



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES (CES)

# ENERGY CRISIS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

A frame analysis of climate activists' perspective of the energy crisis

**Alva Rödström**

---

Bachelor thesis:	15 credits
Programme:	European Studies Programme
Level:	First Cycle
Semester year:	Autumn 2022
Supervisor:	Lotte Schack

## Abstract

The energy crisis affects households, companies and countries all over Europe. But at the same time, it is a climate crisis. The aim with this research is to understand the climate perspective's role in the energy crisis. Previous research about energy systems in relation to climate change suggest that fossil fuel dependency contributes to crises, for the producing and exporting countries. This research presents different conflicts the energy crisis gives rise to, in Sweden and Germany.

Through a frame analysis, made on interviews with climate activists', this essay identifies the activists perception of the problem of the energy crisis and its solution. The research shows that the crisis is more severe in Germany than in Sweden, because of Germany's dependency on Russian gas. Energy is known being discussed technocratically, but with the invasion of Ukraine, it has become politicized. The climate activists' have found shortcomings in the politicization of the energy crisis, as well as the energy system in general, arguing that the climate perspective is left out. To prevent energy crises in the future, they argue for the need of an energy system based on renewables and criticize unsustainable economic growth.

---

Bachelor thesis:	15 credits
Programme:	European Studies Programme
Level:	First Cycle
Semester year:	Autumn 2022
Supervisor:	Lotte Schack
Keyword:	Energy crisis, climate crisis, war, de-politization, fossil fuels, capitalism, renewable energy, conflict, climate activism, social movements, energy systems, sustainability
Word count:	12 954

---

# Contents

- Introduction ..... 1
  - Aim and research questions ..... 1
- Background ..... 2
  - Energy policies in the EU ..... 2
  - Energy policies in Sweden & Germany ..... 2
- Theory and previous research ..... 4
  - The concept of social movements ..... 4
  - Social movements and climate activism..... 4
  - De-politization of energy and the climate movement ..... 5
  - Fossil fuel economy and energy demand ..... 6
  - Energy and climate change as a class conflict..... 7
  - Summary of the used theories and previous research..... 7
- Method and material..... 8
  - Qualitative interviews..... 8
  - The participants ..... 8
  - Ethics and practicalities ..... 10
  - Frame analysis ..... 11
- Results ..... 12
  - Diagnostic framing ..... 12
  - Prognostic framing ..... 16
- Conclusions ..... 23
- References ..... 25
- Appendix ..... 28
  - Document 1: Interview guide Sweden..... 28
  - Document 2: Interview guide Germany ..... 30

# Introduction

The energy crisis in Europe is prominent. Since EU decided to no longer import Russian gas, because of the invasion of Ukraine, EU's energy system has been put under pressure. Energy is a complex topic and the crisis has led to many conflicts, challenges and opinions about energy being brought up to surface (Crew 2022). But who is responsible for the energy crisis and what is the solution? The EU portray themselves a climate-friendly union and the Green Deal has set up ambitious goals, such as reducing all the EU's emission to zero by 2050 (Pianta and Lucchese 2020, p. 663). People have argued for the possibility that the energy crisis could be a push for the implementation of renewable energy. But at the same time, the energy crisis has made many EU countries switch from gas to coal, another fossil fuel even more polluting (Euronews 2022). Climate movements from all over the world has been stressing the fact that the dependence of fossil fuels eventually will lead to energy crises since fossil fuels is a finite recourse (Brand & Wissen 2021, p. 21). Social movements are formed in response to societal problems and conflicts, when studying a structural tension, therefor social movements perception of them can be essential in the understanding (Diani and Della Porta 2020, p. 15). Since the energy crisis awakes structural tensions and energy has a direct effect on climate change, the climate movement's view on the energy crisis can be important.

## Aim and research questions

This research will try to understand what role the climate perspective has gotten in the energy crisis, according to climate activists'. This paper will further aim to understand the climate activists' view on the conflicts brought up to the surface by the energy crisis and how these have affected the possibility for a green energy transition. Since the EU countries have different geographical and social conditions when it comes to energy systems, this paper will compare two different EU countries, Sweden and Germany. The comparative perspective will allow a broader understanding of the energy crisis' effect on EU countries as well as an understanding of how an individual country's energy systems can affect the situation.

This research aim to understand the climate activists' perception on the different conflicts that the energy crisis gives rise to and what role the climate issue plays in these. The research will be built upon interviews with climate activists' from Germany and Sweden.

- How do climate activists' from Germany and Sweden perceive the different conflicts regarding energy that has been brought up during the energy crisis?
- What are the similarities and differences in the perception of the energy crisis in Germany and Sweden?

The first research question focuses on the climate activists' own understanding of the energy crisis, in their given context. The second research question focus on the comparative perspective and how the results from the first research question differ from country to country.

## Background

This section will present an overview of the EU's, Sweden's and Germany's current energy policies and the countries individual resources and challenges. Firstly, EU's energy package and the green deal will be presented. After that, an overview of Sweden and Germany's energy situation and the countries relationship with Russian natural gas.

### Energy policies in the EU

Sweden and Germany are both part of EU's internal energy market, so even though they have country specific energy policies, they are also connected through a bigger European energy market. EU's "energy package" was implemented to create a more competitive and flexible market, to enhance the interconnectedness between the EU countries at the same time as ensuring energy access for all EU's population. Because of the shared price of energy, every country's individual energy price is affected by the European demand and the general access to energy (Europaparlamentet 2021). EU's internal energy market is the reason why the energy crisis has affected all the EU countries harshly, even the countries that were not dependent on Russian gas before the war. This can explain why the energy crisis has effect on both Sweden and Germany, even though they were differently dependent on Russian gas (Szulecki et al., 2016 s. 554, 555). The energy package is also the reason why saving energy in one EU country can lower the demand and the general price of energy all over the union. To handle the crisis, EU suggested to diversify the supply, by finding new partners and saving energy (European commission 2022).

The European green deal (EGD) is a huge policy package, suggested by the commission and agreed upon by the member states, as a response to fulfill the ambitions set on the Paris agreement in 2015. The policies in EGD are made to reach the goal, for Europe to become fully carbon neutral by 2050. Since energy impacts carbon levels, a green energy transition is essential to succeed with EGDs goal. Pianta and Lucchese (2020, s. 633, 635) have identified limitations in the ambitious energy deal and argues that it is uncertain whether the suggested implementations are enough to take down the carbon levels enough. During the crisis, the EU has increased the release of carbon (Euronews 2022). The crisis has led to a development of energy structure in opposite direction EGDs goal. If EU countries, during the crisis, already abandons the policies of the EGD, will the EU be able to succeed in becoming carbon neutral by 2050? To study if the climate perspective is included in the energy crisis debate will be essential since it will have an impact on EU's possibility to reach the EGD.

### Energy policies in Sweden & Germany

Sweden is a country with many energy resources, especially renewable ones, such as hydroelectric power plants. The access to energy resources has created a surplus of energy which has made energy a product for export (Energimyndigheten 2022). Germany on the other hand, does not have the same access to renewable energy resources as Sweden. But, the country plans on an energy transition. Germany is known to be a country with a strong resistance towards nuclear energy and after the Fukushima accident in 2011, Germany's decided to have no more nuclear energy by 2022 (Schiermeier & Quirin 2013, p. 157). The drastic phase out of nuclear power made the country, in the short term, more dependent on fossil fuels, as well as Russian gas, but with a long term plan to push for a renewable energy transition.

Germany is the EU country that imports the most of Russia's natural gas. The gas deal between Russia and Germany have created an interdependence between them. Germany joined the gas deal with Russia, with the hope that economic interdependence could create an opportunity to influence Russia to become more democratic (Solera Urena 2015, p. 54). However, EU has been concerned about Germany's dependence on Russian gas, fearing that it won't promote democratic values in Russia but make Germany less independent in their foreign policy (Szulecki et al., 2016 p. 555). Since Germany has been such a big importer of Russian gas, the decision to no longer import gas, after the invasion of Ukraine, has affected the country harshly and the lack of energy has been prominent. Sweden, compared to Germany, has not imported as much Russian gas, which may explain why the invasion in Ukraine has not been as centrally discussed in relation to the question of energy.

Since the energy crisis started, questions regarding energy policies have been brought up to the surface, but as it is an ongoing crisis there is almost no research yet on this topic. This essay aim to focus what role the climate movement play in these conflicts regarding energy polices. What is the climate movement's view on this crisis and the underlying conflicts regarding energy policies that it gives rise to?

## Theory and previous research

Since this essay is studying activists' from the climate movement, the theory will be based upon social movement theory. Further, this essay will draw inspiration from the terms de-politization and fossil fuel economy. Lastly, I will present previous research connecting energy systems to questions about democracy as well as climate change as a class conflict.

