



LUND
UNIVERSITY

Problematizing Security in Education

A poststructural policy analysis of Swedish school security

Lovisa Rosberg

Lund University
Sociology of Law Department

Master Thesis (SOLM02)
Spring 2023



Supervisor: Ole Hammerslev

Examiner: Rustamjon Urinboyev

Abstract

During the last few years several violent school attacks have taken place in Sweden, leading to a debate in both the media and in politics concerning school security. There is pressure from the public to “make schools safer”, with some steps being taken on a legislative level. This thesis aims to understand how security is represented as a problem in the Swedish Education Act’s preparatory work, as well as further the understanding of securitization of schools in Sweden. The socio-legal relevance of the thesis is founded upon the societal influence on the legislation and the government. At the same time, research from a Swedish perspective on this topic is scarce, where this thesis can contribute with further knowledge. In order to accomplish this, Carol Bacchi’s (2009) *what’s the problem represented to be?* was employed as the method, along with Bacchi and Goodwin’s (2016) poststructural policy analysis. These were applied to the policies at hand: Bill 2021/22:160 and the committee directives 2022:86 and 2023:22. The findings of this thesis illustrates that there were three problem representations of security that could be discerned in the policies. These included the 1) problems of clarity and definitions, 2) uncertainty and 3) school security, with assumptions of violence, authority and “trygghet” underpinning them. Taken as a whole, this showed that the problem representations had discursive effects regarding security, limiting it to be understood as more repressive in the form of social control and governing throughout the policies. Regarding securitization, it became clear that security has taken a place in the Swedish education system, through the “necessary” prioritization of security due to the perceived increase of violence. This was, through the poststructural policy analysis, understood as increasing the governing role of schools, using security as a more symbolic tool.

Keywords: Education Act, school security, securitization, poststructural policy analysis, WPR.

Acknowledgements

This thesis marks the culmination of my six years studying at Lund University, with the Department of Sociology of Law being my home for the majority of the time. It has been an inspiring experience of learning, which I will hold dear for a long time.

This master thesis would not have been possible without the support from friends and family, who have kept me motivated throughout the process. I would also like to thank my classmates for valuable discussions and company during the writing process. Without this support the thesis would not have been possible.

I also owe thanks to my supervisor, Ole Hammerslev, for support and encouragement throughout the thesis. The comments and input has been invaluable for finishing this thesis.

Thank you.

Table of contents

1. Introduction	5
1.1 Research problem	6
1.2 Aim and relevance	6
1.3 Research questions	7
1.4 Outline	7
2. Defining key concepts	8
2.1 Security	8
2.2 Securitization	10
3. Legal background	11
3.1 Education Act	12
3.2 Committee directive	13
4. Literature review	14
4.1 School security in a Nordic context	15
4.2 School security in the United States	17
4.3 Securitizing education	18
4.4 Summary and reflections	19
5. Theoretical framework	20
5.1 Poststructural policy analysis	21
5.1.2 <i>Governmentality</i>	22
5.1.3 <i>Power and discourse</i>	23
5.2 Summary and reflections	24
6. Methodology	25
6.1 Bacchi's WPR-approach	25
6.1.1 <i>The six questions of WPR</i>	26
6.2 Research material	28
6.2.1 <i>Delimitations</i>	29
6.3 Reliability and validity	30
6.4 Methodological and ethical considerations	31
7. Analysis	32
7.1 Problem representations in Proposition 2021/22:160 and committee directives 2022:86 and 2023:22	32
7.1.1 <i>The problem of clarity and definitions</i>	32
7.1.2 <i>The problem of student participation</i>	34
7.1.3 <i>The problem of authority</i>	35
7.1.4 <i>The problem of security in school</i>	37
7.2 What assumptions underpin the problem representations in the policies?	38

7.2.1 <i>The assumption of “trygghet”</i>	39
7.2.2 <i>Assumption of uncertainty</i>	40
7.2.3 <i>Assumption of violence</i>	42
7.4. What is unproblematic and silenced in the problem representations?	42
7.4.1 <i>Resources</i>	43
7.4.2 <i>The ambiguity of authority</i>	44
7.4.3 <i>Social measures</i>	45
7.5. What effects are produced by the problem representations?	46
7.5.1 <i>Discursive effects</i>	46
7.5.2 <i>Subjectification</i>	47
7.5.3 <i>Lived effects</i>	49
8. Discussion and conclusions	49
8.1 Conclusions	51
8.2 Suggestions for future research	54
9. References	55

1. Introduction

Over the last few years in Sweden, four different violent school attacks have occurred, with three of them taking place in Skåne within a year. In Malmö, a student at a high school brutally murdered two teachers in the school building, before being apprehended by police. The other two happened in Eslöv and Kristianstad, where the perpetrators walked into their own schools and attacked students and teachers alike (Englund 2022). After all these events, safety and security in school have become a frequently debated topic in Sweden, both in the media and in politics. Even though these types of violent attacks previously have been rare, there are now more and more calls from the public to make schools safer. Teachers all over Sweden are now being educated in what to do in case of an active violent assailant on campus, barricading doors and practicing lockdown drills (Brolin 2022; SVT 2022). Apart from these more extreme events, there has simultaneously been an increase in incidents of other school violence, such as fighting and bullying, and a more situational crime prevention perspective dominating schools (SVT 2019). Meanwhile, teachers and educators are calling for help from higher authorities in order to deal with this new wave of violence, which has been answered by an investigation. There are also opinions about the legislation being confusing and inapplicable to these new situations, coming from educators themselves (Hedman 2022; Martorell, 2022).

Departing from these events and the following debate, Swedish schools are seemingly taking steps towards keeping students “safer”. Using different tactics and tools in order to create *trygghet*, i.e. “safeness”, has become more and more common (Tryggare Sverige 2023). There is also the question if Sweden is leaning towards an American approach to school safety, with ideas of teachers being able to stop-and-search students (Eriksson 2022). This focus on security and safety is a new development in Swedish education, which I find very interesting. This process of making schools safer can be related to the concept of securitization, i.e. transforming regular political issues into issues of security, which seems to be taking place in the education system of Sweden through efforts from municipalities and lower government institutions, but also on a legislative front (Utbildningsdepartementet 2022).

1.1 Research problem

The current public debate in the media, as showcased above, has put more pressure on the government and legislators to “make schools safer”. Steps have been taken in some ways, mostly through initiatives of organizations such as the foundation of Tryggare Sverige, or individual municipalities. My curiosity for this research area was piqued while doing an internship at a municipality in Skåne, being tasked with surveying the security and safety in a particular school and coming up with suggestions of what could be done to increase this. Through this internship, I got the opportunity to interview teachers and students, as well as conduct observations. The Education Act does include chapters concerning security and preventative work, but is still difficult for schools, in particular its staff, to utilize in their daily work. This ambiguity of security appeared in my interviews with staff, as well as with the students. While I came from a background of introducing more social and caring measures to increase security, the situational perspective of using security measures such as cameras, limits to access and training for violent situations was what became most prevalent in the wants of school staff. As this differed to my picture of how school security could be understood, I became more interested in the topic.

This is seemingly a turning point in how we think about security in an educational setting from a Swedish perspective, which makes it an interesting research problem. Understanding how “security”, a very abstract concept, is represented and viewed in Swedish legislation can help the understanding of what is happening. A part of this is also the securitization of school that appears to be taking place, which has not been thoroughly studied in a socio-legal context. It is therefore important to contribute with research on this topic, as to start a discussion on what school security is, should be, and could be.

1.2 Aim and relevance

The introduction paints a picture of a harsher, more violent school climate which all levels of government are trying to ameliorate in different ways. From a socio-legal perspective, the legal position and its development is therefore of interest. Security has overtime become a bigger concept in society (Zedner 2009), which now is influencing legislation and the government. The aim of this thesis is therefore to understand how security is represented in the proposition (Prop. 2021/22:160) and committee directives (Dir. 2022:86; Dir. 2023:22), relating to the Education

Act. The public debate on school violence and school security seemingly has influenced the government and their view on security in an educational context. Due to this, it becomes interesting to explore this topic. This first part of the aim will be analyzed using a discourse analysis, more specifically Carol Bacchi's (2009) what the problem is represented to be (WPR). The thesis also aims to explore the concept of securitization, in particular the securitization of schools. Looking at how security is represented in the policies can offer a broader understanding of securitization in the Swedish educational system, and how this is developing. This will be grounded in the theoretical framework, a Foucauldian-influenced poststructural policy analysis.

This thesis topic is relevant to the field of sociology of law in order to understand how the increased violence, and subsequent public debate, has influenced the ways in which legislators approach making changes. Understanding how lawmakers problematize and view security in an educational context is relevant, to see what direction this process is going and lead to an understanding of the process of securitization. Apart from a purely empirical interest, there is also a lack of research concerning this topic in a Swedish context which also makes it relevant.

1.3 Research questions

In order to accomplish the aim of this thesis, two research questions have been formulated:

- How is security represented as a problem in the Education Act and its preparatory work?
- How can securitization of Swedish schools be further understood?

1.4 Outline

This section outlines the disposition of the thesis, consisting of eight different sections. This first section is made up of an introduction to the topic of the thesis, as well as the research problem, aim and research questions that the thesis uses. The socio-legal relevance is also explained in this section. The second section defines the key concepts of security and securitization, as they are a fundamental part of the rest of the thesis. The third part, legal background, provides an overview of what legislation exists when it comes to security in schools, as well as a more in-depth review of the policies that are used for the analysis. The fourth section of the thesis is the literature review, which provides an understanding of what research that has been conducted concerning school security and securitization, both from a Scandinavian perspective as well as an American.

The following section, the fifth, is the theoretical framework, which defines and outlines the theoretical stance of the thesis. After this, the sixth section provides the methodology used in order to conduct the analysis, also including empirical material, reflections on validity and reliability as well as ethical and methodological considerations. The seventh part of the thesis is the analysis. Lastly, the eighth section concludes the thesis, providing a discussion of the analysis, what conclusions can be drawn and suggestions for future research.

2. Defining key concepts

Security and securitization are the basis of the research conducted in this thesis, concepts which can seem quite abstract and diffuse. In order to establish a common understanding of what is meant when using these concepts throughout the thesis, this section aims to define them. As security can seem quite broad, apart from abstract, the definition of this concept makes use of Lucia Zedner's (2009) division of security into four different categories: subjective, objective, security as a pursuit, and finally security as a symbol. These different categories of security will be used in order to operationalize what "kind" of security is apparent in the policies when analyzing. Securitization is also defined, through the foundation laid by the Copenhagen School (Buzan et al. 1998) and how it can be seen in an educational setting. Taken as a whole, these two concepts are key in understanding the thesis.

2.1 Security

Departing from Lucia Zedner's (2009) writings on security, this thesis makes use of her idea of different ways to look at security. Firstly, security can be seen as an objective state. The objective state of security suggests a condition without threats, which in simple terms makes security the condition of being protected from threats. This also implies that the definition of security is related to what is deemed as a threat, i.e. military security is defined by referencing the threat, which is armed conflict. Achieving an objective state of security is therefore measured through the policies created to reduce or thwart a certain threat. It is also reasonable to acknowledge that a perfect objective state of security is seemingly unattainable, but something to aspire towards (Zedner 2009).

On the opposite hand we have security as a subjective state, which is the subjective sense of one's own safety and feeling of security. It is more of an existential state, that an individual feels safe due to a lessening of the feeling of insecurity or unsafety in some way. An important thing to mention is that the subjective state of security can be related to the objective state, but might as well be unrelated. As an example, elderly people often report a fear of assault outside the home, whereas they are statistically at a low risk of this (Zedner 2009). This understanding of security is closely related to the Swedish concept *trygghet*, which does not have a direct English translation. Despite this, it can be understood through security as a subjective state, in that it is an individual's feeling and experience of safety and security (Zedner 2009). As will be discussed in the legal background (section 3), *trygghet* is frequently used in the laws and preparatory works concerning school safety and security.

