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Coronavirus, Risk, and Responsibility

A Governmental Analysis of Swedish Crisis Management

During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The purpose of my thesis is to examine how risk is perceived and mitigated by the Swedish state in connection to the covid-19 pandemic. This is done by conducting a deductive qualitative content analysis. The material of the study is the transcriptions of nine press conferences held by the government in order to communicate strategy, recommendations, restrictions, and general updates to the crisis-situation of covid-19 in Sweden. By utilizing the theory of governmentality, as developed by Michel Foucault, several governmental techniques, rationalities and identifications are deciphered and analyzed in order to understand how governing is made possible during a time of crisis. The study is guided by the research question: *How is risk being understood and mitigated by the Swedish state in connection to the covid-19 pandemic?*

The analysis finds that in the Swedish response risk perception follows the governmental rationality of non-exceptionalism and governmental techniques connect the notion of responsibility to the risks associated with the pandemic. Finally, it is concluded that the mitigation of risk is made in line with the three principles of Swedish crisis management (responsibility, similarity, subsidiarity), wherein the governmental rationality of maintaining order is sought through a process of normalizing. Risk is therefore perceived and mitigated in the least exceptional way possible to maintain the practices that produce and make up the welfare of the population.

Keywords: Covid-19, coronavirus, Michel Foucault (1926–1984), governmentality, risk, biopower, responsabilization, Sweden, crises, human rights

Abstract

Syftet med min uppsats är att undersöka hur risk hanteras och tolkas av Sveriges regering i samband med covid-19-pandemin. Detta görs genom att med en deduktiv ansats utföra en kvalitativ innehållsanalys. Materialet som har valts för studiens syfte består av nio transkriptioner av regeringens presskonferenser som hölls i samband med krishantering av covid-19, dessa pressträffar syftar till att kommunicera gällande rekommendationer, restriktioner, samt uppdatera kring situation i stort. Genom att bruka Michel Foucaults teori om governmentaltitet kommer flera governmentala tekniker, rationaliteter och identiteter att påvisas och sedermera analyseras. Detta för att skapa en förståelse för hur styrning görs möjligt under en kris. Studien ämnar besvara frågeställningen: *Hur förstås och hanteras risk av Sveriges regering i samband med covid-19-pandemin?*

Analysen visar att risk inom den svenska krishantering förstås genom en governmental rationalitet som något icke-exceptionellt. Governmentala tekniker kopplar samman individuellt ansvar med risker i pandemin. Slutsatsen blir att hanteringen av risk görs i linje med Sveriges tre krishanteringsprinciper (ansvar, likhet, närhet), där governmentaltitetsrationaliteten att upprätthålla ordning eftersträvas genom en process av att normalisera. Risk förstås och hanteras genom icke-exceptionella medel för att upprätthålla det som producerar och skapar välfärd hos befolkningen.

Nyckelord: Covid-19, coronavirus, Michel Foucault (1926–1984), governmentaltitet, risk, biomakt, ansvarsskapande, Sverige, kriser, mänskliga rättigheter

Glossary

Swedish government agencies:

Folkhälsomyndigheten (FHM) - Public Health Agency of Sweden

Myndigheten för samhällsskydd och beredskap (MSB) - The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency

Regeringskansliet - Government Offices of Sweden

Socialstyrelsen - National Board of Health and Welfare

Utrikesdepartementet (UD) - State department

Swedish government officials:

Johan Carlson - Director-general of the Public Health Agency

Mikael Damberg - Minister of Home Affairs

Dan Eliasson - Director-general of The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency

Lena Hallengren - Minister of Health and Social Affairs

Morgan Johansson - Minister of Justice and Migration

Stefan Löfven - Prime Minister

Isabella Lövin - Vice Prime Minister and Minister for the Environment

Olivia Wigzell - Director-general of the National Board of Health and Welfare

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1. Introduction

No one could predict what the year 2020 would have in store for the world when the news that a new coronavirus had been detected in China at the end of 2019. SARS-CoV-2 (covid-19) is believed to have transferred from an animal to a human and which then spread from human to human.¹ The experience now shared by all of living in a world where all aspects of life have been usurped by the threat of an infectious disease is something truly unique in modern times. Comparison to premodern events of massive outbreaks like the Black Death or the Bubonic Plague associated with the infamous plague masks characterized by their long beaks comes to mind. It might be strange to compare massive outbreaks in premodern societies to that of today. Today, for one thing, we know a lot more about the nature of infectious disease, viruses, and bacteria. Modern medicinal knowledge has surpassed the notion of miasma or the belief that epidemics are a sort of divine punishment. However, even if our knowledge about disease has come a long way, the experience with covid-19 still has striking similarities with the past. For Michel Foucault the experience of plague is seen as a crucial moment in the development of new techniques of power and ways of thinking about the social world. Much like now, a plague 300-400 years ago compelled city and state authorities to administer exceptional measures in the effort to mitigate the disease.²

These regulations involved separating specific spaces, and even entire regions and towns infested with a plague, and regulations on when people can go outside, how, and at what times. Together with instructions on what they must do at home, what type of food they must have, prohibiting certain types of contact, requiring them to present themselves to inspectors, and to open their homes for inspection.³ Quarantine of the home, the city, and the nation during plague necessitated assessments of issues concerning state power, individual liberty and medical

¹ Folkhälsomyndigheten, Folkhälsomyndigheten.se, Frågor och svar om covid-19 (coronavirus).

² See Foucault, Michel, *Security, territory, population: lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978*, Senellart, Michel. & Davidson, Arnold Ira, (trans. and eds.), Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2007.

³ Ibid, p. 10.

knowledge and awareness.⁴ Accepting the existence of an epidemic, that is disease as something more than illness inflicted upon individual bodies, implies and in a sense demands the creation of a framework capable of managing its dismaying arbitrariness.⁵ Plague for Foucault was the moment that brought forth the articulation of new forms of power. Whereas the leper was shunned and excluded from society as pariah, being something dangerous and unknowable, the plague victim was something else that was to be controlled and rendered calculable through the new formations of administrative power.⁶ On the 11th of March 2020 the spread of covid-19 was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO).⁷ This does not mean that the virus itself had changed but WHO effectively changed the social construction of the virus as it entered a pandemic discourse.

1.1 Purpose and statement of issue

The full scope of the ramifications of covid-19 is yet unknown as the situation is still evolving. It is no understatement that covid-19 has had an unprecedented impact on the world and there will undoubtedly come a plethora of academic papers looking into all imaginable aspects of the pandemic. Different countries employ different strategies, tactics and reasoning in how they deal with the threat of the disease and how to best mitigate or even stop it. The fact that there is no single unified response as to how to deal with a crisis like the present one points to a lack of experience. Key global health scholars have observed that the landmark global health initiatives generally, but also with regards to epidemic outbreaks specifically (like the international response to HIV/AIDS of the 2000s) have been narrowly focused, short term, and unsustainable.⁸ With the obvious exception of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, most deadly disease outbreaks have been limited to the Global South. As such, epidemics are mainly thought of as a problem of the

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Rosenberg, Charles, *Explaining Epidemics and Other Studies in the History of Medicine*, Cambridge University Press, 1992. p. 282.

⁶ Mckinlay, Alan, "Foucault, plague, Defoe", *Culture and Organization*, Vol. 15, No. 2, June 2009, pp. 168–169.

⁷ Krisinformation.se, WHO: Spridningen av covid-19 är en pandemi.

⁸ Brown, Tim, Craddock, Susan & Ingram, Alan, Critical interventions in Global Health : Governmentality, Risk, and Assemblage, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 102, no. 5, 2012, p. 1184.

periphery that the West deals with sporadically, and not as a global concern.⁹ With regards to the unprecedented scale of the covid-19 pandemic, experiences from earlier disease epidemics are inadequate for providing guidance from a global point of view. As such there is much to learn and take into consideration from this new experience. And as there is no way to know for certain that a similar thing will not happen again nor even when the current crisis will end, lessons must be learned whilst doing, so to speak.

Beyond a total death toll, it is worth remembering the potential costs of isolation, unemployment and human rights infringement that might follow, during and after the pandemic. With regards to human rights violations and states' obligation to protect their people it is worthwhile to remember the types of non-infectious epidemics that at a population level are far more deadly than any influenza. Examples include obesity, starvation, consumption of tobacco, and curable or preventable diseases among poorer populations.¹⁰ Health and security agenda to a large degree ignores the boring, communicable and non-communicable diseases that in fact kill more people annually than war, terror or high-profile disease. Yet this is generally not seen as something requiring exceptional interventions.¹¹

Actions taken to control an infectious disease epidemic, such as separating spaces, registering cases of the sick and when people are declared healthy, are disciplinary practices to a set of given conditions. The strategies and disciplinary procedures that states utilize in response to the pandemic will produce new forms of knowledge that in turn give structure to what constitutes a problem and what corresponding interventions are possible to implement, both during and after the current pandemic.¹² Just as Foucault claims that medical jurisdiction was expanded via the management of epidemics in the past, covid-19 could have a lasting impact on society, politics and human rights by changing the conditions of our milieu. Since plague has been a formative,

⁹ Ingram, Alan, "Biosecurity and the international response to HIV/AIDS: governmentality, globalisation and security", *Area*, Vol. 42, no. 3, 2010, p. 299.

¹⁰ Enemark, Christian, "Biosecurity and the Risk to Global Health", in *The Oxford Handbook of Global Health Politics*, Ed. McInnes, Colin, Lee, Kelley and Youde, Jeremy, Jan, 2018, pp. 9-12.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Supra* note, 2.

necessary experience that has given rise to new disciplinary projects, it is clearly imaginable that we will see a rise of new apparatuses for intervention and control.¹³

In Sweden covid-19 was declared a threat to society and health (*allmänfarlig och samhällsfarlig sjukdom*) on the 1st of February, alongside ebola, SARS and smallpox.¹⁴ Sweden has become known within the international press for being one of few countries that have not resorted to utilizing things such as extensive quarantine measures, curfews, school shutdowns, etc. Media speaks about a new form of Swedish exceptionalism, as Sweden's approach to the virus is described as vastly different from that of its Scandinavian neighbors and the rest of Europe.¹⁵ The difference in the approaches and tactics taken by states in connection to the threat of the pandemic could be related to various interpretations of risk. The notion of risk-taking refers here to a positive and a negative side as a weighing up of gains and losses. The perception of risk is not merely an objective consideration of facts, but instead what is considered *risky* is dependent on things like knowledge and sociocultural values.¹⁶ As Sweden arguably stands in stark contrast to other states in the midst of the pandemic I am interested as to why and how that is.¹⁷ In my study I will be looking at Sweden's response to the covid-19 pandemic.

The concept of risk is tied to the possibility that the future can be altered, or at least perceived as such, by human activities. This possibility is the underlying principle to support why state response in a crisis matter at all. Risk therefore makes an interesting object of study by virtue of its discursive connotations. My study explores how the Swedish government mitigates the threat of a deadly infectious disease in an ongoing pandemic. During a crisis, the notion of risk is a central term as it gives danger a semblance of order in the attempt to make the properties of the disease calculable and manageable. My research question is as follows:

How is risk being understood and mitigated by the Swedish state in connection to the covid-19 pandemic?

¹³ *Supra* note, 2.

¹⁴ Löfvenberg, Jonas, "Coronaviruset klassas som samhällsfarligt av regeringen", Svt-Nyheter, 1 Feb, 2020.

¹⁵ Savage, Maddy, "Coronavirus: Has Sweden got its science right?", BBC News, 25 April, 2020.

¹⁶ Zinn, Jens (red.), *Social theories of risk and uncertainty: an introduction*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2008, p. 4.

¹⁷ Al Jazeera, "Coronavirus: Travel restrictions, border shutdowns by country", *Al Jazeera*, 22 May 2020.

1.2 Material

The material for this study consists of the official press conferences held by the Swedish government in order to communicate relevant information regarding the situation, status and consequent actions taken in connection to covid-19. I have selected a total of nine of the press conferences that were held between March 2 and April 22 by *Regeringskansliet*. In order to analyze the material I have transcribed the selected press conferences. The Swedish government issues press releases on their official website that serves as a channel for communication between the government and the general public. It also serves the purpose of extending invitations to the media for press conferences that are held in service of informing and reporting on the government's work on specific topics.¹⁸ I argue that the information and arguments presented at these conferences are the closest thing available to an elaborate presentation of Sweden's response to an ongoing situation, as they specifically address the topic of, and are issued by the presence of the risks and ramifications of covid-19. Furthermore, the conferences are held in direct relation to developments in the situation of the crisis and as such are a direct representation of the government's actions, implementations, measures, interventions, etc. Strategic documents or earlier emergency provisions are hypothetical and as such they do not address the government's response to an ongoing crisis directly. These are therefore less suitable as material for the purposes of my study.

Which government officials attend the conferences vary throughout the events. All who are represented in the material, and at which specific conferences they were present at can be found in the provided table in *Appendix 1*. All who are referred to throughout my analysis are listed in the *Glossary* above, together with their appropriate titles and associated departments. *Regeringskansliet* does not in fact provide transcripts of their conferences and therefore I had to make my own. The original material as well as the transcriptions are in Swedish, all the material used in the study will be translated by me. The quotations will not always be translated verbatim,

¹⁸ Regeringen.se, Regeringskansliet, Pressmeddelanden.

but as closely to the original as possible with the aim to capture the essence of the statements. The original Swedish transcription of the statements will be provided in the footnotes to show transparency. Some agencies and titles that lack an adequate equivalent in the English language will be featured in the glossary as well, these will consequently not be given a translation in the analysis and instead be written in cursive throughout. The process of data collection, together with a more critical discussion on the material will be provided in the method chapter.