### The concept of social movements

This essay will define the term social movement with inspiration from Diana and Della Porta's (2020) definition. First, social movements are built around some sort of conflict or problem. Secondly, social movements are formed in informal networks, which means that social movements are usually not derived from formal organizations, but rather built around organized actors fighting collectively for the same goal. Lastly, the actors belonging to a social movement have a shared collective identity (Diana and Della Porta 2020, p. 21, 22).

The theoretical framework around social movements has not always been the same. Before, social movements theories were mostly centered around the classical Marxist class conflict. But, in the 60s, there was an upswing for social movements which created a more diverse spectrum of different kinds of social movements (Diani and Della Porta 2020, p. 6). When the new forms of social movements started to emerge, the theoretical framework had to adopt. Scholars of the new movement, such as Habermas, Touraine, Melucci, Offe and Castell started formulating a new kind of theoretical framework to be able to analyse new social movements, also known as NSM (Diani and Della Porta 2020 p. 9). Theorists of the NSM's highlight the importance of the new modern society and everything that it comes with, such as consumption, individualism and cultural habits. The new movements were focused on challenging political and social norms (Diani and Della Porta 2020 p. 11) The climate movement is an example of one NSM. It is a movement that started in 1960s, in response to climate changes with the aim to change our unsustainable habits. Now, compared to in the 60s, the climate movement has grown to a more wide and diverse movement, with different climate groups focusing on different aspects of climate change as well as different mobilization strategies.

Why even study social movements? Diani and Della Porta (2020, p. 15) argue that it is not always enough to study structural conflicts or tensions. They argue that it is essential to study social movements to understand how certain conditions can transform structural conflicts into mobilization and change. For this research, I have chosen to study climate activists', to get an understanding of how the conflicts within the energy crisis can be transformed into mobilization or actual change. When studying social movements it is important to remember the actors as members of a bigger society. This research will therefore analyse individual actors of social movements as interdependent and intertwined with structural conflicts, cultural norms and the society.

### Social movements and climate activism

Climate groups can be centered around different focuses, but they are built around the conflict of climate change and gathered around the goal on how to make structural or political changes to prevent more emissions. Since climate movements are connected to the bigger society, the

countries individual energy politics and resources have influenced how the countries' climate movements are formed and focused.

In Sweden, the climate movement is known for being one of the first well-integrated social movements into politics (Cassegård 2017 p. 193, 194). The social democratic party even hosted the first UN conference about environment, in 1972, in Stockholm. The fact that the Swedish climate movement so early institutionalized and integrated to politics can explain why Sweden is known to be a country committed to the climate issue. Internationally, Sweden is considered as a leading country when it comes to climate policies (Cassegård 2017 193, 194). The climate movement in Germany, on the other hand, is known for its anti-nuclear stands, which has made the climate question more centered around energy questions. The climate movement started in west Germany in the 70s with early activists' fighting for the anti-nuclear question (Brand and Wissen 2022, s. 14). But today, the climate movement has become a more expanded movement, including different kinds of climate conflicts.

The climate movement, all over the world, has grown which has made the climate issue considered as a question of national importance (Brand and Wissen 2022, p. 15 & Herbert 2021). Germany is a country known for its anti-nuclear stands and campaigns against nuclear energy have been supported by the whole society and not only by climate activists'. Sweden has also had anti-nuclear protests. The resistance movement started making campaigns in the 1970s and they later formed the Swedish Green Party (Cassegård, 2017, p. 195). The history may explain why to be "anti-nuclear" in Sweden has been more associated with the green party and left-winged politics, compared to in Germany whereas it has been a more general opinion.

## De-politization of energy and the climate movement

Energy is often regarded as a technological topic, perhaps since it is such complex technology behind the production (Laird 1990). This could explain why energy often is being discussed in a technocratic matter, which can result in that the discussion is removed from the general crowd, or even popular politics. Laird (1990 p. 49) argues that the problem is not the technology, or the voice of the expert but the risk that it makes the conversation about it considered as "non-political" with a lack of democratic input. Since energy is a topic known to be de-politized, it is relevant to investigate deeper in how the energy crisis has affected the politization or de-politization of energy question.

De-politization can be understood by the term post-politics, which is built upon the idea that politics has, since the cold war, moved away from the people, started to fulfill economic interests than democratic ones (Wilson 2014). In post-political societies, political problems are no longer discussed politically. They are instead being reduced to policy problems to be handled by experts (Wilson 2014 p. 16). The danger of a post-political societies is that the people are left of out the democratic process.

The climate movement, as well as climate politics has also been criticized for being de-politized (Moor, Catney, & Brian 2021, p. 313). Since the 60s, the climate movement has grown which has made the climate issue an integrated political question. As it has become more integrated, climate politics has gotten critique for being decided upon with technocratic influence, without acceptance from the whole population. The EGD for example, has been criticized for being too ambitious and lacking a democratic input and Pianta and Lucchese (2020, p. 635) argues that they doubt if it will be accepted on a local level by the people. But the democratic aspect is not

easy, Wilson (2014, p. 178) argues that climate change would be handled in a much more efficiently if the democratic aspect was disregarded.

Since both the question of energy and climate is known for being de-politized, this essay will explore the concept in relation to the energy crisis. From the activists' perspective, do they consider that the energy crisis has become politized, or de-politized, and what are the consequences? To understand the context of the current crisis, I will now turn to previous research about fossil fuels dependency, energy in connection to topic such as democracy, climate change and class.

## Fossil fuel economy and energy demand

The reports are clear, global warming will lead to awfully damaging effects (IPCC 2022). Most politicians, are aware of the effects of climate change, but why is not enough made to prevent it? Brand & Wissen (2021, p. 39) argues that our habits and life, in the global north, is so dependent on the use of fossil fuels that a sustainable alternative would be in direct opposition to our everyday life. For example, everything from infrastructure to important societal institutions is dependent on the consumption of fossil fuels in the global north that our everyday life would be abruptly without them (Brand & Wissen 2021, p. 114). Their argumentation can further be understood by the term "fossil fuel economy". The term is built upon the idea that as economy grows, the need for fossil fuels will increase as well. According to the term, material production and economic growth is dependent on an expanded extraction of coal, oil and/or natural gas (Malm 2013, p. 17). Since fossil fuels is a finite resource, the more Europe consumes, the less will exist for other countries. Mitchell (2002, p. 2013) is stating the fact that one person from the UK requires more energy per year than 6 people from Egypt. Europe's energy consumption is not only unsustainable, but also unfair. According to the term fossil fuel economy, Europe's coming economic growth, will lead to more extraction of fossil fuels, which will lead to less resources left for other countries.

At the same time as the fossil fuels is a finite resource, unfairly distributed over the world's population, fossil fuels are mainly extracted in countries with non-democratic leaders. Therefore, Brand & Wissen (2021, p. 49) argues that our costly way of living in the global north supports undemocratic leadership in the global south, which contributes to globally unequal power dynamics. Following Brand & Wissen (2021, p. 44, 45) idea the question about energy is not a technological, but rather a question about imperialism, power dynamics and exploitation. Brand & Wissen (2021) also highlights the fact that fossil fuels is such an integrated part in our everyday life and explains why using less energy, is a sacrifice, since it would be in contradiction to today's ideas about economic growth and our everyday life in the global north.

When understanding energy, it is important to remember its interconnectedness with the whole society. Mitchell (2009, p. 400) argues that energy systems are intertwined with the question of democracy. Further he argues that countries that depend on oil tend to be less democratic, since the dependence of oil also creates a dependence of the decision makers in the producing states, which gives the producing states political power. Huber (2011, p. 32) defines oil dependency as the "*oil curse*" and explains how this curse is applicable to both the community where the oil is extracted and the community the oil is exported to. Since the extraction of oil can devastate whole infrastructures, for example as polluting water systems, oil has a direct effect on the producing states. But Huber (2011) also points out that it has a direct effect on the communities,

or countries, buying the oil. The dependency of oil makes the whole societies structure rely on unpredictable states, which makes the economy, and society, vulnerable for crises and economic fluctuations (Huber 2011, p. 32). Therefore, both the producing and the importing country can be seen as oil states. Both Huber (2011) and Mitchell (2009) uses oil as an example. But, since this research mainly is centered around Russian gas, this text will understand their arguments about oil, as applicable to all fossil fuels, including gas.

## Energy and climate change as a class conflict

The energy crisis is an example on how fossil fuels is an unpredictable resource. Since Europe's energy system was dependent on gas from Russia, a non-democratic country with a questionable leader, the energy stability was easily disturbed. A high demand, but less supplies made the energy price rise which mostly affected households, with a low income, in European countries that were dependent on the gas, such as Germany. Therefore, the energy crisis has not only been about energy, German political leaders have also called it a “*social and economic crisis*” (ECEEE 2022).