In relation to the objective and subjective state of security, security can also be seen as a pursuit according to Zedner (2009). Thinking of security as a pursuit, instead of the goal, is to recognize that it is unreachable and in most cases temporary. Security must constantly be put in relation to threats, even those still unknown, and then be revised accordingly. This makes security a more adaptable concept, not tying it down to a specific reference but is instead connected to policies and practices that are changing. Therefore, security as a pursuit can also be seen as a "practice" of security.

Security as a word or concept is very powerful in society, which leads us to the idea of security as a symbol. It can, as previously mentioned, have many meanings for different people, making it a valuable rhetorical tool in society. This is what lays the foundation for politicians making promises to tackle certain safety issues in communities, as well as stickers signifying DNA-marking in a neighborhood. While these things rarely have an actual impact on averting threats and increasing security, they can be reassuring and persuading in the sense that citizens feel that their concerns are being taken seriously. Symbolic security can also be seen as "security theater", i.e. measures taken in the name of security, but in reality only taken to alleviate public fear (Zedner 2009).

As this section shows, security as a concept could be divided into four different categories, ranging from an objective state to a subjective sense of security, or symbolic and practical ways of employing the concept. It is questionable whether these divides can be clearly differentiated in reality. This being said, this way of viewing security is useful for analysis, which is what this paper aims for. These distinctions and different views of security can thus further the understanding of school security, and how security is problematized and represented in Swedish policy.

2.2 Securitization

As discussed in the conceptualization of security above, security as a concept has been used as a powerful tool. When using security to justify policy or other types of action, other interests take the backseat. It can seem obvious that security is a prerequisite, taking precedence over things such as welfare or education. When doing this, all problems in society become viewed through the lens of security, widening the concept to encompass other arenas as well. This way of using security, in order to prioritize a policy or get more resources, can be called *securitization* (Zedner 2009). Securitization has its beginnings in the Copenhagen School which described it as taking politics a step further, framing the issue as a special type of politics or above politics. They described securitization as the political level on which

“the issue is presented as an existential threat to the referent object by a securitizing actor through so-called “speech acts” and requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure.” (Buzan et al. 1998)

Since the term was coined, it has evolved and been used to understand how ordinary things can be transformed into issues of security. It is through securitization that one can claim a certain new development or issue is threatening security enough to be deserving of immediate attention and action, perhaps through policy (Kaunert & Yakubov 2017; Durodie 2016). Securitizing policy can thus take the attention away from the fundamental problems that exist, focusing instead on safeguarding and the more “compelling” idea of security. (Zedner 2009)

Since this thesis focuses on securitization in an educational context, the term school securitization will also be elaborated on. It departs from the idea of security expanding into the realm of school, in an effort to make students and staff safer. School securitization has mostly been described in an American context, connected with increased focus on security in policies and practices relating to schools. It can also be framed as being concerned with safeguarding the students, as well as surveilling them (Elwick & Jerome 2019). This expanded securitization has come about as a response to increased violence and crime in school settings, resulting in an intensification of tangible security measures, such as locked doors, security cameras, and/or resource officers (Madfis, Hirschfield & Addington, 2020) Securitizing education in this way, may be taking attention away from the deeper reasons behind school violence and crime, as is the case with the concept of securitization as a whole. There are more critical ways of viewing the securitization of school, seeing it as a form of governing in order to control students. This is done by using different actors (i.e. teachers, staff) and policies, in the name of increasing security (Nguyen 2017). School securitization can therefore be said to be an example of how *security* has influenced the educational sector, an example of securitization in practice.

3. Legal background

The legal framework which all schools work according to, is the Education Act (SFS 2010:800). It entails many aspects of both running a school, as well as what obligations both the school and its students have. This law has been revised and updated many times since its inception in 2010, to make changes deemed necessary by the government and the lawmakers. The latest adopted changes relate to chapters 5 and 6, which concentrate on safety, security and the study environment, following Proposition 2021/22:160. Safety and security in school has also been debated in the parliament, resulting in a committee which is exploring aspects of this topic. Therefore the committee directive is also relevant when explaining the legal background for this thesis. This section of the thesis will give an overview of the legal framework, which for this thesis includes these different parts. It will also be the basis of the empirical material, which will be further discussed in section 4.3.

3.1 Education Act

For this thesis, the focus will be on chapters 5 and 6 of the Education Act (SFS 2010:800). These two chapters contain the regulations regarding safety, security and the study environment. The aim of these chapters, in an overarching way, is for all individual schools to actively engage with these concepts, making the school safe and secure for the students who attend it. Chapter 5 is about the feeling of security and the study environment. The main aim of this chapter can be summarized with paragraph 3, which says that all education should be characterized by feeling safe, as well as being conducted in a calm environment. The school should also ensure that some kind of preventative work is being done to ensure this (SFS 2010:800). The majority of this chapter of the Education Act, i.e. paragraphs 6-24, consist of what power and authority the school and its staff have, in order to create this safe study environment. These paragraphs also give options of disciplinary measures available for staff. An example of this is paragraph 6, that gives staff the right to take immediate and temporary necessary measures to ensure the safety of students. This is exemplified as the right to physically intervene to avert violence, degrading treatment, or other disorderly conduct (SFS 2010:800).

Moving on to chapter 6, this chapter contains regulations concerning measures against degrading treatment. Degrading treatment is defined as a behavior that is not connected to one of the grounds of discrimination found in the Discrimination Law (SFS 2008:567), but is degrading a student's dignity in some way. The definition is broad in order to encompass more situations, since it is a very subjective concept. In this chapter, there are requirements and obligations concentrating on the school. The school's mandator, i.e. responsible authority, has to ensure that these obligations that are described in the chapter are fulfilled. These obligations can be summarized as a goal-oriented work, and duty, of preventing degrading treatment. An example of this work can be found in paragraph 8, which mandates a plan of action against degrading treatment. This plan must contain measures of preventing this type of treatment, what measures are to be taken for the school year, as well as evaluating the previous work that has been done. There is also an obligation for staff to report, investigate and remedy any degrading treatment that is discovered, as stipulated in paragraph 10. All together, paragraphs 6-16 contain different obligations and measures that the school must take on, in relation to degrading treatment (SFS 2010:800).

The Education Act has been recently revised, following Proposition 2021/22:160. This proposition focused on revising the law in order to increase the feeling of safety in the study environment. The aim for the proposition was to clarify what preventive measures and work schools' need to conduct, as well as the concepts of security (i.e. trygghet) and a calm study environment. It also explored the authority of teachers, and what rights they have to use their authority and power in a school setting. A substantial part of this proposition was focused on chapter 5 of the Education Act, since the focus was the feeling of safety in schools. To exemplify what this proposition resulted in, chapter 5 paragraph 6 will be used again. As mentioned above, this paragraph entails what rights staff have when intervening in unsafe or disorderly situations. The description of paragraph 6 above is the result of one of the changes made, which clarified that all staff could take certain measures if needed, in order to ensure the safety of students. This clarification facilitates the understanding of what measures staff can take, if needed, whereas before it was quite abstract. Previously, according to the paragraph, only the principal and teachers could intervene in order to resolve a student's disorderly conduct (Prop. 2021/22:160). These changes will be further discussed later in this thesis, in the analysis.

3.2 Committee directive

Departing from the current wording of the Education Act, having been developed through Proposition 2021/22:160, there have been further initiatives from the government in regards to school security. A committee has been formed to explore the topic, focusing on improvements of security in schools in different ways (*Säkerheten i skolan ska förbättras*, Dir. 2022:86). This has been summed up in a committee directive, which has since been expanded recently. The premise for the creation of this committee and its directive departs from the view of a deteriorating security in schools, because of an increase in the occurrence of violent attacks on school grounds. The government proposes that a holistic approach is needed regarding the safety and security in schools. Even though the latest changes made to the Education Act through Proposition 2021/22:160, further inquiries need to be made.

The directive is thus contains different aspects and corresponding questions that the committee is charged with exploring and answering. The committee and its investigator is supposed to come

with suggestions on how to improve the preventative work regarding violent attacks, both on a local as well as national level, and how this can be organized. Another part of the task is to explore what measures should, and can, be taken in order to increase the preparedness and knowledge of dealing with violent situations. Furthermore, analyzing the possibility for school staff to body search students (and others) is a part of the task, to see if this might be a necessary step. Consequently, the committee should answer these questions, and if deemed essential, propose changes to the law (Dir. 2022:86). All these things were part of the original committee directive, which has since been expanded further to include more (Dir. 2023:22). Crime prevention in school, and how this can be legalized, has been added to the committee's responsibility to investigate. Apart from this, the obligation to report crimes to the police will also be explored, in how to shape this for all forms of education in Sweden. Finally, the committee has also been charged with making recommendations on how to clarify the fact that people without permission to be on school premises are trespassing. The subsequent report of this committee and its work is supposed to be finished by 2024 (Dir. 2023:22).

4. Literature review

In order to situate this study in the field of research on school security and securitization, the following literature review aims to create an understanding of relevant previous research. This section of the thesis provides an overview of different aspects of the literature concerning school security, presenting it from both a Nordic and American perspective. Doing this provides an opportunity to understand what previously has been studied, and where there might be a lack of research, i.e. a “gap” in the research field (Hart 2007, p.38; Banakar 2019, p.9). The choice of including the Nordic perspective was made to understand the local setting of the topic, whereas the American perspective was chosen due to the prevalence of school attacks as well as their focus on school security. This “gap” found in the literature is therefore used to guide the formulation of research questions, but also what methodology and theoretical framework are prevalent within the literature (Banakar 2019, p.9). The literature review has been divided into three parts; School security in a Scandinavian context, school security in an American context, and finally securitizing education. After this, a summary of the research field is presented as well as reflections upon it.

To collect the relevant literature I have mainly used the database LUBSearch, using the keywords “school security”, “school safety”, “securitization”, “school securitization”, “school violence”, “school attacks”, “education”, “school system”, “education act”, “Sweden” and “Scandinavia”. These were also combined in a Boolean search method. I also elected to only read literature that was peer-reviewed, and by coincidence all literature was in English. The first search resulted in around 50 articles, which were skimmed through and choices were made about which were relevant. These choices were based on the relevance of the articles relating to the key words used. As an example, many studies which focused on the psychiatric aspect of school violence appeared in the search. Since this is not a focus of this thesis, these were subsequently excluded. A snowball approach was also used, looking at the references in the relevant articles to find more. All in all, the literature search resulted in 21 different sources.

It should also be noted that even though this thesis is conducted within the field of sociology of law, I opted to make use of academic literature from other disciplines as well. This was done in order to get a broader concept of a research topic which is related to many academic disciplines. In doing this, a deeper understanding of the subject was facilitated. Sociology of law is also seen as an interdisciplinary field (Banakar 2009), which makes using research from outside the field compatible. Other fields which touch upon this topic, and are thus used in this literature review are for example security studies, educational research and criminology.

4.1 School security in a Nordic context

Since this study is conducted in a Swedish context, an overview of the research done in the Nordic countries will first be presented. This is done to understand what research has previously focused on, and what is presented as central arguments in the more local literature. In Sweden, insecurity in society has become a hot topic in public debate, with specific attention to schools. Reports of an increase in occurrences of violence and bullying in schools have been part of this debate, questioning the development of security work in Swedish schools. Dahlstedt and Foultier (2019) present the idea that as a result of this debate, repressive measures regarding security have become more normalized. Sweden has been regarded as having a progressive outlook on young offenders, focusing on social welfare and care instead of punishment. Other studies suggest that

there has been a juridification of Swedish schools, making previously educational matters legal matters (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019; Hammarén et al. 2015; Alexius 2018). The policy changes made regarding the Education Act can be related to broader policy changes in Sweden, calling for order and stronger discipline. Becoming more repressive and making school violence part of the legal discourse is argued to contribute to a securitization of school. Criminalizing certain behaviors also allows for more resources for surveillance and discipline. From a Foucauldian perspective, this creates a more governing role for schools, as well as increasing the level of social control (Dahlstedt & Foultier, 2019; Lunneblad & Johansson 2018).

