climate emergency statements from the perspective of relevant local actors in the concerned municipalities?
- RQ2: To what extent are climate emergency response attributes present in the climate strategies of the Swedish municipalities that have stated a climate emergency?

To help me explore and answer these questions – and to build on the current conceptual understanding of CEDs and the implications of climate emergency framings – I will apply and test two recently developed frameworks; Patterson et al (2021)'s typology of political effects of emergency framings, and Davidson et al (2020)'s climate emergency response attributes framework.

3   Research methodology

The aim of this thesis is to explore the role of climate emergency framings in Swedish urban climate action by studying the climate emergency statements by the City of Lund, the City of Malmö, and the City of Kalmar. By doing so, I seek to contribute to the understanding of if and how climate emergency framings can spark transformative change, as well as to position the statements in relation to municipal CEDs issued in other parts of the world.

To achieve this aim, my study is addressed through a qualitative, exploratory design, consisting of semi-structured interviews with various local actors in the concerned municipalities as well as an online review of policy documents. An overview of the research methodology, and what type of data that have been collected and analyzed to answer each of the two RQs, is provided in Table 3-1 below. It should be noted that while RQ1 predominantly is addressed by conducting interviews, and RQ2 predominantly is addressed by reviewing policy documents, the two RQs are overlapping and data from the different sources is triangulated to achieve the overarching aim of the study.

Table 3-1. Overview of research methodology.

Aim	To explore the role of climate emergency statements in Swedish urban climate action	
Research design	Qualitative exploratory multi-case study	
Research questions	RQ1: What are the political implications of the Swedish climate emergency statements from the perspective of relevant local actors in the concerned municipalities?	RQ2: To what extent are climate emergency response attributes present in the climate strategies of the Swedish municipalities that have stated a climate emergency?
Data type	Respondents' opinions	Policy documents
Data collection method	Semi-structured interviews	Online review
Data analysis method	Qualitative content analysis	Qualitative content analysis
Theoretical framework	Patterson et al (2021)'s typology of political effects of emergency framings	Davidson et al (2020)'s climate emergency response attributes framework

3.1   Research design

This study is addressed through a qualitative, exploratory design. The choice of research design is motivated by the emergent nature of the research problem in question: "if a concept or phenomenon needs to be explored and understood because little research has been done on it or because it involves an understudied sample, then it merits a qualitative approach" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 19). Following the key characteristics of qualitative research, I have allowed the research process to change and shift as I have delved deeper into the topic, I have sought to sketch the larger picture of the problem under scrutiny, and acknowledged how my role in the study as the key instrument for data collection and analysis affects the outcomes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study is underpinned by a constructivist worldview – an approach typically seen in qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) – as I have posed open-ended questions, collected participants' meanings and perceptions, and acknowledged how my own personal background and experiences shape the interpretation of the data.

The specific qualitative approach used to achieve the aim of this study is a multiple case study design, since this commonly is seen as an appropriate strategy to explore processes, activities or events (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Moreover, case studies allow the researcher to conduct in-depth analyses (Blaikie & Priest, 2019; Flyvbjerg, 2006), and to remain flexible with regards to the research design – as new findings emerge, the structure of the design can be adapted accordingly (Perri & Bellamy, 2012) – which aligns with the exploratory aim of this thesis.

The cases in question are the three Swedish municipalities that have made formal climate emergency statements (*Klimatnödläge råder*, 2020; *Kommunfullmäktige Har Konstaterat Klimatnödläge*, 2020; *Lund erkänner*, 2019). The cases were thus purposefully selected – a common approach in qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) – on the basis of my expectations of what information they content (Flyvbjerg, 2006). As the three cases in question differ from all other Swedish municipalities, considering their choice to state a climate emergency, they can – to use Flyvbjerg (2006)'s typology – be understood as 'extreme' or 'paradigmatic' cases. By studying all three municipalities and not only one of them, I aim to provide a holistic picture of the Swedish climate emergency statements. As multiple cases make it possible for the researcher to analyze data both across and within the cases, and to understand similarities and differences between them, this design enables more robust and generalizable results than a single-case study can generate (Sovacool et al., 2018; Yin, 2014). However, it should be noted that the intent of case studies, and qualitative research more generally, commonly is considered to lie in their particularity rather than their generalizability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). According to Flyvbjerg (2006), formal generalization is even "considerably overrated as the main source of scientific progress [and] only one of many ways by which people gain and accumulate knowledge" (pp. 226-227). Generalization is thus not the main goal of this study – instead, I have seeked to generate strong and accurate answers to the particular questions guiding this research project.

To ensure the stringency and accuracy of the findings, several of the validity procedures proposed by Creswell and Creswell (2018) have been employed. For instance, I have triangulated different data sources and methods (see Table 3-1 above), and – as previously mentioned – reflected upon how my personal experiences and background shape the interpretation of the findings. For instance, my strong interest in climate issues, and the fact that I have been involved in the climate movement myself, is likely to have influenced the ways I have approached the topic in question and the conclusions I have drawn.

3.2 Data collection

To achieve the aim of the study, both interview data and qualitative documents were collected. According to Blaikie and Priest (2019), using multiple data sources and methods "should be seen as normal […] particularly when more than one research question is being investigated" (p. 219). In the following subsections, I outline the two main sources of data used, along with the associated data collection methods employed.

3.2.1 Respondents' opinions

When seeking to access people's perspectives, beliefs, understanding and meanings, conducting interviews is an appropriate data collection method (Sovacool et al., 2018). Qualitative interviews were thus used as the primary method of inquiry to answer RQ1. All interviews were semi-structured, which is suggested to be a particularly suitable format for case studies (Yin, 2014). On the one hand, this format gives some flexibility for the researcher to adjust the probing, wording, or tone in ways that suits the interview best (Berg & Lune, 2017). On the other hand, by following a pre-determined line of questioning, it allows for the comparability of results and facilitates the analysis (Yin, 2014). The interviewees were asked a series of open-

ended questions regarding their opinions about the climate emergency statement, their views on how and why it emerged, and what they perceive to be the implications of the statement. As the respondents' opinions were the predominant data source to answer RQ1 the interview questions were developed as to cover all aspects of Patterson et al (2021)'s typology of political effects of emergency framings. Considering the iterative nature of the thesis project, as my understanding of the topic deepened – stimulated by themes and ideas brought up by the respondents – I allowed for changes in how I conducted the interviews. Thus, over the course of collecting interview data, small adjustments to the interview guide were made. The final version of the interview guide (translated to English) can be found in Appendix I.

The interviewees were selected based on purposeful sampling. After an initial stakeholder mapping – based on reviewing media coverage of the statements and press releases by the municipalities – of what actors in the concerned municipalities that in one way or another had been involved in the propagation of or the decision regarding the statement, I could identify three stakeholder groups as particularly relevant to interview: local politicians, civil servants, and climate activists. Representatives from these interview groups in all three municipalities were thus approached via email. In addition to those that could be identified by the media review as having valuable insights, some contacts were provided by Klimatkommunerna (Klimatkommunerna representative, personal communication, February 15, 2022), as well as by the respondents themselves (snowball sampling). It should be noted that in the case of the climate activists, one of them was active in both Lund and Malmö, and one of them was involved in CED advocacy on the national level. In total, a sample of 14 interviewees was achieved (see Table 3-2 for an overview).

Table 3-2. The interviewees of the study.

	Lund	Malmö	Kalmar
Local politicians	2	2	2
Civil servants	1	2	1
Climate activists	1		2
	1		

I acknowledge that there are limitations of this sampling strategy in terms of reliability of the results. For instance, only interviewing one or two civil servants per municipality does not necessarily provide insights corresponding to the views of the municipal civil service as a whole, and only talking with a few local politicians does not capture the range of different opinions across the political spectrum. However, instead of painting an exhaustive picture of the opinions among 'relevant local actors' regarding the statements, it was deemed appropriate – considering the exploratory nature of the study, and the limited time frame of the thesis project – to collect a sample of views. Moreover, by interviewing both local politicians, civil servants and climate activists, I ensured that my sample included different perspectives on the statements. Also, since I interviewed at least four representatives from each of the three interview groups, and at least five representatives from each of the three cities, I could internally triangulate their responses and thus verify the consistency of the interview data. Additionally, this internal triangulation allowed me to mitigate other potential biases involved in conducting interviews, such as the risk that some of the respondents provided socially desirable responses (i.e. told me what they thought I wanted to hear in my role as researcher). Furthermore, to the greatest extent possible, I sought to interview people with the same roles across the cities (e.g. the civil servant in each of the municipalities that had been in charge of preparing the city council decision regarding the citizen proposal).

In total, 14 interviews with a duration of 30-60 minutes were performed between 2022-02-24 and 2022-03-24. All interviews were held in Swedish, conducted online, recorded, and manually transcribed. Member checking was used to ensure the accuracy of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), by asking the respondents to check and verify direct quotes (and their translation to English) to be used in the study.

3.2.2 Policy documents

Document review – the systematic procedure of evaluating or reviewing documents (Bowen, 2009) – is an unobtrusive type of data collection method (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The selection of which policy documents to review was guided by the focus of RQ2 – to explore the extent to which the climate strategies of the three municipalities correspond to what is deemed an appropriate response to climate change from an emergency perspective. It should be noted that instead of studying all policies and plans connected to the cities' ways of addressing climate change, my review focused on the main climate strategy document of each municipality. This scope was deemed appropriate considering – once again – the exploratory nature of the study and the narrow time frame at hand. Thus, after reviewing the websites of the municipalities, as well as by asking the civil servants I interviewed about their respective city's climate change response, one policy document per municipality could be identified as the main strategic document with regards to the city's climate work (see Table 3-3).

Table 3-3. The reviewed policy documents.

	Lund	Malmö	Kalmar
Main climate strategy document	'LundaEko – Programme for Ecological Sustainable Development for the City of Lund 2021-2030' (2021)	'Environmental programme for the City of Malmö 2021-2030' (2021)	'Action plan – Fossil free municipality 2030' (2019)

3.3 Data analysis

All data collected was analyzed through qualitative content analysis. This data analysis method entails a "careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, assumptions, and meanings" (Berg & Lune, 2017, p. 182). As suggested by Creswell and Creswell (2018, pp. 193–194), the analysis process involved the following steps: preparing data for analysis; reading through all data; coding the data; generating and interrelating descriptions and themes; and interpreting the meanings of themes and descriptions. Coding is the process of systematically identifying and extracting central themes, topics, or issues from the raw data (Berg & Lune, 2017). As assistance in the analysis, I used the coding software Nvivo. The following subsections outline how the collected interview data and the policy documents were analyzed.

3.3.1 Respondents' opinions

The analysis of the respondent's opinions was guided by Patterson et al (2021)'s five key dimensions of political effects of emergency framings. As a first step, after reading through all of the interview transcripts, I delved into the data by coding it inductively – i.e. by generating codes based on the topics and ideas that I identified in the transcripts (Berg & Lune, 2017). Through this approach, I made sure to capture important aspects that I otherwise – if I had coded the data strictly deductively per Patterson et al (2021)'s dimensions – might have overlooked. Then, as a second step, I clustered the codes I had generated into themes and sorted them according to the suggested five dimensions. The process was iterative, however, and the

coding structure developed over the course of the analysis process as I conducted a second round of coding in order to merge, delete and move codes. See Appendix II for the final coding structure.

Through the analysis process, I took note on whether the topics and themes identified were specific for any particular municipality, or lifted in interviews with respondents from all three cities. While a few aspects were city-specific, most of them were common across the cases. Therefore, I decided to present the interview data on an aggregate rather than a city-specific level (see Section 5.1).

As the interviews were conducted in Swedish, the interview transcripts were consequently coded in Swedish. However, significant quotes – that I identified as representative for the themes generated – to be used as direct quotes in the thesis were translated to English (see Appendix III for the original Swedish versions of the quotes).

3.3.2 Policy documents

The document analysis was performed by applying Davidson et al (2020)'s climate emergency response attributes framework (CERAF). After an initial reading through of the selected material, a coding structure based on the 10 attributes of CERAF (see subsection 2.2.2) was developed. Then, I started to code the data by – similarly to the method employed by Davidson et al (2020) – looking for explicit and implicit signs of the CERAF attributes in the selected material. The coding process of the policy documents was thus – in contrast to the analysis of the interview data, where a mix of inductive and deductive coding was used – mainly deductive, as it followed a predeveloped set of codes suggested from a framework (Berg & Lune, 2017).

While the strategy document of Malmö was in English, the strategies of Lund and Kalmar were in Swedish. The excerpts from these two documents that are used in the thesis (see Section 5.2) are thus translated to English by me.

4 Background

This section provides a background to the findings of the study (see Chapter 5). After presenting some aspects and current trends with regards to climate action on the municipal level in Sweden (Section 4.1), I will briefly describe the rise of the Swedish CED movement (Section 4.2), before introducing the three case municipalities and how their respective climate emergency statements came to be (Section 4.3).

4.1 Swedish municipal climate action

On the national level, Sweden's environmental work is guided by 16 environmental quality objectives. Addressing different areas – from air quality to farmland ecosystems – the environmental objectives correspond to Sweden's implementation of (the environmental dimension of) Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Naturvårdsverket, 2022a). The objective 'Reduced Climate Impact' states that "[t]he increase in global average temperature is to be limited well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels, and efforts are to be pursued to limit the increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels." (Naturvårdsverket, 2022c). To achieve this goal, a climate policy framework was adopted by the Swedish Parliament in 2017, specifying that Sweden will have net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 at the latest (Naturvårdsverket, 2022c). According to the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (Naturvårdsverket), even though progress has been made, the goal will not be reached with existing policy instruments (Naturvårdsverket, 2022b).

Given their specific responsibilities in terms of physical planning and energy management, their role as large employers, and the fact that they operate close to the citizens, the municipalities of Sweden play an important role for reaching the national climate goals (Klimatkommunerna, 2022c). Sweden has 290 municipalities – each with an elected municipal council that makes decisions on municipal matters and appoints the municipal executive board, which in turn coordinates the municipality's work (Government Offices of Sweden, 2015). In terms of municipal climate action, many Swedish cities have relatively high ambitions, long-term commitments, and rigid plans to tackle climate change (see e.g. *Klimatkommunerna*, 2022; *Viable Cities*, 2022). A recent initiative is the establishment of climate contracts between cities, five national authorities and the strategic innovation program Viable Cities, in which the parties undertake to accelerate the transition towards climate neutrality (Viable Cities, 2022a). Moreover, several cities have recently adopted climate budgets that specify how much the municipal carbon dioxide emissions need to decrease to be in line with the Paris agreement of limiting global warming to well below 2°C (Uppsala universitet, 2018).

Since the 1990s, when Swedish municipalities began to work with climate change, the focus of the work has expanded from focusing on mitigating greenhouse gas emissions to also include strategies to adapt to a changing climate (Wamsler & Brink, 2014). However, a recent review by the Swedish Environmental Research Institute (IVL) of the local adaptation work shows that despite a widespread awareness of the issue, there is a lack of actual measures in place in many municipalities, and the progress vary significantly between different cities (Ekholm et al., 2021).