1.2.1 Contextual description of the material

The first of the conferences was held on the 2nd of March. It held the purpose of addressing the fact that the virus had brought major ramifications in other countries and how Sweden was going to contain and consequently stop the spread from proliferating in the country. At this time Sweden only had about 70 cases.¹⁹ On the 11th of March the WHO declared the disease to be a pandemic, this coincided with the first death in Sweden from the virus and the government decided to ban public gatherings of more than 500 people.²⁰ On the 27th of March the limit provided by the restriction on public gatherings was changed down to 50 people.²¹ On the 31th of March the government banned visitations to nursing homes, which is referenced on the 7th of April in my data.²² On the 7th of April the government proposed and decided upon a proposition (prop. 2019/20:155) that gave the government a temporarily increased mandate with regards to measures in connection to covid-19.²³ The remaining of my selected conferences did not revolve around any specific event, but were instead reporting on the continuously evolving situation.²⁴

¹⁹ March 2, press conference, Available at: [regeringen.se](https://www.regeringen.se), Regeringskansliet, Pressträff med anledning av coronaviruset.

²⁰ March 11, press conference, Available at: [regeringen.se](https://www.regeringen.se), Regeringskansliet, Pressträff med statsministern.

²¹ March 27, press conference, Available at: [regeringen.se](https://www.regeringen.se), Regeringskansliet, Pressträff med statsministern den 27 mars 2020.

²² [Regeringen.se](https://www.regeringen.se), Regeringskansliet, Nationellt besöksförbud på äldreboenden.

²³ April 7, press conference, Available at: [regeringen.se](https://www.regeringen.se), Regeringskansliet, Pressträff med statsministern 7 april 2020.

²⁴ Remaining press conferences can be found at: [regeringen.se](https://www.regeringen.se), Regeringskansliet, Pressmeddelanden.

1.3 Background: Risk and emergency in Sweden

In this chapter I survey the current state of crisis-management in Sweden. Namely how Sweden is a relatively stable country with little experience of emergency of national and international magnitude in recent decades. I also provide relevant information on the bureaucracy and principles governing how Sweden mitigates risk and emergency since 1995.

Sweden did not take an active part in any major war throughout the 20th century, and has not since. Amongst the many benefits of having enjoyed a prolonged peace is that Sweden has been able to develop an advanced social welfare system which has led Sweden to consistently rank among the most developed countries in the world in terms of life expectancy, mortality, literacy, etc.²⁵ The Swedish government decided in 1995 to change its crisis management strategy, in part due to the lack of military threats and instead attention was focused more on domestic and internal crises rather than external threats.²⁶ With regards to natural disasters, Europe as a continent is relatively spared in comparison to other continents. In addition to this, Sweden is one of the least exposed countries in Europe to events of natural disasters.²⁷ As such, Sweden's current risk landscape is characterized by the vulnerabilities induced by modern complexes themselves, such as risks related to nuclear power plants, transportation infrastructures, chemical industries, hazardous material transport, and so on.²⁸

Myndigheten för säkerhet och beredskap (MSB) states that the main objectives of the efforts for societal safety in Sweden are to protect the (1) lives and health of the people, (2) the functionality of society, (3) fundamental values (e.g democracy, rule of law, human rights), (4)

²⁵ Becker, Per & Bynander, Fredrik, "The System for Crisis Management in Sweden: Collaborative, Conformist, Contradictory", In *Handbook of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management*, Publisher: Imperial College Press, Ed. Madu, Christian N., Kuei, Chu Hua, 2017, p. 70.

²⁶ Rådestad, Carl & Larsson, Oscar, "Responsibilization in contemporary Swedish crisis management: expanding 'bare life' biopolitics through exceptionalism and neoliberal governmentality", *Critical Policy Studies*, Vol. 14, no. 1, 2018, p. 94.

²⁷ Davidsson, G., Haeffler, L., Ljungman, B., and Frantzich, H, *Handbok för Riskanalys.*, Karlstad: Räddningsverket, 2003.

²⁸ Becker & Bynander, 2017, pp. 70-71.

the environment and economic value, and (5) national sovereignty.²⁹ The list indicates that there is a generally holistic understanding of threats to society. These are all believed to be inseparable values, they are listed in no particular order and the same document also states that by securing the functionality of society, the other values will be indirectly safeguarded as well. Thus the functionality of society is believed to be the main vanguard for the protection of life, democracy and human rights in Sweden.³⁰

After the shift in 1995, the government argued that there was a need for a broader approach to security, that would give a more prominent position to non-military threats within the country's defense planning. It was also recognized that there was a need to involve both civil public authorities as well as private actors during mitigation and management of crises situations. Consequently a substantial reorganization took place within the public administration.³¹ The plethora of emergency provisions, laws, and regulations that previously governed the functioning of the Swedish state apparatus during a state of heightened military preparedness was now replaced with three organizational principles that were believed to be superior for coping with domestic crisis compared to a military-based approach.³² These are:

- (1) The principle of responsibility – whoever is responsible for operations under normal conditions should have equivalent responsibility during crisis situations.
- (2) The principle of similarity – the organization of any function in crisis situations should remain as similar as possible to its normal status.
- (3) The principle of subsidiarity – crisis and security challenges should be managed at the lowest possible level.³³

²⁹ Myndigheten för samhällsskydd och beredskap, Handlingsplan för skydd av samhällsviktig verksamhet, Avdelningen för risk- och sårbarhetsreducerande arbete, Enheten för skydd av samhällsviktig verksamhet, Publ.nr: MSB597, December, 2013, p. 11.

³⁰ Becker & Bynander, 2017, p. 72.

³¹ Rådestad & Larsson, 2018, p. 94.

³² Ibid.

³³ Krisinformation.se, Krishanteringens grunder.

The new organizational structure brought forth by these principles was intended to adapt Swedish society. This with the intention to make it malleable and robust to face new types of threats to security and redirect attention away from total military defense to managing local crisis situations and exceptional circumstances.³⁴ This rather unique system is based on a horizontal division of responsibility, that is the principle of responsibility elaborated on above. Since the reorganization together with the aforementioned principles were formally introduced and established, it has functioned overall in dealing with crisis situations and extraordinary events. At least to the degree that, so far, neither decision-makers nor the general public have demanded the need to substantially change them.³⁵

This thesis embarks on exploring risk and governance in a crisis situation, the background stated in this chapter serves as a contextual prerequisite for the analysis. I have provided an overview of crisis management and the risk landscape in Sweden, together with an understanding of the current Swedish policy-framework. The next chapter continues this effort by firstly reviewing relevant research on crisis management and risk in general to then go back to looking at research on Sweden in particular.

1.4 Research review

This chapter will identify and review arguments and positions surrounding risk and crisis to provide relevant background for my own research. Several researchers have done studies with a similar aim as this thesis, namely to analyze emergency governance through a Foucauldian governmentality approach.³⁶ However, the unprecedented scale and impact of the covid-19 pandemic in modern times puts the ability of states to deal with and mitigate risk to the test. Therefore I will present the overall research field in order to revisit risk and crisis in light of this development.

³⁴ SOU 2001:41, pp. 15-30. Available at: Regering.se, Regeringskansliet, Säkerhet i en ny tid.

³⁵ Becker & Bynander, 2017, p. 87.

³⁶ Adey, Peter., Anderson, Ben., and Graham, Stephen, "Introduction: Governing Emergencies: beyond Exceptionality", *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol 32, no. 2, 2015 pp. 3–17; Kaufmann, Marielle, "Exercising Emergencies: Resilience, Affect and Acting Out Security", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 47, no. 2, 2016, pp. 99–116; Bashford, Alison, Epidemic and governmentality: smallpox in Sydney, 1881, *Critical Public Health*, Vol. 9, no. 4, 1999, pp. 301-316.

To answer the research question of how risk is being understood and mitigated by the Swedish state in connection to the covid-19 pandemic, three orientations that relate to risks and crises will be elucidated upon. The research review will first outline the role of the state and state-preparedness. Secondly, the role of individuals in a crisis, and the challenges associated with that will be reviewed. Lastly I will present some research on the Swedish state's approach to crisis management.

1.4.1 The role of the state in preparedness and response to risk and crisis

In the body of literature on risk and emergency there is a wide consensus that it is the role of the state to prepare for and anticipate crisis, as such the term “Emergency-preparedness” is a key focus. Sweden, amongst other European countries, have developed and implemented plans, coordination mechanisms and procedures in preparation for a plethora of emergencies.³⁷ In the context of infectious disease, states' preparedness is seen as pivotal in handling threats to national health and security.³⁸ Biosecurity has become a prominent feature of Western security practices and discourses in the past decades.³⁹ This is in part attributed to the absence of external military threats after the end of the Cold War which incited many Western states to redirect their focus towards domestic security issues.⁴⁰

³⁷ Anderson, Ben, and Adey, Peter, “Affect and Security: Exercising Emergency in ‘UK Civil Contingencies’”, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 29 no. 6, 2011, pp. 1092–1109; Anderson, Ben, and Adey, Peter, “Governing Events and Life: ‘emergency’ in UK Civil Contingencies”, *Political Geography* Vol. 31, no. 1, 2011, pp. 24-33; Baker, D. Natalie & Ludwig, G. Lisa, “Disaster preparedness as social control”, *Critical Policy Studies*, Vol. 12, no. 1, 2018, pp. 24-43.

³⁸ Collier, J. Stephen, & Lakoff, Andrew, “Distributed Preparedness: The Spatial Logic of Domestic Security in the United States”, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 26, no. 1, 2008.

³⁹ Jappah V., Jlateh, Smith T., “Danielle, Global governmentality: Biosecurity in the era of infectious diseases”, *Global Public Health*, Vol. 10, no. 10, 2015, pp. 1145.

⁴⁰ Hart, T. Paul, & Sundelius, Bengt, “Crisis Management Revisited: A New Agenda for Research, Training and Capacity Building within Europe”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 48, no. 3, 2013, pp. 444–461.

In anticipation of crisis and emergency, with regards to disease outbreaks specifically, a wide range of scholars point out the use of preparedness and several practices that are expected by the state, including, but not limited to: stockpiling supplies and pharmaceuticals,⁴¹ vaccinating first responders,⁴² and simulations, and scenario-based exercises.⁴³ All of these practices build on the notion that preparedness is believed to be able to bring uncertainties into a calculable and predictable space suitable for governmental intervention.⁴⁴

There is however disagreement on the feasibility of state preparedness, as some scholars believe that there are major obstacles to achieving anything more than sporadic to modest levels of preparedness.⁴⁵ The reasoning of Carl Schmitt has been influential within this domain, who argued that it was impossible to anticipate the details of any emergency, and even more so with regards to any attempts to spell out what might take place in such a case.⁴⁶ Some have, likewise, argued that there is a gap between the plan at the outset and what then actually happens in disasters and public crises. Plans ought therefore to be understood as largely symbolic, due to the fact that they are inadequate in properly predicting events and human behavior.⁴⁷ It should be noted, however, that these scholars argue that states' level of preparedness is never completely in vain, it remains clear that having a plan in every case is preferable to not having one. That is, preparedness, e.g. plans and their intended outcomes despite their varying levels of success, still serves an important purpose when thought of as providing narratives, which in turn can

⁴¹ Elbe, Stefan, Roemer-Mahler, Anne, Long, Christopher, "Securing Circulation Pharmaceutically: Antiviral Stockpiling and Pandemic Preparedness in the European Union", *Security Dialogue* Vol. 45, no. 5, 2014, pp. 440–457.

⁴² Samimian-Darash, L., "Governing through Time: Preparing for Future Threats to Health and Security", *Sociology of Health and Illness*, Vol. 33, no. 6, 2011, pp. 930–945.

⁴³ Collier, J. Stephen, "Enacting Catastrophe: Preparedness, Insurance, Budgetary Rationalization", *Economy and Society* Vol. 37, no. 2, 2008, pp. 224–250.

⁴⁴ Samimian-Darash, L., "Governing through Time: Preparing for Future Threats to Health and Security", *Sociology of Health and Illness*, vol. 33, no. 6, 2011, pp. 930–945.

⁴⁵ Bosworth, Susan & Kreps, Gary "Organizational Adaptation to Disaster." In *Handbook of Disaster Research*, edited by H. Rodriguez, E. L. Quarantelli, and R. R. Dynes, New York: Springer, 2006, p. 311.

⁴⁶ Schmitt, Carl, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, George Schwab (trans.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

⁴⁷ Quarantelli, E. L., "Disaster crisis management: A summary of research findings", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 25, no. 4, 1988, p. 374.

transform and make sense of unusual events to provide the public with a sense of safety.⁴⁸ As other scholars have shown, one important function of the state is for public leaders to provide meaning and security during crises.⁴⁹

The literature on securitization and preparedness highlight two different kinds of temporalities for states to adopt when faced with an emergency. Scholars who focus on preparedness view emergency as meaning an emergent threat that involves an unknown event in an uncertain future while securitization scholars understand emergency as referring to an immediate threat that instead requires an urgent response.⁵⁰ These different definitions and framings of emergency have implications for how the state understands and responds to disasters and public crises. States leaning more towards securitization, tend to argue for the management of crises comparable to a war-like event, that requires disaster management modeled on the military.⁵¹ Thus emergency responses have been argued to best be handled in a military fashion, whether drawing on military experience, personnel or response tactics. This has become prominent within securitization whence influenced by the blending of political rhetoric that shaped the post-9/11 ‘War on Terror’ with approaches to other types of disasters.⁵²

This overview implies that preparation and planning is expected to be utilized as a preliminary caution, it is believed to be necessary and non-optional, but there is disagreement on the actual level of efficacy. During a crisis event there appears to be no clear consensus on a ‘golden standard’ for what role states ought to do when dealing with risk and uncertainty. State-preparedness is a scientific and political field full of idiosyncratic and exceptional

⁴⁸ Baker, D. Natalie & Ludwig, G. Lisa, “Disaster preparedness as social control”, *Critical Policy Studies*, Vol. 12, no. 1, 2018, p. 37.