Looking to Finland, Vallinkoski and Koirikivi (2020) argue that national policy documents are key in order to create a cohesive safety culture in the educational system. It is also argued that all aspects of security and safety must be taken into account when creating these policies, not just visible security measures. The “jurisdiction” for individual schools is limited, thus making guiding policies on a national level important in order to provide the resources necessary for conducting safety and security work. Relating to this, a study conducted in Sweden focused on teachers’ views of national security discourses (Holmberg 2021). While national security have three main focuses in the education system - countering violent terrorism, limiting school violence and civil defence - Swedish teachers are most focused on limiting school violence. Looking at what guidelines and policies have been provided to teachers from the National Agency for Education, the author argues that they relate mostly to this area of school violence. Holmberg also suggests that this can be related to an increased media focus on school violence after the attack in Trollhättan (2021). This attack resulted in a shared desire from the public and politicians to make schools safer, mainly by using technological solutions to control who has access to schools. Thodelius and Sandén (2017) argue that the efficiency of this securitization of schools lacks comprehensive evidence that it prevents or hinders school violence. The authors also suggest that lethal school violence in Scandinavia has predominantly taken the form of two types of offenders. Either offenders who are taking interpersonal revenge, i.e. having a single target in mind at the school, or institutional revenge, i.e. taking revenge against the school. Both types thus have a relation to the school (Thodelius & Sandén, 2017).

4.2 School security in the United States

This section provides an overview of research conducted in an American context. This was chosen over including other European studies, since the US has been at the forefront of matters on school security for the last few years. This was a choice made by the researcher due to previous knowledge, since school security issues have been discussed for a longer period of time in this context than in a European context. It should also be said that a substantial part of research conducted concerning school violence is from the US.

Altheide (2009) discussed the fact that even though school shootings and attacks are rare, the fear of them has become common. The attack at Columbine High School in Colorado can be seen as a focusing event, i.e. a symbol that brings attention to a problem in society. The media highly publicized and sensationalized this event, creating a sense that the government and school administration needs to “do something”. Columbine in particular became a policy-driver throughout the US, with all levels of government looking to increase surveillance and safety measures in schools (Altheide 2009; Highberger, Wang & Brittingham, 2022). Little is known about introducing an increase in security measures, with most schools opting for technical solutions. Even though Columbine created a motivation for policy change, the risk of school attacks taking place can be seen as overestimated. The cost on the educational system when introducing these security measures may impact the civil liberties of students, as well as create a negative school environment (Addington 2009).

Kupchik, Brent and Mowen (2015) also argue that heightened security measures and the presence of police officers at school can have a negative impact on the school environment. Looking to evidence-based approaches, it has been suggested that a positive school environment has been proven to lessen the risk of school violence. Increasing security is thus proposed as the opposite of what research has suggested (Highberger, Wang & Brittingham, 2022). The rarest form of school violence is thus driving these changes in American school safety policy, which can be connected to risk management. The perceptions of risk, influenced by the media, drive policy and practice, no matter how low the actual risk for a violent attack is (Madfis, Hirschfield & Addington, 2020). The risk assessment made after these kinds of events is oftentimes skewed or inaccurate, but still used to justify the policy changes (Madfis 2015) It is also suggested that

the media has created a sort of moral panic concerning the problem of school shootings, thus creating an exaggerated fear of them resulting in the inaccurate risk assessment. This type of focus on visible security measures has been related to “target-hardening”, i.e. making possible targets for crime less attractive. Using target-hardening creates changes which are visible for the public, and often more cost efficient than more social measures since it is a one-time cost (Chambers 2022; Hope 2015). It is also suggested that securitizing education is a way of avoiding the problem without recognizing the source of the threat. School attacks arise from a multitude of reasons, and while banning certain weapons may seem a good idea, the problem would manifest in a different form. School securitization can thus critically be viewed as an unwillingness to understand the underlying problem of why they occur (Chambers 2022). Martin (2013), proposes this securitization process is part of a neoliberal agenda of social control and discipline. Instead of trying to create a safer school environment through caring about young people, the American education system is trying to control students and their behaviors through policing and disciplining.

4.3 Securitizing education

There are arguably multiple ways in which security and education overlap, but most research focuses on how educational systems have responded to securitized policies. An example of this is the Prevent legislation in the UK, which is a duty for schools to prevent terrorism and extremism. Having securitized policies in education often creates a surveillance regime, where teachers and administrators “police” problematic individuals. This can also be seen as a part of risk management strategies, trying to circumvent problems before they happen (Durodie 2016; Zembylas 2020). In an American context, the securitization of schools has been seen by scholars as an expression of rising neoliberalism in society, looking to more punitive tactics and ideas of governing through criminalization (Madfis, Hirschfield & Addington, 2020)

Primarily, school has the function of the socialization of children and learning. Because of Prevent, teachers now need to both fulfill obligations to this law, as well as fulfill their purpose of educating (Durodie 2016; Elwick & Jerome 2019). This balance can be tough, since having a securitized approach can be seen as criminalizing children and breaking the “trust-bond” between teachers and students (Elwick & Jerome 2019). In a Swedish context, having these

kinds of programs or laws contributes to a securitization of schools, contradicting the traditional Swedish way of educating through pedagogy and social approaches. Social work is thus challenged by a security-oriented discourse (Mattson & Säljö 2018).

4.4 Summary and reflections

This overview of previous research showcases a few different things. Looking at the Scandinavian perspective, the literature shows that there has been an increase in focus on school violence because of public debate and media. Bigger influences in society calling for stronger control, order and discipline are having an effect on the school system as well. A more repressive turn concerning school security can be seen in Sweden, mostly due to a juridification of the school system, thus making educational matters into legal matters. Criminalizing young people through this juridification results in the allocation of more resources, resulting in more surveillance and discipline. Turning to the American context, there seems to be a consensus that there is a lack of empirical evidence that securitization of schools prevent and/or hinder school violence. Another aspect which appears in a lot of the research is the impact of sensationalization through media of school attacks. This is seen by many researchers to be a driving force behind governmental reforms and school administrations focusing on introducing heightened security measures in schools. These forms of security measures are mostly visible, technical solutions which can impact students negatively, instead of focusing on creating a positive school environment. Risk management and target hardening are seemingly a recurring topic in American research. Even though school shootings and attacks are relatively rare when put in context, they have led to a form of moral panic or exaggerated fear of them happening, leading to tougher approaches and security measures. School securitization is also said to be a form of avoiding the root of the problem, while being a part of a neoliberal agenda of more social control and discipline in society. Securitizing an educational space is also seen as a contradicting approach, combining teaching, i.e. social work, with surveillance and monitoring.

From this summary of the literature review, it can be concluded that much of the research on school securitization as a concept comes from the US. This is valuable knowledge, in order to understand securitization of the educational sector from an American perspective. In a Swedish context, research is mostly focused on the juridification of the educational system and society's

influences on school. In my opinion, there is a gap in the literature concerning Sweden, more specifically understanding how security is approached and discussed in a legal sense when it comes to the school system. Securitization is seemingly an unexplored area related to the Swedish educational system, which is why it becomes relevant for this thesis to contribute with research on the topic.

Previous research discusses the media and public debate's influence on school security, but there is a lack of research concerning how the legislators of the Education Act view security and safety. This is also true concerning how the government has problematized security. This is where I will situate my thesis, in order to contribute to more knowledge around the discourse concerning school securitization in Sweden. The presented previous research is also used throughout the thesis, in order to provide examples and comparisons of how the Swedish context can be understood in relation to the literature. The choice of theoretical framework and methodology is also influenced by the literature review. Foucault is used in several articles, which contributed to the choice of using a poststructural policy analysis departing from a Foucauldian perspective, resulting in the use of Bacchi's WPR-approach to discourse analysis.

5. Theoretical framework

The following section provides an overview of the theoretical framework that the thesis is grounded in, a Foucault-influenced poststructural policy analysis as proposed by Carol Bacchi and Susan Goodwin (2016). This framework has an analytical standpoint, which aims to understand how "problems" are produced through policy, politics and governing. It also has the intention of helping researchers to understand how these "problems" are represented as well as their underlying assumptions. This framework is closely connected to the method of Bacchi's "what's the problem represented to be?", a type of discourse analysis. This method will be further explained in the next section. The framework will be explained broadly, how it relates to poststructuralism and what it aims to understand. Since it has a Foucauldian perspective, some key concepts will also be further discussed, i.e. power, knowledge and governmentality.

5.1 Poststructural policy analysis

In today's society, there is an abundance of policies which influence our actions everyday. From a poststructural viewpoint, we can put emphasis on how these regulations bring with them knowledges which all play a role in how society is governed. When understanding poststructuralism, we can start by looking at the concept of "knowledge". A fundamental part of this approach is questioning heterogeneous practices, especially knowledge practices which produce hierarchies and inequalities in society. By doing this, there is a recognition that contingency is important, that our realities are conditional and open to change. This attention to heterogeneity and contingency results in an inherent skepticism, which Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) describe in relation to policy as:

"Rather than essences, "things" are "done" or "made", constituted, or brought into being. It follows that "things" commonly treated as entities (e.g., "organizations", "institutions", "the economy", "nation-states"), can also be "undone" or "unmade"" (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p.4)

This way of approaching policy therefore looks at how "problems" in policy are "made" or "produced", what assumed knowledge underlies the policy, and how these can be scrutinized. The aim is not to understand what outcomes a certain policy might have, but rather what effects it can have in relation to subjects or discourse (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016).

Moving to the central concept of "knowledge" and the skepticism of poststructuralism, it can be said that all knowledge must be examined. "Knowledges" cannot be taken at face value as "truth", but be seen as something that is constructed throughout history and society by people. Looking at policy this way can help us move away from taken-for-granted certainties that policies often are based upon. In relation to policy and knowledge, Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) also discuss the government as a part of this analytical approach. Departing from Foucault's understanding of government, it is more than just legislation and politics, but is the "conduct of conduct". The meaning of this is that government is any form of activity which has the objective of shaping, guiding or influencing the conduct of people in society (Banakar & Travers 2013). This can include how people control their own behavior, as well as the regulations and rules from

the state which are most commonly associated with government. In this sense, “policy” is therefore how order is maintained through politics (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016).

This theoretical framework approaches policy as problematizations that *produce* problems as specific problems. This differs from the more conventional view, that policy is made to *address* problems. By using this poststructural standpoint the aim becomes to find out how the problems are represented, understanding the implicit assumptions that make the representations possible, and what implications they have. Problematization is therefore a key word when it comes to poststructural policy analysis, as we try to understand how a problem has been constructed and represented.

5.1.2 Governmentality

Foucault originated the term “governmentality”, combining the words govern and mentality. As such, the meaning entails different ways of thinking about governing. Governmentality as a concept dates back to 16th century Europe, where the idea that power concerned everything that is and happens in society, because the condition of the population was understood as influencing the strength of the state. Governmental power can therefore be seen as concentrating on the subjects and objects it manages, instead of the purely legislative power it has (Deflem 2009). Governmentality incorporates “rationalities” and “technologies”, which are described as:

“Ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit complex, form of power” (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p.42)

Rationalities can be explained in the form of governmental rationalities, which are motivations used to justify certain ways of ruling. Understanding what these motivations or rationalities imply, means understanding the unexamined ways of thinking that underpin them. This is what shapes how governing takes place, as well as what is possible for society to become. It can also help us look at governing from a distance, how governing through regulations can establish norms through which subjects govern themselves (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016). Governing can take place through the use of different mechanisms, which the technologies are. Examples of

technologies are censuses, policies, programs, etc. These are often connected to certain rationalities.