4.2 The Swedish CED movement

Inspired by the CED movement in other parts of the world – with cities issuing declarations of climate emergency, often as a result of demands from social movements such as XR and FFF (Dyson & Harvey-Scholes, 2022; Howarth et al., 2021; Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021) – there has been a rise also in Sweden of citizens and climate activists urging their municipalities to declare a climate emergency. According to Parents For Future Sweden – a climate action group that has developed an interactive online map showing the status of CED discussions in different Swedish cities to facilitate CED advocacy – the issue has been discussed in at least forty municipalities,

in the form of citizen proposals, petitions, or local newspaper articles (Parents For Future representative, personal communication, Mars 24, 2022). In a number of municipalities, the demands have been brought to the city council (*Fler Kommuner Vill Utlysa Klimatnödläge*, 2020). However, all city councils – with the exception of the City of Lund, the City of Malmö, and the City of Kalmar – have turned down the proposals to declare a climate emergency (*Klimatnödläge råder*, 2020; *Kommunfullmäktige Har Konstaterat Klimatnödläge*, 2020; *Lund erkänner*, 2019).

4.3 Introducing the Swedish climate emergency statements

In December 2019, the City of Lund stated that there is a climate emergency, followed by a similar statement from the City of Malmö in January 2020 and one from the City of Kalmar in October the same year *(Klimatnödläge råder, 2020; Kommunfullmäktige Har Konstaterat Klimatnödläge, 2020; Lund erkänner, 2019)*. In the following subsections, I give a brief introduction to these three case municipalities and how their respective climate emergency statements emerged.

4.3.1 The City of Lund

Lund is a city in the southern part of Sweden with 125 941 inhabitants (as of December 2020) (Lunds kommun, 2022a). Since 2018, and as the first municipality in Sweden, the City of Lund has a local climate policy council, consisting of experts from Lund University and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, that annually reviews the climate work of the municipality (Lunds kommun, 2022b). The city is a member of networks such as the Covenant of Mayors, Klimatkommunerna and Viable Cities, and in December 2021, the City of Lund was one of the nine Swedish cities that signed Viable Cities' Climate City Contract, with the purpose of accelerating the climate transition (Viable Cities, 2021a). Moreover, in April 2022, the city was selected by the European Union to participate in the EU Mission for 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030 (European Commission, 2022).

The overall climate goals of the municipality are specified in 'LundaEko' – the city's programme for ecologically sustainable development 2021-2030 (Lunds kommun, 2021). The climate related goals of the programme are the following:

> - "In 2030, Lund is a climate neutral and fossil-fuel-free municipality adapted to a changing climate (Goal 3)
> - Emissions of greenhouse gases in Lund Municipality will decrease by at least 65% by 2025 and by at least 80% by 2030 compared with 2010. By 2045, the municipality will be climate positive and emissions close to zero. (Goal 3.1)
> - In 2030, Lund Municipality is a pioneer and role model in sustainable urban and rural development. (Goal 4)
> - In 2030, Lund Municipality has established itself as a pioneer in circular and climate-neutral construction and civil engineering. Emissions from the construction sector will be halved by 2025 and be net zero by 2030 (Goal 4.1)
> - In 2030, consumption and production is more circular in Lund Municipality. It should be easy to do right. (Goal 1)"
>
> (Viable Cities, 2021a, p. 5)

Lund's climate emergency statement

In April 2019, a citizen proposal ('Lundaförslag') was submitted to the City of Lund, calling on the city to declare a climate emergency immediately (Kommunkontoret, 2019). The proposal, signed by 361 citizens, included seven demands, urging the municipality to:

> *"1. recognize that we face a climate emergency;*
> *2. recognize that the emergency requires mass mobilization and urgent action at the local, regional, national and international level;*
> *3. recognize that the emergency lasts until all nations of the world ensure that global warming does not pass a devastating 1.5 degrees;*
> *4. commission the municipality to urgently develop a climate emergency plan and prioritize the plan in the municipality's strategic work;*
> *5. state that the municipality, in the climate emergency plan, will prioritize to influence other municipalities and higher political levels to declare a climate emergency;*
> *6. state that the municipality, in the climate emergency plan, will prioritize to cooperate with other municipalities internationally and nationally to build capacity and take compensatory responsibility for a rapid transition until higher levels take full responsibility;*
> *7. state that the municipality, in the climate emergency plan, will undertake to inform all citizens of Lund about the climate emergency, and cooperate with local actors for an urgent transition."*
> (Kommunkontoret, 2019, pp. 1–2).

The citizen proposal was discussed by the city council in December 2019 (Kommunstyrelsen, 2019). While not an unanimous decision – some parties wanted to reject the proposal while others wanted to make it have more of an impact on the current work of the municipality – it was decided to follow the recommendation of the working group of the city council: to state that there is global climate emergency and thus consider the proposal answered (Kommunstyrelsen, 2019). The assessment of the working group was that the city's "existing plans, documents and working methods correspond to a climate emergency plan" (p. 2), and that sharpening these would be more efficient than introducing new structures for the climate work of the municipality (Kommunkontoret, 2019).

4.3.2 The City of Malmö

The City of Malmö, the third largest city in Sweden with its population of 351 749 inhabitants (as of December 2021), is located in the southern part of Sweden (Malmö Stad, 2022). The city has a long history of working with sustainable urban development, and has been internationally recognized for its sustainability work (ICLEI, 2022). In addition to being a member of both Klimatkommunerna and Viable Cities, the city participates in a number of international networks, such as EIT Climate-KIC, Eurocites, Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), Covenant of Mayors, Resilient Regions Association and United Cities and Local Governments (Viable Cities, 2021b). In December 2021, the City of Malmö signed Viable Cities' Climate City Contract (Viable Cities, 2021b). Moreover, in April 2022, the city was selected to be part of the EU Mission for 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030 (European Commission, 2022).

In the 'Environmental programme for the city of Malmö 2021-2030', the city's climate goals are specified:

> - "Emissions of greenhouse gases in Malmö as a geographical area have decreased by 70%.
> - The City of Malmö's organization has net zero emissions.
> - By 2030, Malmö's consumption-based greenhouse gas emissions are well on their way to a sustainable level.
> - Malmö is supplied with 100 percent renewable and recycled energy."
>
> (Viable Cities, 2021b, p. 5)

Malmö's climate emergency statement

In 2019, two citizen proposals regarding declaring a climate emergency was submitted to the municipality – a proposal through the online platform 'Malmöinitiativet', signed by 878 citizens, was submitted in March (Stadskontoret, 2019), followed by a similar proposal by a single citizen in October (Malmö Stad, 2019a). Both proposals included the same seven demands, urging the local politicians of Malmö to:

> *"1. recognize that we face a climate emergency;*
> *2. recognize that the emergency requires mass mobilization and urgent action at the local, regional, national and international level;*
> *3. recognize that the emergency lasts until all nations of the world ensure that global warming does not pass a devastating 1.5 degrees;*
> *4. commission the municipality to urgently develop a climate emergency plan and prioritize the plan in the municipality's strategic work;*
> *5. state that the municipality, in the climate emergency plan, will prioritize to influence other municipalities and higher political levels to declare a climate emergency;*
> *6. state that the municipality, in the climate emergency plan, will prioritize to cooperate with other municipalities internationally and nationally to build capacity and take compensatory responsibility for a rapid transition until higher levels take full responsibility;*
> *7. state that the municipality, in the climate emergency plan, will undertake to inform all citizens of Malmö about the climate emergency, and cooperate with local actors for an urgent transition."*
> (Stadskontoret, 2019).

The issue was discussed by the city council in January 2020. The city office, that had prepared the issue for decision, cautioned against issuing a CED: "there is a risk that declaring a climate emergency would be perceived as symbolic politics, and thus steal focus from the efforts required to achieve the goals of the city's current and future environmental programs, and the emission reduction goal set by the city council in the budget" (Stadskontoret, 2019, p. 3). Instead, the council was recommended to state that existing environmental strategies of the city constitute a response to the citizen proposals (Stadskontoret, 2019). The decision made by the city council largely followed the recommendation of the city office, with the addition of 'stating' that there is a climate emergency (Malmö Stad, 2019b). However, several reservations were made against the decision – some parties rather wanted to declare a climate emergency, while others would have liked to reject the citizen proposals (Malmö Stad, 2019b).

4.3.3 The City of Kalmar

Kalmar is a medium-sized city (71 328 inhabitants as of December 2021) in the southeastern part of Sweden (Kalmar kommun, 2022). Alongside Lund and Malmö, Kalmar is a member of Klimatkommunerna (Klimatkommunerna, 2022b), as well as of Viable Cities' Climate Neutral Cities Initiative (Viable Cities, 2022a). In December 2022, Kalmar is to sign the Climate City Contract, thus committing to accelerating the transition to become climate neutral (Viable Cities, 2022a).

To reach the goal of becoming fossil fuel free as a geographical area by 2030, the following goals – specified in the 'Action plan - Fossil free municipality 2030' – guide the work:

> - "Energy usage by the municipal group will decrease with 10 percent from 2018 to 2022
> - The vehicles of the municipality and purchased transports will be fossil fuel free by 2021
> - Domestic flights to and from Kalmar Öland Airport will be 50 percent fossil fuel free by 2025
> - The share of passenger transport by foot, bike, and public transport will be 45 percent by 2025"
>
> (Kalmar kommun, 2019, p. 7)

Kalmar's climate emergency statement

In 2019, a citizen proposal to declare a climate emergency was submitted to the municipality of Kalmar by a citizen active in FFF (Vatten- och miljönämnden, 2020). The proposal included five demands, prompting the local politicians of Kalmar to:

> *"1. recognize that we face a climate emergency;*
> *2. commission the municipality to urgently develop a climate emergency plan and prioritize the plan in the municipality's strategic work;*
> *3. state that the municipality, in the climate emergency plan, will undertake to inform all citizens of Kalmar about the climate emergency, and cooperate with local actors for an urgent transition"*
> *4. recognize that the emergency lasts until all nations of the world ensure that global warming does not pass a devastating 1.5 degrees, in accordance with the Paris agreement;*
> *5. state that the municipality will prioritize to cooperate with other municipalities internationally and nationally in order to build capacity and take responsibility for a rapid transition until politicians on higher political levels take full responsibility for the transition to a sustainable future."* (Vatten- och miljönämnden, 2020).

In October 2020, the issue was discussed by the city council (Kommunfullmäktige, 2020). The recommendation from the water and environment committee to the city council was to state, instead of declare, a climate emergency (Vatten- och miljönämnden, 2020). The assessment of the committee was namely that while there is a climate emergency, current and future strategies of the municipality correspond to a climate emergency plan, and that it thus would be "more efficient to work within existing structures instead of developing new plans" (Vatten- och miljönämnden, 2020, p. 2). The city council decided to follow this recommendation, and consequently stated that there is a climate emergency (Kommunfullmäktige, 2020). Some parties of the council opposed this decision, arguing that there is no climate emergency, while others rather stressed the importance of following up such a statement with concrete climate action (Kommunfullmäktige, 2020).

5 Findings

In this chapter, I present and analyze my results. While Section 5.1 seeks to answer RQ1, by analyzing the perceived political implications of the climate emergency statements, Section 5.2 aims to answer RQ2, by analyzing the main climate strategy document of each of the three municipalities.

5.1 The five key dimensions of political implications

In this section, an analysis of the interviewees' perceptions of the Swedish climate emergency statements is conducted, by applying Patterson et al (2021)'s typology of key dimensions of political implications of emergency framings. By doing so, I seek to answer the first research question of this thesis:

- RQ1: What are the political implications of the Swedish climate emergency statements from the perspective of relevant local actors in the concerned municipalities?

The five dimensions of political implications are analyzed in the following subsections (5.1.1-5.1.5). Some concluding remarks are provided in subsection 5.1.6.

5.1.1 Engagement among mass public

In all three cases, the demands to declare a climate emergency originated from local climate activists (Respondents 4, 7, 10, 11, 14), which suggests an interest in the matter among citizens. However, with regards to how the general public reacted to the climate emergency statements, the impression of close to all interviewees is that there barely were any reactions at all, despite some media attention (Respondents 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13):

> "I don't think the public knows that the city has stated that there is a climate emergency. And if they have heard about it, they don't know what it means." (Respondent 11, climate activist)

> "There were some articles in [the local newspaper], but I don't think it has contributed to any increased awareness or discussion on the topic. Well, apart from in the climate movement, among those that pushed for it." (Respondent 12, local politician)

Thus, it seems like the Swedish climate emergency statements neither have increased or decreased the engagement of the general public noticeably. However, in the case of Kalmar, the municipality's statement led to one specific kind of engagement among mass public (Respondents 1, 2, 3):

> "We have attracted conspiracy theorists. Very few who live in the municipality of Kalmar have contacted me, instead it feels like there is a… I don't know… people who target municipalities that make this 'stupid decision' […]. The questions have been very childish, very low level: 'I'm scared to go visit my friends in Kalmar, because maybe I'll drown.' […] At one point we had to involve a communications staff member to answer all the questions… it was really a storm." (Participant 1, civil servant)

5.1.2 Empowerment or disempowerment of social actors

With regards to how the use of emergency framings by the three cities have strengthened or weakened the power of different societal groups, the interviews suggest that the statements have

empowered the climate movement and, albeit to a lesser and/or more indirect extent, local politicians and scientists.

First of all, politicians in all three cities express that one of the reasons for deciding to state a climate emergency was to accommodate the climate activists' demands (Respondents 2, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13). This recognition seems to have empowered the climate movement (Respondents 3, 7, 10, 11, 14):

> "It gives self-confidence to the movement. Both that the issue gains attention, and that the politicians say that it's a climate emergency. That's a sign that we're speaking more or less the same language. In that way, it's a victory. But mostly, it's a victory in that it shows that we have an influence. We can influence politicians through our methods." (Respondent 10, climate activist)

Moreover, it seems like the activists found advocating for CEDs empowering since it is a relatively easy way of influencing the municipality, thereby lowering the threshold for people to get involved in the climate movement (Respondents 7, 14). Also, several of the interviewed climate activists describe activism as a form of experimentation – a strategic way of testing and learning from different approaches (Respondents 7, 10, 11). Urging the municipality to declare a climate emergency was seen as one such low-hanging experiment worth trying out and possibly build upon:

> "In the climate movement, I believe that you constantly try to put things in motion, constantly lift the lid of new things. And when climate emergency as a term popped up, with cities and regions starting to declare it, it was… well, one had to take that chance." (Respondent 7, climate activist)

However, there seems to be a widespread disappointment among the climate activists advocating for CEDs with regards to the municipalities' decisions of stating instead of declaring a climate emergency (Respondents 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 14). Despite, or perhaps thanks to, this middle way, several interviewees mean that the decisions have been used by the climate movement to hold the politicians accountable (Respondents 2, 7, 9, 10):

> "The climate emergency gives us a better argument to use next time. Especially since they admitted that there is a climate emergency, but did not declared one. It's such an obvious hypocrisy from the politicians, which gives us ammunition to more easily work against them. And show people that nothing happens, that it's just empty words." (Respondent 10, climate activist)

Apart from empowering the climate movement, it is suggested in some of the interviews that the accountability aspect of the climate emergency statements, at least to some degree, have empowered also the politicians (Respondents 3, 4, 8):

> "It's very good with a push from the side, from the people, it boosts me in my negotiations. I can get longer by pointing to that this is what the voters want, what the public wants, that you'll lose votes if you don't do this." (Respondent 3, local politician)

> "When I speak in the city council, I see that many are ill at ease. It's a bit like a stone in the shoe. No one who voted in favor of the decision can come now and say that this is not a problem. […] We have to feel that pressure in order to decrease the emissions fast enough." (Respondent 8, local politician)

Furthermore, some interviewees mention that the climate emergency statements have increased the awareness and knowledge among politicians, thus preparing them for future climate action (Respondents 1, 3, 11, 12). More than elsewhere, this seems to have been the case in Kalmar, where the statement led to internet trolling (see subsection 5.1.1 above):

> "The only thing that has been positive is that our politicians have had to unite around this. When the decision was made, they had to stand for it. […] When the climate adaptation plan was adopted, one year later, we were very prepared for how to answer any questions that might come up. I think that we've never had politicians as informed and knowledgeable as we have now. And I don't think that would have been the case [without the statement]. […] The climate emergency was the baptism of fire, which made climate adaptation not feel as frightening anymore." (Respondent 1, civil servant)

Another societal group that is mentioned in many of the interviews is the scientific community (Respondents 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12). Several interviewees refer to the term climate emergency as a fact-based description of reality – "this is not about us demanding different things, we're just saying what the scientists are saying" (Respondent 10, climate activist) – which could indicate that the climate emergency statements, albeit more indirectly, have strengthened the voice of scientists as well:

> "I recently skimmed through the latest IPCC report for policy makers, and that is just another way of saying that the house is on fire. […] For me it's about natural science. For me, the climate emergency is a statement that can't be appealed." (Respondent 8, local politician)

5.1.3 Exercise of formal political authority

When it comes to the third dimension of implications, which refers to the use or intensification of power by the local government, aspects brought up in the interviews are rather about hopes and cautions with regards to political authority, than about tangible implications per se.