Huber (2022) argues to prevent climate change, a revolutionary reformation is necessary. For the reformation to be democratically supported, it must be accepted by everyone in the society. Right now, most people deny climate change and the climate movement is mainly supported by the educated middle class (Huber 2022, p. 6 & Norgaard 2021). To also include the working class in the climate movement, Huber (2022) argues that we need to highlight that the climate crisis is also a class conflict, about who profits from resources and who pays the costs of climate change. If the climate crisis would be presented as a class conflict, Huber (2022 p. 295) is arguing the reformation needed would be more supported by the working class.

During the energy crisis, low-income households in Sweden and Germany are highly affected by the consequences of rising electricity prices (Eurostat 2022). At the same time, companies and the people owning energy resources, such companies owning fossil fuels, can profit on the rising price (Huber 2022, p. 15). Huber’s reasoning about that the climate crisis is a class struggle is applicable to the energy crisis, since it is a question about who owns the resources and who must pay for the costs of the less available energy.

## Summary of the used theories and previous research

This essay will be based on research about social movements, energy systems, de-politization/politization, climate change, fossil fuel economy and class. This thesis is about a climate perspective on energy systems, just as most of the studies also are. The studies are, making a connection between energy systems and climate change and some are even further connecting it to class, world orders and conflicts. As the used research suggests, energy is a topic with many underlying conflicts, interest, and areas of problem. When there is a crisis, these conflicts often become exposed. In Ergen & Suckert (2021) research about the energy crisis in 1970s, they identified that the crisis gave rise to conflicts, especially regarding climate. It will therefore of interest to use the previous research regarding energy and climate change, to study a real life, ongoing case. Social movements respond to conflicts in a bigger society, to use the social movement theory as a base will therefore be essential to understand the climate activists’ reasoning, perception and understanding of the crisis.

## Method and material

This essay is based upon qualitative interviews on climate activists' from Sweden and Germany. In this section, I will first motivate the chosen method and then discuss process of collecting the material. At last, the method used for the analyse, frame analysis, will be presented.

### Qualitative interviews

This essay is based on qualitative method. The energy crisis is happening now which is why there is almost no big statistics yet presented on the topic. When researching something ongoing, it can be an advantage with a qualitative approach, since it can deepen an understanding of a problem even though no statistical reports yet has been made (Troost 2010, p. 31). Further, the material will be collected through semi-structured, participant-based interviews. Since this study aims for an inside perspective of climate activist's own thoughts about the energy crisis, the qualitative interviews fits well to collect the material. Qualitative interviews have enabled for this research to understand the climate activist's subjective opinions and personal experiences (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2014 p. 28-35). This essay is centered around the personal perception of the climate activists'. The qualitative interviews have allowed me to get a deeper understanding of the crisis and to grasp its complexity (Kvale & Brinkmann 2014, s. 43). When doing qualitative research, it's of importance to show transparency about the reability and validity, therefor I will discuss the problems met during the interviews thoroughly (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014 p. 200-202).

The semi-structure allowed me to research the topic in a more explorative way (Kvale & Brinkmann 2014 p. 147, 171). Since the energy crisis is happening now and the material is built upon personal experiences and thoughts, I chose to have an open focus in the beginning of the research, to change it accordingly, based upon the findings. During the research, the interview-guide has been built up and questions have slightly changed, even though the structure of it has stayed the same. As collecting the material, I have understood the climate activists' perspective more and therefor also the focus of this research. Therefore, my research question, aim as well as the theoretical framework has changed during the process. The semi-structured approach has helped me reaching the spontaneity needed for doing this research explorative. But, since this is a comparative study of German and Swedish activists', it has been helpful with cohesiveness in the interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014 p. 147). I have been having themes and similar questions asked for the participants, which has been helpful in the comparative analysis, since it made it easier to map out similarities and differences between the answers.

### The participants

I chose participant-based interviews since this research is built upon knowledge about personal experiences rather than an expert view. The selection criterion for the participants was to be an active member of a climate movement and over 18 (Kvale and Brinkmann 2014, p. 159-164). Since it is a comparative study, the requirements differ from the 2 groups. One group is German people active in the climate movement and the other Swedish people active in the climate movement. The participants come from different kinds of climate movements, such as Extinction rebellion, Fridays for future, Friends of earth and many more. The climate groups vary in their organisational focus, but are all movements based on the conflict of climate change and climate justice. Some of the groups are more rebellious, such as Extinction rebellion that

use civil disobedience with the aim to raise interest, while other organisations such as friends of earth are doing more peaceful activism focusing on public awareness about climate change. Below is a table of all the participants.

Tabell 1.1 the participants of the interviews

<b>Number</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Country</b>
Participant 1	Swedish society for nature conservation	Sweden
Participant 2	Friends of earth and green youth party	Sweden
Participant 3	Friends of earth	Sweden
Participant 4	Green youth party	Sweden
Participant 5	Fridays for future, Extinction Rebellion and green university group	Germany
Participant 6	Extinction Rebellion and Fridays for future	Germany
Participant 7	Ende Gelände and Extinction Rebellion	Germany
Participant 8	Fridays for future	Germany
Participant 9	Green peace, Fridays for future	Germany

Source: the interviews

As presented in the table, I have interviewed a total of 9 activists', 5 from Germany and 4 from Sweden. All the 9 activists' come from non-profit climate organizations. The activists' are from a broad range of different kinds of climate organisations. My research is not centred around a specific climate organisation but rather about the general perspective, from a person active in the climate movement. Therefore, I chose a mix of climate organisation since it gave the research a broader perspective of the different viewpoints. Through the analytical method all the activist's different perspectives will naturally be narrowed down with the frame analysis since it helps when framing the similarities and differences in the viewpoint between the participants (Benford & Snow 2000). The activist's position within the organisation also varies. Some of the activists' are hired to work for the organisation while others are "just" active members. As the interviewer, I have had this in mind while conducting the interviews, since the different position may impact on how the activists' speak about certain topics, for instance, the activist hired for the organisation may had more time to learn about certain topics compared to the activists' doing it on a voluntary basis (Kvale and Brinkmann 2014, p. 159, 163).

I chose to not present the gender of the activists' in the table, since gender has not been the focus of the study. But most participants have been female activists' in their 20s, coming from bigger cities, which may have affected the representation in the research (Trost 2010, p. 137). Therefore, when reading this research, it could be of importance to have in mind that most of the participants are from a non-diverse group. At the same time, climate activists' are not a diverse group in itself and most climate activists' are younger females, which may explain why a majority of the participants of this study also are. To not expose the activists' gender in the analysis, I have been using "they/them" as a neutral pronouns.

To find the participants for the interviews, I have been using different types of methods. With some participants, I have been contacting organisations for recommendations of possible participants. I have also contacted specific people in my network directly and lastly, I used the snowballing method, asking already interviewed people for recommendations in their network (Trost 2010, p. 138, 139).

The way of collecting participants have been different in Germany and in Sweden. Since I am Swedish and have been active in the climate movement myself, my own personal network in Sweden is bigger which has allowed me to find possible participants more easily. In Germany I do not have as big personal network and I have therefor been using the snowballing method exclusively. Therefore, three of the German participants all came from the same university. When using the snowballing method, it's important to be cautious since the gatekeepers may slant the selection of the research and make it narrower (Trost 2010, p. 139). Therefore, when reading the research, it could be important to have in mind that the German activist's perspectives may be influenced by a shared life situation. At the same time, since I had more personal connections in Sweden, I had to be more aware of my role as a researcher. Hage (2009, p. 75) argues that sharing emotions with the participants can deepen an understanding of their world view and therefor have a positive impact on research. But Hage (2009) argues that it must be done carefully, for the researcher to not overstep the borderline and instead take on the role as one of the participants. In the research, especially with the Swedish participants, I did empathize with them, but I was cautious to keep the role as the researcher.

## Ethics and practicalities

For all the interviews and the recordings, I have been using informed consent. I have been clear with the participants that the interviews, as well as the recording, is voluntary and that they will be able to read the thesis as it is finished (Kvale and Brinkmann 2014, p. 87). All the respondents are presented anonymously, so there are no names or other information that would make it possible to track the quotes to a certain person. I chose to do the interviews anonymously to make the participants feel free to talk without being afraid of judgement or other possible consequences (Kvale and Brinkmann 2014, p. 89).

I have been conducting the Swedish interviews in person and the German interviews on zoom. The Swedish interviews have been in Swedish and the German in English and since the thesis is in English, I have translated the quotes from the Swedish participants to English. I have been careful to translate as corresponding to the original quote as possible. Further, I have transcribed all interviews with a transcribing program. There is always a risk when transferring an oral conversation into a text, since spoken and written language is not the same (Kvale and Brinkmann 2014, p. 196-197).