⁴⁹ Boin, Arjen, Hart, Paul t, Stern, Eric K. & Sundelius, Bengt, *The politics of crisis management: public leadership under pressure*, Second edition., Cambridge University Press, New York, 2017; Duckers, Michel L. A., C. Joris Yzermans, Wouter Jong, Arjen Boin, “Psychosocial Crisis € Management: The Unexplored Intersection of Crisis Leadership and Psychosocial Support”, *Risk, Hazards & Crisis in Public Policy* Vol. 8, no. 2, 2017, pp. 94–112.

⁵⁰ Rabi, Michael & Samimian-Darash, Limorp, 2019, p. 13.

⁵¹ Rabi, Michael & Samimian-Darash, Limorp, 2019, p. 26.

⁵² Sun, G. Lisa, & Jones, A. RonNell, “War Rhetoric and Disaster Transparency”, In *Risk Analysis of Natural Hazards, Interdisciplinary Challenges and Integrated Solutions*, edited by P. Gardoni, C. Murphy, and A. Rowell, Heidelberg: Springer, 2015, p. 200.

approaches; studying Sweden in particular will provide insightful contributions to this ever evolving field.

1.4.2 The role of individuals in response to risk and crisis

Modern security practices are today not only associated with the safeguarding of critical functions in society but also with the security of individuals.⁵³ Larsson and Rådestad assert that there is a broad consensus that effective crisis management demands collaborative efforts that go across organizational and jurisdictional boundaries.⁵⁴ These developments of the understanding of crises, and moreover, the recognition that individual responses to them can be rather unpredictable have had substantial effect on the relationship between the state and its citizens. Policy regarding how individuals behave in a crisis often presuppose that most people resort to panic and will be in desperate need of support from public authorities.⁵⁵ Some scholars even argue that crisis situations are generally associated with violent and non-communitarian behavior, and that many individuals are quick to return to a Hobbesian state of nature when faced with an emergency.⁵⁶ Sjöberg has argued that there is an assumption among security experts that individuals are in general misinformed, badly educated and highly emotional.⁵⁷ Consequently this has implications for how individuals are treated and perceived when states formulate strategies for managing crises and how to best communicate relevant information. Some scholars argue that this assumption about individuals is unfounded, as there is substantial research claiming that human social behavior in all situations of disaster is mostly characterized by communitarianism, altruism and otherwise social behavior, and that many exhibit a great proclivity towards self-organization.⁵⁸

⁵³ Collier & Lakoff, 2015.

⁵⁴ Rådestad & Larsson, 2018, p. 86.

⁵⁵ Rådestad & Larsson, 2018, p. 91.

⁵⁶ Tierney, Kathleen, Bevc, Christine, Kuligowski, Erica, “Metaphors Matter: Disaster Myths, Media Frames, and Their Consequences in Hurricane Katrina”, *The American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 605, no. 1, 2006, pp. 57-81.

⁵⁷ Sjöberg, Lennart, “Risk Perception by the Public and by Experts: A Dilemma in Risk Management”, *Human Ecology Review*, Vol. 6, no. 2, 1999, p. 5.

⁵⁸ Baker & Ludwig, 2018, p. 27.

Larsson and Rådestad found in their review of security study literature that there is an awareness of the need to provide individuals of the public with accurate information. However, the same literature shows that communication from authorities is often informed by the somewhat unfounded presumptions regarding the limited ability of individuals to act and behave in specific and desirable ways. States' disbelief concerning the ability of individual citizens has an important impact on the level of trust that can be expected between authorities and the public.⁵⁹ This concerns the fact that public trust in institutions and the effectiveness of security systems is of great relevance for the level of success of any crisis-response.⁶⁰ To combat this issue of credibility and trust, there is a growing emphasis from scholars that the key to a successful emergency response by a state is to focus on social resilience that fosters the coping capacities of individuals, in other words, to enhance their ability to respond and adapt to crises and security threats.⁶¹

Individual responses to crises can be unpredictable, in fact, one of the main obstacles to disaster preparedness is the problem that people do not do what they are supposed to do in the ways that they are told by State authorities.⁶² Critique has been directed to the assumption that in times of emergency, individuals prefer a traditional, strong leader,⁶³ when in fact there is very little research done concerning how and what individuals think during times of crises.⁶⁴ One thing that has been noted is how risk, which is most often presented by abstract quantification, e.i probabilities and statistics, tends to ignore the whole person and their humanity.⁶⁵ This could

⁵⁹ Rådestad & Larsson, 2018, pp. 89-92.

⁶⁰ Poortinga, Wouter & Pidgeon F. Nick, "Trust in Risk Regulation: Cause or Consequence of the Acceptability of GM Food?", *Risk Analysis*, Vol. 25, no. 1, 2005, p. 208.

⁶¹ Lentzos, Filippa & Rose, Nikolas, "Governing Insecurity: Contingency Planning, Protection, Resilience", *Economy and Society*, Vol. 38, no. 2, 2009, pp. 230–254; Collier, J. Stephen and Lakoff, Andrew, "Distributed Preparedness: The Spatial Logic of Domestic Security in the United States, Environment and Planning D", *Society and Space*, Vol. 26, no. 1, 2008.

⁶² Baker & Ludwig, 2018, p. 38.

⁶³ Aradau, Claudia, "The Myth of Preparedness", *Radical Philosophy*, Vol. 16, 2010, pp. 2–7.

⁶⁴ Jong, Wouter, and Dückers A. L. Michel, "The Perspective of the Affected: What People Confronted With Disasters Expect From Government Officials and Public Leaders Risk", *Hazards & Crisis in Public Policy*, Vol. 10, no. 1, 2019, p. 16.

⁶⁵ Castel, Robert, "From dangerous to risk", In C. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality*, University of Chicago Press, 1991, pp. 281–298.

have implications for the relationship between individuals and the state as a focus on wider epidemiological data and its logic is primarily concerned with the macro and consequently ignores individual experience.

Patrick Brown has asserted how the literature on individuals' perception of risk also points to the importance of paying attention to different sub-groups during crises.⁶⁶ Furthermore he shows how literature on infectious diseases, risk, and security, highlights the fact that there is a need to acknowledge how varying experiences and perceptions of government and healthcare organisations, shaped at the intersections of class, gender, race and ethnicity, will shape and render very different relations and approaches to risk.⁶⁷ Scholars have argued in connection to risk and infectious disease, that it is vital to acknowledge the fact that individuals' perception of risk is never merely about probabilities, as some have argued that risk perception for individuals entails particular ways of interpreting these numbers and calculations in relation to social values.⁶⁸ Moreover, research on the public understanding of disease outbreaks has shown that the exposure to frequent media coverage may in fact introduce a disjuncture between the perceptions of personal risk and estimate of population incidence.⁶⁹ It has been argued that this was one of the more important lessons from the H1N1 epidemic of 2009, also known as the swine flu. There was major disagreement with regards to how much, and what kind of information should be available to the public, and moreover how this information ought to be delivered. The problem with striking a balance between either overreaction or underreaction in epidemics carry the characteristics of the Goldilock tales - is there too much representation, too little, or just the right amount?⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Brown, Patrick, "Studying COVID-19 in light of critical approaches to risk and uncertainty: research pathways, conceptual tools, and some magic from Mary Douglas", *Health, Risk & Society*, Vol. 22, no.1, 2020, pp. 2-4.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Aven, Terje, "The concepts of risk and probability: An editorial", *Health, Risk & Society*, Vol. 15, no. 2, 2013, pp. 117-122; Szmukler, George, "Risk assessment: 'numbers' and 'values'", *Psychiatric Bulletin*, Vol. 27, no. 6, 2003, pp. 205-207.

⁶⁹ Young, E. Meredith, King, Nicholas, Harper, Sam & Humphreys R. Karin, "The influence of popular media on perceptions of personal and population risk in possible disease outbreaks", *Health, Risk & Society*, Vol. 15, no. 1, 2013, p. 112.

⁷⁰ Briggs, L. Charles, & Nichter, Mark, "Biocommunicability and the Biopolitics of Pandemic Threats", *Medical Anthropology: Cross-Cultural Studies in Health and Illness*, Vol. 28, no. 3, 2009, p. 191.

The insights presented above all carry implications for risk and crisis management and what information should be available to the public. It also points to a discrepancy regarding what is believed to be the appropriate level of trust and agency that can be placed upon individuals in times of crisis. What kind of strategies that would be advantageous from the perspective of governance, within this context, remains unclear. As such my research will be able to provide valuable insights regarding how individuals are involved in order to mitigate the risks of covid-19 in Sweden.

1.4.3 Swedish crisis management

Rådestad and Larsson have provided insights closely related to my own research as they have examined the changes in Swedish crisis management that took place in the 1990s. They argue that Sweden's crisis management today is based on neoliberal strategies of responsabilization, within a decentralized order of power that guide and govern state action during an emergency.⁷¹ They point to a substantial change in the discourse regarding individuals and security, while protection of the health and security of individuals and the population is the primary focal point, this was coupled with an increased responsibility placed upon individuals.⁷² Their article was written in 2017 and their findings serve as valuable background for my own study. The current covid-19 pandemic thus provides an opportunity to investigate if Rådestad and Larssons findings are applicable to Sweden's current crisis response.

The system for crisis management in Sweden is different from that of many other countries as it is based on coordination and collaboration, with no crisis general, or otherwise not responsible actor assuming control during emergency. Per Becker and Fredrik Bynander claim that this system has evolved and receives continuous support as it is firmly rooted in Swedish culture. They argue that collaboration and cooperation have positive connotations in Sweden and is the implicit additional fourth principle among the three that already make up crisis management in

⁷¹ Rådestad & Larsson, 2018, pp. 86–105.

⁷² Rådestad & Larsson, 2018, p. 96.

Sweden.⁷³ Sweden has been credited with having some of the highest levels of interpersonal trust in the world, meaning that people generally trust each other and are confident that others act in good faith and do what they say they are intending.⁷⁴ Furthermore scholars have asserted that Swedes have generally high levels of trust in their public institutions in comparison to other countries.⁷⁵

Becker and Bynander argue along with other scholars that the high levels of trust and a belief in pragmatism within Swedish society has the positive effect that individuals in events of crisis conform to authorities' decisions. They also claim that this amounts to many feeling a sense of responsibility to contribute to the collective response.⁷⁶ However, they assert that Sweden might be ill-equipped to deal with large-scale crisis with its current legislation, and that the overall strong belief that the system works well in the event of an emergency could be an effect of the fact that it is so rarely utilized in practice.⁷⁷

My own research becomes fruitful, since Sweden has not been studied during a major crisis to any large degree, mainly because of the lack of large scale emergency events. My study thus serves an important purpose by complementing existing research on risk and crisis management in the context of covid-19. The existing research mainly looks at policy and framing in a theoretical setting, this provides me with the opportunity to discover any shifts or new insights provided by the need for practical application.

⁷³ Becker & Bynander, 2017, pp. 86-87.

⁷⁴ Elgar, F.J., Davis, C.G., Wohl, M. J., Trites, S.J., Zelenski, J.M., and Martin, M.S, "Social capital, health and life satisfaction in 50 countries", *Health Place*, Vol. 17, no. 5, 2011, pp. 1044–1053.

⁷⁵ Grönlund, Kimmo & Setälä, Maija, "In honest officials we trust: Institutional confidence in Europe", *The American Review of Public Administration*, Vol 42, no. 5, 2011, pp. 523–542.

⁷⁶ Becker & Bynander, 2017, p. 89. See also Daun, Åke, *Swedish Mentality*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996; Holmberg, Ingalill., and Åkerblom, Staffan, "The production of outstanding leadership - An analysis of leadership images in the Swedish media", *Scand. J. Manag.*, Vol. 17 no. 1, 2001, pp. 67–85; Holmberg, Ingalill, & Åkerblom, Staffan, "Primus inter pares leadership and culture in Sweden", In *Culture and Leadership Across the World*. Eds. Chhokar, J.S., Brodbeck, F.C., and House, R.J., Abingdon and New York: Taylor & Francis, 2008, pp. 33–74.

⁷⁷ Becker & Bynander, 2017, p. 90.

2. Theory

I will discuss the theoretical concept of this thesis below, that is governmentality and what it implies for the present study. I have chosen governmentality as an analytical tool in order to explore my research question as it provides valuable insights. It enables me to decipher the data in order to examine how diverse practices of power are articulated around practices that are seemingly neutral. Governmentality has been used to analyze a broad range of topics related to government-directed policies such as: poverty, foreign aid, childhood obesity, and more.⁷⁸ But more importantly, as mentioned in the research review, several researchers have previously done studies with a similar aim as this thesis wherein they utilized the theory of governmentality.⁷⁹ Therefore my research is, already at the outset, positioned in a well-established field of governmentality studies.⁸⁰

2.1 Governmentality and biopower

Governmentality is a concept that refers to the strategic management of conditions for a population designed to support and safeguard life. It is based on the idea of biopower and biopolitics as formulated by Foucault in his lectures and books.⁸¹ He used the notion of “biopolitics” to speak of the relationship that power establishes with the social body in modernity. Biopolitics takes control of life, with the population as its target; it is bent on

⁷⁸ Supra note 8, p. 1184.