First of all, it seems like the main desired outcomes of municipal CEDs – and, consequently, the main drivers behind advocating for such declarations – from the perspective of the climate activists relate to an increased use of the municipality's political authority. The activists' demands on the municipality to "act now" and "tell the truth", can be seen as urging the municipality to use its authority to urgently mobilize resources towards climate action, and to inform citizens about the urgency of the situation (Respondents 7, 10, 13, 14):

> "I'm seeing the climate emergency as a state of war. We need to mobilize on that level in order to have at least a chance to save us." (Respondent 10, climate activist)

Moreover, factors relating to the political authority of municipalities seem to have played a role also for the politicians. The motivations for stating that there is a climate emergency, as expressed in the interviews, include sending signals to citizens (Respondents 5, 6, 9, 12) and strengthening the municipality's profile by taking the lead (Respondents 2, 9, 11, 12) – which arguably are different ways of seeking to use or intensify the power of the municipality:

> "I think it's good that the third biggest city in Sweden thinks it's an emergency and sends that signal to the citizens." (Respondent 5, local politician)

However, rather than actually intensifying the political authority of the municipality, the decision to state that there is a climate emergency seems to mainly have invited reflections on the topic among the politicians and civil servants involved in making the decision. Issues relating to the responsibility and capacity of municipalities to act on the climate crisis are brought up in several of the interviews (Respondent 4, 6, 9, 12, 13):

> "We took a thorough think […]. If we were to go into a state of emergency, what would that mean, what decisions would we make if we were to let go of the usual democratic anchoring process, what would be the consequences of that…" (Respondent 4, civil servant)

> "It's a bit of a grey zone what's a municipal responsibility and what's a national responsibility. […] In Sweden, we've maybe not seen much schisms yet between the national and the local level. […] But I'm thinking that [the climate emergency statements] shine some light on this. On the municipality's responsibility, capacity, and possibilities." (Respondent 13, civil servant)

These reflections are closely tied to the motivations behind why the municipalities ended up stating instead of declaring a climate emergency. Issuing a climate emergency declaration would namely, according to many of the interviewees, have been politically very difficult (Respondents 1, 3, 5, 7, 14), undemocratic (Respondents 3, 4, 9), and/or not trustworthy (Respondents 3, 4, 5, 6, 14).

> "The amount of resources that we as a municipality would have had to put into this, if we in a serious way would say that we'll take a compensatory responsibility for when higher political levels fail… That would be sheerly impossible for us, from an economic perspective. And I would never have gotten that through politically either, since it's impossible to say how much it would cost, and it's also not within our mandate. So [declaring an emergency] did not really work for us, if we want to be trustworthy." (Respondent 5, local politician)

> "As we are responsible for planning the city, we have great tools with regards to car traffic and the like, what we can do there. […] So the tools are there, but the question is what the consequences would be. Shutting down car traffic in the city for instance, we could do that, but… what would that ultimately lead to? I mean, we have a lot of capacity, but the question is how to use it in the best way." (Respondent 9, civil servant)

However, it should be noted that the views on the climate emergency statements differ between different politicians. While interviewees from all three cities confirm that there were parties in the city council that rather would have liked to reject the citizen proposal (Respondents 2, 5, 8, 11, 13), some of the interviewed politicians think it would have been possible – and preferable – for the municipality to go further in meeting the activists' demands and do more than only stating that there is an emergency (Respondents 2, 8, 12):

> "We thought the opposite, discussing the measures can we do later, but declaring an emergency would be very important in order to emphasize the gravity of the crisis. […]. Of course, it's not the municipality that can solve the problem, that must happen also nationally, regionally, and globally. But even so, we still must look into what measures we can take that best brings us out of this emergency. That's how we reasoned." (Respondent 12, local politician)

Lastly, on the note of political authority, several of the interviewees point to lessons that might be drawn form other recent crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, with regards to the possibility for society to mobilize resources (Respondents 4, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14):

> "We can't disregard it now, when we did what we did for corona. We have a super concrete example that we can act differently." (Respondent 11, climate activist)

> "The way I interpreted the proposers and their proposal, they argued that by declaring an emergency, resources in society can be freed up. For instance, the term mass mobilization was used in the proposal… and to then draw parallels to other situations of crisis, it's almost a bit eerie in today's time, both with the pandemic and with the war in Ukraine, how one sees that crises can mobilize societies. So one understands the logic of the proposers." (Respondent 13, civil servant)

5.1.4 Reshaping of discourse

When it comes to whether the climate emergency statements have reshaped the existing discourse, the overall impression is that the statements neither have reinforced or disrupted the discourse significantly. Indeed, several of the interviewees say that there are occasions when they or others have brought up the climate emergency statement to, as previously mentioned, hold the politicians accountable (Respondents 1, 2, 7, 9, 10), or to better make their case in debates (Respondents 2, 3, 5, 8, 12):

> "Me and my colleagues have used this decision as a stepping stone. To get a stronger voice in the climate and environmental debate. […] I think that maybe civil servants have used the decision as well. To motivate things they think should get through. […] It may have been used to justify joining Viable Cities. That seems probable. That's what symbolic decisions are good for." (Respondent 2, local politician)

However, no one of the interviewees thinks that the overall discourse has changed because of the climate emergency statements. One reason for this is thought to be that the statements have been overshadowed by other recent crises (Participant 6, 9, 11, 13), and that the issue therefore has lost its momentum (Respondents 10, 14). Furthermore, it is indicated in some of the interviews that other ways of framing climate change are both more commonly used in the city council, and considered more effective (Respondents 6, 8, 9, 13). Nevertheless, a view brought up by several of the interviewees – somewhat opposing this point – is that framing climate change as an emergency has become rather mainstream in recent years (Respondents 3, 5, 10, 11, 12). Thus, as expressed here by Respondent 10, as emergency framings have entered the general discourse on climate change, CEDs may be seen as less and less disruptive:

> "Reality has a bit outrun this with declaring a climate emergency. The IPCC reports are only getting worse and worse, and several international leaders are already saying that we're in a global emergency. So I think that for people who are interested in climate issues, for all of them, it's completely obvious that we are in a climate emergency. So that makes it kind of strange to pursue the issue further." (Respondent 10, climate activist)

5.1.5 Impacts on institutions

Close to all interviewees state that the climate emergency statements barely have had any effects on the factual climate work of their respective municipality (Respondents 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13):

> "Well, this decision has probably not led to such a huge change […]. I would like to say that even if the [citizen] proposal had not appeared, we would still have continued to work on the issues in the way we do." (Respondent 6, local politician)

> "To be a little crass, you could say that the decision has had very marginal consequences. […] Sure, the statement that this emergency prevails was made, but no other decisions that pushed for any measures or allocated any resources or so." (Respondent 13, civil servant)

The main reason for why no new steering-mechanisms or action plans were introduced as a result of the statements, expressed in many of the interviews and mirrored in the decision documents from all three municipalities (see Section 4.1), is the perception that the cities' existing climate strategies are in line with stating that there is a climate emergency (Respondents 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14). Therefore, it was considered unnecessary to restructure the work of the municipality (Respondents 4, 5, 13):

> "We've tried to take a holistic approach in the environmental programme, where we try to analyze what efforts to do and where they have most effect. […] It's an ongoing work. To then say "let's do a separate [emergency] plan", I don't think anyone thought that was a good idea." (Respondent 5, local politician)

However, despite the consensus view that the institutional impacts of the climate emergency statements have been only but marginal, close to all interviewees state clearly that they still consider the statements an important – albeit small and mainly symbolic – step forward (Respondents 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14):

> "There are many pieces in the puzzle, one does not know which drop that causes the beaker to overflow." (Participant 3, local politician)

> "Somehow… the giant colossus that is the municipality is going in one direction, and then there are things that pop up and push it, make it change direction a bit. And the climate emergency initiative gave it such a push, it pushed the giant colossus a bit further." (Participant 4, civil servant)

5.1.6 Concluding remarks

With regards to what relevant local actors in the concerned municipalities perceive to be the political implications of the Swedish climate emergency statements, the analysis conducted above indicates that the effects of the statements are considered to be rather marginal. From the perspective of the interviewees, there have barely been any reactions to the statements among the citizens in the concerned cities, and the statements have not reshaped the discourse noticeably. Furthermore, the effects on the municipal climate work are perceived to be marginal, and there are no noticeable shifts in the political authority of the municipalities. However, it seems like the statements, at least to some extent, have been empowering, and have invited reflections on the capacity and responsibility of municipalities to act on the climate crisis. A summary of the key perceived political implications of the statements – across the five key dimensions that have guided my analysis – is provided in Figure 5-1 below (see Appendix IV for an overview in table format).
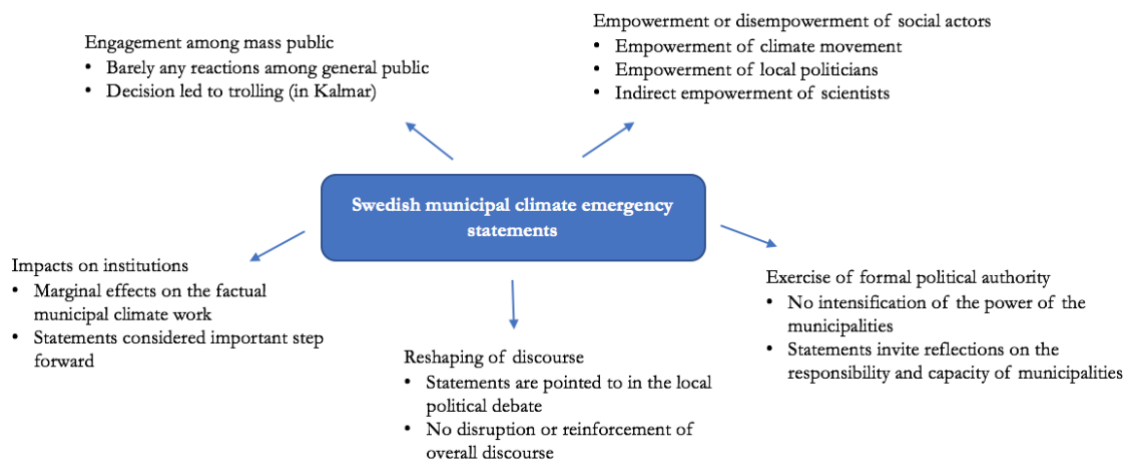

Figure 5-1. Key perceived political implications of the climate emergency statements.

Source: Own elaboration based on Patterson et al (2021)'s typology.

5.2 Climate emergency response attributes in existing strategies

In this section, I review the main climate strategy document of the cities of Lund, Malmö and Kalmar against the 10 criteria of Davidson et al (2020)'s climate emergency response attributes framework (CERAF). By doing so, I seek to answer the second RQ of this thesis:

- RQ2: To what extent are climate emergency response attributes present in the climate strategies of the Swedish municipalities that have stated a climate emergency?

The reviewed documents (see Table 5-1) differ in terms of scope and relation to other steering documents. While the focus of LundaEko and the Environmental Programme of Malmö is on environmental issues at large, beyond climate change, the scope of Kalmar's Action Plan is much more narrow, only including actions relating to reducing the use of fossil fuels. Furthermore, it should be noted that while the strategies of Lund and Malmö were adopted after their respective climate emergency statements, Kalmar's plan was adopted before the statement. A more detailed overview of the documents is provided in Appendix V.

Table 5-1. Key features of reviewed policy documents.

	Lund	Malmö	Kalmar
Main climate strategy document	'LundaEko – Programme for Ecological Sustainable Development for the City of Lund 2021-2030'	'Environmental Programme for the City of Malmö 2021-2030'	'Action Plan – Fossil Free Municipality 2030'
Adopted	2021-06-22 (i.e. after climate emergency statement)	2021-04-29 (i.e. after climate emergency statement)	2019-12-16 (i.e. before climate emergency statement)
Relation to other steering documents of the city	LundaEko is the environmental dimension of the city's overarching policy for sustainable development. Actions are concretized in other steering documents, such as the energy plan and the framework for green obligations.	The Environmental Programme is the city's local agenda for the environmental dimension of 2030 Agenda. Actions are concretized in other steering documents, e.g. the traffic and mobility plan and the energy strategy	The Action Plan concretizes how to achieve the goal of the municipality to become fossil fuel free by 2030. The strategic parts of the action plan may become part of the upcoming environmental programme of the city.

Source: Kalmar kommun, 2019; Lunds kommun, 2021; Malmö Stad, 2021.

In the following subsections (5.2.1-5.2.10), I present and analyze the extent to which each of the 10 criteria of CERAF are incorporated in the three documents. A summary of the findings is outlined in subsection 5.2.11.

5.2.1 Purpose of action

The term 'climate emergency' is not used in any of the three reviewed climate strategies. None of the documents can thus be understood to have "an articulated purpose in the context of a climate emergency mode" (Davidson et al., 2020, p. 8). This is perhaps not surprising, given that none of the strategies is an outright climate emergency plan. Moreover, in the case Kalmar, the absence of the purpose of action attribute should be seen in light of the fact that the plan in question was adopted almost a year before the climate emergency statement.

However, while the core of this attribute – i.e. stating that there is an emergency, and why that is perceived to be the case – is absent in all three documents, the aspect of responsibility is explicitly incorporated. In LundaEko, there is a specific section describing how the responsibility for reaching the goals of the programme is shared; each sub-goal has one or several responsible committees (Lunds kommun, 2021). There is a similar section in Malmö's Environmental Programme. Under the heading *Implementation*, it says that

> "every municipal board, committee and company must integrate the content of the environmental programme into their operational planning based on their respective fundamental assignments and conditions. This means that each municipal board, committee and company is responsible for identifying the goals to which their activities will make a contribution." (Malmö Stad, 2021, p. 10)

Kalmar's Action Plan is also clearly spelling out who is responsible for taking action. In the section *Implementation,* it is stated that "all committees and municipal companies have the opportunity to contribute to the goal. [...] The activities point to which administration(s) that is responsible for their implementation" (Kalmar kommun, 2019, p. 3).