When doing qualitative interviews, my role as the researcher affects the material, since the material of the research is collected through an interview, held by me. To aim for objectiveness has been criticized by feminist researchers such as Haraway (1998), who argues that the idea about scientific objectivity is rooted in a masculine gender norm that has influenced our way of thinking about objectiveness as something inherently good. Drawing inspiration for Haraway (1998), instead of ignoring that my personal subjectivity has an impact on the research, I will raise awareness to it. For example, I might have misunderstood the activist's points about certain things (Kvale and Brinkmann 2014, p. 90-91). To avoid this, when using the activist's quotes, I have been writing my interpretation of it below. It will hopefully make it easier for the reader to understand how I interpreted their quote and how my subjectiveness has affected the analysis. To further show respect towards the respondents, I have been careful to not take their quotes out of context (Kvale and Brinkmann 2014, p. 223, 224). To prevent this from happening, I have rather used bigger parts of text than smaller.

## Frame analysis

To analyze the interviews, this research use frame analysis. It is an analytical method quite similar to discourse analysis, but more focused. Della Porta (2014, p. 198) argues that frame analysis can be seen as a “*focused sub-variant of discourse analysis*”. The frame analysis is commonly used when studying social movements since it is a helpful method to get an overview of the social movements goals and ideas, and how these are collectively constructed within the movement. Frame analysis is built upon a social constructionist perspective. According to social constructivism, societal norms and structures construct our reality and worldviews. So, as norms change, our reality does as well (Alvesson & Sköldbberg 2017, p. 39-45). Therefore, the frame analysis does not study the social movements as a static group but rather as a group constantly reconstructing ideas, ideologies and meanings (Della Porta 2014 p. 198 & Benford & Snow 2000, p. 611, 612).

Frame analysis has 3 different methods of framing a social movement, which makes it easier to get a clear overview of the bigger picture of collective action used. The first one is diagnostic framing, which is about identifying the conflict or “problem” the movement is built upon, for example the problem climate change. Secondly, prognostic framing, is about identifying the proposed solution to solve the agreed conflict or problem, for example to have zero net emissions. Lastly, motivational framing, is about the motivation behind the participation, for example someone's motivation may be “if not me then who”. The diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing can give an overview of the outcome of the mobilization and collective action, as well as individual participants' own thoughts and interpretations (Della Porta 2014, p. 206-207 & Benford & Snow 2000 p. 615).

In my research, I chose to only use diagnostic and prognostic framing and not motivational. The aim for this study is focused on understanding the climate activists' framing of the problem and the solution to the energy crisis, rather than their motivation behind it. Since this research is focused around the understanding on how the climate activists' frame the different conflicts that has been brought up during the energy crisis, the motivational framing would rather analyze something else. Even though the motivational framing may be interesting to get a deeper understanding of the activists' own reasoning behind their activism, it fits better for another type of research.

## Results

This section will present the result from the interviews. Frame analysis is helpful since it provides a clear overview of the activist's own framing of the problem and solutions of the energy crisis. The frame analysis can therefore be helpful when mapping out similarities, differences, and the general understanding of the crisis between the activists'. The results will be divided into two sections. The first one will be the diagnostic frame, which is about the activists' own perception of the problem and cause of the energy crisis. The second part will be the prognostic framing, which is about the activist's proposed solution to the problem of the energy crisis.

Since it is a comparative study, the Swedish and German activist's answers will be mapped out in comparison to each other, in both sections. The activists' own answers will also be analysed in relation to the bigger societies' understanding of the crisis. To analyse the activists' answers in comparison to the bigger society can be helpful to understand the activists' answers in relation to something else. However, the material about the bigger society is collected through the interviews with the activists'. It is therefore of importance to remember that the perspective of the bigger society is in the eyes of the activists'. The activist views about the bigger society will be presented in relation to research about EU, Sweden and Germanys energy systems, as presented earlier in the background. The comparative analysis will give an insight to the individual activist's perception, as well as their experiences in relation to the context they live in.

### Diagnostic framing

In this section, the diagnostic framing will be presented, the climate activists' thoughts about the problem with the energy crisis and what caused it. I identified 3 main topics, the first one is about the severity of the crisis, the second one is the de-politization of the energy question and the last one about war.

#### Severity of the crisis

By listening to respondents from Germany and Sweden, it's clear that the energy crisis is more severe in Germany than in Sweden, which affects the activists' own understanding and perception, as well as the general discussion in the countries. One German activist said:

*"I mean for us it's really about saving energy, its harshly said but we have to save the country and we can't survive if we spend as much energy as we did previous to this"*

Respondent 2

The German activist explains the seriousness of the crisis and how the lack of energy is so prominent that if not saving energy, they risk a blackout, which could be a potential threat to the country's safety. According to Szulecki et al. (2016) Germany was one of the EU countries most dependent on Russian gas, which can explain why the crisis hit harder in Germany than in Sweden. The difference in the severity can affect to what extent the activists' consider the crisis as an ongoing problem. In the quote, the German activist explain the crisis as a potential threat towards the country. In comparison to the Swedish activist's, they have not described the energy crisis as such radical happening, even though it is still affecting. At the same time, the Swedish position of being an energy exporter with more access to energy comes with other challenges. One of the Swedish activists' said:

*“I think that Sweden is one of the countries that are worse at using energy efficiently since it has been cheap with energy for such a long time in Sweden”*

respondent 8

The Swedish activist explain how Sweden has not historically been forced to deal with high energy prices, which they argue has made the Swedish citizens bad at energy efficiency. Both of the countries have an energy crisis, but the national context and energy situation affects the severity and the potential challenges it comes with. According to Mitchell (2009, p. 400) countries depending on fossil fuels tend to be more vulnerable for safety risks, which can explain why the energy crisis hit hard in Germany and why they now risk a safety risk, in form of an energy blackout. The national energy situation in the countries can affect the activists’ interpretation of how severe the “problem” is which may affect the way that the German compared to the Swedish activists’ speaks about the crisis and the cause behind it.

### **The (de)politization of the energy question**

Energy is often viewed as a technological, complex topic (Laird 1990 p. 49). But now, with the energy crisis, its noticeable that the lack of energy influence the whole society. When energy has impact on household’s economy and important infrastructures, it is hard to only view energy as something technological. With the crisis, energy has suddenly become viewed as a question intertwined with social and economic aspects of the society. However, during the interviews, almost all the participants, both Swedish and German, apologized for “not knowing enough” about energy, except from one of the Swedish participants who worked with energy. The de-politization of the energy question can explain why it is common to have the feeling of “not knowing enough” about energy (Wilson 2014, p. 16). But despite this, the activists’ agreed on that energy is an important topic. One of the German activists’ said:

*“I have always ignored the debate about energy transition because i am not interested in Energy, I’m like more interested in like questions around justice and social issues or whatever. For me, energy was for a long time just something I wanted to be done in a “climate centered approach” and promoting scientists to the thinking about how we do it. You know, also as an activist that’s not my job that’s other people that are much more educated on the field job. But now, that it has become an issue, I’m looking into it more because it has these social aspects and suddenly it’s like a social issue”.*

Respondent 2

The activist describes how they regarded energy as uninteresting, since they viewed it as too scientific. This essay interprets the activists’ former view on energy as de-politized. But now, with the energy crisis, they have started to understand that energy is a social issue, which they argue makes it more interesting. When a question is de-politized, its often discussed in a technocratic manner, as if only experts were allowed to express or have opinions about it (Wilson 2014, p. 16). The question about energy is known for being de-politized (Moor et al., 2021, p. 313 & Laird 1990, p. 49). As the activists’ said, now with the energy crisis, when energy has become closely linked to the question social and economic questions, the question about energy has become politized. The Swedish activist who worked with energy commented that energy has become more politized since the energy crisis started. The Swedish activist said:

*“I think that it is sad that there have been a lot of untruths in the media about energy, that it is blamed on the outphase of nuclear energy and a bit like that. Since I have been working with energy questions, I know that energy actually has been very cheap in Sweden, and of*

*course, now it is extreme, but we have actually been wasting a lot of energy, and that perspective has not been highlighted at all, which is sad since we actually have a surplus of energy in Sweden.”*

Respondent 6

The activist explained that even though the energy question started to be discussed in a more political way, the discussion has been based on unscientific assumptions. So, according to this activist's view, the politization of the energy question has not been done in a positive way. The activists' argue that the politicians are using false facts for their arguments, which creates a contradiction, where expert knowledge is used to legitimize a standpoint rather than as an existing, neutral fact. Wilson (2014, p. 178) argues that the climate movement could benefit from de-politization since the democratic process slows down the preventions of climate change. Since climate change has the experts and scientists behind it, the de-politization may not even be regarded as bad for the climate activists'. The politization of the energy question has not been beneficial for the climate issue. The activists' argue that today's more politized discussion about energy have disregarded science. Overlooking science also often means that the climate perspective is neglected which could explain why the activists' may be disappointed at the politization of the energy question.