⁷⁹ Supra note 36.

⁸⁰ Dean, Mitchell, *Governmentality: power and rule in modern society*, 2. ed., SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2010; Rose & Miller, 1992; Nilsson, Jakob & Wallenstein, Sven-Olov (red.), *Foucault, biopolitics, and governmentality*, Södertörns högskola, Huddinge, 2013; Bevir, Mark (red.), *Governmentality after neoliberalism*, First issued in paperback, Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon, 2017; Walters, William, *Governmentality: critical encounters*, Routledge, London, 2012; Lemke, Thomas, *A critique of political reason: Foucault's analysis of modern governmentality*, Verso, London, 2019; Lemke, Thomas., *Foucault, governmentality, and critique*, Paradigm, Boulder, Colo., 2011.

⁸¹ Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1991; Foucault, Michel, Gordon, Colin, Miller, Peter M. & Burchell, Graham (red.), *The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality : with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1991; Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction*, Robert Hurley (övers.), New York: Vintage Book, [1978]1990.

production rather than suppression. He describes the transition from sovereign society, in which sovereignty is defined in terms of commanding the ritualization of death, to a “disciplinary society,” which oversees and maximizes the life of populations as a function of national interest.⁸² In other words the aim of biopolitics is to maximize people's wellbeing, wherein the rationale behind the strategic maximization is based on the governmental notion that the population ought to be seen as an asset rather than a liability. Thusly improving peoples’ lives and livelihoods is seen as an inseparable part of government.⁸³

For Foucault, the techniques of biopolitical government spread as a network of power that goes beyond the juridical spheres to become a horizontal, rhizomatic and capillary movement, traversing the entire territory of lived experience and penetrating each individual body with a governmental gaze. Unlike the law, biopolitical techniques do not typically result from sovereign, democratic decisions in modern society, it is therefore not orchestrated by one ruler or any political body.⁸⁴ Instead they are part of the administrative, organisational, institutional, and managerial procedures which receive their value and legitimacy through expert knowledge. Foucault argues that in instances when governmental societies make use of the law it is mainly as a complementary instrumental normativity, rather than any repressive means of coercion. Therefore the rationality of biopolitics within governmentality treats the law as one of many administrative techniques that can be employed to regulate the life of the population.⁸⁵ Other such administrative techniques are the formation of “the economy”, “the population” and “society”. These are to be seen as domains of knowledge and fields of governmental intervention and the emergence of the human, social, and behavioral sciences are thus recognized as the *governmentalization* of the state.⁸⁶ To analyze and understand formations of power, it is

⁸² Foucault, Michel, "Society must be defended": lectures at the collège de France, 1975-76, Picador, New York, 2003.

⁸³ Oksala, Johanna, “From Biopower to Governmentality”, in: *A Companion to Foucault*, 1st ed., Blackwell Publishing, 2013 p. 321.

⁸⁴ Taylor, Chloe, "Biopower", in *Michel Foucault Key Concepts*, Ed. Taylor, Dianna, Acumen, 2011, pp. 42-43

⁸⁵ Oksala, 2013, p. 322.

⁸⁶ Foucault, Michel, 2007, pp. 108-109.

important to recognize that it is essentially the power of scientists, interpreters and administrators that make government possible.⁸⁷

2.2 Governmentality as the *conduct of conduct*

The term “government” should in a general sense mean *the conduct of conduct*. This is to be understood as a form of activity aimed at shaping and affecting behavior. However this is not limited to a top-down relationship of power, but rather it encapsulates the governing of others as well as the governing of the self.⁸⁸ Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller argue that political power is exercised in contemporary Western societies between diverse authorities in order to govern a multitude of facets of the economy, social life and individual conduct.⁸⁹ Power in Western states is not so much a matter of imposing constraints upon citizens as it is of producing citizens capable of practising a kind of regulated freedom. As such, individual autonomy should not be seen as threatening societal order, nor as the antithesis of political power, but a key ingredient in its *modus operandi*. In other words, a governmental understanding of government today is that individuals are the subjects of power active in the operations of government.⁹⁰

Dean has suggested that the *conduct of conduct* can be understood as a way of governing by structuring the field of possible action.⁹¹ The governed are free in the sense that they are actors that carry the capacity to think and act in myriad ways which sometimes are impossible to be foreseen by various authorities. Therefore, governmental practices are the nature, source, effects and possible utility of these capacities of acting and thinking that come with the freedom of the governed.⁹² Within governmental studies, governmental rationalities, techniques and identification are co-hyponyms under the hypernym of governmental *regimes of practises*, which

⁸⁷ Oksala, 2013, p. 322.

⁸⁸ Dean, 2010, p. 22.

⁸⁹ Rose, Nikolas & Miller, Peter, “Political Power beyond the State: Problematics of Government”, *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 43, no. 2, Jun, 1992, pp. 173-205.

⁹⁰ Rose & Miller 1992, p. 174.

⁹¹ Dean, 2010, pp. 20-22.

⁹² Dean, 2010, pp. 22-24.

are essentially “the organized practices through which we govern ourselves.”⁹³ As such these are key terms to analyze when the object of study is concerned with *how* we are governed and *how* we govern ourselves.⁹⁴ I will return to the terms during the outlining of my analysis framework in the method chapter.

2.3 Governmentality and risk

Governmentality scholars attempt to show through analysis of governmental practice, knowledge and rationale, how taken-for-granted ways of doing things and how we think about and question them are never self-evident.⁹⁵ One such concept is risk; it is not a natural phenomenon that exists independently from our conceptualization. Risk is a technique and rationality that orders reality, and thus rendering it into a calculable form.⁹⁶ It is a way of representing events so that they are made governable in particular ways, with particular techniques, and for particular goals. What is made intelligible and governable is a matter of discourse, it concerns sets of ideas, assumptions, beliefs, behaviors, and understandings.⁹⁷ In other words, what constitutes reality is produced and continuously reproduced by complex formations of a plethora of societal organizations, state apparatuses, science, expertise knowledge, institutions, etc. What constitutes risk and how it should be managed is constructed by different actors and experts that cannot be separated, or exist independently, from the discursive formations that produce what is intelligible.⁹⁸

Through governmentality, risk is a calculative rationality that is combined with techniques for the regulation, management, and shaping of the conduct of individuals, collectivities and populations in the service of teleonomical society.⁹⁹ How risk is presented through readings of epidemiological data or calculations of probability is far from neutral as it is a product of

⁹³ Dean, 2010, p. 28.

⁹⁴ Dean, 2010, p. 33.

⁹⁵ Dean, 2010, p. 31.

⁹⁶ Dean, Mitchell, “Risk, Calculable and incalculable”, *Soziale Welt*, Vol. 49, Jahrg., H. 1, 1998, p. 25.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ewald, Francois, Insurance and risk, in: *The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality : with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault*, Univ. of Ed. Burchell, Graham, Gordon, Colin & Miller, Peter (red.), Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991, p. 199.

⁹⁹ Dean, Mitchell, 1998, p. 25.

discursive flows of power, acting out certain schemas within a discourse of risk. And it is through the governmental practices, techniques, and rationalities that facts, statistics, and governmental interventions are made feasible. Therefore, it is through discursive formations that governing takes place.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ See Dean, Mitchell, 1998, pp. 25-42.

3. Method

In this section I will describe my methodological undertaking. Firstly I will present my research design, the process of selecting a material suitable to study for my research endeavour. Secondly I will describe the process of my data collection, which entailed listening to the available press conferences and transcribing a total of nine conferences to make it amenable to my qualitative approach. Thirdly I will consider some limitations, bias, and possible critique to my study. Lastly, I will go through my methodological approach that will aid me in how I decipher the material in order to answer my research question.

3.1 Research design

In order to answer my research question, that is, how risk is being understood and mitigated by the Swedish state in connection to the covid-19 pandemic, I have chosen to do a qualitative content analysis with the theoretical framework of governmentality. I have selected material that represents the official Swedish response and strategy during the covid-19 pandemic. This is represented in the form of the official press conferences held in order to brief the public about the management and actions taken during the crisis. For this study, the template for the analysis was developed *a priori*, based on the research question and theoretical concept of governmentality. By using a qualitative content analysis I focus on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the material.

Nine press conferences held by *Regeringskansliet* were selected when empirical saturation was deemed to have been reached. These nine were then transcribed in their entirety, The chosen conferences were held on the following dates: March 2; March 6; March 11; March 13; March 15; March 27; April 7; April 16; April 22. One example-transcript in Swedish is provided in the *Appendix 2*. I have limited the selected dates between March 2 and April 22. March 2 was the date of the first public press conference that addressed covid-19, and April 22 was at the time of

writing the latest available conference. A subjective limitation had to be set somewhere at the time of writing, since covid-19 is far from over and consequently many more conferences will follow, therefore a holistic representation would currently be impossible.

3.2 Data collection

The process of collecting the data consisted of watching all available press conferences held by *Regeringskansliet* between March 2 and April 22. The chosen material was collected as a convenience sample. Rather than transcribing all the available material, a total of nine conferences were transcribed through the process of dictating while listening, it was still a very time consuming process. In the nine chosen out of all available, priority was given to the conferences that highlighted the attendance of the Swedish prime minister, *Folkhälsomyndigheten*, and *Socialstyrelsen*. These all carry heavy political weight and appear to, in comparison to other ministers, mostly address relevant topics to my research and they were therefore prioritized in the transcription process.

3.3 Limitations and critique

Here I will address some of the limitations of my study, and it is also important to disclose any notion of bias. First of all it should be recognized that I am doing a study that concerns the Swedish government's response to covid-19, which as I discussed in the introduction is in itself a rather contested and controversial topic. It is here important to be transparent about the fact that I am myself a Swedish citizen, and as such might be inclined to have a biased opinion. By being continuously exposed to media's coverage of the ongoing situation, as well as living through the ongoing situation, I have inevitably developed my own opinion of the Swedish state's response. However, my study is not concerned with whether the strategy is good or bad, nor is it my aim to evaluate its efficiency in comparison to other countries. The fact that I am looking at Sweden from the perspective of an "insider", opens up the possibility that I might overlook or fail to

recognize rationalities and techniques to a certain degree by virtue of being integrated in the system I aim to analyze. To attenuate these implications I have chosen to utilize a deductive analysis, this allows me to alleviate some of the influence of potential biases in the analysis process. This effort is also aided by the fact that my framework, which I apply to my data, was chosen *a priori*.¹⁰¹

Secondly, I realize that my material is limited as it only showcases the *official* government response, as such the material is somewhat one-sided and therefore lacks width. However, I still believe that the press conferences provide data of analytic value representative of the discourse at large. Lastly, as I mention in the material section, the material has gone through the process of first being transcribed and then translated by me. All translations of the statements throughout the analysis are my own. This implies that some meaning or emphasis could be inadequately captured in my translation and that needs to be taken into consideration. My onerous job of transcribing several hours of video will realistically include some errors regardless of my attempted precision. The original videos that my material is transcribed from is available on the Swedish government's website for anyone that would like to review it for themselves.¹⁰²

3.4 Data analysis

In order to answer the question of how risk is being understood and mitigated in Sweden in connection to the covid-19 pandemic the first step after completing the transcriptions was to read through it all and begin with preliminary coding. That is reading through the text, highlighting passages that may be potentially important and relevant to the research question and fit the theoretical framework. Then the consequent coding process involved recognizing (seeing) important statements and encoding them (recognizing them as something value-laden) prior to a process of interpretation. Then a second, closer reading was done in which I thematically deciphered and sorted the material into the framework of governmentality. This served the

¹⁰¹ Forman, Jane & Damschroder, Laura, "Qualitative Content Analysis", *Empirical Methods for Bioethics: A Primer*, Advances in Bioethics, Vol 11, 2008, pp. 46-48.

¹⁰² Regeringen.se, Regeringskansliet, Webb-tv.

purpose of: (1) reducing the amount of raw data to that which is relevant to answering the research question; (2) breaking the data (transcripts) into more manageable themes and thematic segments; and, (3) reorganizing the data into categories in a way that addresses the research question.¹⁰³

As mentioned in my theory chapter: governmental rationalities, techniques and identifications are key terms within the field of governmentality to analyze when the object of study is concerned with *how* we are governed and *how* we govern ourselves.¹⁰⁴ Therefore my coding framework will set out to identify and analyze *governmental techniques*, *governmental rationalities*, and *governmental identifications*. I will outline the definitions as well as what these terms entail for my own research below. To answer how risk is being understood and mitigated by the Swedish state in connection to the covid-19 pandemic I will be using insights from the theoretical framework of governmentality; in short, governmentality will be made useful by entailing a certain way of mapping the milieu and theorizing around the discourse of risk and governance.

3.4.1 Governmental techniques

Governmental techniques are the procedural means that make governing possible. By identifying governmental techniques I can analyze how relations of authority and obedience are constituted in the Swedish response and mitigation of covid-19. How different agents are to be connected with one another, what problems are to be solved and what objectives are to be sought are primary objectives for my research. These governmental techniques will include characteristic ways of visibility, ways of seeing and interpreting things, and how problems are formulated in order to enable specific ways of acting and intervening. Techniques of government are also the specific ways of acting that are in turn made up of a practical rationality, i.e. expertise and

¹⁰³ Forman & Damschroder, 2008, p. 48.