5.2.2 Urgency of action

With regards to whether it is clearly stated that urgent action is needed, there are instances in all three documents where words and formulations that express a sense of urgency are used. For example, in LundaEko it is stated that emissions have to decrease quickly and that the phase-out of fossil fuels need to be accelerated:

> "The time frame for not causing serious irreversible consequences for the environment and humans is very narrow. Therefore, an enormous development needs to take place in a short time, which means that humanity as well as the citizens in Lund need to carry out the perhaps largest collaboration and innovation project in historical time." (Lunds kommun, 2021, p. 22)

A sense of urgency is communicated also in the Environmental Programme of Malmö – "The coming decade will be crucial for environmental and climate action in our city and across the globe" (Malmö Stad, 2021, p. 3) – and the same can be said for Kalmar's Action Plan: "[…] according to the IPCC, Sweden and the world need to have made sharp reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in ten years, in order to be able to slow down global warming" (Kalmar kommun, 2019, p. 9).

5.2.3 Prioritization of action

The attribute prioritization of action is not explicitly incorporated in any of the reviewed documents – the strategies does not state that climate action should be prioritized. However, in the strategies of Lund and Malmö, there are a few implicit signs of this attribute, demonstrating an understanding that some other municipal tasks might be incompatible with decarbonization. In LundaEko, there are sub-goals stating that "the municipality should ensure that the growth of the municipality does not lead to negative environmental impact" (Lunds kommun, 2021, p. 9) and that "agricultural land ought not be used for any new buildings" (Lunds kommun, 2021, p. 13). Similarly, in the Environmental Programme of Malmö, one of the sub-goals says that "land must be used efficiently, with priority given to sustainable means of transport" (Malmö Stad, 2021, p. 22). Moreover, in the foreword of the programme, it is stated that "a system that has long rewarded short-term, anti-climate thinking ahead of a greener and more sustainable structure must be reformed" (Malmö Stad, 2021, p. 3).

5.2.4 Institutional resource mobilization

In the strategies of Lund and Malmö, nothing is said about the allocation of funds towards climate action specifically. However, in both cases it is recognized that resources are needed to reach the goals of the programme, and in both cases those resources are integrated into the ordinary planning and budget process of the municipality (Lunds kommun, 2021; Malmö Stad, 2021). To exemplify, in Malmö's programme, it is stated that "the practical implementation of the work is governed by the priorities and economic conditions specified in the City of Malmö's budget" (Malmö Stad, 2021, p. 7).

Since the focus of Kalmar's Action Plan is on climate action rather than on environmental issues at large, the allocation of funds towards climate action specifically is naturally more explicit in this plan than in the other two. However, just as is the case for Lund and Malmö, the costs of implementing the plan are tied to the municipality's ordinary budget process. Additionally, in the section *Financing the activities*, it is stated that "[e]xternal funds should be sought when possible. If the budget allows, the municipality can create opportunities for municipal operations and for citizens to apply for funding to stimulate the transition to renewable energy" (Kalmar kommun, 2019, p. 3). Furthermore, one of the six main strategies to reach the overarching goal of the plan is specifically on governance, resources and competence (Kalmar kommun, 2019).

5.2.5 Social mobilization

The attribute social mobilization is explicitly incorporated in all three documents. Thus, in all three cases, there seems to be an understanding that engaging the local community is a crucial part of municipal environmental action. In LundaEko, statements relating to the attribute of social mobilization are not connected to climate action specifically, but increasing the knowledge and engagement among the citizens on environmental issues in general is an outspoken part of the programme. There is a separate section on *Knowledge, cooperation and innovation* in which it is stated that

> "keywords such as leadership, knowledge, transparency, dialogue, commitment and collaboration are important prerequisites for a transition to sustainable development. [...] The municipality also needs to develop its sustainability communication, so that people who live and work in the municipality can follow the progress of the LundaEko work in a transparent way, in order to create a sense of commitment, trust and pride." (Lunds kommun, 2021, p. 22)

Similar statements are made in the Environmental Programme of Malmö. There is a separate section on *Participation*, which emphasizes that involving citizens is necessary in order for the goals of the programme to be achieved, and that the city therefore must create conditions for people to participate and make a difference (Malmö Stad, 2021). One such condition could be seen as being created in the programme itself – a glossary is namely provided in the end of the document (p. 30-31), arguably making the programme more accessible. Moreover, several references relating to encouraging social mobilization are made in the foreword of the programme:

> "[…] it should be easy for the citizens of Malmö to make climate-smart choices in their everyday lives […]. To succeed with the implementation of our environmental programme, we need to develop and create forums for dialogue, engagement and measures aimed at ensuring inclusion and sustainability. [...] Either we undertake this journey together, or not at all." (Malmö Stad, 2021, p. 3)

In the case of Kalmar's Action Plan, one of the six strategies to reach the overarching goal of the plan is connected to aiding social mobilization: *Knowledge, awareness and sustainable consumption* (Kalmar kommun, 2019). As part of this strategy, it is specified that the municipality should develop a systematic and ongoing citizen dialogue (Kalmar kommun, 2019). Examples of other actions relating to empowering the local community include stimulating behavioral change, e.g. by encouraging fossil-fuel commuting and car sharing through information and collaboration campaigns, and by setting up visible activities such as bicycle libraries (Kalmar kommun, 2019).

5.2.6 Restoring a safe climate

In all three strategies, the attribute restoring a safe climate is explicit. In the case of LundaEko, *Climate and energy* is one of the six prioritized areas of the programme, with the overarching goal of becoming climate neutral by 2030 (Lunds kommun, 2021). To achieve this, it is stated that "fossil fuels are to be phased out and other emissions minimized. The remaining emissions are to be handled by carbon sinks within the municipality's boundaries (Lunds kommun, 2021). The overarching goal of climate neutrality is broken down into seven sub-goals, out of which five relate to mitigation efforts – greenhouse gas emissions, transports, carbon sequestration, energy efficiency, and renewable energy (Lunds kommun, 2021). Furthermore, apart from the sub-goals tied to *Climate and Energy*, there are sub-goals relating to climate change mitigation in some of the other prioritized areas of the programme as well. Examples include decreasing the consumption-based emissions of the citizens of Lund, decreasing food waste, and decreasing emissions from the building and construction sector (Lunds kommun, 2021).

Climate change mitigation is one of the prioritized areas of the Environmental Programme of Malmö as well: *A Malmö with the lowest possible climate impact*. There are four associated sub-goals to achieve this, covering emissions in Malmö as a geographical area, the emissions of the organization of the City of Malmö itself, consumption-based emissions, and renewable and recycled energy (Malmö Stad, 2021). With regards to the City of Malmö's own emissions, the goal is to "minimise emissions from direct and indirect sources to the greatest extent possible. The remaining emissions must be compensated with carbon sequestration to achieve net-zero emissions" (Malmö Stad, 2021, p. 15). Furthermore, climate change mitigation is also mentioned in other parts of the programme, related to sustainable mobility, and to biodiversity and healthy ecosystems (Malmö Stad, 2021).

In the case of Kalmar, the very focus of the plan is on climate change mitigation. The overarching goal is that the municipality should be completely fossil fuel free as a geographical area by 2030 (Kalmar kommun, 2019). This long-term goal is broken down into four sub-goals, covering the city's own energy usage, vehicles and purchased transports, domestic flights to and from Kalmar Öland Airport, and public transportation (Kalmar kommun, 2019). Strategies to achieve these goals include striving towards fossil fuel-free energy production, fossil fuel-free energy use, and energy efficiency (Kalmar kommun, 2019).

5.2.7 Adapting to a changing climate

With regards to adapting to a changing climate, there are explicit signs of this attribute in the strategies of Lund and Malmö. In LundaEko, two of the sub-goals under *Climate and energy* refer to adaptation efforts. Specifically, they are about preventive climate adaptation and preparedness for extreme weather events (Lunds kommun, 2021). Moreover, there are sub-goals under other prioritized areas of the programme that also relate to adaptation. For instance, it is stated that the food production in the municipality should be "sustainable, resilient and contribute to a long-term food supply as well as maintaining ecosystems, soil and soil quality" (p. 9) and that the water provision should be resilient to ensure the supply of good drinking water also for future generations (Lunds kommun, 2021). In the Environmental Programme of Malmö, there

is one sub-goal on adapting to a changing climate under the prioritized area *A Malmö with a good urban environment:*

> "Floods, heat waves and droughts are examples of the effects of climate change that could have a negative impact on the lives and health of Malmö's residents. Malmö must be more resilient and must increase its capacity to deal with the effects of climate change through urban planning and initiatives in the existing urban environment." (Malmö Stad, 2021, p. 23)

Given the more narrow scope of Kalmar's main climate strategy document – with its explicit and sole focus on climate change mitigating by reducing the use of fossil fuels – adaptation efforts fall outside the scope of the reviewed document.

5.2.8 Plan for informed action

In all three cases, the attribute plan for informed action is explicitly mentioned. References to current scientific research and the importance of innovation are made in all reviewed documents, and each of them have sections describing how the work is monitored and actualized.

To start with, LundaEko has a separate section on *Knowledge, cooperation and innovation,* in which it is stated that the municipality should encourage research and innovative ideas: "Innovation and problem solving are important parts of the identity of Lund" (Lunds kommun, 2021, p. 22). Furthermore, implicit connections to current scientific research are drawn throughout the document, in the form of references to international climate agreements and the municipality's own carbon budget (Lunds kommun, 2021). Concerning revisions of targets and monitoring, there is also a separate section – *Follow up, evaluation and actualization* – in which the process and responsibilities with regards to reporting on and updating the programme is described (Lunds kommun, 2021).

Turning to the Environmental Programme of Malmö, the promotion of research and innovative solutions is explicit in the introduction and in the foreword:

> "We must dare to test new ideas […] we are constantly investigating new opportunities to reduce our climate impact. [...] We need to scale up successful initiatives and terminate those that don't generate desired outcomes. [...] Together with the business community and academia, the City of Malmö has used test-beds to drive the development of innovative solutions." (Malmö Stad, 2021, pp. 3–5)

With regards to stating that the programme is based on current scientific research, this is – in a similar fashion as in LundaEko – implicitly done throughout the document by e.g. referring to the municipality's carbon budget and international climate agreements (Malmö Stad, 2021). In the section *Monitoring*, it is stated that the "fulfilment of goals of the environmental programme is monitored in regular environmental reports" (Malmö Stad, 2021, p. 11).

Also in Kalmar's Action Plan, there are several references to current scientific research. For example, the plan contains a brief summary of the latest IPCC report, and an overview of current national trends with regards to transportation (Kalmar kommun, 2019). The plan itself constitutes the carbon budget of the municipality, and recent progress with regards to emission reductions is described as being "in line with the carbon budgets that e.g. Uppsala University has developed" (Kalmar kommun, 2019, p. 2). Moreover, encouraging innovative solutions is an explicit part of the plan. Specifically, it is stated that the municipality should encourage fossil

fuel free innovation, such as innovation for increased use of biogas in trains, ships and heavy transport (Kalmar kommun, 2019). Moreover, the plan points to some areas where the municipality consider more research to be needed. These areas include carbon sequestration, and the total climate impact from production and consumption (Kalmar kommun, 2019). Regarding revisions of targets and monitoring, there is a specific section providing an overview of the indicators, their definition and boundaries, and their current state (Kalmar kommun, 2019).

5.2.9 Coordination, partnerships and advocacy for action

The attribute coordination, partnerships and advocacy for action is partly embedded in the reviewed documents. While the importance of collaboration is explicitly pointed to in all three plans, the advocacy aspect is more or less absent.

In the section *Knowledge, cooperation and innovation* of LundaEko, it is recognized that the sustainable transition needs to happen on the global, national, regional and local level (Lunds kommun, 2021). Moreover, to achieve the goals of the plan, it is stated that collaborations with different actors such as businesses, academia, and the civil society are needed and that the municipality should "take an active role in this collaboration and the necessary exchange of knowledge" (Lunds kommun, 2021, p. 22). However, it is not explicitly stated how or if Lund will advocate for radical action on the national level. Instead, when national policy is referred to, the focus is rather on how it relates to LundaEko: "LundaEko [...] is based on Agenda 2030 and the Swedish national environmental quality objectives" (Lunds kommun, 2021, p. 4).

Also the Environmental Programme of Malmö has a separate section directly connected to the attribute in question. In the section *Partnerships and collaboration*, it is stated that

> "all municipal boards, committees and companies must undertake a transition aimed at working together with the business community, academia and civil society. […] changes to Swedish and European regulations and policies will also be required, a process that is already under way, with the participation from the City of Malmö." (Malmö Stad, 2021, p. 10)

Thus, while it is not explicitly stated that Malmö will advocate for radical climate action, it is recognized that the city can play a role in influencing national and international policy. This point is made in the foreword of the programme as well, where it is stressed that Malmö "shall continue to be a progressive role model by playing a leading role in relevant regional, national and international initiatives" (Malmö Stad, 2021, p. 3).

The possibility for the city to be a role model is explicitly mentioned in Kalmar's Action Plan as well. As part of the strategy *Knowledge, awareness and sustainable consumption,* it is stated that Kalmar should be "a role model and actively encourage other societal actors to become fossil fuel free" (Kalmar kommun, 2019, p. 7). Furthermore, several of the actions of the plan are about seeking partnerships with relevant actors, such as universities, industry organizations, and local businesses (Kalmar kommun, 2019).

5.2.10   Equity and social justice

With regards to the attribute equity and social justice, it is in varying degrees incorporated in the three reviewed documents – while only implicitly part of LundaEko, more explicit references are made in the documents of Malmö and Kalmar.

In LundaEko, there are no specific goals or sections explicitly ensuring that mitigation and adaptation efforts are not adversely affecting vulnerable communities. However, the attribute

equity and social justice is indirectly addressed by the fact that Agenda 2030 and its 17 SDGs form the basis of LundaEko (Lunds kommun, 2021), as well as by connections made to the municipality's policies targeting the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development (Lunds kommun, 2021).

In contrast, issues relating to equity and social justice are more explicitly part of Malmö's Environmental Programme. In addition to drawing connections to Agenda 2030, there is a separate section on *Participation,* in which it is stressed that

> "dealing with environmental and climate issues is a question of providing opportunities for people – particularly children and young people – to satisfy their needs, both locally and globally. [...] Social equality, anti-discrimination and gender equality are other important aspects of the work." (Malmö Stad, 2021, p. 11)

Connections between environmental initiatives and reducing social inequalities are drawn also in the introduction of the programme, and in the section *From words to action.* In this section, it is stated that while the focus of the programme is on environmental issues, consideration must be given to the social and economic dimensions of sustainability as well, given differences in conditions and resources in different parts of Malmö which affects the environmental work (Malmö Stad, 2021).