### **The war**

The question of politization is also connected to the invasion of Ukraine. To no longer import Russian gas has been a way for Europe to take distance politically from Russia. It could be argued that the question of energy has become even more politized because of the war. The effects of the invasion of Ukraine has a strong link to the energy crisis since the decision to no longer import Russian gas came as a result of the war and is the reason why the energy prices rose so drastically in Europe (Crew 2022). I did not have a question in the interview-guide about the war, but still, all of the German participants mentioned it as an essential factor while the Swedish participants almost did not talk about it. One of the German participants said:

*“There is also a social aspect (to the crisis), it is not only environmental reasons why I am saving energy, because in a way my heater is also connected to the war in Ukraine. So yeah, I think that is something that also motivates a lot of people to keep their energy habits levels low”*

Respondent 1

The German activist is explaining how they save energy to show solidarity with the Ukraine, since the ongoing energy crisis is directly linked to Russia. Since Germany was more dependent on Russian gas (Solera Urena 2015, p. 54) the consequences of the war are more present which may explain why the war plays a more prominent role in the German discussion about the energy crisis than in Sweden. It can also explain why the German activists' more directly spoke about the invasion of Ukraine as a question connected to energy. In Sweden, most of the participants barely mentioned the war, but some did shortly. One Swedish activist talked about the war and said:

*“I would say that I was surprised about that the war happened, that Russia chose to invade Ukraine all of a sudden and then everything did feel very unsafe and like, what is going to happen now, and with the sanctions and everything the electricity became more expensive and stuff”*

## Respondent 9

The Swedish activist explains how the invasion of Ukraine came as a surprise and how it affected both the feeling of safety and the energy price. The German activists' did not only talk about how the war affected their energy consumption, but also the other way around, how their individual consumption affects the war, while the Swedish activists' did not mention Sweden's influence on Russia. In Sweden, the invasion of Ukraine was spoken more about as a separate crisis related to safety rather than energy. Germany's dependence of Russian gas was built up with the aim to influence Russia democratically through an interdependent relationship (Solera Urena 2015, p. 54). But both Mitchell (2009) and Huber (2011) argues that a fossil fuel dependence leads to the opposite of democratization. Mitchell (2009) further argues that countries that base their whole societies structure on fossil fuel dependency, tend to be less democratic, since they must take undemocratic producing states in regard when making decisions. Now, when Germany took the decision to no longer import gas, it had devastating effects for the country. Since Germany's energy system is intertwined with energy dependence of an undemocratic state may explain German energy question may naturally be more closely related to social questions, such as showing solidarity towards Ukraine (Solera Urena 2015, p. 54). The aim to influence Russia democratically through an energy deal, together with a more extensive dependence on Russian gas, could explain why the invasion of Ukraine was more embedded in the energy crisis for the German activists' than the Swedish (Mitchell 2009).

Almost all of the German activist's mentioned that they do agree with the idea that the war has a big role in the energy crisis and the high price of electricity. But, at the same time, they also argue that other factors have provoked the energy crisis, but that they have been ignored, such as the dependency on fossil fuels. One German activist said:

*"Like of course it's unfortunate since it is related to the war in Ukraine, but you cannot just like blame it all on that, because now we are also realizing how dependent we are on other countries and things like fossil fuels, there is so much burning of fossil fuels".*

Respondent 2

The German activists' argued that fossil fuel dependency is connected to war and conflict in general. The activists' view is in line with Brand and Wissen's (2021) idea that our whole way of living in the global north supports undemocratic states, such as Russia. So, the activists' argue that case with Russia is not an "unfortunate" happening, but a consequence coming from fossil fuel dependency. But, not all of the German activities agreed with each other. When I asked a question to one of the German activists' about the reason behind the energy crisis, the activist said:

*"Well, that depends on what people say is the real crisis, I would say what makes it a crisis is the situation the German government has created by cutting down solar power for the last 10 years."*

Respondent 5

The activist argued that the crisis has been portrayed as only related to the war and argued that the real problem was that Germany had been rejecting new renewable energy from being built. The idea of what role the war plays is therefore not completely the same for all of the activists'.

Generally, most of the German participants agreed that the war was a causing factor, but not the only factor, in opposition to the society, that sometimes makes it seem like the only factor. The activists' thoughts can be understood by "fossil fuel economy", which is based upon the idea that economic growth is based on increased consumption of fossil fuels (Malm 2013, p. 17). The term fossil fuel economy could explain why the activists' do not regard the war as the only factor to the energy crisis, but as a consequence of fossil fuel dependency. Therefore, the activists' diagnostic framing of the crisis could be described as the country's fossil fuel dependency rather than the war itself. In Sweden, even though the activists' did not talk so much about the Russian invasion of Ukraine, they did talk about war in general in relation to fossil fuels. One Swedish activist said:

*"I would have hoped for more understanding about the climate, more understanding of how bad it actually is with fossil fuels and who is in the hands of those resources and what other effects they have than just environmental. It is dictators that have these energy resources that makes a lot of money on them. Fossil fuels can maintain war and suppression, so from a democratic point of view I hope for more understanding about fossil fuel dependence and the whole system around it."*

Respondent 6

The Swedish activist explained how they consider fossil fuels dependency as interconnected with war and conflict and the extraction of those resources maintains war and suppression. In the eyes of the activists', both Swedish and German, fossil fuels do not only contribute to climate damages, but is also connected to war and an unjust world order. The activist's thoughts can be explained by Brand and Wissens (2021) idea about that our modern day of life and our dependence on fossil fuels, contributes to war and conflicts. Therefore, the bigger society may argue that the energy crisis is a consequence of the war, while the activists' argue that fossil fuels dependency contributes to conflict, which has resulted in today's energy crisis.

To sum up the diagnostic framing, the activists' thoughts about the problem of energy crisis is different in Germany and Sweden, mainly because of the different severity of the crisis, since Germany was more dependent on Russian gas than Sweden. Both the Swedish and German activists' had similar views on energy as a technological topic but that the energy crisis has made it more politicized. In comparison to the bigger society, the activists' argue that fossil fuel dependency is the causing factor for the crisis, while the society has portrayed the war as the main cause.

## Prognostic framing

In this section the prognostic framing will be presented, the climate activists' thoughts about possible solutions to the energy crisis. In the interviews, I identified four main proposed solutions, one is about energy consumption, the second about challenging capitalism, the third about nuclear energy and the last about renewable energy.

### **Energy consumption**

The demand for energy is higher than ever and the modern European day of life is fully dependent on access to electricity (Brand & Wissen 2021, p. 114). During the energy crisis people in both Germany and in Sweden have been encouraged to save energy. Since the energy

crisis have been more severe in Germany compared to Sweden, their energy saving has been an essential solution to prevent from an energy blackout. One German activists' said:

*“Our government had made a big thing out of the this (the energy crisis) and has gone out with like that everyone should save energy. Even our chancellor has made like a whole talk about it and it is very clear that everyone is supposed to save electricity and gas”*

Respondent 3

The activist describes how the German government has been promoting saving energy as a solution to the energy crisis. In Sweden on the other hand, the climate activists' have expressed a disappointed towards the government since the climate activist argue that they have not been promoting saving energy enough. One Swedish activist said:

*”There has not really been any talk about saving, I have seen a little bit, like some municipalities going out with some tips on how to save. But there has not been any discussion at all about how we should prioritize our energy consumption, like, how much can we produce and what we want to put that energy into. We need to start to discuss what to de-prioritize when it comes to energy consumption, and that thought today is quite radical, to cut down on our energy consumption. But I am pretty sure to save energy has a big support from science. But yeah, that was a discussion that didn't exists at all in the media. And the only motivation behind the tips about saving energy has been for individual people to save money”.*

Participant 8

The activist describes how there has almost not been a debate about saving energy and especially not about how to prioritize the energy consumption according to the given resources. In all interviews, it was clear that the German government had been talking about energy saving as an essential solution, while the Swedish government had not. As argued earlier, why the Swedish government had not been talking as much about saving energy as Germany could be explained by their substantial access to renewable energy (Energimyndigheten 2022). But the German activists' argued that even though people had saved energy, it had been done for the wrong reason. One German activist said:

*“I mean, I think that people try to save energy right now because like “OK it's the crisis now and we need to save money and be warm in winter” and yeah, in one way I get it, but then nobody thinks about climate. Ok, I mean, people save, but we also need to change the way we consume and that's not the focus”*

Participants 2

The activist describes how people started saving more energy now in the crisis, but because of the “wrong reasons”. The activist explains how people save energy but not because of the climate, but to save money. Since the upgoing energy prices mostly affects low-income households or people living on a short budget, the energy crisis became a question about class, since people are forced to save energy to survive. Huber (2022) argues that the climate movement must include more of the class dimension into. If having the working-class support, the climate movement would get the support needed to prevent climate change. Since saving energy has a positive impact on the climate, the fact that the energy question has become a class

question could be regarded as an example of what Huber (2022) promotes as a solution. However, the activist's does not regard "saving energy to save money" as something positive, since they argue that it has made the climate perspective left out. Listening to the interviews, the activists' understand that the energy crisis is interconnected with the question about class. But none of them have mentioned on how to make the connection on how climate change and class struggle more explicit. Since the energy crisis is closely related to both class and climate, it could be seen as an opportunity for the climate movement to include Huber's (2022) idea. But, the interviews are showing on an absence in the explicit connection on how climate change affects the class struggle.