As is the case with poststructural policy analysis, problematizations play a part in governmentality as well. When analyzing government, the starting point is questioning some part of the “conduct of conduct”, i.e. problematizing some aspect of the government. This is done in order to understand what specific rationale is at play. This relates very clearly to the theoretical framework at hand, becoming a way to look at policy, a “technology” in the governmental sense (Bacci & Goodwin 2016).

5.1.3 Power and discourse

Power from a poststructural perspective is informed by Foucault’s understanding of power. Differing from the everyday understanding of power, i.e. having power *over* something or someone, power in this framework is understood as something more systemic that is not connected to a specific actor. Power is not a “thing” that someone can possess, but should rather be described as a power relation. These power relations are something productive, which produces reality. In this sense, the view of power as productive and relational is central in a poststructural policy analysis. Policy is therefore a productive thing, creating problems as particular problems. It also produces “subjects”, which gives it its relational aspect. This can be called subjectification, which entails the production of “subjects” through policies. Policies are therefore part of shaping what is possible for people to become in society, by encouraging certain behaviors and/or characteristics. This is another example of how policy is a productive power (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016).

The relation between power and knowledge is fundamental in a Foucauldian perspective of poststructural policy analysis. According to Foucault, knowledge is not “truth”, but instead what is seen as true. When joining knowledge and power, this results in discourse. Discourse can be understood as “socially produced forms of knowledge” (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016, p.35). This limits what is possible to conceive and think about a certain object. In order to clarify this understanding of discourse from the everyday understanding, some points must be made. From this perspective, discourse is not focused on linguistics. It is not what *people* say, but instead

what people say, i.e. what they are actually saying. The focal point becomes the *sayable* due to a certain discourse. Discourses can thus have effects, which from a poststructural viewpoint means that they limit what can be thought about, written about or taken into account when producing a policy for example. Looking at discourse and discursive effects one can understand what is conceived as “unthinkable” or “unmentionable” in a certain policy (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016).

5.2 Summary and reflections

This section’s aim was to present the theoretical framework which is the foundation of this thesis. As introduced above, the thesis makes use of a Foucault-influenced poststructural approach to policy analysis, departing from concepts such as governmentality, power, knowledge and discourse. These concepts were further developed, as to make them useful for the analysis of the Education Act’s preparatory work and the committee directives. As a whole, this approach focuses on productive activities, i.e. practices, subjectification, and problematizations. This framework allows for the interrogation of policy and understanding the underlying assumptions, discourses and power relations. For this thesis, the framework of poststructural policy analysis is used to guide the methodology of the WPR approach presented in the following section. This allows for a questioning of taken-for-granted “knowledge”, assumptions and silences, in order to problematize the problem representations in the chosen policies. The choice of theoretical framework therefore seems fitting, helping understand how security has influenced the education sector in the form of what “knowledge” the government bases their understanding of security on, as well as what is ignored and the effects of this. Governmentality is, as stated, connected to the political rationale behind the type of governing that is being done. I argue that this part of the poststructural approach is important to understanding securitization in the Swedish educational system. Power and discourse are central to both the theoretical viewpoint, as well as the methodological, and mostly relate to the discursive effects of the policies which are closely connected to the aim of understanding school securitization.

6. Methodology

This section presents the methodology used for the thesis, and different considerations that have been made. In order to answer the research questions, Carol Bacchi's *What's the problem represented to be?* will be used. This method for policy analysis will be explained by going through the six questions which are the base for the analysis. Then, the research material will be presented, followed by methodological and ethical considerations, and lastly a discussion on validity and reliability will be presented. Since this method is closely related to the theoretical framework, Bacchi's approach inherently has a poststructuralist perspective. A poststructural approach to research aims to challenge established "truths", trying to dismantle the dominant ways of "knowing" and their subsequent discourses (Mason 2018, p.9). The "problems", which are explained in the next section, may have many different constructions which all have a connection to a political dimension. The focus of the political involvement in the creation of "problems" connects the approach further to poststructuralism (Bacchi 2009, p.34).

6.1 Bacchi's WPR-approach

The method that will be used in this thesis is Carol Bacchi's "what's the problem represented to be?", (from this point called WPR) which is a critical approach to policy analysis. This type of policy analysis challenges the usual idea that policy is a government's way of handling "problems". These "problems" are conventionally seen as concrete concepts which are identifiable, something that the government is reacting to. WPR constitutes a different approach to policy. Bacchi proposes that governments are not *reacting* to a problem, but rather *producing* a problem in the policy. Therefore all policies contain implicit representation of what the "problem" needing to be fixed is, since that is the aim for policies in themselves. The way these problems are represented comes with implications for the issue the policy is aimed at, e.g. how the issue is thought about henceforth. WPR therefore emphasizes the governmental role in shaping and representing a specific problem (Bacchi 2009). The focus of this method is not to discover any kind of calculated manipulation of how problems are presented in policy. Instead, understanding what underlying knowledge and assumption is within these problem representations, that made them possible to begin with. Using this critical approach can thus facilitate further understanding of what the policy means, and what effect it has (Bacchi 2009).

Bacchi has proposed a broad field of use for WPR as a methodology, ranging from legislation to generic government documents. All kinds of government documents contain some kind of problematization which can be critically analyzed through WPR. For this thesis, specific legislation will be used in the form of the Education Act latest proposition (2021/22:160) and a related committee directive (Dir. 2022:86; Dir. 2023:22). This will be further described in section 4.3.

6.1.1 The six questions of WPR

The WPR approach involves the use of six interdependent questions, which are the following:

1. What's the "problem" (for example, "domestic violence", "sexual harassment", etc.) represented to be in a specific policy or policy proposal?
2. What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the "problem"?
3. How has this representation of the "problem" come about?
4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be thought about differently?
5. What effects are produced by this representation of the "problem"?
6. How/where has this representation of the "problem" been produced, disseminated and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted and replaced?

There is also a seventh question, asking the researcher for self-problematization, i.e. reflexivity (Bacchi 2009, p.2). This will be further discussed in section 4.4.

To understand the method further, the six questions and their meanings will be explained. The first question aims to clarify a problem representation in a policy. Bacchi discusses this as a way of WPR "working backwards", starting with the final policy and distinguishing what is considered to be the problem in the policy. A simple example used by Bacchi is a public pool introducing timers on the showers, which shut off the water after a few minutes. The "problem" is then excessive showering, implying "indulgent customer behavior". Through working backwards with WPR, the problem representation in a policy

about water timers is thus “indulgent customer behavior” (Bacchi 2009, p.3). Even though this first step can seem straightforward, policies may contain multiple problem representations. These can also be contradicting, or at least conflicting. Despite this, it is an important first step of the analysis.

The second question departs from the implicit problem representation. It focuses on understanding what assumptions are used to establish the problem representation. This refers to the knowledge that is taken for granted in the creation of the policy. We need to understand what is assumed, what is not being questioned? This also includes consideration of epistemological and ontological questions. An important point to make is that question two does not focus on the assumptions made by policy makers, but instead what assumptions lie within the problem representations themselves. Bacchi talks about this knowledge being at a “fundamental level”, that can be likened with Foucault’s idea of episteme (Bacchi 2009, p.5). Identifying these basic values and assumptions is quite hard, which is why Bacchi recommends using discourse analysis to identify binaries, key concepts and categories within a policy (Bacchi 2009).

The third question aims to understand the circumstances which established a problem representation and then allowed it to become dominant. Bacchi proposes that there are two objectives with this question: reflecting on what developments and choices which formed the current problem representation and understanding that different problem representations can exist at the same time, which means that it could have developed in a different way. This way of thinking is closely related to Foucault’s genealogy, asking “how we got from here to there” (Bacchi 2009, p.11). Question three thus looks at the origin and history of the problem representation.

The aim of the fourth question is to critically problematize the problem representation itself. There is a need to reflect upon what limits the problem representation contains. Policies are limited by the way they represent a specific problem, which is why it is necessary to ask what is missing, or silenced through the identified problem representation. Here, Bacchi points to cross-cultural comparisons as a useful tool. Different countries have

established different problem representations because of their cultural and basic values, which makes comparison advantageous (Bacchi 2009, p.13).

The purpose of the fifth question is to identify what effects a specific problem representation may have, in order to critically analyze them. WPR as a method presumes that problem representations can create adversities, or even cause harm, to certain groups in society. Bacchi makes use of three connected effects: discursive effects, subjectification effects, and lived effects. Discursive effects are connected to question four, and are effects which stem from the limits of the underlying assumptions of the problem representation. Subjectification effects constitute how specific subjects are made through the way in which the policy itself sets up social relations and how *we* as people are positioned within that. Lived effects are thus the impact problem representations impact life, and sometimes death. It is a purely material impact of the representations, how they affect us in life (Bacchi 2009, p.16-17)

Lastly, the sixth question aims to understand how some problem representations have become dominant in society and thus policies. Adding to this, it also asks if it is possible to challenge this dominance in case the representation is harmful. Basically, it is analyzing how a problem representation has been legitimized (Bacchi 2009, p.19).

6.2 Research material

The study will use the Education Act (SFS 2010:800) in its latest wording as a base for the empirical material. Specifically, the chapters on safety and study environment, and measures against degrading treatment, will be used. This is because they relate most to the topic of school securitization, and its evolution in Swedish law. An overview of these two chapters, chapter 5 and 6 in the Education Act, has been given in section 2, Legal background. The law itself is quite sparse with information about how lawmakers have come to the current version of the Education Act, making it hard to use as empirical material on its own. This is why the proposition containing the latest changes to the law will be used, which is Proposition 2021/22:160 “The school’s work with safety and a calm study environment”. This proposition includes the reasons behind making changes to the law, in the form of discussion on the previous wording of the law,

responses from consultative bodies across the country, and the final decisions made by the government. The proposition's aim is to increase security and the feeling of safety in school, which relates directly to the thesis topic. All these parts constitute the background for making legal changes, which is what the WPR-analysis can explore and further understand.

Apart from the law and its latest developments in the form of the proposition, a previously mentioned committee directive and its amendment will also be used for the research material (Dir. 2022:86; Dir. 2023:22). This committee has been charged with enhancing school security and safety through a holistic approach, with certain questions to answer. It should be noted that the increase in violent school attacks is mentioned as a reason for opening the committee, because the security situation has deteriorated, with the threat of attacks increasing. This relates directly to the topic of school security and securitization, which makes the committee directives suitable for the use of the WPR approach.

6.2.1 Delimitations

The Education Act as a law came into force during 2010, and has since undergone many changes and amendments. When writing this thesis, there are coming changes to be made as well, that have already been decided by parliament with corresponding propositions. Since this thesis focuses on security in schools, school securitization and legislation regarding this, a choice was made to use the Education Act and its changes up to Proposition 2021/22:160. These changes affect the two chapters which are relevant for the research, chapters 5 and 6, which coming changes do not. The choice to focus mostly on these chapters also relate to the topic of the thesis, since they mainly relate to the concept of security. Using a committee directive as material for the research is also considered relevant, in order to understand the current view of the government regarding security. It can be seen as what the government, and parliament, believe to be problematic about the current version of the Education Act, and what needs to be further explored and understood. Since this thesis employs the method of WPR-analysis, which concentrates on understanding how a problem is represented, it is thus interesting to see what questions the committee is charged with answering. Taken as a whole, these different policies and documents are the base of the research conducted in this thesis.