In the case of Kalmar, the attribute equity and social justice is addressed in the introduction of the Action Plan, where there is a subsection on social aspects: "The activities of the action plan should be designed from an inclusive perspective, with regards to gender equality, diversity and accessibility" (Kalmar kommun, 2019, p. 3). Furthermore, while the plan does not include any specific efforts to ensure that the activities of the plan will not adversely affect vulnerable communities, a few activities of the plan relate to equity and social justice. For instance, it is stated that the strategy for sustainable mobility (which is to be developed) should have a gender equality perspective (Kalmar kommun, 2019). Moreover, similarly to LundaEko and Malmö's Environmental Programme, the Action Plan of Kalmar has a separate section on Agenda 2030 (Kalmar kommun, 2019). Thereby, connections are implicitly drawn between the activities of the plan, and the drivers and consequences of climate change in other parts of the world.

5.2.11　　Concluding remarks

My review of the climate strategy documents of the three cities suggests that they exhibit – at least implicitly – most of the CERAF criteria (see Appendix VI for an overview of the criteria fulfillment). While some attributes can be seen as explicitly incorporated in all three documents, such as social mobilization, restoring a safe climate, and plan for informed action, other attributes seem rather to be only partly or implicitly embedded. For instance, none of the strategies states that climate action should be prioritized, and while the importance of collaboration is explicitly pointed to in all three cases, the advocacy aspect is only implicitly mentioned. A summary of the key findings with regards to RQ2 is provided in Figure 5-2 below.

Summary of incorporation of climate emergency response attributes

1) Purpose of action
While there is no use of the term 'climate emergency', the aspect of responsibility is explicitly incorporated in all three documents.

2) Urgency of action
There are formulations in all three documents that express a sense of urgency.

3) Prioritization of action
The strategies do not state explicitly that climate action should be prioritized.

4) Institutional resource mobilization
All three strategies state that resources to achieve the goals are integrated into the ordinary planning and budget.

5) Social mobilization
Engaging the local community is explicitly mentioned in all three documents.

6) Restoring a safe climate
Efforts to mitigate climate change is an explicit part of all three strategies.

7) Adapting to a changing climate
Efforts to adapt to climate change is an explicit part of the strategies of Lund and Malmö, but falls outside the scope of Kalmar's plan.

8) Plan for informed action
References to current scientific research and innovation are explicit in all three documents, and each of them have sections describing how the work is monitored and actualized.

9) Coordination, partnerships and advocacy for action
While the importance of collaboration is explicitly pointed to in all three plans, the advocacy aspect is only implicitly mentioned.

10) Equity and social justice
While only implicitly part of LundaEko, more explicit references to equity and social justice are made in the documents of Malmö and Kalmar.

Figure 5-2. Summary of key findings with regards to the incorporation of the CERAF criteria in the reviewed documents.

Source: Own elaboration based on Davidson et al (2020)'s framework.

6 Discussion

In this chapter, I interpret and describe the significance and relevance of my findings from two specific angles. In Section 6.1, I discuss my findings against what is already known about climate emergency framings and CEDs (see Chapter 2), in order to assess my contribution to the identified research problem (as presented in Section 1.1). In Section 6.2, I reflect upon how my methodological and analytical choices have affected the outcomes of the study.

6.1 The role of Swedish municipal climate emergency statements

The aim of this study has been to explore the phenomenon of CEDs in relation to Swedish urban climate action. Through this aim, I have sought to contribute to the understanding of if and how climate emergency framings can spark transformative local climate action, and how the climate emergency statements by Swedish municipalities can be understood in relation to CEDs issued elsewhere. Specifically, I have explored the perceived political implications of the climate emergency statements by the City of Lund, the City of Malmö, and the City of Kalmar, and the extent to which the climate strategies of these municipalities correspond to what is considered a climate emergency mode. Two RQs have guided the study:

- RQ1: What are the political implications of the Swedish climate emergency statements from the perspective of relevant local actors in the concerned municipalities?
- RQ2: To what extent are climate emergency response attributes present in the climate strategies of the Swedish municipalities that have stated a climate emergency?

In the following paragraphs, I will discuss my findings as pertaining to these two questions before deepening my discussion (in subsections 6.1.1-6.1.3) by turning to some cross-cutting aspects of climate emergency framings – falling somewhat outside the scope of my study, but connected to my RQs – that have emerged from my analysis.

When it comes to what the local actors that I interviewed consider to be the political implications of the climate emergency statements (RQ1), my findings suggest those perceived effects to be rather marginal. As my analysis of the respondents' perspectives – according to Patterson et al (2021)'s typology of political implications of emergency framings – indicates, there seems to be no recognizable shifts in most of Patterson's (2021) suggested five dimensions as a result of the statements (see Figure 6-1 below).
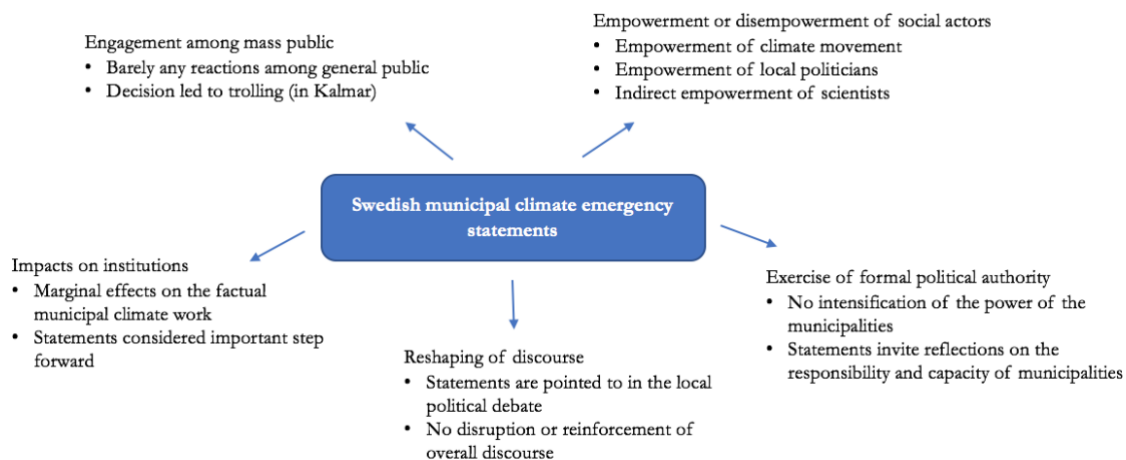

Figure 6-1. Key perceived political implications of the climate emergency statements.

Source: Own elaboration based on Patterson et al (2021)'s typology.

In other words, in relation to previous research on municipal CEDs, where contrasting claims have been made with regards to the potential of such declarations to accelerate local climate action, my findings are in line with those studies that indicate that instead of making cities go beyond what was already planned, they are mainly symbolic (Chou, 2021; Custodio, 2020; Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021; J. Sutton, 2020).

However, as Ruiz-Campillo et al (2021) argue, the symbolic importance of CEDs – a point that is discussed in further detail in subsection 6.1.1 – should not be underestimated since they build social mobilization momentum around climate action. This claim could be considered reflected also in my findings. By all means, the awareness of the climate emergency statements among the general public of Lund, Malmö and Kalmar seems – at least from the perspective of most of the interviewees – to be very limited. But on the same time, among the five dimensions of political implications, my study indicates the most noticeable shifts across the dimension 'empowerment or disempowerment of social actors'. The Swedish climate emergency statements seem, at least to some extent, to have been empowering. The climate activists that I interviewed expressed a sense of pride and self-confidence as a result of having pushed for, and partly succeeded with, making the local council adopt an emergency framing of climate change. There are also signs of that the statements – in line with previous literature (see e.g. Dyson & Harvey-Scholes, 2022) – have increased the possibility of civil society to hold politicians accountable. Furthermore, what is clear is that the climate emergency statements came to be as a result of pressure from the civil society – similarly to how CEDs have emerged elsewhere (Dyson & Harvey-Scholes, 2022; Howarth et al., 2021; Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021). Thus, my findings suggest a mutual reinforcement with regards to social mobilization around climate action: the statements seem to have played a role for empowering local activists, and local activists have played an important role for the emergence of the statements.

Turning to the implications of the statements on municipal operations, the perceived lack of effects on the factual climate work and on the formal political authority of the municipalities is perhaps not surprising, given the decision of the city councils to state instead of declare a climate emergency. This outspoken 'constative' rather than 'performative' nature of the Swedish climate emergency statements could be seen as one of their key characteristics. However, as previous literature suggests, CEDs issued by municipalities in other parts of the world are very varied (Chou, 2021; Davidson et al., 2020; Gudde et al., 2021; Harvey-Scholes, 2019), and in most cases not followed by any new plans or initiatives (Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021). Thus, it could be argued that the Swedish climate emergency statements, in a global comparison, very well may be labelled 'climate emergency declarations', despite that this distinction (to state instead of declaring a climate emergency) seems to have been important for the three Swedish city councils. This careful selection of wording may be a sign of the inherent political nature of climate emergency framings – a point that will be further discussed in subsection 6.1.2. Connected to this, my findings suggest some reasons for why CEDs are operationalized differently – as mere statements or as political moves to be followed by concrete action – in different contexts. In the case of Lund, Malmö and Kalmar, there seems to be two main reasons for why the councils decided to respond to the citizen proposals by taking a 'constative' rather than 'performative' approach.

On the first hand, declaring instead of stating a climate emergency would, according to many of the interviewees, have been politically very difficult, undemocratic and/or not trustworthy. From this perspective, it is argued that while it may be theoretically possible for the city to prioritize climate action further, such a prioritization would be incompatible with other municipal responsibilities. This argument can be seen to align with claims made by scholars such

as Hulme (2019) and Hodder and Martin (2009) who caution against the use of emergency framings of climate change since that risk – by making climate action prioritized over other important sustainability issues – to render public policy worryingly focused on a single goal. Connected to this, several of the interviewed civil servants and local politicians underline the importance of getting citizens 'on board' in the transition, which ties to the increasing recognition of the importance of social justice perspectives in urban climate action (Castán Broto & Robin, 2021; Long & Rice, 2018). Arguably, prioritizing climate action in a democratic and socially just way is one of the key challenges for cities. A further discussion on the role of cities in a 'climate emergency' will be provided in subsection 6.1.3.

On the second hand, my findings – as well as the decision documents presented in Section 4.3 – show that another reason for the Swedish middle way of stating a climate emergency instead of fully meeting the climate activists' demands, relates to the cities' current climate change responses. It is argued that the strategies and processes in place correspond to what a hypothetical emergency plan would entail, and that focusing on those thereby is a more efficient way of working than changing approach and developing new plans. However – not very surprisingly – the interviewees' opinions on the cities' current way of addressing climate change vary quite significantly. While some think that their city handle the situation as – if not completely, then at least close to – an emergency, others think it is far from an emergency response. As expressed by one of the climate activists:

> "We need a Saturn project, the same kind of project as when we flew to the moon, that's the power we need to make a change. […] But I don't see any signs of that happening, not even close, even though they have stated that there is an emergency." (Participant 10, climate activist)

This point is directly connected to the second RQ of my thesis. While the interviewees' perspectives with regards to the way their respective cities address climate change vary, what can be said about the cities' strategies when reviewing them against what Davidson et (2020) consider to be a 'climate emergency mode'? My analysis of the main climate strategy documents of Lund, Malmö and Kalmar suggests that most of the 10 criteria of Davidson et al (2020)'s framework are – at least implicitly – incorporated in the reviewed documents. Consequently, it can be argued that the three cities exhibit – at least partly – a climate emergency mode. Interestingly, similar levels of incorporation of the criteria are found in studies where CERAF has been applied to review factual climate emergency plans (Davidson et al., 2020; Greenfield et al., 2022). This suggests that the climate strategies of Lund, Malmö and Kalmar share many features with such plans – which would support the claim, put forward by the city councils, that the existing strategies and processes of the municipalities correspond to a climate emergency response.

However, as indicated by my findings, among the criteria only partly or implicitly incorporated in the reviewed strategies are purpose of action, prioritization of action, and coordination, partnerships and advocacy for action. Arguably, without explicitly addressing these attributes, a "move away from routine approaches, instead encouraging action that goes well beyond business as usual" (p. 2) – which is how Davidson et al (2020) define a climate emergency mode – is unlikely. Prioritizing climate action over other municipal policies was identified as lacking also in the climate emergency plans reviewed by Davidson et al (2020) and Greenfield et al (2022). As Greenfield et al (2022) conclude, this "raises critical questions on the real impact on CEs [climate emergency plans] in actual local government planning, policy, and action" (p. 11). Similar concerns are lifted in several of the interviews. Respondents from all three municipalities describe how infrastructure projects incompatible with decarbonization (new roads, new airports, new developments, etc) tend to be approved, despite the climate emergency statements.

To use the words of one of the civil servants (Respondent 13), having ambitious climate goals on the one hand but not prioritizing climate action on the other renders the climate politics of the municipality somewhat incoherent. Connected to this, another point lifted in several of the interviews is that what is missing in the cities' responses is a way of filling the gap between goals and concrete action. As another of the civil servants puts it, with regards to whether the city is addressing climate change as an emergency or not:

> "If you look at our goals, then yes – absolutely. If you look at how big part of the organization that is working with the issues and have a clearly designated responsibility, then yes. But regarding certain areas, if you look at what actually is being done, you can at the same time say that it's not enough. There's a gap [between stated goals and concrete actions]." (Participant 4, civil servant)

To summarize this discussion, in terms of whether there is a climate emergency mode in Lund, Malmö and Kalmar – a relevant question considering that new modes of governance have been suggested to be one of the key conditions for transformative change (Glaas et al., 2019; McCormick et al., 2013) – my study indicates that the three cities fulfill most of the CERAF criteria. However, both the document review and the interviews point to a lack of prioritization of climate issues, and a gap between stated goals and concrete action. This brings the attention back to the climate emergency statements – what is their potential to fill that gap? My findings can neither confirm or reject the potential of climate emergency framings to assist transformative change, similarly to how others have concluded that there are no simple answers regarding the transformative potential of such frames (Davies et al., 2021; McHugh et al., 2021; Patterson et al., 2021; Wilson & Orlove, 2019). However, it can be argued that the statements shine light on important and challenging aspects of urban climate action. In the following subsections, I will go into these in more detail.

6.1.1 Stating a climate emergency – on hypocrisy and symbolism

As discussed above, similarly to many municipal CEDs issued in other parts of the world, the Swedish climate emergency statements are 'constative' rather than 'performative' acts. While others have pointed out that the symbolic importance of CEDs should not be underestimated (see e.g. Chou, 2021), the data yielded by this study seems to suggest that stating a climate emergency is regarded as both far from enough and – on the same while – an important step forward. These opposing perspectives will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

On the one hand, it can be argued that symbolic acts such as stating a climate emergency – in times when urgent climate action is needed – are far from enough. This point is made by several of the interviewees. From the perspective of the climate activists, recognizing that there is a climate emergency, but not developing any new plans or strategies as a result of that recognition, is considered rather hypocritical. Instead of only stating that there is a global climate emergency, the activists would – to use Patterson et al (2021)'s typology – have liked to see an intensification of the use of the political authority of the municipalities. From this point of view, an 'emergency' is thus understood similarly to what Neocleous (2006) describes as "a condition close to war in which the normal constitution might be suspended" (p. 207), and climate change should thus be handled as such. Interestingly enough, some of the interviewed civil servants and politicians also question the value of the climate emergency statements – but for a different reason. From their perspective, instead of discussing climate emergency framings, statements and declarations – that only potentially assist transformative change – the focus should be on enhancing processes and strategies in place, and on concrete actions. This argument can be considered connected to what my findings suggest, namely that what is missing in the municipalities' climate change responses is to fill the gap between ambitious goals – or, for that matter, ambitious statements – and concrete action. In other words, my findings suggest that, while different

underlying arguments are used, the value of climate emergency statements is questioned across the three interview groups.