¹⁰⁴ Dean, 2010, p. 33.

know-how, that rely upon definite mechanisms. It is these specific ways of acting that I set out to map and analyze.¹⁰⁵

3.4.2 Governmental rationalities

Governmental rationalities are what makes governing possible through distinctive ways of thinking and questioning, that in turn rely on definite vocabulary and procedures for the production of truth. These, furthermore, derive their legitimacy from science. My methodological approach, herein, is that governmental rationality consists of three signifying traits. Firstly, I will describe how a rationality of government has a characteristically moral form. That is, government principles and ideals are directed towards tropes like freedom, justice, equality, reason, and so on. Secondly, great significance is here given to discourse. Just as Rose and Miller put it: language for government is not merely contemplative or justificatory, it is also performative.¹⁰⁶ I will explicate this language of government in order to provide an understanding for the systems of thought through which problems of government are articulated and understood. Lastly, knowledge is a vital part of governmental rationality, and likewise for my own scientific project, as within governmentality it refers to the vast assemblages of persons, theories, projects and know-how, from philosophy to medicine, that make government possible; therefore these properties are to be rendered visible throughout my analysis.¹⁰⁷

3.4.3 Governmental identification

Governmental identification is in my analysis a part of governmentality in the process of subjectification. Governmental identification is closely connected and sometimes inseparable from techniques and rationalities of government but it specifically concerns the conduct of individuals. For my analysis identification refers to the characteristic ways of forming subjects, selves, persons, actors or agents, in such a way that the governmental rationalities are inscribing

¹⁰⁵ Dean, 2010, pp. 40-42.

¹⁰⁶ Rose & Miller, 1992 p. 177.

¹⁰⁷ Rose & Miller, 1992 p. 178.

responsibility and subjectification in its subjects, in order for them to be able to act as rational individuals. Thus, I will explicitly look at what forms of persons, selves and identities are presupposed or encouraged by practice of government. It is a matter of what capacities, attributes, values, duties, and rights are presumed of those who are to be governed. The underlying process – how conduct is fostered, or reformed – will also be made intelligible.¹⁰⁸

4. Findings and Analysis

This study sets out to investigate how risk is being understood and mitigated by the Swedish state in connection to the covid-19 pandemic. By using the deductive template of governmentality detailed in the previous section, the findings from the data were categorized thematically. The findings are presented separately in Table 1 below to provide a few examples of the coding process into thematic categories. Following the findings, the analysis of the data will be presented.

Table 1: Categories of governmentality

Category : Governmental Techniques	Examples
Characteristic ways of visibility, ways of seeing and perceiving things, and how problems are formulated in order to enable specific ways of acting and intervening.	<p><i>The difference between a scenario where the spread of the disease is lowered and stretched out over a longer period if time and one with a more dramatic course can be compared with having 1 case per day for a year, or 365 cases on one single day. The total number is the same, but for societal resilience the difference is pivotal.¹⁰⁹</i></p> <p><i>Continue to keep distance, protect at risk groups, and to wash your hands often and very thoroughly.¹¹⁰</i></p>

¹⁰⁸ Dean, 2010, pp. 43-44.

¹⁰⁹ Stefan Löfven, March 15, “Skillnaden mellan att smittspridningen dämpas och sprids ut på en längre tid och ett dramatiskt förlopp är att likna vid 1 sjukdomsfall per dag under 1 år tid, eller 365 sjukdomsfall på 1 och samma dag. Antalet sjukdomsfall är detsamma, men för samhällets förmåga är skillnaden avgörande.”

¹¹⁰ Stefan Löfven, April 22, “Fortsätt hålla avstånd, skydda riskgrupper, och tvätta händerna ofta och mycket noggrant.”

<p>Specific ways of acting that are made up of practical rationality, i.e. expertise and know-how, that rely upon definite mechanisms.</p>	<p><i>No one can do everything, but all can do something, It is Easter soon, and I wanna repeat what Folkhälsomyndigheten previously said, if you don't need to travel, stay and home.¹¹¹</i></p> <p><i>In many other countries the police have to take to the streets, assault people, force them to go inside [...] I think you have to have acceptance and understanding, we have built much of our strategy with disease prevention through the decades on acceptance and understanding of the measures that are taken.¹¹²</i></p>
<p>Category: Governmental Rationalities</p>	<p>Examples</p>
<p>Government principles and ideals that are directed towards tropes like freedom, justice, equality, reason, and so on.</p>	<p><i>It is important that there is a major political understanding and willingness for allowing these types of measures. Democratic principles and collaborative responsibility is always important, but even more so in times of crisis.¹¹³</i></p> <p><i>The government's obligations are to defend people's lives and health, while simultaneously relieve the effects on the jobs, wage workers, and society.¹¹⁴</i></p>
<p>Distinctive ways of thinking and questioning, relying on definite vocabularies and procedures for the production of truth.</p>	<p><i>[...] There are a few principles that guide our duties when faced with severe societal threats. These are the principles of responsibility, similarity and subsidiarity. This means that there are a couple of government agencies that make up the core of our mitigation of the situation, these are Folkhälsomyndigheten,</i></p>

¹¹¹ Stefan Löfven, March 27, "Ingen kan göra allt, men alla kan göra något. Det är snart påsk, och jag vill upprepa det som Folkhälsomyndigheten tidigare sagt - du som inte behöver resa, stanna hemma."

¹¹² Johan Carlson, March 27, "Vi ser i många andra länder där polisen måste springa ut på gatan och slå folk, tvinga in dem. [...] Jag tror man måste få en acceptans och förståelse. Vi har byggt väldigt mycket av vår strategi med smittskydd genom årtionden på acceptans och förståelse för de åtgärder som vidtas."

¹¹³ Isabella Lövin, April 7, "Det är viktigt att det finns ett stort politiskt samförstånd för den här typen av handlingsutrymme, demokratiska principer och ett gemensamt ansvarstagande är alltid viktigt. Men i kristider, synnerligen viktigt."

¹¹⁴ Stefan Löfven, April 7, "Regeringens uppgifter är att värna människors liv och hälsa, samtidigt som vi ska lindra effekten för jobben, löntagare, samhälle och de åtgärder som samhället vidtar innebär framförallt att vi vill plana ut den här berömda kurvan så att inte väldigt många blir svårt sjuka samtidigt."

<p>— " —</p>	<p><i>Socialstyrelsen, UD, and the regions where the actual groundwork is done.¹¹⁵</i></p> <p><i>We will never be able to regulate everything by law, we will never be able to prohibit all deleterious behavior, instead, it is now also a matter of common sense [folkvett]. There is an individual responsibility and each individual must take responsibility for themselves, their fellowmen, and their country.¹¹⁶</i></p>
<p>Category : Governmental Identifications</p>	<p>Examples</p>
<p>Characteristic ways of forming subjects, selves, persons, actors or agents.</p>	<p><i>There is an individual responsibility and every individual must take responsibility for themselves, their fellowmen, and for their country. If all do, then our society will prevail in this crisis.¹¹⁷</i></p> <p><i>People need to contemplate, the majority understand what is at stake and are aware of the risks, the most important thing is to do your own risk evaluation.¹¹⁸</i></p>

¹¹⁵ Dan Eliasson, March 2, “Som inrikesministern inledde så finns det några principer som vägleder vårt arbete vid svåra samhällspåfrestningar. Det är ansvarsprincip, likhetsprincip och närhetsprincip. Det här gör att det är några myndigheter som är kärnan i hantering av situationen. Det är Folkhälsomyndigheten, Socialstyrelsen, UD, och regionerna där det faktiska smittskyddsarbetet görs. Det hindrar inte att andra myndigheter följer arbetet, vår roll är att skapa samordning och helhet i arbetet.”

¹¹⁶ Stefan Löfven, March 27, “Vi kommer aldrig att kunna lagstifta om allt, vi kommer aldrig att kunna förbjuda allt skadligt beteende utan nu är det faktiskt också en fråga om folkvett. Det finns ett individuellt ansvar och varje individ måste ta ansvar för sig själv, för sina medmänniskor och för sitt land.”

¹¹⁷ Stefan Löfven, March 27, “Det finns ett individuellt ansvar och varje individ måste ta ansvar för sig själv, för sina medmänniskor och för sitt land. Om alla gör det, då kommer vårt samhälle att klara av också den här krisen.”

¹¹⁸ Johan Carlson, March 27, “Här får folk få fundera, det allra vet vad som gäller, förstår var riskerna ligger. Det viktigaste är att man gör en egen riskvärdering”.

4.1 Analysis

My analysis sets out to decipher and interpret statements made by government officials during the press conferences that address the status and mitigation of the covid-19 pandemic in Sweden. Here I present excerpts from my data collection, give contextual background and display governmental rationalities, techniques, and identifications. To understand how risk is perceived and mitigated I will identify governmental techniques, rationalities, and identifications in order to analyze how they consequently order reality, and thus render it governable. My theoretical framework asserts that what is made intelligible and governable is a matter of interconnected governmental discourses. Therefore what constitutes the perception of risk is more than just language or natural facts, it concerns the interplay of rationality, techniques, and identifications that in turn make risk intelligible.

I have devised the analysis into four sub-headings: (1) Principles and knowledge: I will elucidate upon the reliance and faith in bureaucracy and the expertise of *Folkhälsomyndigheten* being central and crucial to government policy. (2) Individuals, information, and trust: The analysis points to the importance of information and reciprocal trust between individual and authorities. (3) The governmental politics of life and death: I discuss the balance between protecting individual lives and the welfare of the population. (4) Law as complementary to norm: The analysis shows that the reliance on law as a tool for discipline and order is only utilized sparingly.

4.1.1 Principles and knowledge

The first press conference was held by the government on the 2nd of March 2020. The conference was the first of many more to come and it served the purpose of reassuring the people that the Swedish government was aware of the possible risks and that several preparedness measures were already put in place.

In Sweden, society's crisis preparedness is based on the so called principle of responsibility, this means that the organizations that are in charge of certain operations under normal circumstances remain responsible in a crisis situation. During mitigation of

a crisis the principles of subsidiarity and similarity are also put in place. This means that crises will be handled in the closest proximity possible and with methods and actions as similar as possible to normal conditions. If necessary, any government directives taken during a crisis are decided as usual by the government.¹¹⁹

Mikael Damberg showcases with this statement how the crisis strategy relies on three overarching principles. In short this means that any crises should be handled in the least exceptional sense possible, with the standard decision making procedures, in order for society as a whole to function and remain in order. This reaffirms that the value of bureaucracy is a firm principle worthy of protection within Swedish society. It would be feasible to imagine a rhetoric more along the lines of exceptionalism justified by a declared state of emergency. But the belief being conveyed here by the government is that things can and ought to be handled in a way that as closely as possible resembles the ordinary way of doing things.

The system of collaboration that rests upon the three principles even implies that the mitigation of infectious disease is not primarily a political matter:

There are a few principles that guide our work when faced with major hazards, These are the principles of Responsibility, Similarity and Subsidiarity, this means that there are a few government agencies that are the core in the mitigation of the situation. These are Folkhälsomyndigheten, Socialstyrelsen, UD and the regions where the actual disease prevention work is carried out.¹²⁰

Therefore these principles imply that during a crisis that concerns public health, it is not the government that carries the main responsibility. Furthermore, in matters that regard public health and the disease it is the government that answers to *Folkhälsomyndigheten* and not the other way around. This points to the fact that science is viewed not merely as the process of arriving to conclusions based on a scientific process, but as something that is free from interpretation and

¹¹⁹ Mikael Damberg, March 2, “I Sverige utgår samhällets krisberedskap från den så kallade ansvarsprincipen, det innebär att den organisation som ansvarar för en viss verksamhet under normala omständigheter och förhållande även har det ansvaret i en krissituation. Vid en krishantering gäller även närhets- och likhetsprincipen. Som innebär att kriser ska hanteras så nära händelsen som möjligt, och med arbetsformer så lika de ordinarie som möjligt.[...] Vid behov av regeringsbeslut under pågående hantering så fattas detta precis som vanligt av regeringen.”

¹²⁰ Dan Eliasson, March 2, “Som inrikesministern inledde så finns det några principer som vägleder vårt arbete vid svåra samhällspåfrestningar. Det är ansvarsprincip, likhetsprincip och närhetsprincip. Det här gör att det är några myndigheter som är kärnan i hantering av situationen. Det är Folkhälsomyndigheten, Socialstyrelsen, UD, och regionerna där det faktiska smittskyddsarbetet görs.”

separate from political discourse. This was made clear after a question was asked by a reporter about why Norway had suspended schools, while Sweden had not, and would not follow suit. The reasoning that was provided as an answer was that *Folkhälsomyndigheten* did not believe it to be effective, nor that it should be a political decision at all: *Folkhälsomyndigheten is the agency that always provides advice and tells the government what we need from a disease prevention perspective, so it is not just a matter of opinion.*¹²¹ The principle of responsibility is a governmental technique that leads to the fact that *Folkhälsomyndigheten* are presented in the Swedish response to the crisis as the sole eligible interpreters of the situation. In a sense this reduces political responsibility from the government, as the situation is mainly handled by non-political agencies and their appointed experts. Therefore, crisis is perceived to be mitigated in a manner free from the constraints of ideology and political priorities, this rationality derives its legitimacy from the sciences of epidemiology and public health.

4.1.2 Individuals, information, and trust

The Swedish strategy of mitigating the virus is based on a model of trust and collaboration.

