



SCHOOL OF
ECONOMICS AND
MANAGEMENT

From Panic Rooms to Boardrooms

The effects of Business Continuity Management on company operations

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores the effects of Business Continuity Management (BCM) on a company's daily operations. By investigating if such effects exist, this thesis contributes to the understanding of the implications of BCM. In turn, this understanding may help facilitate the implementation of BCM. Based on a qualitative method, it undertakes 7 interviews with Swedish companies within manufacturing, utilities, finance and construction. The data suggests that BCM influences several aspects of daily company operations including activities within strategy, financial management, external relations and organisational culture. We conclude that effects on these areas are heavily intertwined and that BCM has significant spillover effects aside from strengthening resilience. The themes found in this study may be utilised in further research.

Keywords: Business Continuity Management, BCM, Daily Operations, Effects, Resilience

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Introduction

This section introduces a background, placing the research in a broader context. The purpose of the study is presented, with its research question, and arguments for its relevance. Lastly, the delimitations are pointed out and an overview of the study is provided.

1.1 Background

In recent years, the global economy has witnessed a series of significant disruptions: From the COVID-19 pandemic to the war in Ukraine, blockages of the Suez Canal and the seizing of shipping in the Red Sea, and as of writing heightened tension in the Middle East. These events have not only disrupted global economic activity and supply chains but have also contributed to a state of geopolitical instability (S&P Global, 2024).

These events showcase the importance of companies being able to navigate unexpected disruptions. To successfully do so, organisations must be able to anticipate threats to their operations - such as a lack of supplies or power outages - and prepare ways in which to adapt their operations accordingly. One way of preparing for, and managing through, disruptions is known as *Business Continuity Management*, or *BCM*. The Business Continuity Institute defines BCM as a

management process that identifies potential impacts that threaten an organisation and provides a framework for building resilience and the capability for an effective response that safeguards the interests of its key stakeholders, reputation, brand and value-creating activities (BCI, 2024).

Whilst an abstract concept in definition, applications of BCM are often simple and quite practical. Examples of BCM measures include (in no way limited to) duplicate warehouses or spare inventory to ensure redundancy, IT security measures eg. firewalls and encryption, physical security such as restricted access, regular employee training of emergency procedures, and diversification of supply chains. BCM applications vary between organisations.

Collectively, such measures contribute to an organisation's resilience, ensuring it can continue to operate effectively under adverse conditions, as is showcased in the empirical data of this thesis.

Ensuring continuity, ie. the organisation's ability to continuously deliver its intended services or products is increasingly recognised as essential for businesses. Continuity is of self-interest to the company and of interest to the general public. With the own company, both shareholders and key stakeholders such as customers, employees, suppliers, and industry partners have an interest in the company producing its intended output (Järveläinen, 2020). The broader societal interest stems from an interest in the stable supply of consumer goods, and from companies' key role in keeping the global economy in status quo. Ensuring continuity is especially important for companies that play important roles in societal resilience, eg. businesses supplying basic utilities (Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency informant, 2024).

Despite the importance of ensuring continuity, evidence suggests that companies struggle with the implementation of effective BCM. There are several potential reasons, such as the associated costs and lack of risk awareness. Effective implementation might also be hampered because the effects of BCM are poorly understood (Bakar et al., 2015). With opaque effects - and potentially, benefits - companies risk blindly focusing on the cost, required managerial attention, and tradeoffs against other company activities, such as business/product development, and ultimately underimplement BCM. To address the issue of poorly understood effects (and potential underimplementation of BCM as a consequence) this study explores the effects of BCM on day-to-day company operations.

For the purpose of this research, *day-to-day* or *daily* operations refer to the activities and processes in which a company engage in order to deliver their intended product or service under normal operating circumstances. Examples of such activities include, but are not limited, to strategy formulation, sales, recruitment, product development, and the maintenance of relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

1.2 Purpose and Research Question

This thesis aims to explore the effect of Business Continuity Management on companies' daily operations. These include activities and functions such as strategy formulation, financial management, stakeholder relations, and HR management. By contributing to the understanding of BCM's effects, this thesis' purpose is to provide guidance for organisations wishing to implement BCM. Whilst not a step-by-step guide to implementation, this thesis may provide insights into what consequences a company might anticipate from BCM implementation.