However, on the other hand, a common view among the respondents seem to be that stating a climate emergency is better than not doing so, and three reasons for this can be derived from the interview data. First of all, a recurring argument is that even though there have been no direct effects of the statements on the factual municipal work, it is impossible to get a clear idea of what their implications are or will be given the difficulties of grasping the casual relationships involved. Therefore, many interviewees mean that the statements very well may play a small part of the climate transition. As one of the interviewees puts it, "one does not know which drop that causes the beaker to overflow" (Participant 3, local politician).

Secondly, it seems (as previously discussed) like the statements – despite their mere symbolic nature – have been empowering. The climate activists I interviewed describe an increased self-confidence as a result of 'their language' being used in the city council, and my findings seem to suggest that the statements – in line with what e.g. Dyson & Harvey-Scholes (2022) have argued – have increased the activists' ability to hold the city council accountable. Furthermore, while I cannot lend support to Rilling and Tosun (2021)'s finding that CEDs may strengthen the position of civil servants "vis-à-vis the political ones as they can de facto veto projects or policy proposals" (p. 100), my findings give some indications that the statements have led to changes of power within the city as well. To some extent, there are signs that at least some of the politicians and civil servants have found the decision to state a climate emergency empowering, given that such statements somewhat validate the municipality's commitment to climate action. Thus, it is possible that the statements – similarly to what Anderson (2017) suggests to be a potential effect of emergency framings – have imbued some hope and inspiration among those involved in advancing the climate work of the municipalities. This would be worthwhile to investigate further, since those kinds of effects of emergency framings are suggested to create conditions for more comprehensive policy responses, and thereby assist transformative change (Koppenborg & Hanssen, 2021).

Thirdly, the symbolic value of the statements can be tied to that they seem to have invited reflections within the municipalities on critical aspects of urban climate action – a finding in line with what some previous studies on municipal CEDs also have found (Custodio, 2020; Rilling & Tosun, 2021). Connected to this, others have suggested that declaring a climate emergency can be seen as a preparation for future climate action (Custodio, 2020; Dyson & Harvey-Scholes, 2022; Howarth et al., 2021). This is not necessarily the case for the Swedish climate emergency statements – at least, my findings do not allow for any conclusive inferences on this note – but it could be argued that the statements, by invoking a reflection process among politicians and civil servants, can be considered important stepping stones towards transformative change. On this note, similarly to how framing is considered a process (Benford & Snow, 2000; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Slothuus & de Vreese, 2010; van Hulst & Yanow, 2016), the symbolic value of the climate emergency statements should perhaps also be seen as a result of a process. Perhaps, it is the discussions that have taken place in the city councils, and the lessons learnt along the way – both within and outside the council – that that have invoked reflections, rather than the statements per se.

To wrap up this discussion, my findings indicate two opposing ways of perceiving the 'constative' nature of the Swedish climate emergency statements – as empty words or as stepping stones. As the urban level is considered central for combatting climate change (see e.g. Bulkeley, 2021; Mi et al., 2019), it could be argued – based on the assumption that cities therefore have authority in the field of climate action – that also merely symbolic acts on the part of cities is of importance. However, if climate emergency framings such as the Swedish statements are to

assist transformative change, my findings indicate that such symbolic acts must be coupled with action.

6.1.2 The (a)political nature of climate emergency framings

Another perspective on climate emergency statements that can be derived from my data relates to how the term climate emergency is understood in terms of its political nature, and how that may influence the effects of climate emergency framings on climate action. Does framing climate change as an emergency make the issue more or less political? In previous literature on CEDs, a consensus view is that more research is needed in order to understand how different political and social actors in various contexts perceive and respond to emergency framings (Hulme, 2019; Patterson et al., 2021). From my interviews with Swedish local politicians, civil servants and climate activists, two contrasting perspectives with regards to the political nature of climate emergency framings appear.

On the one hand, my findings suggest that the notion climate emergency is highly political. This is indicated by the varying opinions on whether stating a climate emergency is a hypocrisy or an important symbolic act (as discussed in subsection 6.1.1 above), as well as by the fact that stating – or, even more so, declaring – a climate emergency could be described as seeking to intensify the political authority of the municipality. Previous literature supports this finding, considering claims made by e.g. McConnell (2020), Neocleous (2006), and Patterson et al (2021) about the inherently political nature of climate emergency framings. Thus, arguably, framing climate change as an emergency makes the issue more political. Moreover, the internet trolling in Kalmar that followed the statement (see subsection 5.1.1) can be seen as another sign of climate emergency being a contested term. While the varying effects of a certain frame on different people – depending on e.g. their political views, cultural context, and preexisting beliefs – have been studied by others (Caillaud et al., 2020; Goffman, 1974; Slothuus & de Vreese, 2010; Wiest et al., 2015) and fall outside the direct scope of this study, my findings give some indications of the different ways that the climate emergency statements are perceived. Considering the conspiracy theorists trolling in Kalmar alongside, for instance, the empowered climate activists, it seems like the statements are perceived quite differently among different groups. Furthermore, it is not impossible that the statements, at least to some extent, thereby have polarized beliefs and actions, which climate emergency framings, according to Wilson and Orlove (2019), are likely to do. If nothing else, these varying perceptions can be argued to bear evidence of the inherently political nature of the climate emergency statements.

On the other hand, and in line with what others have suggested to be one of the possible implications of climate emergency framings (Creasy et al., 2021; Markusson et al., 2014; McHugh et al., 2021), my study seems to point to certain connections between the climate emergency statements and a depoliticization of climate change. As indicated by my findings, many respondents refer to the term climate emergency as a fact-based description of reality, and that recognizing that there is an emergency therefore is the objectively right thing to do. The very term 'statement' ('konstaterande', in Swedish) points to this rather apolitical understanding of the decision to state an emergency. As one of the politicians puts it:

> "we have not declared a climate emergency, we have simply not said no to the citizen proposal. [...] It boiled down to that we can't say that it's not a climate emergency" (Respondent 3, local politician).

Thus, a consensus view among the interviewees seems to be that climate emergency framings – in line with what Nisbet (2009) argues is one of the prerequisites for successful framing of climate change – means remaining true to the underlying science of the issue. Indeed, as has been previously mentioned, a significant number of scientists encourage the use of climate

emergency framings as that would "better allow policymakers, the private sector, and the public to understand the magnitude of this crisis, track progress, and realign priorities for alleviating climate change" (Ripple et al., 2019, p. 11). The perception among the interviewees that climate emergency framings have become rather mainstream can also be connected to this point. In other words, my findings suggest that instead of solely being viewed as political acts, the climate emergency statements are also conceptualized as plain descriptions of how most people (including the scientific community) would describe the factual situation.

However, while previous studies conclude that a depoliticization of climate change risks to marginalize alternative worldviews and approaches (McHugh et al., 2021) and lead to large-scale technical solutions being implemented in an undemocratic way (Markusson et al., 2014), my study does not provide any conclusive answers regarding the potential risks associated with the partly apolitical understanding of the Swedish climate emergency statements. If anything, what my findings may show is that this way of understanding the term climate emergency risk to obscure the highly political nature of climate action. As previously discussed, my interview data as well as the CERAF analysis seem to indicate that what is missing in the climate responses of the three municipalities under scrutiny is a prioritization of climate action in order to fill the gap between goals and concrete action. What is needed is, in other words, political action. As pointed out by one of the interviewed politicians:

> "[The climate activists] usually say 'follow the scientists' recommendations'. Yes, but climate scientists are not politicians. It's the task of politics, based on the fact that we must curb emissions quickly, to take the necessary measures. That is not the task of the scientists. At least not the climate scientists, they are meteorologists, physicists and biologists. [...] So I think that climate policy should be given much, much more space in the general discussion." (Respondent 8, local politician)

To summarize this discussion, my study seems to show that the Swedish municipal climate emergency statements are perceived both as highly political *and* as scientific descriptions of reality. Based on my findings, I cannot say whether framing climate change as an emergency makes the issue more or less political. However, what seems important is the recognition that even supposedly 'objective' statements, such as the ones under scrutiny here, are inherently political.

6.1.3 Urban climate action in a climate emergency

In the previous sections, I have discussed the perceived dual natures of the Swedish climate emergency statements with regards to their (mere) symbolic value and (a)political character. Arguably, these dualities shine light on some challenging aspects of urban climate action, related to the responsibility and possibility of cities to act on the climate crisis in a socially just way. In the following paragraphs, I will bring up a couple of these, and connect them to the research problem I have sought to address through this thesis.

First of all, as indicated by my findings (see subsection 5.1.3) and discussed in subsection 6.1.1, my study seems to show that the climate emergency statements have invoked reflections on the capacity of municipalities. By demanding the municipality to start taking compensatory responsibility for when higher political levels fail to act, the citizen proposals to declare a climate emergency can be understood as calls on the municipalities to re-evaluate what the municipal mandate entails. And the city councils' decisions to not fully meet these demands, but instead point to plans and strategies in place, can thus be seen as them having an opposite view of what lies – and should lie – in the mandate of municipalities. In other words, the public demand for CEDs, and the city councils' responses in terms of climate emergency statements, are shining

light on challenges associated with the multi-level nature of climate change. As climate change issues increasingly are understood as playing out on the transnational, personal, networked, regional, and urban level (Bulkeley, 2021), the role of cities in tackling the climate crisis can both be considered critical – and limited. What is possible for a city to commit to achieve? What must rather be handled on other political levels? Rather than providing answers to these questions, I would argue that the rise of municipal CEDs across the globe poses critical questions on the capacity and responsibility of different political levels to act on the climate crisis – and on the possibilities to re-evaluate that mandate.

A second challenging aspect of urban climate action that my study sheds light on relates to public participation. The issue of public participation – which is considered an important driver of transformative change (Cattino & Reckien, 2021), and tied to the increasing recognition of the importance of social justice in urban climate action (Castán Broto & Robin, 2021; Long & Rice, 2018) – is namely closely connected to the climate emergency statements under scrutiny. First of all, involving the civil society is clearly part of what is considered an appropriate response to climate change from an emergency perspective, given that mobilizing citizens and partnering with the civil society are part of the CERAF criteria (Davidson et al., 2020). This point is mirrored in my interview data – several of the interviewed civil servants and politicians stress the importance of involving citizens in the transition, as well as collaborating with the civil society. Moreover, as has been previously discussed, in all three cities, the statements came to be as a result of responding to citizen proposals from the local climate movement (see subsection 5.1.1). The statements could, in other words, be seen as products of public participation in municipal climate politics.

However, my findings point to difficulties associated with citizen involvement as well. A few interviewees describe one challenge of working with the climate emergency statement as not fully 'owning' the issue; since the proposal came from climate activists and not from the municipality itself, it does not fully fit with the municipality's own plan (Respondent 1, 3). And along similar lines, a few interviewees problematize the concept of citizen dialogues. If you invite such a dialogue, you must have the capacity to go through with it in a democratic and systematic way, which might be difficult (Respondent 4, 13). Thus, inviting the public to participate in and influence the municipal climate work in a meaningful way seems to be considered crucial but challenging.

To summarize this brief discussion on the role of cities in a 'climate emergency', it could be argued that the climate emergency statements concretize some challenging aspects of climate action specific for the urban level – challenges sprung from the position of cities vis-à-vis other political levels, as well as vis-à-vis citizens. According to Rode (2019), cities can be understood as "institutions blurring the line between social movements and governments" (p. 9), and I would argue that my analysis of the Swedish climate emergency statements supports that picture. As the climate crisis deepens, questions relating to the capacity and responsibility of cities – in the intersection of social movements and governments – will arguably become increasingly important. While not necessarily providing any answers to those questions, the role of the climate emergency statements might rather be to help point out some crucial aspects of climate action associated with "blurring" that line – the challenge of developing meaningful public participation, and closing the gap between goals and concrete action in a socially just way.

6.2 Reflections on methodological and theoretical choices

In this section, I reflect upon how my choice of methodology and theory has affected the results obtained. After discussing some limitations of the study, I suggest some alternative methods and approaches that could have been applied to address the identified research problem.

In terms of the legitimacy of the study, I would say that my research questions were legitimate. As I could identify a distinct research problem – few studies on CEDs in general, and no studies on the Swedish context in particular – as well as two relevant and recently developed frameworks to test and apply, I would argue that my study clearly contributes to a research gap. Furthermore, I experienced a strong interest in and curiosity about the topic among the interviewees, which could be seen as a sign that the study fills a gap also with regards to what actors involved in urban climate action consider worth understanding more about.

However, there is a number of methodological limitations to my study. First of all, I interviewed only a small sample of relatively like-minded people. Even though I drew from three different interview groups, everyone I spoke to had a more or less positive attitude towards the topic at hand. I did not interview anyone who were distinctly against the use of climate emergency framings, nor did I approach representatives from all different political parties. Thus, the opinions I have collected do not give a holistic picture of the perceived political implications of the climate emergency statements. Apart from mitigating this potential bias, a larger sample of respondents would also have allowed for more of a comparative analysis of the respondents' perceptions, across the interview groups and/or the cities. Secondly, in my review of the cities' climate strategies against CERAF, I only looked at one strategy document per municipality. While this approach was deemed appropriate considering the limited time frame of the thesis project, a wider scope would have resulted in a more comprehensive assessment of the cities climate change responses. Furthermore, looking into each of the CERAF criteria more deeply and/or applying the framework more quantitatively would have made the analysis less dependent on my subjective interpretation of the level of incorporation of the criteria.

In terms of generalizability, the multi-case study design of this research, and its sole focus on Swedish cities, might limit the transferability of the results and the conclusions drawn. However, some degree of generalizability might be indicated by the fact that my findings to a large extent seem to mirror what previous studies also suggest. Moreover, while Lund, Malmö and Kalmar can be understood as 'extreme' or 'paradigmatic' cases (Flyvbjerg, 2006) in terms of their climate emergency statements, they could in terms of their size be considered typical cases from a Swedish as well as a European perspective. Arguably, this increases the relevance of the findings to contexts also beyond the scope of the study. However, this being said, it should be noted that – as discussed in 3.1 – the value of case studies, and qualitative research more generally, commonly is considered to be their particularity rather than their generalizability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In the case of this study, this point could be considered even more accurate, given the suggested context-dependent implications of emergency framings (Hurlbert, 2021; Patterson et al., 2021).

With regards to my theoretical choices, the reason for applying Patterson et al (2021)'s typology of political effects of emergency framings, and Davidson et al (2020)'s climate emergency response attributes framework was – in addition to help me answer the two RQs – that I wanted to test two recent developed frameworks, and thus contribute to the current conceptual understanding of CEDs and climate emergency framings. Both of these proved to be interesting lenses to apply to the cases in question, since they – apart from guiding the exploration of the climate emergency statements in a systematic way – helped to identify some challenging aspects of urban climate action.