For this thesis, questions 1, 2, 4 and 5 will be utilized for the analysis, since these relate closely with the research questions posed. The first question of this thesis is to understand how security is represented as a problem in the chosen policies. This includes the assumptions underpinning the problem, what “knowledge” it relies on, as well as what it ignores. Therefore questions 1, 2 and 4 encompass the purpose of the research first question, which through analysis could provide an “answer”. The second question concerns how securitization in a Swedish educational context can be understood. This also relies on the question concerning security, but expands into what effects accompany these specific problem representations. The goal of using these questions when it comes to school securitization in Sweden is to understand it from a poststructural perspective, which these questions can enable. Therefore, questions 3 and 6 from the WPR approach are excluded from the analysis, since the aim is not to understand how the problem representation came about or how the dominant problem representation can be questioned.

6.3 Reliability and validity

Reliability is mainly about whether a replication of the study would have the same results if conducted again, by another researcher. In order for the thesis to be reliable, I will follow the steps of the WPR approach presented in the previous section. By providing a thorough account of the methodology, it provides transparency about how the study was conducted (Mason 2018, p.236). The subsequent conclusions of the thesis will also be related back to the methodological approach, to clarify how those were reached. When it comes to the validity of the thesis, some things can be mentioned. Validity is if the methodology “measures” what it aims to “measure”, and the true value of the findings. The thesis departs from questions which relate directly to the methodology being used, i.e. WPR. The problem representations and subsequent assumptions, silences and effects are analyzed through the use of the method, leading to conclusions about the topic. Validity can be reached through being reflexive as well as transparent about how the analysis was conducted, and what material was used (Mason 2018, p.238). As previously stated, WPR includes a large amount of self-problematization and reflexivity. This aids in increasing the validity of the study. This approach is a good way of critically understanding the meaning and problematization of problems in government policies, which is the aim of the thesis.

6.4 Methodological and ethical considerations

When conducting a discourse analysis, especially through WPR, it is important to be reflexive, as it is with all research. This can be mitigated when using WPR, since apart from the six questions used to guide the actual analysis through the WPR approach Bacchi has included a separate seventh one which focuses on the researcher. This process of self-reflexivity can be accomplished through applying the six questions on one's *own* problem representations. We as researchers are shaped by the basic values in society, and have our own preconceived notions as well. Being reflexive can thus ensure that one acknowledges that problem representations have affected us, and that there is a need to reflect on their purpose and effects as well.

Ethical considerations are always important to reflect on when conducting research. Research can have an effect on the subject which is studied, something that needs to be reflected upon. The empirical material of this thesis are public documents, i.e. the legislation in the Education Act and its preparatory work, which are public documents. These are all under the law of public access in Sweden, which makes the ethical considerations few. Another part of the reflections made during this thesis, the bias of the researcher is one of them. Due to the fact that I have previously had an internship at a municipality, which focused on school security and safety, I have preconceived notions about the field itself. Both relating to the previous knowledge I have, but also certain opinions about the development as of late. As discussed above, WPR requires reflexivity in its methodological process, which can mitigate this and provide further reflection. This point is made in order to provide transparency on my role as a researcher, as it does affect my preconceived notions.

7. Analysis

This section consists of the analysis of the empirical material, done by applying Bacchi's (2009) WPR approach, as well as the theoretical framework. The aim of the thesis is to understand security through the problem representations in the policies, as well as explaining securitization through the poststructural policy analysis. The questions of the WPR are thus applied to the policies, to explore the representations, assumptions, silences and effects that exist. As previously discussed in the delimitations of the methodology, the analysis makes use of questions 1, 2, 4 and 5 in order to reach the aim. Subsequently, the analysis is divided into subsections according to which question is being asked regarding the policies.

7.1 Problem representations in Proposition 2021/22:160 and committee directives 2022:86 and 2023:22

This part of the thesis presents the findings of Bacchi's (2009) first question as applied to the empirical materials presented above. These include the proposition for the latest changes to the Education Act, regarding chapter 5 and 6 which relate to security, as well as the committee directive which has the aim of improving security in schools. Bacchi (2009) makes a notice of the fact that a policy can have multiple problem representations, which this thesis has found to be true for the chosen empirical material. Below are four problem representations found in these "policies", relating to how security is presented in the proposition and directives.

7.1.1 The problem of clarity and definitions

A recurring problem representation in proposition 2021/22:160 is that the wording prior to this included many representations and definitions of the same concepts in different contexts. The main goal of the bill is to clarify how schools should work with *trygghet*, i.e. the feeling of safety or subjective security, and the study environment. This is thought to be a foundation for learning, leading to the idea that flaws to the formulation of these concepts in the Bill leads to variations from school to school, resulting in an insufficient focus on subjective security. This problem can thus be represented as a lack of distinctness when it comes to abstract concepts, which security can be. The Bill therefore proposes changes to alleviate this problem of differing understandings of the concepts, by introducing definitions and explanations in the legislation. An example of this

is the government's discussion on subjective security and the study environment which have been combined and connected in the Education Act, especially in relation to preventative work.

“The Education Act states that education must be designed in such a way that all students are assured of a school environment that is characterized by security and quiet study environment (Chapter 5, 3§). It is common for the concepts of security and study peace to be mentioned together in this way also in other contexts. To some extent, there is a mutual influence between them, but safety and study peace are different things that touch and are affected by different parts of the school's work.” (Prop. 2021/22:160, p.40)

In order for schools and their mandators to understand how to conduct this preventative work, there is a need for separate definitions for the concepts. The “calm” study environment is thus proposed to be clearly defined in the Education Act, to facilitate the understanding and by fault the use of the concept. Despite this definition, subjective security (trygghet), is not thought to be needing a definition in the law as such, because schools actively work with this preventatively:

“Despite this, the School Inspectorate assesses that schools have generally come further in the work with security than with the study environment. The government shares the picture that emerges in the memorandum that the work with the study environment needs to become more systematic and that a more common understanding of what the concept of study environment means is then needed.” (Prop. 2021/22:160, p.43)

This will be further discussed under Bacchi's (2009) second question, in order to understand why these choices were made.

In relation to the preventative work that these clarifications aim to facilitate, there is also a discussion of what preventative work is and what it entails for a school. Previously, the idea of preventative work has been unclear and something that each school needs to define on their own. The problem is once again represented as a lack of clarity.

“The government believes, [...] that preventive work for the study environment means that the school works proactively to provide students with good conditions for learning by identifying and removing obstacles to learning so that students can dedicate themselves to and concentrate on teaching. It can mean that the school prevents disorder through well-established rules of order and a common approach among the staff and development of pedagogical leadership in the classroom [...]. Correspondingly, preventive work for

safety means that the school identifies and removes obstacles in order to ensure that students are safe throughout their school day [...]. Important parts of the preventive work are how the school works with norms and values, including gender equality, e.g. by promoting human rights and actively countering all forms of abusive treatment.” (Prop. 2021/22:160, p.46)

The solution presented in the proposition is thus to include a short formulation that the mandator of each school must ensure that preventative work, relating to both security and the study environment, is done. This does mean that there is no clear definition available in the law itself, but only in the bill.

7.1.2 The problem of student participation

The rules of conduct are seen as important in relation to security in schools, as they create boundaries and expectations on how to behave in school, which students then can follow. The proposition also argues that rules of conduct are connected to the norms and values, as they form the attitudes and actions that are acceptable in an educational setting. The bill discusses that the adherence to the rules of conduct is higher if students have participated in the development of them as well as the evaluation, which has been stipulated previously in the legislation. Despite their importance, there are flaws in the compliance to this part of the Education Act. The bill proposes changes to this part, as to ensure that students are involved in the production of each school’s rules of conduct. Therefore, the problem is represented as a lack of participation from the students. It should be noted that this lack of participation, according to the bill, rarely stems from the students themselves but instead from the school as an institution.

“It appears that many students do not feel involved in the development of the rules of order. In addition, both students and teachers state that the rules of order are not always followed. In several of the schools, there is also a lack of a school-wide discussion aimed at developing a consensus regarding norms and values. There are thus established deficiencies in the application of the Education Act’s provisions on rules of conduct. In addition to what has been mentioned above, deficiencies can also consist of schools submitting basically ready-made proposals for rules of order for the students. The students are therefore not involved in the work of developing the rules of order and as a result these are not properly anchored.” (Prop. 2021/22:160, p.89)

Due to this, the Bill argues that the work concerning the rules of conduct must be further rooted in the involvement of students. In relation to security, the rules of conduct are seen as part of creating security and safety in school, through the clarification of norms and values. By having clear rules of conduct, developed with the students, the Bill argues that the understanding will increase and thus also their adherence to the rules.

“Established rules of conduct can also provide support in the work against degrading treatment, which should include, amongst other things, identifying more hidden problems such as low-intensity violence, sexual harassment, online violations and honor-related violence and oppression.” (Prop. 2021/22:160, p.91)

Firmly established rules of conduct is also argued to be of help in cases of degrading treatment.

7.1.3 The problem of authority

Another problem representation that is apparent throughout the Bill (2021/22:60), is the authority of the staff in the educational setting. Preventative work plays a part in avoiding situations where staff might need to assert their authority against a student(s). Despite this, there are situations where staff are obligated to step in and intervene, in order to ensure the security of both other students and themselves. This is showcased in multiple ways in the proposition. The government argues that there is a need for a straightforward approach to staff authority, in a general sense, in order to safeguard and protect students in their care.

“It should be made clear in the Education Act that all staff must take the immediate and temporary measures that are justified to ensure students’ safety and study peace. It must be expressly stated that these measures include a power to intervene physically to prevent violence, violations or other disturbances of order” (Prop. 2021/22:160, p.140)

The problem is thus represented as the question of what authority staff have in order to have security, both subjective and objective in an educational setting. Looking at the excerpt above, staff seemingly have lacked the authority to intervene in a physical way when difficult situations arise. Previously, staff relied on the law regarding self-defense in cases where they needed to intervene. This was raised in the previous wording of the Education Act, but even then only teachers and the principal had the authority to make such

decisions. In order to ameliorate this problem, and its representation, the government argued that this authority needed to be a distinct part of the Education Act, clarifying what mandate all staff have to act. All this is done in order to warrant the security and safety of students.

Another aspect of the problem of authority is what can be done if a student's actions or behavior threatens the security of other students and/or staff. The Bill argues that the previous general principle of using lesser interventions, such as a written warning, is not compatible with situations where the security of others is directly jeopardized. Security in this sense can be seen as objective security.

“It must be clarified in the Education Act that a student in upper secondary school, upper secondary special school and municipal adult education can be suspended from the education, without less intrusive measures having first been tried, if the student acts in such a way that the safety of other students or staff is deemed to be threatened.” (Prop. 2021/22:160, p.186).

“ [...] it is already possible today in certain compulsory forms of school (primary school, primary special school and the Sami school) to deviate from the main rule that less intrusive measures must be tried before suspension is decided, if there are special reasons with regard to the pupil's behavior (chapter 5, 14§ in the Education Act). However, there is some uncertainty about how this exception should be interpreted. In the government's opinion, this is not a satisfactory arrangement.” (Prop 2021/22:160, p.191)

The problem according to the government in this case, is the imprecision in how and if suspension can be used in situations where there might be a forthcoming threat. This is a form of authority that the principal can exercise, which needs to be made explicit. The reasoning is that despite conducting preventative work, which has been discussed previously, there can also arise more critical situations where immediate actions are necessary to take.

“The government agrees with the importance of both principals and schools carrying out preventive and promotional work to ensure that there is safety and a calm study environment. However, situations may arise when more urgent measures are required. In particularly serious situations, the law needs to be so clear that there should be no doubt about the principal's mandate to act. Such particularly serious situations are when the student acts in such a way that the safety of other

students or staff is deemed to be threatened, e.g. at risk of acts of violence. The threat can be directed at individuals or at groups of people, for example in the case of a threat to a school. Such threats need to be taken seriously. It shall not be required that the student first commits a serious crime before the student can be suspended.” (Prop. 2021/22:160, p.191).