[Our strategy] is built upon information and providing the population with knowledge [...] the success factors of our disease prevention is built on trust and faith [...] We also from the start strived to have a society that is as open as possible.¹²²

This asserts that the public is susceptible to information and instruction, that it is dependent on the notion of interpersonal trust, and that the best way to have a feasible action plan is if people willingly submit themselves to a kind of auto-isolation, as opposed to an enforced one. The aim is to have a symbiotic relationship between the citizens and the authorities that benefits both parties. This is consistent with the fact that in Sweden there is a high general level of trust in institutions, as has been previously shown in the research review.¹²³ The relationship between

¹²¹ Lena Hallengren, March 13, "Folkhälsomyndigheten som myndighet är ju alltid dom som rådgör och talar om för regeringen vad vi behöver ur ett smittskyddsperspektiv, så det är inte bara tyckande."

¹²² Johan Carlson, March 2, "Vi tror att vår strategi är framgångsrik i det här läget. Den bygger på information och kunnande till befolkningen. [...] framgångsfaktorn i smittskyddsarbetet är att det bygger på tillit och förtroende.[...] Vi har också från början strävat efter att så mycket som möjligt att ett öppet samhälle."

¹²³ *Supra* notes 74, 75.

individuals and the state aims to achieve compliance by rewarding such positive behavior collectively. Therefore the strategy adopted by the Swedish government not only presupposes an open society with mutual trust between all the nation's citizens, it also aims to guide society and identity further in this direction. This means that the strategy produces citizens capable of practising a kind of regulated freedom.

In line with observations made in the research review, the government adheres to the importance, in effective crisis management, of tailoring information to reach a broad range of subgroups in society: *Information is central and all individuals and actors need to understand and follow the best available knowledge in this situation.*¹²⁴ The reliance of individuals, corporations, and even the authorities themselves can be bolstered through transparency and guidance rather than with force or threats. There is however an element of paternalism hidden in the strategy of responsabilization, evident in the fact that the people need to be guided towards *the truth* and cannot be completely trusted with the task of finding information on their own. The statement that the government is providing the *best available knowledge*¹²⁵ serves as a technique to reaffirm a supposed dichotomy between correct and incorrect facts, rather than the alternative that there could be a myriad of options, opinions, valid critique, different priorities or strategies in mitigating the crisis at hand. Mikael Damberg provides another example of the rationality that the population can in general be trusted: *It is always important to mind the source when taking part of information, and to stay updated on advice and recommendation from the authorities.*¹²⁶ At the same time he emphasizes the fact there is a great need for scepticism towards information from sources that are external to the government. As such, information functions as a governmental tool that aims to create active, responsible citizens whose conduct can still be influenced and thus controlled. This is a governmental act of identification wherein transparency and inclusion become fundamental in the process of governmental responsabilization, as individuals in a governmental society are primarily seen as an asset. Since governmentality is

¹²⁴ Olivia Wiksell, March 6, "Det är mycket viktig, informationen är central, och att förstå kommunikationen, att alla individer och berörda aktörer, förstår och följer, bästa tillgängliga kunskap i det här läget."

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Mikael Damberg, March 2, "Det som alltid är viktigt att kontrollera källan till den information som man tar del av, och hålla sig uppdaterad kring de råd och rekommendation som myndigheter ger."

inherently bent on positive production in the service of the whole societal body, it must therefore nourish and manage mainly by means that are primarily positive. But there is still an awareness of the possibility that the asset that is the population could turn into a liability if not managed properly.

Larsson and Rådestad argue in their study that within Swedish crisis management, there is a governmental rationale of limiting individual participation to simple contributions,¹²⁷ and that regardless of inclusive language concerning the importance of voluntary and collaborative efforts, the main use for promoting individual responsibility is to use participation as a way to unburden public authorities.¹²⁸ This is conclusive with observations made in the present study. Individual responsibility is one of the central tactics highlighted to handle the crisis. For example, after speaking at length about different actions, monetary compensations, reduction of costs, loans to corporations, etc., the prime minister adds that: *However, every citizen also has to continuously abide by their duties. Follow official recommendations, continue to stay updated, and if you have the ability to help someone who is at risk, with shopping, running an errand – do that!*¹²⁹ Individuals are encouraged to take part and contribute, mainly by means of their own resilience, but also to unburden the government with reference to values such as solidarity. However individual participation is not encouraged by virtue of the knowledge and possible alternative views that could come from critical agency: *The best advice is to always stay informed and follow the recommendations that the agencies in charge provide.*¹³⁰ Thus I conclude that individuals mainly serve here as a so-called ‘silent resource’, whose main duties are synonymous with compliance.

¹²⁷ Rådestad & Larsson, 2018, pp. 89-101.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Stefan Löfven, March 27, “Men varje medborgare har också att fortsätta göra sin plikt. Följ myndigheternas rekommendationer, fortsätt att håll dig uppdaterad, och har du möjlighet att hjälpa en person som kanske tillhör en riskgrupp med att handla eller uträtta något annat ärende – gör det!”

¹³⁰ Stefan Löfven, March 2, “Det bästa rådet är att alltid hålla sig informerad och följa de råd som ansvariga myndigheter tillhandahåller.”

4.1.3 The governmental politics of life and death

Lena Hallengren said on the 11th of March, as the first death from covid-19 had been confirmed in the country, that now was the time to: *take every measure in order to stop the spread*.¹³¹ And that in order to make sure that the elderly and people at elevated risk are protected, a restriction banning events with more than 500 people was put in place: *It is against this background [to stop the spread] that we have chosen to ban public gatherings with more than 500 people*.¹³² Here I would point to a dissonance between the obligation of the state to *do what it takes* in order to mitigate the disease, which is argued repeatedly,¹³³ and the competing obligation of maintaining societal order. If the statement made by the Minister of Justice during the same press conference that *there is nothing more important than life and health*¹³⁴ has any truth to it, there are clearly ways imaginable of doing more than putting the limit at 500. To protect life at all cost would reasonably entail the implementation of stricter measures that would disrupt normal society to a more noticeable degree. This can be explained by the fact that life and health are not the only objectives being protected in the Swedish mitigation of the crisis. This is not only implicit, the Swedish prime minister Stefan Löfven made clear during a later conference that: *The government's obligations are to defend people's lives and health, while simultaneously we should relieve the effects on the jobs, wage workers, and society*.¹³⁵ Thus the risk of further spreading the disease – along with the consequent damages to the health, and risk of death within the population – is evaluated against the competing threat of the damages to society as a whole; those symptomatic of placing invasive restrictions upon the conduct of *homo economicus* and *homo socialis*. Johan Carlsson clarifies during the first press conference that: *It might not be the case that the spread of the disease and the infection itself is what have the largest impacts and*

¹³¹ Lena Hallengren, March 11, “framför allt måste vi vidta varje åtgärd som kan hejda smittan”.

¹³² Lena Hallengren, March 11, “vi behöver särskilt skydda äldre och personer i andra riskgrupper. Det är mot den bakgrunden som vi har valt att förbjuda allmänna sammankomster på mer än 500 personer.”

¹³³ See Conferences, March 11, April 7, etc.

¹³⁴ Morgan Johansson, March 11, “När allt kommer omkring finns det ju inget som är viktigare än liv och hälsa.”

¹³⁵ Stefan Löfven, April 7, “Regeringens uppgifter är att värna människors liv och hälsa, samtidigt som vi ska lindra effekten för jobben, löntagare, samhälle och de åtgärder som samhället vidtar innebär framförallt att vi vill plana ut den här berömda kurvan så att inte väldigt många blir svårt sjuka samtidigt.”

*consequences as such, but rather the measures forced to be taken to counter the infection.*¹³⁶ This shows that in the Swedish mitigation of covid-19 the health of the population is regarded from a biopolitical perspective; the perception of risk does not merely account for the calculations of how many might get ill, or die. The Swedish government is concerned with a plethora of values, rights and freedoms that are balanced in order to serve for the greatest good for the majority. The right to life, mainly for the elderly and the fragile, is balanced against the damages to the whole social body that quarantine, curfews and the shut-down of society would entail for the health of the population. *In some countries people have been locked inside, literally locked in their apartments for 6 weeks. That is not really an enviable situation neither for them or their governments.*¹³⁷ The Swedish governmental strategy of crisis management is to adapt society to the reality of extraordinary events in a slower but more controlled manner, both in order to achieve better adherence to the recommendations and to mitigate the negative impact that restrictions, self-isolation and social distancing might have on the health and well-being of the population.

In many other countries the police have to take to the streets, assault people, force them to go inside [...] I think you have to have acceptance and understanding, we have built much of our strategy with disease prevention through the decades on acceptance and understanding of the measures that are taken.¹³⁸

The need for the police to force people into obedience can be avoided if they willingly auto-police themselves. Discipline is a key term within governmentality that is conceptualized in the essence of Bentham's classic Panopticon, a prison-model which architecture made possible the penetrable gaze of all the prisoners at once. Individuals that are subjected to a field of visibility, and are themselves aware of their visibility, assume responsibility for the constraints of power. Governmentality aims to achieve discipline by inducing in the population a state of

¹³⁶ Johan Carlson, March 2, "Man kan säga så här, det kanske inte är smittspridningen och infektionen som sådan som får de största konsekvenserna utan de åtgärder som man tvingas vidta för att motverka infektionen."

¹³⁷ Johan Carlson, April 22, "I viss länder har människor suttit instängda, bokstavligen instängda i sina lägenheter i 6 veckor. Och det är ju ingen riktigt avundsvärd situation, varken för dom eller deras regeringar."

¹³⁸ Johan Carlson, March 27, "Vi ser i många andra länder där polisen måste springa ut på gatan och slå folk, tvinga in dem. [...] Jag tror man måste få en acceptans och förståelse. Vi har byggt väldigt mycket av vår strategi med smittskydd genom årtionden på acceptans och förståelse för de åtgärder som vidtas."

conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power.¹³⁹ It is even better if people do not see the *conduct of conduct* as something intrusive, but as something that is an intrinsic part of everyday life. As Rose and Miller have noted, making people write things down and count them – registering births, reporting incomes, filling in censuses – is itself a kind of governing of them, and in turn them governing themselves.¹⁴⁰ *People need to understand the importance of doing things a certain way, I think those principles apply here as well. Now we set a new norm for the fact that we have a continued spread of the disease.*¹⁴¹ Meticulous handwashing, social distancing, staying home at the first sight of symptoms, and working from home are normalized and it becomes seen as a self-evident fact that these are reasonable adjustments to ordinary life. This is achieved in Sweden through the complex structures of programmes, calculations, techniques, modes of operations, documents and procedures through which authorities seek to render the situation intelligible and calculable and give effect to governmental ambitions.

4.1.4 Law as complementary to norm

There is very little mention of the realistic possibility that people, with their own personal interests, aspirations, and goals, will utilize this free space to pursue their personal goals and aspirations. This could therefore be in conflict with intersubjective, or reciprocal, solidarity with the rest of society and others' safety. Stefan Löfven addresses the topic only in so far as to say that:

No one is above the responsibility that everyone now has, and the person who in this situation, violates the recommendations and guidelines by for example excessive travel within the country [...] that person takes on a heavy responsibility. The recognition of the severity of the crisis must be shared by all.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ For his conceptualization of the panopticon see in general Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1991.

¹⁴⁰ Rose & Miller, 1992 p. 187.

¹⁴¹ Johan Carlson, March 27, “Att folk förstår att det är viktigt att göra på ett visst sätt. Och jag tror de principerna gäller även här. nu sätter man en ny norm för man har en fortsatt smittspridning.”

¹⁴² Stefan Löfven, March 27, “Det finns ingen som kan stå över det ansvar som varje person nu har, och den som i det här läget bryter mot råd och anvisningar genom att till exempel företa en onödig resa i landet. [...] den tar på sig ett mycket tungt ansvar. Insikten om krisens ansvar måste delas av alla.”

This supports the notion that norm is the preferred way of shaping conduct in governmental societies. Rather than the alternative of speaking about any consequences, legal or otherwise, the prime minister's statement appeals to a sort of *Volksgeist*. The identification sought is one that would never truly violate the recommendations with ill intent, but if they do for whatever reason, they must have a good reason. *Here people need to contemplate, the majority understand what is at stake and are aware of the risks, the most important thing is to do your own risk evaluation.*¹⁴³ This entails that the perception of risk is ultimately up to each individual, but through recommendations the government aims to shape the possible field of action so that the preferred conduct is rewarded and perceived as the right thing to do. This is a part of governmental identification that reinforces how each individual govern themselves.

As previously mentioned, Sweden's mitigation of covid-19 does not exclusively rely on norms nor only on individuals that take responsibility. The concept of responsabilization is utilized as a preferable option to a larger reliance on exceptional and repressive means of control, however the law is utilized to some degree as an instrument to guide and shape conduct. The aforementioned ban on gatherings with over 500 people that was put in place on the 11th of March was followed by a stricter ban on the 27th of March prohibiting gatherings with over 50 people: *Breaking the regulation is a criminal offence, with fine or prison up to six months.*¹⁴⁴ Here we can see that the traditional use of sovereign power aids where biopower ends, the law in governmental societies is used as a complementary measure to that of norm. One of the very potent risks acknowledged in Sweden was the fact that nursery homes accommodates large groups of very old and fragile people, who are consequently exposed to a high degree of risk by being packed in one place. It was left to the administrators of specific nursery homes how they wanted to handle visitations up until the government on 7th of April officially banned visitations to nursery homes all together. This decision was taken in reaction to the rapid spread of the virus, and the consequent high death toll in Swedish nursing homes: *The government was quick to*

¹⁴³ Johan Carlson, March 27, "Här får folk får fundera, det allra vet vad som gäller, förstår var riskerna ligger. Det viktigaste är att man gör en egen riskvärdering".