However, Patterson (2021)'s typology was somewhat challenging to apply given the broad, and to some extent overlapping, five dimensions – especially considering the rather modest effects of the Swedish climate emergency statements, and my focus on perceived instead of factual effects. It is possible that another researcher would have analyzed the interview data slightly differently, and tied certain of the identified themes to other dimensions than I did. As one way

of mitigating the potential biases connected to myself being the instrument for data analysis, I decided to use many original quotes in the presentation of the findings (see Section 5.1).

In comparison to analyzing the interview data according to Patterson (2021)'s five dimensions, reviewing the policy documents against Davidson et al (2020)'s framework was more straight-forward given the distinct 10 criteria. What could be added to the framework, however, would be a more prominent focus on *how* the attributes are incorporated. As my study indicates that what is missing in the reviewed policies is not ambitious words, but actual action connected to those words, strengthening the framework's assessment of the concrete actions tied to the different attributes could make it more stringent in terms of answering whether a certain city exhibits a 'climate emergency mode'.

I recognize that there is a multitude of other concepts and theories that could have been used to explore the topic at hand. For instance, the two different ways of understanding frames – 'frames in communication' and 'frames in thought' – suggested by Chong and Druckman (2007) could have been used in order to unpack the climate emergency statements in terms of their effects on the political debate, as well on people's perceptions of climate change. Another idea would be to, similarly to how others have sought to understand the meaning of emergency framings (Hurlbert, 2021; McConnell, 2020; McHugh et al., 2021; Wilson & Orlove, 2019), study the statements in relation to other crisis related concepts, such as 'risk', 'accident', 'urgency', 'disaster' and 'catastrophe'. A third option would have been to, instead of focusing on the perceived implications of the statements, go deeper into the drivers behind the statements by exploring them against the four different ways – identified by Howarth et al (2022) – in which local CEDs tend to emerge: actively from above, passively from above, actively from below, and passively from across. Moreover, since my findings invoke discussions on issues such as empowerment, the capacity of cities, and citizen dialogue, theories and frameworks from literature on e.g. social movements, policy processes, and public participation could have been brought in anchor my findings in the broader body of political science research.

Lastly, it is important to note that this is an exploratory study. As such, it seeks to provide an initial understanding of the Swedish climate emergency statements, and while there are many possible methodological and theoretical avenues I could have pursued to do so, I had to draw limitations considering the narrow time frame of the thesis semester. However, as a result of my exploration of the topic, many new RQs have emerged over the course of the study. For instance, many of the interviewees made references to other current urban-led climate movements (such as Viable Cities' Climate City Contracts) as well as to other recent crises (such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine), which invokes questions regarding the relationship between these and the statements. Moreover, my focus on perceived implications poses questions regarding the factual effects of the climate emergency statements. For instance, my study cannot give any conclusive answers to whether the statements have built any social mobilization momentum around climate action beyond the local climate activists advocating for CEDs. The perception of the interviewees seems to be that the knowledge and awareness of the statements among the citizens in Lund, Malmö and Kalmar is very limited. Nevertheless, it is not impossible that the statements – or the CED movement at large, with citizen proposals and discussions in local councils in numerous Swedish cities – have generated engagement among mass public. To understand whether this is the case – which would question Bernauer and McGrath (2016)'s conclusion that "simple reframing of climate policy is unlikely to increase public support" (p. 680) – further studies would be needed, not focusing on people's perceptions of the general public but on the general public itself. For instance, surveys could be used to capture the perspectives of citizens in the concerned municipalities. Similarly, to understand whether the discourse has changed as a consequence of the statements, a discourse analysis of e.g. local newspapers articles and city council protocols of the cities could be

conducted. By investigating the implications of the climate emergency statements beyond the perceived effects in these ways, a better understanding of the transformative potential and possible long-term effects of such framings could be generated.

7   Conclusions

The aim of this research has been to explore the role of climate emergency framings in Swedish urban climate action. By doing so, I have sought to contribute to the rather limited scholarly knowledge of the emerging phenomenon of municipal CEDs. While previous studies suggest that such declarations have the potential to advance urban climate action (see e.g. Dyson & Harvey-Scholes, 2022; Ruiz-Campillo et al., 2021), the debate around the merits and effects of climate emergency framings is inconclusive (see e.g. Hulme, 2019; Ripple et al., 2019) and many uncertainties remain (Chou, 2021; Gudde et al., 2021). Specifically, there is a lack of understanding of how municipal CEDs are operationalized in different contexts (such as in Sweden), how they interact with other existing debates, and why certain cities chose to not declare a climate emergency.

To address this research gap, I have studied the climate emergency statements issued by the City of Lund, the City of Malmö, and the City of Kalmar from two specific perspectives. First, I explored the perceived political implications of the statements by conducting semi-structured interviews with local politicians, civil servants, and climate activists in the three cities. Second, I performed a document analysis of the existing climate strategies by the municipalities in order to explore the extent to which these correspond to what is deemed an appropriate response to climate change from an emergency perspective. Through this approach, I have aimed to contribute to the understanding of if and how climate emergency framings can spark transformative climate action in cities, as well as to position the Swedish climate emergency statements in relation to municipal CEDs issued in other parts of the world. Two RQs have guided the study:

- RQ1: What are the political implications of the Swedish climate emergency statements from the perspective of relevant local actors in the concerned municipalities?
- RQ2: To what extent are climate emergency response attributes present in the climate strategies of the Swedish municipalities that have stated a climate emergency?

With regards to RQ1, my findings suggest that the political implications of the climate emergency statements are perceived to be rather limited. From the perspective of relevant local actors, there have barely been any reactions to the statements among the citizens in the concerned cities, and the statements have neither disrupted or reinforced the overall discourse. Moreover, there are no noticeable shifts in the factual operations of the municipalities as a result of the statements. The effects on the municipal climate work, as well as on the political authority or the municipalities, are perceived to be marginal. However, it seems like the statements, at least to some extent, have empowered the climate movement, and have invited reflections – in the city councils, and among the civil servants as well as the climate activists – on the capacity and responsibility of municipalities to act on the climate crisis. In other words, the merits of the Swedish climate emergency statements seem to mainly be tied to their symbolic value – which has been found to also be the case for municipal CEDs issued elsewhere. Thus, in a global comparison, despite their mere symbolic value and 'constative' nature, the Swedish 'climate emergency statements' could very well be labelled 'climate emergency declarations'.

To answer RQ2, my review of the climate strategy documents of the three cities suggests that they exhibit – at least implicitly – most of Davidson et al (2020)'s climate emergency response attributes. While some criteria can be seen as explicitly incorporated in all three documents, such as social mobilization, restoring a safe climate, and plan for informed action, other attributes are rather only partly or implicitly embedded. For instance, none of the strategies states that climate action should be prioritized, and while the importance of collaboration is explicitly pointed to in all three cases, the advocacy aspect is only implicitly mentioned. As similar levels of fulfillment

of the criteria are found in reviews of factual climate emergency plans issued by cities in other parts of the world, it could thus be argued that the climate strategies of Lund, Malmö and Kalmar do not differ significantly from such plans.

In terms of the role of the climate emergency statements in Swedish urban climate action, rather than driving transformative change per se, my study suggests that the (merely) symbolic value and (a)political character of the statements shine light on important and challenging aspects of municipal climate action – aspects that arguably need to be considered in a 'climate emergency'. As such, by invoking reflections on the capacity and responsibility of cities to e.g. create meaningful citizen dialogue and close the gap between goals and actions, the statements might be considered potential stepping stones for transformative urban climate action.

7.1 Recommendations for societal audiences

Through this study, I have aimed to generate knowledge of relevance to local policy makers and civil servants involved in Swedish municipal climate work, as well as for the environmental movement. In the following paragraphs, I will provide some recommendations to these audiences based on my findings. While the focus of my study is on the three Swedish cities of Lund, Malmö, and Kalmar, I believe that the recommendations – given their rather high-level nature – could be of relevance for audiences also outside this scope.

For policy makers and civil servants, the overall recommendation is to turn the reflections invited by the climate emergency statements into action. The findings of this research indicate that if symbolic acts such as the Swedish municipal climate emergency statements are to assist transformative change, they must be coupled with political action. Whether framing climate change as an emergency is an effective way of sparking such action remains unclear, but if anything, the emergency statements could be used as reminders of the severity of the climate crisis and of the urgency to act. Both the interviews and the document review point to a lack of prioritization of climate issues in the municipal strategies, and that there is a gap between stated goals and concrete action. To succeed with closing that gap – and to do so in a democratic and socially just way – it is not unlikely that a re-evaluation of the capacity and responsibility of cities to act is needed. Here, lessons could be drawn from other recent 'emergencies', such as the COVID-19 pandemic, with regards to the possibility of societies to mobilize resources and prioritize action in times of crises.

Moreover, my study sheds some light on the role of citizen dialogue in urban climate action. While the climate emergency statements in themselves can be seen as products of public participation, and the consensus view seems to be that inviting the public to influence municipal climate work is crucial, my findings point to some challenges associated with involving citizens in this way. For instance, as was the case with the citizen proposals under scrutiny in this study, while welcoming public input, city councils may prefer to go forward with existing plans and processes instead of meeting the demands from the public – and thereby arguably dilute the sense among citizens that their input matter. Thus, in order to meet the challenge for radical climate action, I would recommend municipalities to enhance their commitment to involving citizens in the transition, and to dedicate time and resources to develop and find new strategies for meaningful citizen dialogue.

For the climate movement and other advocators for CEDs, the overall recommendation would be to (continue to) hold city councils accountable for what they promise, as this seems to have potential to empower the movement as well as those local politicians and civil servants that want to see an acceleration of the municipal climate action. Moreover, reviewing city climate strategies against the CERAF criteria could be a way of identifying what aspects of the municipal work to

target when demanding more radical climate action. In the case of Lund, Malmö, and Kalmar specifically, this would mean to call for e.g. an increased prioritization of climate action.

7.2 Recommendations for future research

This research contributes to the body of literature on climate emergency framings by being the first study to look at municipal CEDs from a Swedish perspective. Moreover, I have applied and tested two recently developed frameworks – Patterson et al (2021)'s typology of political effects of emergency framings, and Davidson et al (2020)'s climate emergency response attributes framework – both of which have proved to provide relevant angles on municipal climate strategies and shed light on challenging aspects of urban climate action. In terms of methodological conclusions, what could be added to Davidson et al (2020)'s framework is a more prominent focus on how the attributes are incorporated – whether they are tied to specific actions, or rather to the overarching vision of the city. By applying the framework to other climate (emergency) plans, and comparing the degrees to which different plans fulfill the criteria, the framework could be further developed to provide a more stringent picture of whether a certain city exhibits a 'climate emergency mode'.

Apart from suggesting further applications of CERAF, the analysis and conclusions of this study have invoked a number of new ideas for future research. First of all, considering the exploratory nature of my work, many questions remain regarding the role of climate emergency framings in the specific context of Sweden. For instance, to deepen the understanding of the transformative potential and possible long-term effects of such framings, further studies could investigate the implications of the climate emergency statements beyond the perceived effects, through e.g. citizen surveys and discourse analyses. Also, while touched upon in my study, I believe that studies focusing explicitly on those Swedish cities that have turned down climate emergency proposals – and their motivations for doing so – would build upon my findings in terms of helping to explain the perceived modest effects of the climate emergency statements. Moreover, studying the interplay, differences, and similarities between the statements and other urban-led climate movements, such as the Climate City Contracts signed by a growing number of Swedish municipalities (Viable Cities, 2022a), could yield insights of value to bridge the gap, suggested by this study, between ambitious visions – or, for that matter, ambitious statements – and concrete climate action.

Another avenue for future research would be to look more closely at the relationship between climate emergency framings and other crises. From the interview reflections on the term 'climate emergency', one possible conclusion is that the term is understood differently now than before the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As societies learn from other crises, it is likely that people's perceptions of climate emergency framings – in line with the understanding of framing as a dynamic, evolving process of meaning-making (Benford & Snow, 2000; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Slothuus & de Vreese, 2010; van Hulst & Yanow, 2016) – will continue to develop. Looking ahead, it may very well be that emergency framings will play more of a prominent role in the future, as societies go through other crises and as the 'slow emergency' (Anderson et al., 2020) of climate change deepens.

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Appendix I – Interview guide

[Look for themes relating to: engagement among mass public, empowerment or disempowerment of social actors, exercise of formal political authority, reshaping of discourse, impacts on institutions]

1. Introductory questions:
- Could you tell me a bit about your role?
- How have you worked with [the city's] climate statement?

2. Emergence of statement: What was the story? How did the statement come about?
Examples of probes/follow-up questions:
- Who were the actors involved?
- What was discussed? What was the discussion based on?
- Why state and not declare? What do you think are the implications of those two different approaches? Why?
- Why do you think that the city, in contrast to most other Swedish cities, decided to make this decision?
- Speculative, but from your point of view, why do you think most other Swedish cities have chosen not to state or declare a climate emergency?

3. Implications of the statement: How would you describe what happened next? What were the effects?
Examples of probes/follow-up questions:
- How was the statement perceived by different actors? (Mass public, neighboring cities, etc?)
- Implications for you/your organization?
- Implications for other actors? (thinking back at the actors you mentioned…)
- Do you consider the statement an effective way of enhancing climate action? How? Why/why not?

4. Connection to the city's existing climate strategy:
- How does the statement <u>relate</u> to other climate commitments/framings used by [the city]? How does it <u>differ</u>? Why? What does that imply?
- Is the statement different from what has been done before? How? Why? What does that imply?
- How does the statement relate to other emergencies the municipality deals with?
- Would you say that [the city's] climate change strategies in place are "emergency" like? Does [the city] treat the situation as an emergency? How? Why/why not? (Ask for specific examples)

5. Closing questions:
- Anything you would like to add? What else is important?
- Anyone else I should talk to? People/organizations that have been important?
- (For civil servants: what documents represent the city's climate response?)
- Any questions?