### **Challenging capitalism**

The climate activists' argue that consuming less is not the only solution to the energy crisis, they also argue for the need to start criticizing constant growth, since the capitalist model does not work in combination with a sustainable society. I asked one of the German participants about how what they would do to handle the energy crisis and the German activist said:

*"I would focus more on the ones really in need and then like on a systematic change of energy use. I think we need like completely a change in consumerists habits and in the whole way we live. Like right now, we just need that much energy but like the whole social justice thing, I mean, there has not been any discussion in Germany about consumerism or economic growth, I mean, there has not been anything about that we need to save more energy in general, nobody is discussing the economic system you know."*

Participant 3

The activist explains that they would handle the energy crisis by focusing on a systematic economical change, moving away from today's consumerist habits and the capitalistic structure. The Swedish activists' had similar standpoints and one Swedish activist said:

*"Economic growth is dependent on like all the time producing, consuming and buying more and the idea for those things to all the time increase does not really feel like they go hand in hand with a planet that has finite resources"*

Respondent 9

The activist explains how increased economic growth is dependent on increased consumption of resources, which they argue does not work in combination with sustainability. Both activists' views can be understood by the term fossil fuel economy, which argues that increased economic growth is dependent on an increased consumption of fossil fuels (Malm 2013, p. 17). Since our whole economic system is based on and expanded extraction of fossil fuels, when the crisis ends, we will continue with unsustainable consumerist habits. Therefore, as both the activist and Malm (2013) argues, to prevent climate change in the long term, both Sweden and Germany, will have to change their whole economic systems. The German participants, as well as some of the Swedish, also mentioned disappointment towards the imports of new fossil fuels. One of the German activists' said:

*"I think it it's really good that we don't buy gas from Russia anymore because Putin is definitely not a good guy to do business with, but I just think that other countries also are doing bad thing, and just because they are not attacking Europe it does not mean that they are not bad. I mean, it is kind of Eurocentric to be like,"oh well that's not a problem since we*

*don't see what bad things they do", now, we are getting oil from Qatar, which is at least as awful place as Russia"*

Respondent 4

The activist explains how they are disappointed that Germany started to import fossil fuels from other undemocratic countries. The activist argues that it is a Eurocentric decision since the new importing countries are contributing to conflicts as well, just not conflicts located in Europe. The activist thoughts can be explained by Brand & Wissen (2021, p. 45) who argues that in the global north, we consume resources such as fossil fuels, unconsciously as if they were a natural gift without considering where the resources come from or what inequalities they contribute to. Drawing from Brand & Wissen (2021) it can be understood why the activists' argues that it is unethical to move a fossil fuels dependency from one country to another. In this way, instead of trying to change the way our economy works, the focus has been on finding alternative energy sources. The focus has not only been on how to find new fossil fuels, but also nuclear energy.

### **Nuclear energy as a solution**

The energy crisis has triggered the debate about nuclear energy as a possible solution to the energy crisis, in both Sweden and Germany. However, since the nuclear debate has been a prominent debate in Germany for quite long, the difference from before and during the energy crisis hasn't been that big. In Sweden on the other hand, the nuclear debate has gotten an upswing during the energy crisis (SVT 2022). One Swedish activist said:

*"I think it is sad that it has been a weird debate where the politicians are blaming the energy crisis on the out phase of nuclear energy and stuff like that, since it is not true. The electricity prices are high, but not because of nuclear energy, but because of totally different factors in Europe, that our whole energy system is connected to the European energy market."*

Respondent 1

The activist describes how they are disappointed that politicians have portrayed nuclear energy as the solution to the energy crisis and the phase out of them as the reason for the high prices. The activist is arguing that the high prices are because of other reasons, such as being a part of a shared European energy market. According to the German activists', they had also been having a nuclear debate. One of the German activists' said:

*"Yeah, there has been a big history in Germany against nuclear power stations and that's why we always had a big discussion about nuclear, and now, it's kind of already decided to stop using it, but just that we will use the 3 power stations we have left a little longer, but we won't build new ones"*

Respondent 3

The German activist describes how there has always been a discussion about nuclear energy in Germany and therefor, the energy crisis has not really changed the debate. In Germany, the anti-nuclear debate has been a big topic for a long time and has been a question acknowledged from the whole society and not only climate activists' (Brand and Wissen 2022, p. 14). In Sweden, since the green party has been one of the main actors driving the anti-nuclear question, the anti-nuclear stand may also be more associated with left-winged politics (Cassegård, 2017, p. 195). All the Swedish participants commented on the nuclear debate and one argued that the

discussion about nuclear energy had started to overshadow other questions. One Swedish climate activist said:

*“Now, during the election there was almost no talk at all about environment or climate, but only about energy. The only environmental question they talked about was if nuclear energy is climate friendly or not, if it can even be considered as an environmental question at all. But actually, they don’t care about climate politics at all”*.

Respondent 7

The activist describes how the nuclear question has overshadowed the question about climate. The activist adds that when it’s been discussion about climate, it has only been a discussion about whether nuclear energy is climate-friendly or not. Even though climate politics is integrated in the Swedish political landscape, Cassegård (2017, p. 209, 210) argues that climate activists’ have been critical to this fact, since they argue that politicians portray unsustainable solution as climate-friendly, having economic growth in focus rather than climate. The climate activist is describing a disappointment towards the politicians, since they are making a non-climate question take up space as if it was a question about climate, as Cassegård (2017, p. 209, 210) found in his study. The Swedish activist are in opposition to the politicians, that regard the phase out of nuclear as the solution to the energy crisis and the climate crisis. The Swedish activists’ do not agree with the idea that nuclear energy is the solution to either the energy or climate crisis. Instead, they emphasized renewable energies as a solution.

### **Renewable energy as a solution**

The energy crisis is milder in Sweden compared to Germany, mainly because Sweden has a lot of renewable energy sources based in the country, while Germany is more dependent on imported energy. The climate activists’ all agreed that more renewable energy is the solution to this crisis and what is needed to prevent similar crises from happening again in the future. If Europe had more renewable energy sources, the lack of natural gas would not be as affecting. One German activist said:

*“If we just would switched to renewables sooner, all of this would not be an issue. The fact that we basically just use energy is nothing bad per se, it is just bad how we get it”*

Respondent 2

The activist is saying that the energy crisis would not be an issue if there was more renewable energy. The Swedish are agreeing with the German activists’ point of view and one activist said:

*”In my climate organization, we advocate for that every person should own their own renewable energy production locally. For example, if you have some sun panels on your roof, it can be democratically and socially sustainable since maybe you will go together and buy them with some neighbors, which would make it to a social project and that would make it feel easier.”*

Respondent 8

The activist is describing how they regard locally owned renewable energy as social sustainable, contributing to democracy. All the activists’ agreed that the solution to fossil fuels dependency is renewable energy. According to Cassegård (2017, p. 210) and Brand & Wissen (2021 p. 13,

14) both Sweden and German climate activists' have been one of the main supporters of renewable energy, which may explain why they all agree with each other on the point of renewable energy. According to Mitchell (2009, p. 400) since countries dependent on fossil fuels tend to be less democratic, renewable energy could be seen as a solution to promote democracy. But the activists' also argue that renewable energy can't be seen as the only solution for democracy, but a change in the economic system also is needed. Many of the respondents, especially German, mentioned that renewable energy would help the country to be less dependent on other countries energy resources. One of the German activists' said:

*“I think that it would be good to invest in renewables, that would give us stability because it would make us self-sufficient. It would also be good for people who are against globalization, since it would make us not dependent on all those other countries. I think we should only produce our energy in Germany”*

Respondent 2

The activist describes how they think that investing in renewables energy would be a good solution since it would make Germany more self-sufficient and less dependent on other countries. This argumentation reminds of Huber's (2011, p.32) idea about that countries dependent on fossil fuels tend to be more fragile for economic fluctuations. Germany's energy structure is built upon imports of fossil fuels from other countries which has led to a crisis, just as Huber (2011) explains it. Even though Sweden produces more energy within the country, the Swedish participants all agreed that renewable energy could be a good solution in terms of self-sufficiency. One of the Swedish activist's said:

*“I think we should build more renewable energy, like windmills and solar power, both are more environmental-friendly and can be built very fast. It should be cheaper for people to put up solar power panels in their home, that would support Sweden to become more self-sufficient, but we would also be able to export that energy to the rest of Europe. If we had more renewable energy, we would be able to take down the energy price, not only in Sweden, but in the whole Europe and we would get less dependent on gas and oil from other countries.”*

Respondent 9

The activist describes that renewable energy could be a solution to the energy crisis, more energy from renewables would make the country more self-sufficient at the same time as the surplus could be exported which could minimize the energy prices all over Europe. Brand and Wissen (2021, p.106) argue that globalization is one of the main contributors to a growing production and consumption, especially of fossil fuels. Brand and Wissen critique towards globalization could explain why the thoughts about renewables and self-sufficiency is regarded as more climate-friendly alternative than the globalized market of fossil fuels we have today. When we consume resources imported from elsewhere, we consume a product without knowing what consequences it causes. Fossil fuels is known to be a resource that contributes to conflict, suppression and sometimes even death (Brand and Wissen 2021, p. 184, 185). Therefore, if Europe builds a bigger self-sufficiency based on renewable energy, our energy market would be more democratic, stable, and not built upon globalized consumption that contributes to inequality and conflict.

To sum up the prognostic framing, the activists' propose a change in the consumption as a solution to the energy crisis. Even though the bigger society (or at least the German government), just as the activists', promotes saving energy as a solution, the activist argues that it is not enough and that we need to change the whole economic system to continue saving energy also after the crisis. The Swedish activist argues that the politicians have portrayed nuclear energy as a solution to both the energy and climate crisis, which they do not agree with. The German and Swedish activists' instead argue that renewable energy is the solution to fossil fuel dependency, for the countries to prevent for crises like this one in the future.

## Conclusions

This research aim was to come closer to an understanding of the climate perspective's role in the energy crisis. Further, through frame analysis this research tried to grasp the climate activists' views regarding the cause to the energy crisis and the solution to it. The two research question for this essay is (1) *How do climate activists' from Sweden and Germany perceive the different conflicts regarding energy that has been brought up during the energy crisis?* and (2) *What are the similarities and differences in the perception of the energy crisis in Germany and Sweden?*

In response to the first research question, this study has found that the climate activists' from Sweden and Germany regard it as the climate question has been overlooked in the energy crisis. When researching energy as a question, it is of importance to understand the historical de-politicization of it, which has reduced the question about energy from a political question to a technologic issue, to be handled by experts. As the invasion of Ukraine happened and the energy prices went up, the question of energy became politicized. This study has found a disappointment among the climate activists' in the politicization of the energy question. The climate activists' argue that as the question of energy has become politicized, the perspective of science and climate has been neglected. Climate activists' from Sweden and Germany all agree upon that fossil fuel dependency is the main cause to the energy crisis, in contradiction to the bigger society that regards the ongoing war as the primary cause to the crisis. The climate activists' argue that if the primary cause to the energy crisis is not changed, which they argue is fossil fuel dependency, crises like this will happen again.

To further answer the first research question, the energy crisis has brought up different proposed solutions to the energy crisis. During the energy crisis, the question about saving energy has become of importance. But even though the climate activists' all agree that saving energy is good, they also argue for the need to move away from our economic system based on constant growth, to be able to continue to save resources when the crisis is over. The climate activists' also propose renewable energy as a solution, while the bigger society promotes new types of fossil fuels and nuclear energy. This research has found that the climate activists' had wished for more solutions with a long-term perspective, solution that can prevent future energy crises and reduce climate change.

In response to the second research question, this study has found that the perception of the energy crisis differs for the German compared to the Swedish climate activists'. Since the German energy system was more dependent on the Russian gas than the Swedish, the energy crisis also hit them remarkably harder. This study has found that the German participants spoke about the energy crisis as a more severe happening, affecting a bigger part of their society and life compared to the Swedish ones. The German activists' spoke about the energy crisis as interconnected to the war, while the Swedish activists' spoke about the energy crisis and the war more as two independent happenings. The Swedish activists' also argued that the energy crisis had brought up the nuclear debate, while the German participants had not noticed any difference in the discussion.

In conclusion, this study has found that the climate activist argued that the climate perspective has been past aside during the energy crisis. The climate activists' argue that dismissing long-term climate friendly solution will just lead to more crises, just as this one, in the future. Dismissing the climate perspective, during the energy crisis, may influence the chances of

succeeding with the goals of EGD. However, in the interviews, the activists' own role in bringing the climate issue into the debates on the energy crisis was not discussed. Therefore, future research could investigate deeper on how climate activists' work with re-framing energy issues, for the energy question to be more centered around climate.

## References

- Alvesson, Mats & Sköldböck Kaj. (2017). *Tolkning och reflektion: vetenskapsfilosofi och kvalitativ metod*. Upplaga 3. Lund: Studentlitteratur
- Benford, Robert & Snow, David. (2000). Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (1): 611-639.
- Brand, Ulrich & Wissen Markus. (2021). *The imperial mode of living: Everyday life and the ecological crisis of capitalism*. New York: Verso Books
- Brulle, Robert J. (2013). Institutionalizing delay: foundation funding and the creation of U.S climate change countermovement organizations. *Climate Change* 122(4): 681–694.  
<https://doi-org.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/10.1007/s10584-013-1018-7>
- Cassegård, Carl., Soneryd, Linda., Thom Håkan., Wettergren Åsa. (2017). *Climate action in a globalizing world: Comparative perspectives on environmental movements in the global north*. London: Routledge.
- Crew, Bec. (2022). Solving the energy crisis. *Nature (London)*, 609(7926): 1.
- Della Porta, Donatella. (2014). *Methodological practices in social movement research*. Oxford: Oxford university press.
- Della porta, Donatella & Mario, Diani. (2020). *Social movements: An introduction*. Third edition. New Jersey: Wiley-blackwell.
- ECEEE. (2022). *Energy crisis to push Germany into recession in 2023, warns government*. Accessed 2022/12/30 from <https://www.eceee.org/all-news/news/energy-crisis-to-push-germany-into-recession-in-2023-warns-government/>
- Energimyndigheten. (2022). *Fortsatt hög elproduktion och elexport under 2021*. Accessed 2022/12/30 from <https://www.energimyndigheten.se/nyhetsarkiv/2022/fortsatt-hog-elproduktion-och-ellexport-under-2021/>
- Ergen, Timur & Suckert, Lisa. (2021). “Crises” as catalysts for more sustainable futures? The case of the first oil crisis and the role of multilayered interpretative struggle. *Max Planck institute for the study of societies*: Cologne. 22(2): 15-23.  
[https://econsoc.mpifg.de/43430/04\\_Ergen\\_Suckert-NL\\_22-2\\_March2021.pdf](https://econsoc.mpifg.de/43430/04_Ergen_Suckert-NL_22-2_March2021.pdf)
- Euronews. (2022). *Energy crisis: EU heads to COP27 as countries switch from gas to coal*. Accessed 2022/12/30 from <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/11/03/energy-crisis-eu-heads-to-cop27-as-countries-switch-from-gas-to-coal>
- European Commission. (2022). *EU action to address the energy crisis*. Accessed 2022/12/30 from [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/eu-action-address-energy-crisis\\_en#diversifying-our-supply](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/eu-action-address-energy-crisis_en#diversifying-our-supply)
- European parliament. (2021). *Internal energy market*. Accessed 2022/12/30 from <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/45/internal-energy-market>