¹⁴⁴ Mikael Damberg, March 27, "Förbudet är straffsanktionerat, den som ändå skulle anordna en sådan sammankomst eller tillställning riskerar böter eller fängelse upp till 6 månader."

*provide a sharp recommendation not to make visits to nursery homes, and to secure and make this durable and help the personnel with upholding visitation restrictions, a national restriction is now in place.*¹⁴⁵ In the case where norm and recommendations were determined to be inadequate in their ability to achieve the desired outcome, law was utilized as a last resort. The governmental rationality of reluctance to use law and regulations is prominent in the governments mitigation of the crisis as the prime minister on the same conference said:

It is of course pivotal that you who work in a nursery home do not come to work if you have symptoms, and I take for granted that there is not a single employer that will make employees work when showing symptoms.¹⁴⁶

Here it is not seen as an option to regulate this issue, even if it would be feasible to have a legal framework that prohibits this problem, it is seen as outside the scope of what governmental regulations can possibly accomplish. There is an assumption made here, that is not self-evident, that the risks associated with covid-19 will outweigh corporations and businesses interests in making a profit. Or at least that it will be temporally evaluated as such due to the social expectation brought forth by norm and government recommendations.

Law is evidently used to some degree, and in exceptional ways, but nonetheless to the smallest degree possible. Stefan Löfven ended the conference about the new regulation by saying the following:

We will never be able to regulate everything by law, we will never be able to prohibit all deleterious behavior, instead, it is now also a matter of common sense [folkvett]. There is an individual responsibility and each individual must take responsibility for themselves, their fellowmen, and their country.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Stefan Löfven, April 7, "Regeringen gick tidigt ut med en skarp rekommendation att inte göra besök på äldreboenden, och för att säkra uthålligheten i det och också ge personalen bättre förutsättningar att upprätthålla lokala besöksförbud så infördes ett nationellt besöksförbud."

¹⁴⁶ Stefan Löfven, April 7, "Det avgörande är naturligtvis att du som arbetar i äldreomsorgen inte går till jobbet med symptom, och jag utgår också från att det inte finns 1 enda arbetsgivare som uppmanar att anställda att arbeta trots symptom."

¹⁴⁷ Stefan Löfven, March 27, "Vi kommer aldrig att kunna lagstifta om allt, vi kommer aldrig att kunna förbjuda allt skadligt beteende utan nu är det faktiskt också en fråga om folkvett. Det finns ett individuellt ansvar och varje individ måste ta ansvar för sig själv, för sina medmänniskor och för sitt land."

This is once more consistent with my theoretical insights into governmentality, wherein the governmental rationality treats the law as one of many administrative techniques that can be employed to regulate the life of the population.¹⁴⁸ Primarily, the law and the use of threat of force is used as complementary instruments to the conduct achieved by normalizing practices. As such, laws are mainly seen as having a normative effect rather than a discouraging or repressive one.

The government's focus is obviously to care for the life and health of the people, that is why I am convinced that the Swedish people will have a great deal of understanding for the need for these kinds of decisions [the ban on 500 people]¹⁴⁹

Even when the government is using traditional means of suppression, it is still seen as a requisite that these governmental techniques must have a general level of acceptance in order for it to have the desired effect of shaping conduct in any meaningful way. What constitutes a risk, as in, what values and rights are incorporated as being at risk is not something neutral, neither is what corresponding interventions in light thereof are deemed feasible. Risk in the Swedish mitigation of covid-19 is therefore produced and reproduced through the interplay of rationality, techniques, and identifications that in turn make it intelligible.

4.2 Discussion

Much attention has been given to the fact that Sweden stands out with a relatively high death toll compared to other countries.¹⁵⁰ I am not interested in this discussion on a basis of comparison, or whether the death toll is to be seen as an indication of failure of the state. My study eschews any attempt to place judgement on the actual effectiveness of the Swedish response. Nor does it strive to evaluate the impact of the ramifications of the virus itself or the interventions taken to mitigate it. My endeavour instead solely focuses on *how* the strategy works through the theory of

¹⁴⁸ Oksala, 2013, p. 322.

¹⁴⁹ Mikael Damberg, March 27, "Regeringens fokus är naturligtvis att värna människors liv och hälsa, därför är jag övertygad om att svenska folket har en stor förståelse för att den här typen av beslut kan behöva fattas."

¹⁵⁰ Savage, Maddy, "Coronavirus: Has Sweden got its science right?", BBC News, 25 April 2020.

governmentality. Regardless of why the discrepancy of death toll is present, I want to draw focus to the fact that at the time of writing, and with reference to my available material, there are no real acknowledgements to the deaths being a regrettable tragedy. The only mention was the first time that a person in Sweden lost their life in connection to the virus. The person was not named. Besides that brief mention, throughout the press conferences there has been no mention of memorials, respectful minutes of silence, or monuments honouring the victims; nothing that would give meaning, or serve as apologetic in connection to their deaths. In times of war or armed conflict, deaths must be seen as productive. In order for the suffering of the people, the soldiers, to not have been in vain, their sacrifices must serve a purpose. In a governmental society like Sweden, the deaths of the people are not made meaningful in any way, instead the rationality is bent on making death an acceptable part of ordinary life. Death is always present, for example when it occurs in hospitals and nursery homes death is seen as an integrated and accepted part of modern society. The normality is not questioned, and the consequences of normalized actions become themselves normalized. The calculative rationality of modern liberal societies is always present as a discursive structure. This is what makes it possible that most aspects of society come with an acceptable threshold for risk: there is no given number, but nonetheless most societies accept a certain level of traffic related deaths in order to have efficient transportation.

The notions of biopolitics and governmentality are not concerned with death, but with life. We can accept a certain degree of death as long as there is something more than bare life as its opposite. Soldiers can die in service of something meaningful, but no one wants to die in order for traffic to be efficient. War is something exceptional and thus exceptional deaths are to be accepted. Traffic related deaths, however, are ordinary. They are accepted, not because of their exceptional state but because they are normalized. Therefore, death related to traffic or cardiovascular disease need not, and cannot be meaningful, but rather it is *hidden away* and forgotten by virtue of its prevalence in everyday life. The same goes for other public health issues such as alcohol and tobacco consumption. Those corresponding deaths are the price the population pays to have the freedom to indulge in risk related behaviors. Death becomes

normalized, as we can see throughout the Swedish state's response to the covid-19 pandemic, when the benefits of prosperous life for the many outweigh the suffering of the few. The people who lose their lives to covid-19 could be seen as being sacrificed in service to the overall health and well-being of the population. Through a governmental rationality of biopolitics the deaths of the old and fragile are seen as productive as they benefit the welfare, happiness and general health of the majority.

The covid-19 pandemic *qua* pandemic is in and of itself a spectacle, something exceptional. However, what the Swedish non-exceptional strategy does is transforming a pandemic into something else. The corona outbreak has, then, successfully to some extent been absolved within the framework of an ordinary, annual, and *normal* flu.

The rights of the individual versus the rights of the collective is important here. The notion of human rights stipulates that all are equal, and that the right to life as a human, should clearly outweigh the right to freedom as a consumer. But as I have argued, the humanist assumption that life should always come first has been challenged during the pandemic, by making it clear that there is always a threshold for the acceptable cost. It is possible however that the reality of acceptable deaths will be viewed in a new light during or after this pandemic. Governmental societies' approach to human rights needs to be scrutinized in the workings of policy, programmes, and aspects of everyday life; but even more so during exceptional emergencies.

The limitations connected to my study have originally been presented in the method section. However I would now like to explore them from a more theoretical perspective in order to discuss some of the things that either were outside of the scope of my study or that the study was unable to address properly in other ways. One downside was the lack of a holistic perspective on what constitutes the *conduct of conduct* in Swedish society. Governmentality assumes the notion that power is everywhere and that it is not limited to a top-down relationship of dominance. My study only looks at the official government response and it therefore fails to address the myriad ways in which all aspects of society are affected, and the discourse these aspects consequently

produce and reproduce, as Rose and Miller highlight with their discussion on how power works.¹⁵¹ Civil society and the social realm play an important part within governmentality that could not be addressed properly through my material. I also recognize that any notion of how individuals are not merely silent recipients in a governmental project, together with any acknowledgement of critical agency that can create resistance, is left out from my study. I would encourage future research to consider a broader perspective on governance in order to better capture the interplay of all governmental regimes of practice.

¹⁵¹ See Rose & Miller, 1999.

5. Conclusion

This study set out to analyze the Swedish crisis-response in order to answer the research question of how risk is being understood and mitigated by the Swedish state in connection to covid-19. My study has served the important purpose of complementing existing research in the new context of covid-19. As stated earlier, government response to emergencies in Sweden has not been studied during a major crisis to any large degree, mainly because of the lack of large scale emergency events. Besides the contributions made by analyzing an unprecedented event like covid-19, my study has also provided insight that validates findings from previous studies. Larssons and Rådestad argued that individual responsibility is a central part of Swedish crisis management, but that it is limited to undemocratic participation primarily in order to unburden the government. Their notion that individuals serve mainly as a so-called ‘silent resource’ is supported in my study as well.¹⁵²

My study has shown how the perception of risk is dependent on the governmental production of truth; as discussed in the theory chapter, risk in and of itself constitutes nothing. To return to my research question, the Swedish state perceives risk through the values of calculation, knowledge, and expertise inscribed in it. In the Swedish response, risk perception follows the governmental rationality of non-exceptionalism. Governmental techniques connect the notion of responsibility to the risks associated with the pandemic. Ultimately, the Swedish government’s response asserts that evaluating risk is up to each individual, identifying each responsible and autonomous citizen with free will. The mitigation of risk is made in line with the three principles of Swedish crisis management (responsibility, similarity, subsidiarity), wherein the governmental rationality of maintaining order is sought through a process of normalizing. The question of security is central here. Social and liberal forms of government are correlates of a liberal problematic of security in which the welfare of each citizen and the population as a whole is dependent on the security of social and economic processes. Risk is therefore perceived and mitigated in the least exceptional

¹⁵² See Rådestad & Larsson, 2018.

way possible to maintain the practices that produce and make up the welfare of the population. The biopolitical society divides between livable lives and lives not worth living and is thus in stark opposition to a sovereign conceptualization of human rights. Governmental techniques, rationalities and forms of identifications are all practices that need to be incorporated in future human rights theorizing in order to encapsulate the whole spectrum of possible human rights violations, it should not be possible to hide death behind its productive processes. Normalizing human rights violations is part of the biopolitical project by making grievable lives into statistics.

The insights provided in my analysis could serve as a valuable foundation for future research. For instance, future research could look at the Swedish state's response to covid-19 during a longer timeframe, comparatively to other states, or during different periods of the crisis. Another perspective would be to further investigate governmentality or risk perception within civil society to contribute to issues outside the scope of the present study. Furthermore, and perhaps most interestingly, the Swedish idiosyncratic strategy could be said to be the only governmental response of all action taken by nations vis-à-vis covid-19 and thus merits a lot of further attention from the academic and political community.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

	2/3	6/3	11/3	13/3	15/3	27/3	7/4	16/4	22/3
Stefan Löfven	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Johan Carlson	X	X			X	X			X
Isabella Lövin							X		
Olivia Wigzell	X	X			X				
Lena Hallengren	X		X	X		X	X		X
Mikael Damberg	X					X		X	
Morgan Johansson			X						
Dan Eliasson	X				X				

Appendix 2

Press conference March 2 2020

Statsminister Stefan Löfven:

För 1 månad sen, 1 feb så beslutade regeringen att klassa COVID-19 som allmänfarlig och samhällsfarlig sjukdom. Det beslutet innebär att FHM resp smittskyddsläkare kan vidta extraordinära smittskyddsåtgärder om det ett sånt behov skulle uppstå. Idag har regeringen krishanteringsråd sammanträtt under ledning av inrikesministerns statssekreterare, jag har även kallat till mig Damberg och Hallengren, tillsammans med Generaldirektörerna från de mest berörda myndigheterna. ECDC rapporterar idag att knappt 90.000 fall har registrerats globalt, drygt 80k i Kina. Sjukdomen har förorsakat 3046 kända dödsfall och varav 2900 av dem är i Kina. Den europeiska kommissionens ordförande Ursula von der Leyen har meddelat vid en presskonferens att ECDC nu bedömer att risknivån för EUs invånare nu är hög från att tidigare har varit måttlig. FHM har idag meddelat att risken för allmän smittspridning i Sverige har höjts från låg till måttlig. Det är viktigt att regeringen och att alla berörda myndigheter förbereder sig för att kunna hantera ett värre läge. Vi ska alltid vara förberedda mycket ordentligt, redo att agera, om situationen så kräver. Regeringen är redo att fatta beslut om myndigheterna bedömer att de behöver ökade befogenheter, resurser eller annat. Därutöver har vi informerat oss om att myndigheterna har beredskap och planering ifall smittspridningen ökar. Sveriges samlade expertis och förmåga är mobiliserad för att hantera den här situationen. Myndigheter och regioner har planerat och övat för det här och regeringen tar det här på allra största allvar. I det här läget känner många människor oro, det är fullt förståeligt och naturligt. Kanske särskilt äldre, kroniskt sjuk, personer som har besökt de drabbade områdena kan känna oro. Även de av oss som har nära och kära som tillhör de här grupperna. Det bästa rådet är att alltid hålla informerad, följa de råd som ansvariga myndigheter tillhandahåller. På det nationell informationsnumret 113 113 kan man få tillförlitliga svar på sina frågor dygnet runt. Det gäller också FHMs hemsida. Den som nyligen har besökt ett land där smittspridning pågår och känner sig sjuk ska kontakta 1177 via telefon och berätta om symptom och var man har varit.