The excerpt above shows the government’s problematization of the principal’s authority to intervene and suspend a student without using milder interventions. In order to ensure the objective security of the school as a whole, there can be no doubts about what mandate the principal has in order to ensure the safety of the students and staff. If there is an urgent situation, the principal should thus have the option to suspend a student, putting the collective before the individual.

7.1.4 The problem of security in school

This problem representation departs from the committee directives (Dir. 2022:86; Dir. 2023:22), which presents the idea that security in school should be improved. Security is in this sense discussed in regard to violent attacks, how to prevent this and if there needs to be further expansion of the authorities that lie with school staff. The problem of security is in these directives represented as a lack of knowledge of how to handle violent school attacks. This is encompassed by what the government describes as a “security culture”:

“Security culture is about an organization's common way of thinking and acting in relation to risks and safety issues. The security work can include preventive planning, physical protective measures such as perimeter protection, analyzes of risks and vulnerabilities and raising awareness among staff. The security work may need to be designed differently for different forms of schooling within the school system and for the after-school center. For successful work with safety, the work needs to be part of the regular activities in the school, preschool and after-school center and known by all staff.” (Dir. 2022:86, p.6)

“A good security culture is about employees having knowledge of what threats exist, how the organization’s security is designed and having the knowledge and willingness to contribute to improving and maintaining security” (Dir. 2023:22)

Firstly, it is clear that the directives depart from an understanding of security as both objective, as well as security as a pursuit. Security is problematized as the need for knowledge on the subject; what threats and risks there can be, how to act in violent situations, and what can be done to

prevent these urgent situations. In this, the government sees a need to construct legislation on what educational settings have to do in the name of security, be it as preparation or furthering the knowledge on the subject. Security is also represented as broad in this sense, taking both situational and social aspects into consideration. This builds on the fact that educational institutions need to conduct preventative work, in order to ensure safety and security. Looking at this problem representation in relation to the ones found in the proposition to the Education Act, it is clear that the way the government views security differs. It could be argued that this turn toward objective security, and security as a pursuit, is a representation that education is becoming securitized. An example of this is the task for the committee to investigate if and how it is possible to make trespassing on school grounds prohibited.

“For a long time, it has been common for Swedish schools to be accessible to everyone, with unlocked doors and without visitors being registered or checked in other ways. In this way, the Swedish school system has distinguished itself from others from an international perspective.” (Dir. 2023:22)

The government acknowledges in this excerpt that Swedish schools have had a tradition of being open to the public, without any limitations on who can visit and with no control of them either. This is different from an international point of view, which will be further discussed in the analysis. The new way of looking at school grounds as private property, in order to ensure that students and staff are safe, is a part of the representation of security in this committee directive. This can be seen as security being constructed as moving from a subjective view of security, as implied in the excerpt from the proposition above, to security as a pursuit, adapting to the everchanging reality we exist in.

7.2 What assumptions underpin the problem representations in the policies?

The following section of the thesis uses the second question, i.e. “what presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the “problem”?”. The aim of this question is to understand what “knowledge” is taken-for-granted and underpins the problem representation, allowing it to exist (Bacchi 2009). Identifying the meanings, assumptions, presuppositions and “knowledge” that are needed in order for the policy and its problem representations to be legitimate, creates an understanding of how the problem

representation was established (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016). Below are three assumptions that were found, which the problem representations rely on.

7.2.1 *The assumption of “trygghet”*

As established above, a problem representation found through applying the first question in Bacchi’s (2012) WPR-approach was the problem of clarity and definition when it came to *trygghet*, i.e. subjective security, and a calm study environment. This “problem” relies on the assumption that educational practitioners do not understand the meaning of these two concepts, resulting in inefficiency when it comes to preventative work. Despite this, it is argued in the bill that subjective security does not need to be clearly defined in the law, as schools already undertake preventative work relating to this. The concept is defined in the bill in relation to the preventative work that is done in the name of subjective security, assuming that the meaning is already established:

“*Trygghet* is above all connected with the work against abusive treatment and the work with norms and values” (Prop. 2021/22:160, p.37)

and:

“A work for *trygghet* is more closely connected with how the school ensures that violations are prevented and countered and that there is a promotional work with norms and values.” (Prop. 2021/22:160, p.41)

Looking to Bacchi (2009), the idea of a key concept can be used to facilitate the application of question two. A key concept is described as “abstract labels that are relatively open-ended” (Bacchi 2009, p.8), which are given a certain meaning in a policy. As shown above, subjective security is given meaning in an educational context through the preventative work done in its name. This is seemingly the closest to a definition and meaning of the concept that the lawmakers and government are offering. At the same time, the bill includes comment letters from institutions and organizations. One of these comment letters suggests that the meaning given to subjective security has been convoluted:

“...the concept of “trygghet” has been confused with the concept of “security”” (Prop. 2021/22:160, p.39)

“...the concept of security is too vague and suggests a reformulation where security is replaced by “safe”” (Prop. 2021/22:160, p.42)

The response from the government was that:

“...the concept of *trygghet* is both well established in the context and has a wider meaning than the concept of security.” (Prop. 2021/22:160, p.42)

Through this, it is therefore assumed that everyone has the same *knowledge* and understanding of the concept, even though the comment letter shows that the concept can be given a different meaning. The government thus constructs this meaning of subjective security through it being “well established”, assuming that it is shared throughout society.

7.2.2 Assumption of uncertainty

Another assumption that emerges when looking at the problem representations of lack of participation and authority, can be summarized as an assumption of uncertainty. Starting from the problem of authority, it is assumed in the bill that staff are uncertain, or unaware, of what authority they have to act:

“...it is not clear what authority they have and that they have hesitated to act in situations when students disturb the study environment, because they are unsure of their authority. This lack of clarity and uncertainty has consequences for the working environment at the school for teachers and other staff as well as the students” (Prop. 2021/22:160, p.133)

This uncertainty is then said to lead to staff not using their authority at all in a situation where intervention is needed. The same assumption is made regarding suspending students who threaten the security of others. The presumed ambiguousness of the previous wording of the Education Act led to principals not suspending students who acted in a threatening way, according to the government. Through this, the binary of collective/individual is

emphasized. Bacchi (2009) proposes using binaries to further understand a problem representation and its underlying assumptions (p.7).

“Such particularly serious situations are when the student acts in such a way that the safety of other students or staff is deemed to be threatened, e.g. at risk of acts of violence. The threat can be directed at individuals or at groups of people, for example in the case of a threat to a school. Such threats need to be able to be taken seriously” (Prop. 2021/22:160, p.191)

As this excerpt shows, the security of the collective is put above the individual, i.e. the student who shows threatening tendencies. A binary such as collective/individual can be considered hierarchical (Bacchi 2009, p.7). This can mean that the assumption of uncertainty in this case concerning enacting suspensions, leads to the government putting the collective above the individual. It also means that the collective in this case is privileged and valued higher, when trying to avoid the presumed uncertainty. While the bill aims at making changes to mitigate this assumed uncertainty, it also presupposes that there are situations which make physical intervention necessary. This assumption will be further elaborated on in 7.2.3.

When it comes to the problem of lack of participation, the assumption of uncertainty concerns the students. The problem is represented as the students not being able to, or wanting to, participate in the creation of the rules of conduct. This also relies on the assumption that students do not have “knowledge” about the rules of conduct, their creation or how to evaluate them (Prop. 2021/22:160, p.91). It is therefore presumed that students are not aware, without staff actively involving them, that they have a right to participate in the creation of rules. The problem of lack of participation also presupposes that participation, and thus further “knowledge”, leads to an observance of the rules. Looking to the theoretical framework, these rules can be understood through governmentality. Building on the assumptions of uncertainty and rule observance, the rules of conduct in a school becomes a form of regulation, with the goal of the students governing themselves. The aim of the rules of conduct is to establish what norms and values are acceptable in a school, which relates to Bacchi and Goodwin’s (2016) view of governmentality.

7.2.3 Assumption of violence

Departing from the problem of security, there is a clear assumption of violence present in the committee directives. The policy itself is created due to a perceived increased level of threat and violence in Swedish schools, due to several cases of violent attacks.

“All activities within the school system must be safe for everyone who receives their education within the school system, works in the school system or temporarily participates in activities within the school system. In recent times, however, the security situation and the threat level have changed in a negative direction.” (Dir. 2022:86, p.2)

The assumption is made that school violence has become an unavoidable fact in Sweden, that these attacks will keep happening. This in turn necessitates further security measures and legal support in how schools can handle this. This assumption underlines the aim of the committee directives as a whole, citing this increase of violence in school as a reason for conducting the investigation which presumably will result in more legislation when it comes to school security.

Another aspect of this assumption was mentioned in the previous section, 7.2.2. While mitigating the uncertainty in when staff can intervene in violent situations, it also presupposes that there will be violent situations in school that can only be dealt with in a physical manner. Though this can be seen as simply clarifying the policy, it does imply that violence is becoming common enough for it to be juridified in relation to staff authority.

Throughout these two examples and problems representations, this increase in violence is not questioned throughout either policy. An increase of violence can thus be said to be taken-for-granted in both the bill and the committee directive, becoming a fundamental part of the policies.

7.4. What is unproblematic and silenced in the problem representations?

This section asks the fourth question in the WPR-approach, with the aim of understanding what is left unproblematic in the problem representations found in the policies at hand. The purpose is to see what has been left out of the discussion, and ignored when creating the

policy which produced the problem representations. I therefore seek to analyze what fails to be problematized in the policy and subsequent problem representation. The question posed is what is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the “problem” be thought about differently? (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016). Bacchi (2009) also proposes the use of cross-cultural references, as well as comparisons over time in order to understand how a specific problem representation has been shaped. This can thus help to see what has been ignored in one context, whereas it is the basis of another. Beneath follow the analysis of three aspects that have been left unproblematic and/or been silenced in the problem representations.

7.4.1 Resources

Something that is left unproblematic in most of these problem representations are discussions on other reasons for the problem existing in the first place. When it comes to an inefficient way of conducting preventative work, the main reason cited is the lack of clear definitions and a common understanding of the concepts of subjective security and a calm study environment. This representation of the problem does not include other reasons for why schools might not be conducting preventative work in the way the government has aimed for them to do. As the previous research shows, the main function of school is educating and socializing the students (Elwick & Jerome, 2019), which is mentioned in the bill. In relation to this, a possible increase in the administrative burden due to the preventative work is not discussed, nor the economic constraints of actually taking on a comprehensive way of conducting this work. A large amount of the work regarding security lands on teachers in particular, as they are most present in the students’ daily lives (Prop. 2021/22:160). Teachers are primarily *teachers*, devoting their time to education. There is a silence concerning their time, and how they are supposed to combine this with preventative work. There can thus be said to exist a silence of what other reasons there could be for why the policy is not being followed in a satisfactory way, apart from it being unclear or lacking definitions.

Relating to the study conducted by Vallinkoski and Koirikivi (2020), they point out that by having policies on a national level, also means allocating necessary resources in order for it

to be implemented on such a large scale. Since this aspect was left unproblematized in the proposition, it is unclear whether it could be a reason as to why the preventative work is not conducted as aimed by the government.

7.4.2 The ambiguity of authority

Another aspect that is left unproblematic in the problem representations is how much authority is enough. As discussed in the previous sections, the policies cover different ways to increase the authorities that lie with school staff in different capacities. Be it what it takes to use physical force or when a principal can suspend a student. The argument as to why it is essential to give more authority to staff is very much centered on the concept of security. The question remains throughout the policies, of how much authority is too much authority? Where is the line drawn? An aim of the committee directive is to investigate whether it is possible to introduce more repressive measures such as body searches, visitation, and the like. The previous research shows that introducing security measures such as this, the civil liberties of students may be impacted (Addington 2009). Swedish education has primarily been influenced by social approaches and pedagogy (Mattson & Säljö 2018), which this seems to contradict.