Appendix II – Coding structure: interview data

Engagement among mass public
Proposals came from citizens/climate activists
Barely any reactions among mass public
Some media coverage
Internet trolling in Kalmar

Empowerment or disempowerment of social actors
Climate movement:
- decision taken to accommodate the activists' demands
- a strategic way of getting more people involved
- an experiment worth trying out and learning from
- disappointment among climate activists
- decision used to hold the politicians accountable

Local politicians:
- feeling the pressure from activists helps
- increased knowledge and awareness on the topic

References to scientists/science

Exercise of formal political authority
Activists want to see increased use of municipality's authority
Politicians want to use their authority: send signals, take the lead, strengthen profile
Reflections about responsibility and capacity of municipalities
Motivations for stating instead of declaring (different views across parties)
- politically very difficult
- undemocratic
- not trustworthy

Lessons drawn from other recent crises

Reshaping of discourse
Decision used by different actors in debates
No change of overall discourse:
- decision overshadowed by other crises
- other framings more common/effective

Emergency framing of climate change has become mainstream

Impacts on institutions
No direct effects on municipal environmental work:
- existing strategies in line with stating a climate emergency
- unnecessary to restructure the work

Stating climate emergency is a small and symbolic but important step

Appendix III – Quotes in Swedish

Engagement among mass public

"Jag tror inte att gemene man vet att stan har konstaterat klimatnödläge? Och om de har hört det så vet de inte vad det innebär." (Respondent 11, klimataktivist)

"Det skrivs ju lite grann [i lokaltidningen], men jag tror inte att det är någonting som har bidragit till någon större medvetenhet eller diskussion kring det här. Förutom då i själva rörelsen, dom som har drivit frågan." (Respondent 12, lokalpolitiker)

"Vi har dragit till oss foliehattar. Det är väldigt få som bor i Kalmar kommun som har kontaktat mig, utan det känns lite som att det finns en… jag vet inte… en Flashback-svans som går på kommuner som tar det här "dumma beslutet". [...] Frågorna har varit väldigt barnsliga, väldigt låg nivå: "Jag vågar inte åka och hälsa på mina vänner som bor i Kalmar, för jag kanske drunknar." […] Ett tag var vi tvungna att sätta en kommunikatörsmedarbetare på att svara på alla frågor… det var verkligen en storm." (Respondent 1, tjänsteperson)

Empowerment or disempowerment of social actors

"Det är ett självförtroende till rörelsen. Både att frågan uppmärksammas och att de ju ändå säger att det är ett klimatnödläge. Och det är ett tecken på att vi snackar någorlunda samma språk i alla fall. Så på det sättet är det en seger. Men framförallt så tycker jag det är en seger också i att vi kan påverka. Vi kan påverka politiker genom våra metoder." (Respondent 10, klimataktivist)

"I klimatrörelsen, jag tänker att man försöker rucka på en massa olika bollar eller stenar, hela tiden lyfta på locket på nya grejer. Att klimatnödläge var en grej som singlade upp så att säga som begrepp, och städer och regioner började utlysa det, alltså det är ju… man måste ju ta chansen, man måste ta steget." (Respondent 7, klimataktivist)

"Klimatnödläget ger oss ett bättre argument nästa gång. Framförallt nu när de har erkänt att det är klimatnödläge, men inte deklarerat. Det är ett sånt uppenbart hyckleri från politikerna, vilket gör att vi får ammunition att lättare arbeta mot politikerna. Och avslöja för folket att kolla, det händer ju ingenting, det är bara snack liksom." (Respondent 10, klimataktivist)

"Jättebra med push från sidan, från opinionen, det pushar mig i mina förhandlingar. Jag kan komma längre tack vare att jag kan peka på att det här vill väljarna, det här vill allmänheten. Du kommer tappa röster om du inte gör det här." (Respondent 3, lokalpolitiker)

"När jag tittar ut i salen och talar till fullmäktige, så märker jag att rätt många är illa berörda. Det är som en sten i skon ungefär. Det var ju ingen av dem som röstade för beslutet som kan med och säga att det här är inget problem. […] Vi måste ha en press på oss för att få ner utsläppen tillräckligt snabbt." (Respondent 8, lokalpolitiker)

"Det enda jag kan säga som har varit positivt, det är att våra politiker har varit tvungna att sluta upp kring det här. När beslutet väl var taget var de tvungna att stå för det [...] När klimatanpassningsplanen togs nu i höstas, ett år senare, så var vi förberedda upp till näsroten på hur vi skulle svara på frågor som eventuellt kom upp. Så jag tror att vi aldrig har haft en så informerad och kunnig politikerkår som vi har nu. Och det tror jag vi inte skulle fått annars. […] Man hade gått igenom sitt elddop med klimatnödläget, så då kändes klimatanpassning inte lika farligt längre" (Respondent 1, tjänsteperson)

"Jag har rätt nyligen ögnat igenom den senaste IPCC-rapporten för policymakers, och det är ju ett annat sätt att säga att det brinner. […] För mig handlar det om naturvetenskap. Så för mig är klimatnödläget ett konstaterande som inte kan överprövas." (Respondent 8, lokalpolitiker)

Exercise of formal political authority

"Jag ser klimatnödläget som ett krigstillstånd. Vi måste mobilisera på den nivån för att överhuvudtaget ha en chans att rädda oss." (Respondent 10, klimataktivist)

"Jag tror det är bra att Sveriges tredje största stad tycker att det är ett nödläge och skickar den signalen till medborgarna." (Respondent 5, lokalpolitiker)

"Vi tog oss en grundlig funderare […]. Om vi nu går upp i stabsläge, vad skulle det innebära, vilka beslut skulle vi fatta utan den här vanliga demokratiska förankringsprocessen, vad skulle det få för konsekvenser…" (Respondent 4, tjänsteperson)

"Det är ju litegrann en gråzon vad som är ett kommunalt och vad som är ett statligt ansvarsområde. […] I Sverige har vi kanske inte sett så stora schismer än mellan den statliga och lokala nivån i det här. […] Men jag tänker i alla fall att den här typen av fråga sätter lite belysning på det. Vad är kommunens ansvar, rådighet och möjligheter." (Respondent 13, tjänsteperson)

"De resurser som vi som kommun hade behövt lägga på detta, om vi på ett seriöst sätt hade sagt vi ska ta ett kompensatoriskt ansvar när de nivåerna misslyckas med detta… Det är en ren omöjlighet för oss som kommun att göra, från ett ekonomiskt perspektiv. Plus att jag aldrig hade fått igenom det politiskt heller, det är ju jättesvårt att säga hur mycket pengar som skulle krävas och sen har vi ju inte rådighet över det heller. Just den punkten gjorde att det här inte riktigt funkade för oss, om vi vill vara seriösa." (Respondent 5, lokalpolitiker)

"Vi som stad som har ansvar för planeringen i staden har ju jättestora verktyg till exempel med biltrafik och liknande, vad vi kan göra där. […] Så verktyg finns ju, men så är frågan vad konsekvenserna av det blir. Att stänga av Malmö för biltrafik, det skulle vi ju kunna göra, men… vad leder det till i slutändan. Jag menar, vi har ju stor rådighet, men då är frågan hur man nyttjar den på bästa sätt." (Respondent 9, tjänsteperson)

"Vi tyckte tvärtom, åtgärderna får man diskutera sen, men att utlysa nödläge var väldigt viktigt för att lyfta upp allvaret i krisen. […] Det är ju inte kommunen som kan lösa problemet, det måste ju bli både nationellt, regionalt och globalt. Men vi måste ju ändå se vilka åtgärder kan vi göra som bäst bidrar till att ta oss ur det här nödläget. Det var så vi resonerade." (Respondent 12, lokalpolitiker)

"Vi kan inte bortse från det nu när vi gjort som vi gjort för corona. Vi har ett jättekonkret exempel på att vi kan agera annorlunda." (Respondent 11, klimataktivist)

"Som jag tolkade förslagsställarna och deras förslag så var det ju att genom att utlysa, att erkänna att det är ett nödläge så kan det frigöra resurser i samhället. Man använde ju massmobilisering exempelvis i förslaget… och att då dra paralleller till andra krissituationer, det är nästan lite kusligt i dagens tid, både med pandemin och med kriget i Ukraina, hur man ser att kriser kan mobilisera samhällen. Så man förstår ju logiken från förslagsställarna." (Respondent 13, tjänsteperson)

Reshaping of discourse

"Jag och mina kollegor har använt det här beslutet som en språngbräda. För att få mer hävd i klimat– och miljödebatten. […] Jag tror att kanske tjänstepersoner nog också använt det här beslutet som ett slagträ. För att motivera saker de tycker man borde få igenom. […] Eventuellt har man använt det för att motivera att gå med i Viable Cities. Det är nog mycket möjligt. Det är ju det som symboliska beslut är bra för." (Respondent 2, lokalpolitiker)

"Verkligheten har lite sprungit ifrån det här med att införa klimatnödläge. IPCC-rapporterna blir bara värre och värre, och det är flera internationella ledare som redan säger att vi är i ett globalt nödläge. Så jag tror att för dem som är intresserade av klimatfrågan, för alla dem så är det fullständigt självklart att vi är i ett klimatnödläge. Så det blir liksom konstigt att driva frågan vidare då." (Respondent 10, klimataktivist)

Impacts on institutions

"Det här beslutet har väl kanske inte lett till en så jättestor förändring […]. Jag skulle nog vilja säga att även om det här förslaget inte hade dykt upp så hade vi ändå fortsatt arbetat med frågorna på det sättet som vi gör." (Respondent 6, lokalpolitiker)

"Ska man vara lite krass så kan man väl säga att beslutet har fått väldigt marginella konsekvenser. […] Visst, man gjorde ställningstagandet att konstatera att det här nödläget råder, men sen inga andra beslut i övrigt som pushade på uppdrag eller avsatte resurser eller så." (Respondent 13, tjänsteperson)

"Vi har ju försökt ta ett helhetsgrepp i miljöprogrammet, där vi försöker analysera var vi kan göra insatser och var de gör mest effekt. [...] Det är ju ett pågående arbete. Och att då säga "nu ska vi göra en separat plan", jag tror inte att det var någon som tyckte att det var en bra idé." (Respondent 5, lokalpolitiker)

"Det är ju många pusselbitar i spelet, man vet ju inte vilken droppe som får bägaren att rinna över." (Respondent 3, lokalpolitiker)

"På nåt vis, okej här är kommunjätteskolosen på väg i riktning och sen kommer saker och puffar den lite, gör att den ändrar lite riktning. Och klimatnödlägesinitiativet knuffade den stora kolossen lite längre." (Respondent 4, tjänsteperson)

Discussion

"Vi måste ha ett Saturnprojekt, alltså samma projekt som när vi flög till månen, det är ju den kraft vi behöver för att förändra. [...] Men jag… ser inga tecken alls på att det skulle inträffa, ens i närheten, fastän de utlyst klimatnödläge." (Respondent 10, klimataktivist)

"Om man tittar på våra målsättningar så ja, absolut. Om man tittar på hur stor del av organisationen som ändå är inne och jobbar med frågorna och har ett tydligt utpekat ansvar så, ja. Men på vissa områden, om man tittar på vad som faktiskt görs, så kan man samtidigt säga att det inte är tillräckligt. Så där finns ju igen det här glappet. (Respondent 4, tjänsteperson)

"[Klimataktivisterna] brukar ju säga 'följ forskarnas rekommendationer'. Ja, men klimatforskare är inte politiker. Det är faktiskt politikens uppgift att utifrån det faktum att vi snabbt måste bromsa utsläppen vidta de åtgärder som behövs. Det är inte forskarnas uppgift. I alla fall inte klimatforskarnas, de är ju meteorologer, fysiker och biologer. [...] Så jag tycker att klimatpolitik borde få väldigt mycket större utrymme i den allmänna diskussionen." (Respondent 8, lokalpolitiker)

Appendix IV – Summary of perceived political implications

Key dimensions of political implications	Respondents' perceptions
Engagement among mass public	• Barely any reactions among general public • Decision led to internet trolling (in Kalmar)
Empowerment or disempowerment of social actors	• Empowerment of climate movement • Empowerment of local politicians • Indirect empowerment of scientists
Exercise of formal political authority	• No intensification of the power of the municipalities • Statements invite reflections on the responsibility and capacity of municipalities
Reshaping of discourse	• Statements are pointed to in the local political debate • No disruption or reinforcement of overall discourse
Impacts on institutions	• Marginal effects on the factual municipal climate work • Statements considered important step forward

Appendix V – Key features of reviewed policy documents

	Lund	Malmö	Kalmar
Name of document	'LundaEko – Programme for Ecological Sustainable Development for the City of Lund 2021-2030'	'Environmental programme for the City of Malmö 2021-2030'	'Action plan – Fossil free municipality 2030'
Adopted	2021-06-22 (i.e. after climate emergency statement)	2021-04-29 (i.e. after climate emergency statement)	2019-12-16 (i.e. before climate emergency statement)
Sections of document incorporating CERAF attributes	Introduction Six prioritized areas, of which "Climate and energy" is one Implementation Follow-up, evaluation and actualization Knowledge, collaboration and innovation Agenda 2030 and Sweden's environmental quality goals	Introduction Foreword From words to action Implementation Capacity Partnerships and collaboration Participation Monitoring Three prioritized areas, of which "A Malmö with lowest possible climate impact" is one Glossary	About the action plan Global, national and regional goals and trends The City of Kalmar's vision and goal for a fossil fuel free municipality Overview of indicators Is it possible to become fossil fuel free by 2030? Current situation and definitions Prioritized areas and measures of the action plan
Relation to other steering documents of the city	The environmental dimension of the city's overarching policy for sustainable development (adopted 2020-08-27). Actions are concretized in other steering documents, such as the energy plan and the framework for green obligations	The city's local agenda for the environmental dimension of 2030 Agenda. Actions are concretized in other steering documents, e.g. the traffic and mobility plan and the energy strategy	The action plan to achieve the goal (adopted in 2018) to be a fossil fuel free municipality by 2030. The strategic parts of the action plan may become part of the upcoming environmental programme of the city.

Source: Kalmar kommun, 2019; Lunds kommun, 2021; Malmö Stad, 2021.

Appendix VI – CERAF criteria fulfillment

CERAF criteria	Lund: LundaEko 2021-2030	Malmö: Environmental Programme for the City of Malmö 2021-2030	Kalmar: Handlingsplan Fossilbränslefri kommun 2030
1) Purpose of action	Term climate emergency not used, but clearly spelled out responsibilities.	Term climate emergency not used, but clearly spelled out responsibilities.	Term climate emergency not used, but clearly spelled out responsibilities.
2) Urgency of action	A sense of urgency is expressed, e.g. "fossil fuel phase-out need to be accelerated".	A sense of urgency is expressed, e.g. "coming decade will be crucial".	A sense of urgency is expressed, e.g. "need to act in the coming 10 years".
3) Prioritization of action	Implicit signs of attribute, e.g. "agricultural land should not be used for new buildings".	Implicit signs of attribute, e.g. "priority should be given to sustainable means of transport".	No signs of attribute.
4) Institutional resource mobilization	Costs of achieving the goals are tied to the ordinary budget.	Costs of achieving the goals are tied to the ordinary budget.	Costs tied to the ordinary budget, external funds to be sought when possible.
5) Social mobilization	Increasing the knowledge and engagement among citizens is an explicit part of the programme.	Explicitly stated that involving citizens is crucial. A glossary provided in the end of the document.	Explicit part of the plan, e.g. systematic and ongoing citizen dialogue will be developed.
6) Restoring a safe climate	Mitigation efforts an explicit part of the programme, with five sub-goals	Explicit part of the programme; "A Malmö with lowest possible climate impact" is a prioritized area, with four sub-goals.	Explicit part of the plan – climate change mitigation is the overarching goal.
7) Adapting to a changing climate	Several sub-goals on climate change	One sub-goal on adapting to a changing climate.	No signs of attribute (falls outside scope of the plan).
8) Plan for informed action	Encouraging innovation and research is an explicit part of the programme. Methods for evaluating and actualizing goals and targets are spelled out.	Promoting innovative ideas is an explicit part of the programme. References are made to current research. Methods for monitoring the progress are spelled out.	Explicit promotion of innovative solutions as well as references to current research and trends. Clear methods for monitoring and revising targets.
9) Coordination, partnerships and advocacy for action	Explicitly stated that collaborations are needed and that the city should take an active role in such partnerships.	Explicitly stated that partnerships are needed and that the city should be a role model.	Explicitly stated that the city should be a role model and actively seek partnerships.
10) Equity and social justice	No specific goals on this, but attribute implicitly addressed through references to Agenda 2030.	Explicit part of the programme; social equality, anti-discrimination and gender equality considered important aspects.	Explicitly stated that gender equality, diversity and social justice should be taken into consideration.