- Eurostat. (2022). *Electricity price statistics*. Accessed 2022/12/30 from [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Electricity\\_price\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Electricity_price_statistics)
- Hage, Ghassan. (2009). Hating Israel in the field. *Anthropological theory*, 9(1): 59-79 <https://doi-org.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/10.1177/1463499609103547>
- Haraway, Donna. (1988). Situated knowledge: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist studies*, 14(3): 575-599. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>
- Herbert, Joe. (2021). The socio-ecological imagination: Young environmental activists constructing transformation in an era of crisis. *Area (London 1969)*, 53(2): 373–380. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12704>
- Huber, Matthew T. (2022). *Climate change as class war, Building socialism on a Warming Planet*. London: Verso books.
- Huber, Matthew T. (2011) Oil, Life, and the Fetishism of Geopolitics, *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 22(3), 32-48, DOI: [10.1080/10455752.2011.593883](https://doi.org/10.1080/10455752.2011.593883)
- IPCC. (2022). *Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Cambridge University Press*, 3056 [doi:10.1017/9781009325844](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009325844)
- Kvale, Steinar & Brinkmann, Svend. (2014). *Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun*. Tredje upplagan. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Laird, Frank N. (1990). Technocracy revisited: knowledge, power and the crisis in energy decision making. *Industrial Crisis Quarterly* 4(1): 49-61.
- Malm, Andreas. (2013). The origins of fossil capital: From Water to Steam in the British cotton industry. *Historical materialism: research in critical Marxist theory*, 21(1): 15–68.
- Massetti, Emanuele & Exadaktylos Theofanis. (2022). From Crisis to Crisis: The EU in between the Covid, Energy and Inflation Crisis (and War). *Journal of Common Market Studies* (60): 5-11. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/doi/10.1111/jcms.13435>
- Mitchell, Timothy. (2002). *Rule of Experts Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity Timothy mitchell*. California: University of california press.
- Mitchell, Timothy (2009) Carbon democracy, *Economy and Society*, 38(3): 399-432, DOI: [10.1080/03085140903020598](https://doi.org/10.1080/03085140903020598)
- Moor, de Just, Catney, Philip, & Brian, Doherty. (2021). What hampers 'political' action in environmental alternative action organizations? Exploring the scope for strategic agency under post-political conditions. *Social movement studies*, 20(3): 312–328. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/10.1080/14742837.2019.1708311>
- Norgaard, Marie Kari. (2011). *Living in denial: Climate Change, Emotions, and Everyday life*. London: the MIT press.

Pianta, Mario & Lucchese, Matteo. (2020). Rethinking the European Green Deal. *The Review of radical political economics*, 52(4): 633–641. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/10.1177/0486613420938207>

SCB. (2022). *Stigande elpriser varierar kraftigt i norr och söder*. Accessed 2022/12/30 from <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/redaktionellt/stigande-elpriser-varierar-kraftigt-i-norr-och-soder/>

Schiermeier, Quirin. (2013). Renewable power: Germany's energy gamble. *Nature* 496(7444): 156–158. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/10.1038/496156a>

Solera Urena, Miriam. (2015). Germany's dependence on Russian gas: analysis and contingencies in the current context of crisis in Ukraine. *Comillas Journal of International relations* (4): 57-72. <https://doi.org/10.14422/cir.04.y2015.003>

SVT. (2022) *Energikris ger MP motvind: "Olyckligt att klimatfrågan reduceras till kärnkraften"*. Accessed 2022/12/30 from <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/lokalt/vasternorrland/karnkraften-ger-mp-motvind-eu-parlamentariken-par-holmlund-pa-valbesok-i-harnosand>

Szulecki, Kacper, Fischer, Severin, Gullberg, Anne Therese & Sartor, Oliver. (2016). Shaping the "energy Union": between national and governance innovation in EU energy and climate policy. *Climate Policy*, 16(5): 548-567, DOI: [10.1080/14693062.2015.1135100](https://doi.org/10.1080/14693062.2015.1135100)

Trost, Jan. (2010) *Kvalitativa intervjuer*. 4 uppl. Lund: studentlitteratur.

Wilson, Japhy & Swyngedouw. (2014). *The post-political and its discontents: Spaces of depoliticization, specters of radical politics*. Edinburgh: University press.

# Appendix

## Document 1: Interview guide Sweden

### Introduktion

1. Presentation av mig och studiens syfte
2. Fråga om samtycke för intervjun
3. Fråga om samtycke för inspelning
4. Hur gammal är du?
5. Vill du berätta lite om dig själv, vad gör du om dagarna?

### Miljörörelsen

6. hur skulle du beskriva xxx, vad gör ni som organisation? hur är ni strukturerade? vad är era mål?
7. är du framförallt engagerad på lokal eller nationell nivå, hur skiljer sig dessa plattformar i xxx?
8. När gick du med i xxx? Och varför?
9. Hur skulle du beskriva din roll i xxx nu?
10. Om du tänker tillbaka från när du började att engagera dig i xxx, hur har ditt engagemang/din roll förändrats under tiden?
11. Vad är dina hjärtefrågor/det som du brinner för mest?
12. Om du tänker på den senaste aktiviteten/event/kampanj som du gjorde i xxx, hur såg den ut?
13. Är du engagerat dig i klimatfrågan på något annat sätt, förutom att vara medlem i xxx?

### Energikrisen som stort

14. Hur skulle du beskriva energikrisen med dina egna ord?
15. Hur tycker du att energikrisen har presenterats i media?
16. Vad tänker du om Sveriges hantering av energikrisen?
17. Vad tänker du om Europas hantering av energikrisen? Finns det något land som du tycker har hanterat det bättre, sämre etc?
18. Vad är xxx tankar om energikrisen? Håller du med?
19. Vad är dina tankar om energikrisen?
20. Är du förvånad över energikrisen och de höga elpriserna?
21. Om du hade fått bestämma, hur hade du hanterat energikrisen?

### Energikrisen i relation till rörelsen

22. I debatten om energikrisen, vilken roll har klimatfrågan fått?
23. Hur upplever du att folk ser på klimatrörelsen i relation till energikrisen?
24. Om du tänker tillbaka innan energikrisen, hur såg folk på klimatrörelsen/klimatsmart energipolitik då?
25. Hur upplever du att folk ser på klimatsmart energipolitik nu, alltså efter energikrisen? Upplever du någon skillnad?
26. Isåfall, varför tror du att det är så?
27. Hur hade du hoppats att energikrisen påverkade klimatpolitiken?

### **Organisationen och energikrisen**

28. Vad tror du, har energikrisen gjort att ni fått mer medlemmar, eller färre?
29. Hur är ert interna samtal om energikrisen inom organisationen? Håller ni med varandra?

### **Framtid**

30. Vad ser du som den största utmaningen när det kommer till hanteringen av energikrisen?
31. Tror du att energikrisen, eller liknande kriser, kan ha en positiv effekt?
32. Tror du att miljörelaterade kriser, såsom energikrisen, har en positiv eller negativ inverkan på folks relation till klimatfrågor? Jag menar alltså, tror du att kriser gör att folk tycker att klimatfrågan är viktigare eller kanske tvärtom?
33. Tror du att kriser, så som denna, kommer att få fler folk att engagera sig i klimatfrågor?

### **Slut**

34. Det var faktiskt alla frågor som jag hade, så stort tack för att du ville vara med på intervjun! Är det något som du skulle vilja tillägga som du känner att du inte fått sagt?
35. Innan vi avslutar, har du några frågor till mig eller projektet?

## Document 2: Interview guide Germany

### Introduction

1. Presentation about me and the aim with the study
2. Consent about interview
3. Consent about recording the interview
4. How old are you?
5. Who are you? How are you spending your days?

### The green movement

6. How would you describe xxx? What are you doing as an organization? How are you structured? What are your goals?
7. Are you engaged on a local level or national? How different are these platforms on xxx?
8. When did you join xxx? And why?
9. How would you describe your role in xxx?
10. If you think back when you first started to get active in xxx, how has your role changed?
11. What are your most important questions?
12. Have you always been caring about questions about climate change or is this something that started from a certain starting point?
13. If you think about the last activity/campaigns that you did, what was it?
14. Are you engaged in the climate question in any other way, except from being a member in xxx?

### Energy crisis as big

15. How would you describe the energy crisis in Germany in your own words?
16. How do you think that the energy crisis has been presented in the media?
17. How do you think that the energy crisis has been handled in Germany?
18. What do you think about Europe's role in the crisis? Is there any country that has been handling it better, worse etc?
19. Has xxx said anything about the energy crisis? Do you agree?
20. What are your thoughts about the energy crisis?
21. Are you surprised by the energy crisis and the high electricity prices?
22. If you could decide, how would you handle the crisis?

### Energy crisis in relation to the movement

23. In the debate about the energy crisis, what role did the climate perspective get?
24. How do you think that people perceive the climate movement in relation to the energy crisis?
25. If you think back before the energy crisis, how did people perceive the climate movement/renewable energy then? Has it changed since then?
26. How do people perceive renewable energy now?
27. If so, why do you think it is this way?
28. How would you hope that the energy crisis would affect climate politics?

### **Organization and energy crisis**

29. Do you think that the energy crisis has made more people join xxx?
30. How is your internal talk about the energy crisis within the organization? Do you agree with each other?

### **The future**

31. What do you think is the biggest challenge when it comes to handling the energy crisis?
32. Do you think that energy crises, or a similar crisis like this one, can have a positive effect?
33. Do you think that energy crises can have a positive effect in relation to people's perception of environmental questions?
34. Do you think that crises, like this one, can make people more engaged in climate questions?

### **End**

35. That was actually all of the questions I had! Is there something that you would like to add? Or maybe something that you did not have the chance to say?
36. Before we say goodbye, do you have any questions for me or for the project?