While the proposition discusses actual limitations for the authority in specific cases, such as when it is allowed to intervene with physical force, the committee directive is diffuse. This is partly due to the fact that it is a directive, and not the final product that will be proposed as legislation. Though competing legislation, such as the Instrument of Government, are discussed in the bill, the exceptions to these laws as to when it is possible to, for example, search someone's bag, are pointed out more clearly. When problematizing this silence, it can be useful to look at the government from a poststructural perspective. The justification used for this expansion of authority lies in the reliance on security as a concept, which can be related to Martin's (2013) view that securitizing education is part of a neoliberal way of governing. The rationale of the governmentality at play is thus neoliberalism, using the "technology" of policy in order to accomplish the governing.

7.4.3 Social measures

Looking at the problem representations found in the bill and committee directives, the measures that are introduced have a somewhat repressive function. Be it the increased authority of when principals can suspend a student, or investigating the possibility of teachers' obligation to report students. Sweden has for a time been regarded as having a more progressive stance when it comes to young people, putting emphasis on social welfare and care above punishments (Lunneblad & Johansson 2019). The policies at hand lean toward more the punitive side than keeping with this tradition. Instead, the importance of staff having higher authority is prominent. The social measures, based on the "traditional" Swedish way of dealing with young people, are silenced in these problem representations.

There is a lack of discussion about the necessity of introducing new security measures, apart from relying on the assumption of the increase in violence and threats in schools. This silencing of social measures is in line with what the literature review found. Broader policy changes in Sweden have been calling for more order and discipline, which in turn has influenced educational policy to become more repressive and juridified, allowing for more resources for surveillance and discipline (Dahlstedt & Foultier, 2019; Lunneblad & Johansson 2018). The absence of discussion on softer, social measures can thus be argued to be part of bigger tendencies in what governmentality is "ruling" in society at this time. Through focusing on repressive security measures, the governing role of the school is increased. This is in line with Martin's (2013) argument that the American educational system prioritizes controlling students and their behavior through policing and disciplining, instead of highlighting caring about young students.

Despite the policies at hand focusing on security measures in a more repressive sense, due to the silence of social measures there is no understanding of why this turn is required. While it can be argued that it is implied that social measures should still be present, it is not the main idea of the policies. The committee directive, before the expansion, does state that part of preventing violent attacks in schools lies in long-term preventative work which does entail some social measures. But, the vast majority of the committee directive still focused on more repressive measures.

Constructing the problem representations in this way also ignores the reason for a perceived increase in school violence, only focusing on what security measures can be introduced. This relates to Chambers' (2022) research, where school securitization is viewed as a reluctance to understand the underlying issues for why violence occurs. Social measures, and putting an emphasis on social welfare and caring for young people, can ultimately be seen as silenced throughout the policies.

7.5. What effects are produced by the problem representations?

This section covers the last question posed in the analysis, regarding what effects that the problem representations produce. The WPR approach to analysis inherently starts from a viewpoint that policies produce problem representations, which can have both a negative and positive effect on groups in society (Bacchi 2009). In order to understand these effects, they are split into three different “kinds” of effects: discursive effects, subjectification effects and lived effects. The meaning of these categories of effects will be further explained in this section as well. Below follows the analysis of what effects can be seen as being produced by the problem representations, split into three sections which each focus on one effect.

7.5.1 *Discursive effects*

Discursive effects have a link to questions two and four, i.e. the assumptions and silences that have been previously discussed. Assumptions, silences and the discourses that make these possible, “close off” the problem, which can have an effect. The aim is understanding how the limitations of the present discourse have an effect on the social analysis which is possible (Bacchi 2009).

One distinct discursive effect that can be seen is that the discourse surrounding security, which limits how security can be thought about. While security is discussed in different ways, both as subjective and objective, it places emphasis on the need for repressive measures to ensure the security in schools. A part of this is the silencing of social measures. The measures that are mainly suggested in the policies are “harder” security measures that have a ground in social control, discipline and governing. Therefore the discourse becomes

limited to viewing these measures as the efficient ones when it comes to ensuring the security in schools. Another part of this is the discussion had on authority in the sections above. The increase of authority lying with school staff becomes, due to the discursive effects of security, the only reasonable option because it is not further elaborated on. The silence on the restraints of this authority contributes to this, legitimizing the increase because the downsides of it are not discussed.

In this, it can also be argued that the assumption of violence plays into the discursive effects of security as a concept. This limits the understanding of violence and violent attacks in schools as them being prevalent, instead of rare or occasional occurrences. When understanding violence in this way, it facilitates the view of securitization in schools as a necessary step to take. Due to this, it becomes “unthinkable” or “unsayable” that softer measures which focus on social welfare and caring can be used in this context.

As Bacchi (2009), discursive effects can have a negative effect. Making the “problem” of disobedience and violence in schools a problem of security, closes off the consideration of underlying issues such as social welfare and/or resources. It also impacts the students that are considered “violent”, which will be further discussed in relation to subjectification. This can be seen as a form of securitization where, as Zedner (2009) proposed, existing fundamental problems are disregarded in the name of security. From a poststructural perspective, this can be seen as a way to justify the juridification when it comes to school security and safety. School securitization has been described as a way to “govern” students through social control (Ngyuen 2017), which is made possible by the discursive effects of the problem representations.

7.5.2 Subjectification

Subjectification effects are described by Bacchi (2009) as how “subjects” are made in problem representations, and how they are produced as a particular kind of “subject”. Discourses make subject positions available in policies, which we then assume and view the world from. These subjectification effects thus influence how we think about ourselves, and others, in relation to the problem representation. A part of this is that subjectification

effects due to problem representations often set groups in opposition to each other, implying that one group is “responsible” for the problem itself. This is what Foucault called dividing practices, i.e. separating one group from the other and has the potential of producing “governable” subjects (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016).

One subjectification effect in these policies is the production of the “violent” student, which can also be seen as a dividing practice. The policies concern security, albeit in different ways (e.g. subjective, objective, as a pursuit), relating to the students in the educational system. The understanding of students becomes a division between the orderly and obedient student, versus the violent and disobedient student. In this division, the violent and disobedient student is the one “responsible” for the problem. It is these students that necessitates the need for expanded staff authorities, a clearer definition of preventative work, etc. This view of the violent student as responsible for the “problem”, follows Foucault’s (in Bacchi 2009) argument that stigmatizing a minority serves a governmental purpose, encouraging a desired behavior amongst the majority. The violent student thus becomes an example of what behavior is not acceptable, indicating that all subjects, i.e. students, should fall into the group of orderly and obedient students.

At the same time, this subjectification reinforces the view that violent students are problematic, a problem needed to be “solved”. This can be seen as a harmful effect, since this way of constructing the violent student can hinder instead of help them. By this I mean that the “violent student” has led to securitized measures, ignoring what social factors could be affecting them or causing the disobedient behavior. This aspect is also raised in the previous research, where securitized measures could be seen to result in staff “policing” “problematic” students (Durodie 2016). It can also be related to the discursive effects which limit the discussion on security, concentrating on security measures and not social measures. This effect also implies that the minority of the violent student is a driving factor in changes to educational policy when it comes to security. This is in line with what Madfis, Hirschfield and Addington (2020) argues, that a rare form of school violence is leading to policy changes.

7.5.3 Lived effects

Discursive effects and subjectification effects translate into people's lives, which is encompassed by lived effects. As a whole, lived effects take aim at the impact of problem representations and how they directly can affect people's lives (Bacchi and Goodwin 2016). One such lived effect is the relationship between students and staff, and how the problem representations affect this. Elwick and Jerome (2019) argued that a securitized approach in the educational system could break the "trust-bond" between students and staff. This "trust-bond" can be seen as part of the previously traditional way of treating students with care from a social welfare perspective. This perspective has, as the analysis has shown, taken a repressive turn with the discourse on security. An effect can thus be that this relationship between students and staff has changed into one based more on control and surveillance, in line with the way security is used to "govern" the students. As social measures are disregarded in the discourse of security, the governmental role of the school as an institution is increased. The assumption of violence, the silence on alternative reasons and the other effects previously presented all contribute to a lived effect of increased governing, somewhat taking the focus away from education in school.

8. Discussion and conclusions

The aim of this thesis has been to understand how security is represented as a problem in three policies related to the Education Act. Building upon this, the goal was also to analyze how securitization in a Swedish educational context could be understood from a poststructural perspective. This discussion aims to summarize the analysis, in order to make some conclusions.

By using the first question of Bacchi's WPR-analysis, four problem representations relating to security were distinguished. The interrogation of the proposition 2021/22:160 resulted in problem representations of clarity and definitions, student participation, and authority. Looking at the problem representation identified in the committee directive(s), it encompasses the problem of security. While this differs from the proposition, in that the security is discussed as more of a pursuit than a subjective security, the directive builds upon the proposition. This problem representation is also the most recent one from the government, meaning it could be

seen as an evolution of how the legislators problematize security in educational policies. As such, the different problem representations are intertwined, which can be seen from the underlying assumptions that lay the foundation for their existence.

Three assumptions that underpin the problem representations were found, i.e. the assumption of “trygghet”, the assumption of uncertainty and the assumption of violence. While some are more closely connected to particular problem representations, they together form the “knowledge” that make the problem representations possible. The understanding of subjective security, *trygghet*, is assumed to be common “knowledge” which does not need to be defined in the Education Act. As discussed throughout the thesis, the concept of security is an abstract one (Zedner 2009), which often needs a concrete definition in order to be understood. The analysis also shows that lawmakers and the government assumes that uncertainty is what has led to staff not using their authority in schools, as well as the lack of student participation. The presumed prevalent violence is also something that underpins the problem representations. This assumption is shown in the analysis to be a fundamental part of both the bill and the committee directives, relating directly to an expansion of security in the educational context.

Some aspects of the problem representations are left unproblematized by the government. Through the analysis these have been divided into resources, the ambiguity of authority, and social measures. Together, these show that the focus of the government when constructing the representations of the problems in these policies is centered around security as a concept. As the analysis points to, there is little to no regard as to other reasons apart from unclearness or lack of understanding, could play a part in why preventative work regarding subjective security and the study environment has not been conducted in a satisfactory manner. At the same time, authority is discussed as a necessary means for schools to be safe, without regard for how it can impact the civil liberties of students (Addington 2009). The consideration regarding social measures is also ignored in the policies. While Sweden traditionally has been more focused on social welfare and care, the assumption of violence leads to security taking the upper hand in the discussion on what measures are needed.

When it comes to the effects produced by the problem representations, their assumptions and silences, the analysis points to a few different kinds of effects. Firstly, there are discursive effects, which limit what can be said on a certain topic. A distinct discursive effect is that the discourse surrounding security limits how to think about security. Though different ways of describing security are present in the analysis, such as subjective, objective and security as a pursuit, the focus remains on the need for more repressive measures to safeguard students in school. The effect thus becomes that these measures, and this discourse of security, are what is considered efficient and the only ones “possible”. The limitations that follow with this discourse of security can, from a critical perspective, be seen as a way to justify more legislation and authority as necessary in order to keep schools safe and secure. Another effect that follows upon the problem representation is a subjectification effect, creating a dividing practice of the violent student versus the obedient student. It is argued in the analysis that this can be seen as serving a governmental purpose, that placing the “responsibility” of a problem on one group encourages the desired behavior with the majority. In this case, the orderly and obedient student is premiated above the violent and disobedient, showing their behavior as the “better” one.