Inrikesminister Mikael Damberg:

Jag kommer att fokusera på det krishanteringsarbete som pågår inom regeringskansliet. I Sverige samhällets krisberedskap från den så kallade ansvarsprincipen, det innebär att den organisation som ansvarar för en viss verksamhet under normala omständigheter och förhållande även har det ansvaret i en krissituation. Vid en krishantering gäller även närhets- och likhetsprinciperna. som innebär att kriser ska hanteras så nära händelsen som möjligt, och med arbetsformer så lika de ordinarie som möjligt. Regeringskansliet har ett kansli för krishantering med omvärldsbevakning som dygnet runt bevakar händelser som regering och regeringskansliet kan behöva hantera. Och kan initiera krishanteringsarbete om det krävs. Krishanteringsorganisationens arbete har

intensifierat med anledning av Coronaviruset, det är min statssekreterare som leder gruppen för strategisk samordning, och bedömer behovet av samordningsmöten för berörda statssekreterare i regeringskansliet, så kallade GSS-möte. Det finns krishanterings och beredskapsfunktioner på alla departement, på politisk och tjänstemannanivå, för att snabbt kunna inleda ett krishanteringsarbete, det har genomförts en rad GSS-möten där man följer utvecklingen och spridningen av viruset. Första GSS hölls redan i slutet på januari, och det har varit regelbundna möten sen dess. De har idag genomförts ett möte i krishanteringsrådet, för samverkan och informationsutbyte mellan regeringskansliet och berörda myndigheter. Krishanteringsrådet är ett forum för att upprätthålla en god beredskap inför allvarliga händelser och kriser, genom samverkan och ömsesidig orientering. Rådet sammankallas för ordinarie möten 2 ggr per år och kan även sammankallas vid behov, det har nu genomförts.

Vid behov av regeringsbeslut under pågående hantering så fattas detta precis som vanligt av regeringen. Som inrikesminister är jag också ansvarig för ett antal myndigheter som har bäring på dessa frågor, nära dialog med polismyndigheten, MSB och kustbevakningen för att hålla oss uppdaterade med myndigheternas arbete med det nya coronaviruset.

Jag vill också säga något om det stora informationsflöde som pågår just nu. Vi kan se att många personer är oroliga just nu. Det finns också en viss osäkerhet eftersom det är ett nytt virus, det ökar risken för ryktesspridning, både att människor omedvetet av okunskap sprider felaktigheter. Men det finns också grogrund för desinformation där avsändaren medvetet sprider felaktigheter, därför vill jag avsluta med att betona att det som alltid är viktigt att kontrollera källan till den information som man tar del av, och hålla sig uppdaterad kring de råd och rekommendation som myndigheter ger.

Lena Hallengren, Socialminister :

Som framgår väldigt tydligt, det är flera departement som är berörda av och agerar med anledning av det nya coronaviruset, socialdepartementet står i kontinuerlig kontakt med FHM och socialstyrelsen när det gäller både smittskyddsfrågor och hälso/sjukvårdens beredskap. Vi har en tät kontakt med EU-kommissionen och det finns ett starkt engagemang för det gemensamma krisberedskapsarbetet. Regeringen klassade COVID-19 som en samhällsfarlig sjukdom redan för 1 månad sen och det var bara inom ett dygn från att FHM inkom med sin hemställan. Det var 1 sätt att förbereda Sverige inför ett helt annat läge, som statsministern också var inne på. I fredags höll regeringen ett extra regeringssammanträde och beslutade att Sverige ska delta i en EU-gemensam upphandling av personlig skyddsutrustning för vårdpersonal. Det blir ytterligare ett verktyg för att stärka beredskapen, inte minst om vi skulle få ett mycket stort antal smittade i Sverige. Under hela tiden som COVID-19 utbrottet pågått så har UD följt utvecklingen och uppdaterat sina reserekommendation, det kommer man göra även fortsättningsvis. Idag har FHM rekommenderat TS att dra in trafikillståndet för bolaget Iran-Air som har direktflyg mellan Iran och Sverige. TS meddelar att man följer FHM:s rekommendation och därmed stoppas direktflyg mellan Sverige och Iran. Jag ser det som ett exempel på att

ansvarig expertmyndighet ständigt följer utvecklingen, uppdaterar råd och rekommendationer, och det är ett exempel på att andra myndigheter uppvisar en stor lyhördhet inför expertisens råd. i grunden är det så allt effektivt beredskapsarbete går till, vi planerar och förbereder oss för olika scenario, tar till oss av ny information och bedömningar och att regeringen och ansvariga myndigheter agerar utefter det.

Johan Carlson (FHM):

Från vår sida vill jag berätta av vi idag har gjort en ny riskbedömning, den avser inte läget i världen, och risken för att utbrottet utvecklas till en pandemi, det ligger på WHO, vår bedömning bygger på det svenska scenariot. Vi konstaterar att vi har 2 parametrar att titta på: risken för importerade fall, och risken för en spridning i samhället utanför de importerade fallen. Risken för importerade fall så kan vi konstatera att vi la den på hög förra veckan i en 5-gradig skala, nu går vi upp till 5 (mycket hög), vi har helt enkelt ganska många inkommande fall att hantera. På samma sätt konstaterar vi att risken för spridning i samhället, mindre utbrott eller lite större utbrott är nu lite högre än förut, vi lägger den på en medelhög nivå. Vad är det som gör att vi ändrat oss? Det är framförallt utvecklingen i vår omvärld. Utvecklingen i Iran som jag kommer tillbaka till och utbrottet i Italien. Italien är ju i Europas hjärta kan man säga, och vi ser där att vi får smittade människor överallt i Europa. Den här bedömningen bygger på ett fortsatt professionellt, ido, smittskyddsarbete ute i våra regioner. Som vi samordnar på vår myndighet. Vi tror att vår strategi är framgångsrik i det här läget. Den bygger på information och kunnande, till befolkningen, till inresande från olika håll. Den bygger på att människor med symptom som vistats i länder med känd smitta, söker vården. Så att man kan ställa diagnos, isolera patienterna, vårda om så behövs. Men också spåra smittan runt dessa persone. Det är ett arbete som pågår i alla regioner skulle jag vilja säga, även hos oss på FHM, när det gäller tåg, flyg och andra transportmedel. Vi har en lagstiftning som är väldigt kraftfull där man kan ta till väldigt kraftiga åtgärder. Men framgångsfaktorn i smittskyddsarbetet är att det bygger på tillit och förtroende. Att människor vet att söker man vård för sina symptom och problem så blir man omhändertagen och inte inlåst och bortförd. Det är en strategi som andra länder under andra tidsperioder har använts sig av och den är definitivt kontraproduktiv. Vi också från början strävat efter att så mycket som möjligt att ett öppet samhälle. Vi har inte till exempel begärt att Air-Chinas flyg från Kina har stängt ner, de har flugit 1 maskin i veckan visserligen bara. Det har fungerat väldigt väl, vi har kunnat informera patienterna, vi har kunnat återkoppla om vi har misstankar om smitta. Vi har haft en väldigt god kontakt med air-china och de kinesiska myndigheterna, vi har motsvarande kontakt med alla andra länder som är särskilt berörda. (syd)Korea är ett sånt land med stort utbrott, vi har fullt förtroende för att Koreanska myndigheter hanterat detta med kraft, och vi avser inte att på något sätt införa restriktioner mot Korea, de har visserligen inga direktflyg men man kan tänka sig andra restriktioner. Jag säger det för att jag vill kommentera Iran. När det gäller Iran så saknar vi förtroende för att de Iranska myndigheterna har grepp över läget, vi har i närmast okontrollerad situation, eller åtminstone en situation där vi inte får reda på

vad som gäller. Man redovisar inte siffror på ett tydligt sätt, man redovisar inte på ett tydligt sätt vilka medel som tillgrips och åtgärder som införs för att stävja det här. Tvärtom så har man snarast lagt locket på. Vi har en delegation från WHO i Iran, vi har ännu inte fått någon återkoppling men förutsätter att det kommer. Mot den bakgrunden så är det väldigt svårt att hantera inkomsten av patienter där vare sig vi eller det som kommer med flyget vet hur situation är och kan värdera sin egen situation. Sen spårar och försöker ta reda på om det sprids smitta från Iran. Så tycker vi att det är av smittskyddsskäl viktigt att direkttrafiken inte fortsätter tillsvidare, så länge situationen är som den är i Iran. Det innebär inte att vi avser vidta samma åtgärder mot andra flyg där vi har öppna kanaler och kan arbeta enligt den metod som vi gör.

Olivia Wigzell, generaldirektör för Socialstyrelsen:

Socialstyrelsen uppgifter är att samverka med landet 21 regioner och deras beredskapsorganisationen, i vår samverkan tar vi fram nationella lägesbilder och analyser. Myndigheten har en löpande inhämtning av information från regionerna, nu pågår arbetet med en fördjupad analys på myndigheten. Den omfattar som tidigare personal, materiel och infrastruktur, men på en fördjupad nivå, där vi frågar om hur beredskapen ser ut när det gäller ledning och styrning, förmåga att kunna prioritera och mobilisera resurser. Vi identifierar vilka behov som finns i sjukvård och sen ta ställning till om det är några ytterligare åtgärder som krävs från socialstyrelsen. Vi kartlägger bland annat hur vården har tränat och övat för att ta hand om smittade personer och personer med misstänkt smitta. Det här är ett område där staten kan behöva göra ytterligare insatser, till exempel genom träning och övning. det kan gälla både befintlig personal eller personal som vi ser i ett senare läge kommer in till sjukvården, kanske nyblivna pensionärer. Vår analys ska ge ett brett underlag för vilken typ av stöd och vägledning som behövs i sjukvården. Vi tänker att det kan vara i form av nationella prioriteringar och riktlinjer som vi behöver stödja sjukvården. Vi har ett annat området som är aktuellt för stöd, den kommunala hälso/sjukvården och socialtjänsten, där man vårdar de personer som statsministern uttryckte tillhör... de som... kan drabbas av coronainfektionen. Vi kommer se över behovet av särskilt stöd till äldreomsorgen från vår sida. Vårt arbete omfattar både situationen här och nu samt andra situationer som kan uppstå vid en förvärrad smittspridning. Vi bedömer att vi har ett bra samarbete med landets region för att sammanställa en god beredskap, och en god förmåga till prioritering, och också en bra beredskap att omdisponera och mobilisera resurser. Vi arbetar intensivt nationell och internationellt för att se hur vi kan förstärka sjukvården med ytterligare resurser även från nordiska samarbetet såväl som europeiska samarbetet. Det kan behöva i form av mobila vårdresurser eller ytterligare skyddsutrustning, där är vi inte idag men vi förbereder också för ett sånt scenario om det skulle komma.

Dan Eliasson, generaldirektör MSB:

Som inrikesministern inledde så finns det några principer som vägleder vårt arbete vid svåra samhällspåfrestningar. Det är ansvarsprincip, likhetsprincip och närhetsprincip. Det här gör att

det är några myndigheter som är kärnan i hantering av situationen. Det är FHM, socialstyrelsen, UD, och regionerna där det faktiska smittskyddsarbetet görs. Det hindrar inte att andra myndigheter följer arbetet, vår roll är att skapa samordning och helhet i arbetet. Det är ett arbete som bedrivs kontinuerligt. Vi har samverkanskonferenser med berörda aktörer varje dag i princip. Det som idag sker, just nu fokuserar vi på två saker. Det är det att myndigheter verkligen går igenom sin kontinuitetshandling och tittar på hur varuflöden och tjänsteflöden kan komma påverkas om det blir många sjuka, om många blir frånvarande från jobb. Vi tittar också på vad som händer om leveranser uteblir, för att vara förberedda utifall det skulle eskalera på något sätt. även om det inte finns några tecken på det idag som Johan säger. En annan fråga som vi tittar på är informationsgivningen. Vi vet att informationsgivningen vid den här typen av tillfällen så är behoven näst intill oändliga. Det är svårt för berörda aktörer att räkna till. Vi försöker att bidra till en daglig informationsgivning där berörda myndigheter deltar för att ge lägesbild och svara på frågor. Här hämtar vi inspiration från det arbete vi gjorde med skogsbränderna. För att tillgängliggöra oss för att skapa transparens och öppenhet kring vad som händer för någonting. Det är de 2 särskilda utmaningar vi jobbar med medan vi följer situation vidare.

Anders Thornberg, rikspolischef:

Polismyndigheten har grunduppdraget att upprätthålla allmän ordning och säkerhet samt se till att allmänheten får skydd och annan hjälp. Vi har stor vana av att hantera extraordinära händelser och polismyndigheten har också en avgörande förmåga i många krissituationer. PM har en nära samverkan med andra myndigheter och har den senaste tiden genom MSB haft kontinuerliga avstämningar med andra berörda myndigheter gällande coronaviruset. För att på ett samordnat och effektivt sätt minska påverkan på samhället. PM följer läge utvecklingen noga, och vi har vidtagit förberedelser för att hantera de uppgifter som åligger myndigheten vid en eventuell pandemi. Samhället ska vara tryggt och säkert även om vi utsätts för en större spridning av smitta i Sverige.