8.1 Conclusions

Departing from the discussion of the analysis, some concluding remarks can be made of the thesis in regards to the aim of the thesis. The aim has been to analyze the problem representations of security in the policies, as well as understand securitization through a poststructural approach. The purpose of doing this is to see how public debate as well as the occurrence of school violence and attacks, has influenced legislators and the government in their view of security in the context of education. This section is split into two parts, providing concluding comments on both of the research questions.

- *How is security represented as a problem in the Education Act and its preparatory work?*

In order to analyze the first research question, Bacchi’s WPR approach was employed. This resulted in three main problem representations when it comes to security in the proposition (2021/22:160) and the committee directives (Dir. 2022:86; Dir. 2023:22). These were the problem of clarity and definition, the problem of uncertainty and the problem of security in schools. To understand these representations further, underlying assumptions were explored, as

to understand the “knowledge” which made the representations possible. The representations rely on presumed established and well-known “knowledge” of the concept of security, as well as there being an uncertainty among staff about how they can use their authority. The assumption of an increase in violence is taken for granted in both the bill and the committee directives, necessitating further legislation on security in schools. Taken together, the discursive effects of these problem representations of security can be argued as a response to the first question. The discourse on security is, due to the assumptions made and the silences that exist, limited. Security in all forms, i.e. subjective, objective, and as a pursuit, is discussed as a necessary step of introducing more repressive measures that have their ground in neoliberalism, focusing on social control and governing.

- *How can securitization of Swedish schools be understood through a poststructural policy analysis?*

Through the analysis of the problem representations found in the thesis, it appears that there has been a turn toward objective security and security as a pursuit, moving from the subjective security. This can be argued to be a sign that education is becoming securitized. Security is also used as a justification for expanding the authority of staff in the school setting, which previous research (Martin 2013) connects to a neoliberalism way of governing. Focusing on the more repressive use of security that was discussed in relation to the first question above, the governing role increases, by prioritizing social control and disciplining. By ignoring or silencing the differing understanding of security being created through social measures, or other reasons as to why the preventative work has not been satisfactory, it can be argued that using security in this way shows an unwillingness to see underlying issues for why securitization needs to take place (Chambers 2022).

The effects of the problem representations relate directly to the securitization that is taking place in the Swedish educational system. Prioritizing security becomes necessary due to the way the representation of security is shaped by the assumptions made when creating the policy. Assuming that violence is increasing, introducing more authority lying with the staff and taking a harder stance on security measures all signify that security has taken a larger role in the educational sphere. Security, as seen in the bill and committee directive, is used to justify further

legislation and governing, while disregarding fundamental issues. Departing from this, it could be suggested that the concept of security has become *symbolic*, as Zedner (2009) proposes. By this I mean that the concept of “security” has become a tool for the government, to alleviate public fear. As the debate in the media and the public concerning school attacks and violence in schools has increased, as the introduction states, the way security is employed in the presented policies has changed. Moving from the subjective security prevalent in the proposition, to the more objective security in the committee directives. Despite these policies being quite close in time, the “meaning” of security has changed, which could be a sign that it is used in a symbolic way.

As there is little research from a socio-legal perspective on this topic (see section 4), the conclusions reached contribute to new knowledge on school security in Sweden. This thesis shows that the discourse of security created within the law and its preparatory work limits what can be said and done concerning school security issues. The assumption of violence, for example, is made in order to create a problem representation of school security that enables an increase in security measures and a driving force behind policy changes. Previous research in the field has also pointed towards this happening in the US (Altheide 2009; Highberger, Wang & Brittingham, 2022). Making the same findings in a Swedish setting is therefore important, since it could signify that Swedish law and school security are moving in a similar direction as the US. Looking at this field of research from a socio-legal perspective can also increase the understanding of the securitization taking place in the Swedish school system. Sociology of law offers a unique perspective concerning law in society, in this case how the Education Act has become more influenced by security. As this has rarely been done before, the thesis sought to further the understanding of school security and its representation in the law, which resulted in a different way of viewing security in the Swedish school system. Previous research discussed a juridification of the school system (Lunneblad & Johansson, 2019; Hammarén et al. 2015; Alexius 2018), whereas this thesis proposes a *securitization* of the school system. Viewing this topic through a lens of sociology of law has thus contributed to another way of understanding the development of the Education Act in relation to school security and the public debate on the topic.

8.2 Suggestions for future research

As this thesis concentrated on how security was represented as a problem in the policies, as well as to further understand the securitization of Swedish schools, there are other aspects that future research can capture. The delimitations of this thesis excluded question 3 and 6 when applying the WPR approach, something that could be further explored in this context. Question three is closely connected to Foucault's "genealogy", and attempts to understand the origin and history of the problem representation. In relation to this, question six focuses on how the problem representation has become dominant, if and how it could be challenged. These two questions are thus connected, and could be interesting to apply to the concept of security in an educational setting to understand the longer development over time.

Another suggestion is to focus on the resulting report that the committee directive commissioned. Since this report is not finished at the time of writing this thesis, the report could not be analyzed, nor has the suggestions for legislation become available. Conducting similar research on how security is represented as a problem in the report would therefore be interesting, to further the understanding of how the government views security in an educational context. Also, as the previous research showed, there is little research conducted on school security as an overall topic in Sweden. The public debate on the subject is growing, as is the discussion in schools. More research is needed in order to establish what effects the securitization of the Swedish educational system has and can have, something I highly encourage.

9. References

Alexius, K. (2018). Abuse, degradation and conflicts in school: A qualitative study of text documents in cases at the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, 54, pp.66-74

Altheide, D.L. (2009) The Columbine Shootings and the Discourse of Fear. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 52(10), pp.1354-1370.

Addington, L.A. (2009) Cops and Cameras: Public School Security as a Policy Response to Columbine. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 52(10), pp.1426-1446

Bacchi, C. (2009). *Analysing policy: What's the problem represented to be?*. Frenchs Forest: Pearson Education Australia.

Bacchi, C. & Goodwin, S. (2016). *Poststructural policy analysis: a guide to practice*. New York: Palgrave Pivot

Banakar, R. & Travers, M. (eds.) *Law and Social Theory*. 2 ed. Oxford: Hart

Banakar, R. (2019). *On Socio-Legal Design*. Lund: Lund University

Brolin, A. (2022) Skolpersonal lär sig hantera dödligt våld: "Måste vara beredda". *Gefle Dagblad*, 11 August.

<https://www.gd.se/2022-08-11/skolpersonal-lar-sig-hantera-dodligt-vald-maste-vara-beredda>

Buzan, B., Wæver, O. & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: a new framework for analysis*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner

Chambers, D. (2022). How School Security Measures Harm Schools and Their Students. *Educational Theory*, 72(2), pp.123-153.

Dahlstedt, M. & Foulter, C. (2021). Fostering Agents of Change: Governing, Crime Prevention and Teaching for Security. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 65(3), pp.373-384

Deflem, M. (2008). *Sociology of Law: Visions of a Scholarly Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Durodie, B. (2016) Securitising Education to Prevent Terrorism or Losing Direction? *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 64(1), pp.21-35

Elwick, A. & Jerome, L. (2019). Balancing Securitisation and Education in Schools: Teachers' Agency in Implementing the Prevent Duty. *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 40(3), pp.338-353

Englund, P. (2022). Skolvärlden granskar: Tre skolattacker på 12 månader. *Skolvärlden*, 22 February. <https://skolvarlden.se/artiklar/skolvarlden-granskar-tre-skolattacker-pa-12-manader>

Eriksson, G. (2022). Ska Sverige ta efter USA mot skolvåldet?. *Svenska Dagbladet*, 18 August. <https://www.svd.se/a/G3zQOV/vapen-och-visitation-usa-och-sverige-vill-stoppa-skolvald>

Hammarén, N., Lunneblad, J., Johansson, T. & Odenbring, Y. (2015). The school as a crime scene: Discourse on degrading treatment in Swedish schools. *Power and Education*, 7(3), pp.272-288

Hedman, E. (2022). LR i stormöte om skolvåld: Vi behöver tydligare regelverk. *Skolvärlden*, 5 May <https://skolvarlden.se/artiklar/lr-stormote-om-skolvald-vi-behover-tydligare-regelverk>

Highberger, J., Wang, W. & Brittingham, R. (2022). Differences in Perceptions of Safety Before and After School Shootings: A Multi-Event Analysis. *Journal of School Violence*, 21(3), pp.312-326

Holmberg, A. (2021) Swedish teachers' views of security in schools: Narratives disconnected from the national security discourse. *Critical Studies on Security*, 9(3), pp.226-240

Hope, A. (2015). Governmentality and the “Selling” of School Surveillance Devices. *The Sociological Review*, 63(4), pp.840-857

Kaunert, C. & Yakubov, I. (2017). *Securitization I* The Routledge Handbook of Justice and Home Affairs Research Routledge.

Kupchik, A., Brent, J.J. & Mowen, T.J. (2015). The Aftermath of Newtown: More of the Same. *British Journal of Criminology*. 55(6), p.1115-1130

Lunneblad, J. & Johansson, T. (2019). Policing the School: In between dialogues and crime reports. *Power and Education*, 11(1), pp.1-15

Madfis, E. (2016). “It’s Better to Overreact”: School Officials’ Fear and Perceived Risk of Rampage Attacks and the Criminalization of American Public Schools. *Critical Criminology*, 24, pp.39-55

Madfis, E., Hirschfield, P. & Addington, L.A. (2021). School Securitization and Its Alternatives: The Social, Political, and Contextual Drivers of School Safety Policy and Practice. *School Psychology Review*, 50(2-3), pp.191-205

Martin, J. (2013). Commentary: The Politics of Fear. *Child & Youth Services*, 34, pp.5-8

Martorell, J. (2022). Ny utredning ska förebygga skolvåld. *SVT*, 23 June
<https://www.svt.se/nyheter/inrikes/ny-utredning-ska-forebygga-skolvald>

Mason, J. (2018) *Qualitative Researching*. 3. ed., London: Sage

Mattson, C. & Säljö, R. (2018). Violent Extremism, National Security and Prevention: Institutional Discourses and Their Implications for Schooling. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 66(1), pp.109-125

SVT (2019). Så ska skolorna bli säkrare. *SVT*, 22 November.

<https://www.svt.se/nyheter/lokalt/uppsala/sa-ska-skolorna-bli-sakrare>

SVT (2022). Här tränar lärare inför skolattacker. *SVT*, 27 June

<https://www.svt.se/nyheter/lokalt/skane/har-tranar-larare-infor-skolattacker>

Thodelius, C. & Sandén, H. (2019). Lethal school violence in Scandinavia: development of an incident typology and suggestions for prevention. *Journal of Risk Research*, 22(6), pp.692-700

Tryggare Sverige (2022). *Tryggare skola*.

<https://tryggaesverige.org/skola/tryggare-skola>

Utbildningsdepartementet (2022) Säkerheten i skolan ska förbättras. *Regeringskansliet*, 23 June

<https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/kommittedirektiv/2022/06/dir.-202286>

Vallinkoski, K.K. & Koirikivi, P. (2020). Enhancing Finnish basic education schools' safety culture through comprehensive safety and security management. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, 6(2), pp.103-115

Zedner, L. (2009). *Security*. Abingdon: Routledge

Zembylas, M. (2020) Affect/Emotion and Securitising Education: Re-Orienting the Methodological and Theoretical Framework for the Study of Securitisation in Education. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 68(4), pp.487-506

Legal references

Kommittedirektiv 2022:86. *Säkerheten i skolan ska förbättras*

Kommittedirektiv 2023:22. *Tilläggsdirektiv till utredningen om att säkerheten i skolan ska förbättras*

Proposition 2021/22:160. *Skolans arbete med trygghet och studiero*

SFS 2010:800. Skollag. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.

SFS 2008:567. Diskrimineringslagen.