The following research question will be assessed to fulfil the study's purpose,

What are the effects of Business Continuity Management on a company's day-to-day operations?

1.3 Relevance of Study

As mentioned, this study aims to explore the effects of BCM on daily operations to help facilitate BCM implementation. The importance of well-implemented BCM as highlighted above grants this thesis its relevance. Companies' ability to effectively manage and adapt to disruptions is a matter not only of private concern but of public interest, too (MSB informant, 2024).

Companies operating undisrupted ensure that essential services and goods continue to flow. Stable supply chains, value chains and trade flows not only ensure stable availability of consumer goods but have shown to be necessary for financial stability, eg. through affecting inflation (Albagli et al. 2022; Bai et al. 2024). This illustrates how the robustness of companies' business continuity management affects not only their own resilience but contributes to societal resilience too. Societal resilience is of interest in the increasingly integrated global economy, where disruptions quickly cause ripple effects felt by consumers, firms, and governments alike, begging for comprehensive continuity management amongst companies.

Current literature on the relationship between different BCM measures and their effects on organisations is scarce, opening for further research (Awang Ali et al. 2023). This is reflected in the literature review below and discussed throughout the study. Through interviews with managers responsible for continuity across seven firms operating in Sweden, this study explores

how continuity management affects their respective firms' day-to-day operations, to address the research gap and hopefully provide useful insights for organisations looking to integrate their BCM practices with their day-to-day operations. In summary, the relevance of this study lies in the intersection between the research gap and the entangled societal and corporate interests in continuity.

1.4 Delimitations

This thesis has delimitations regarding the geographical scope and the type of companies studied. Whilst some of the interviewed companies are multinational, this study focuses on companies' operations in the context of Sweden. This is mainly because a broader geographical scope would beg the study to adopt a more comparative approach, as legislations and compliance requirements on continuity differ between countries, affecting how companies work and reason around these questions. Such an undertaking would have been beyond the scope of the study. Subsequently, the expertise and areas of responsibility of the interview subjects are largely limited to a Swedish context as well.

Further, the research studies companies rather than public organisations. Companies, even those whose practices can be regarded as of critical importance, do *not* face the same legal requirements as public organisations such as municipalities or government agencies. This allows for greater interpretative freedom in how they design and implement their continuity plans. The varied nature of BCM practices brought forth under such freedom provides an opportunity for richer analysis, compared to a homogenous sample. Companies exhibit variation in their goals and priorities; their first-order goals are likely to be related to providing owner value subject to competition. This means the perceived role and value of BCM to the organisation may differ between companies, and is likely to be developed internally over time, compared to government-run organisations whose views on, and practice of, BCM is likely to (to a greater extent) be mandated by law or other government bodies.

Finally, the focus is specifically on BCM practices before an incident, discontinuity or crisis, rather than after. Much of the current discourse focuses on the impact on continuity management once set in action, ie. *after* a triggering event/disruption. Focusing on BCM practices in relation to non-incident daily operations will emphasise the importance of BCM from a prevention and mitigation perspective, and allows a discussion of potential spillover benefits or effects on an organisation working actively with BCM.

1.5 Outline

The remainder of this thesis is presented as follows: First, a historical overview and discussion on definitions of BCM is presented, along with previous research. The third chapter describes the choice of methodology, including data collection, data analysis and a critical stance on the chosen method with a discussion related to ethical considerations. The fourth chapter presents the results from the interview, followed by a discussion of the results in chapter five. Conclusions and future research are presented in chapter six.

Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to situate the reader in the BC literature. It does so by presenting a brief history of BCM, and the ongoing discussion of how BCM should fit into the broader task of managing a company. This discussion is largely dominated by the idea of *embeddedness*, which argues that when BCM is integrated into other management functions, rather than treated as a separate activity, it becomes more effective and may carry additional benefits such as a competitive advantage. Embedding BCM into other management practices will likely affect those operations areas accordingly.

2.2 Historical Overview of Business Continuity Management

Emerging from crisis management, BCM began its development in the 1970s. For a detailed review of driving forces and development steps, see Herbane (2010). In short, the driving forces behind BCM development have differed over time, initially emerging as a response to technical and operational risks that threatened organisations' recovery from hazards and interruptions (Herbane, 2010).

The development of BCM is perhaps best illustrated by the rich history of developed practice *standards*. Disaster Recovery Planning (DPR) emerged early as a standard practice, focusing largely on information systems (IS) and information technology (IT) (Elliot et al., 2010). In 1994, the Business Continuity Institute was formed. This increased the demand for common standards for BCM, leading to the creation of the Information Security Standard, ISO 17799 (Hiles, 2007). The first dedicated business continuity standard, the British Standard BS25999 was introduced in 2006, marking a transition from disaster (systems) recovery to a broader focus on sustaining critical business functions (Herbane, 2010). This standard has since been revised and is the basis of the currently serving standard, ISO standard 22301:2019, '*Security and Resilience - Business Continuity Management Systems - Requirements*' (ISO, 2019).

A central concept in the development of BCM is Business Continuity Planning, or BCP. BCP is a forerunner of BCM and remains a component of BCM to this day (Supradi & Low, 2018). The

aim of BCP in short is to plan an organisation's responses to anticipated possible disruptions. It entails defining key products, services, activities, and the resources required to deliver them; identifying potential threats and assessing their impact; and formulating procedures for disaster recovery and the maintenance of critical functions (Cerullo & Cerullo, 2004; Philips & Landahl, 2020; Tucker, 2015).

Whilst planning remains a part of BCM, a shift has occurred from BCP - a planning-centric approach to ensuring continuity - to BCM, a more process-focused and less static method of ensuring continuity. With the shift from planning to management, BCM becomes more integrated into the organisation's ordinary management practices. As such, it transitions from disaster recovery of individual systems and functions to a broader focus on sustaining all-important business deliveries & outputs as a whole (Awang Ali et al., 2023). The distinction between BCP and BCM indicates the broader, more dynamic, nature of BCM.

2.1 Defining Business Continuity Management

There is no single accepted definition of Business Continuity Management. Definitions vary as a result of the wide range of fields and industries in which BCM is employed. Another challenge to a standard definition is the variety in scope, origin, duration and severity of the events that BCM is supposed to address, including anything from environmental disasters to conflicts, IT disruptions, disease outbreaks or supply chain stoppages (Gibbs & Buchanan, 2006). The difficulties experienced in reaching a universal definition have been cited as a roadblock to further developing BCM into a subfield of management studies (Fischbacher-Smith, 2017).

Definitions of BCM tend to view it as a range of *capabilities* or a set of *tools/activities*. These capabilities or activities are viewed as means to an end, often described as the ability to continuously output key functions, products or services or as the lowest bar to ensure the survival of the organisation. When viewed as a set of activities, the definition serves to classify an activity as being of BCM purpose or not. An example is defining BCM as,

refer[ring] to daily operations carried out to ensure the enterprise's stability, consistency, and recoverability. Business continuity management (BCM) aims at eliminating the effects of adverse events by enhancing an enterprise's capacity to continually deliver its critical operations or rapidly restarting them in case of an emergency (Radjenovic & Zikovic, 2022, p. 51).

On the other hand, emphasis may lie on BCM as an organisation's capabilities to reach a desired end. The British Standards Institution defines BCM as,

the ability of an organisation to anticipate, prepare for, respond and adapt to incremental change and sudden disruptions in order to survive and prosper. It reaches beyond risk management towards a more holistic view of business health and success. A resilient organization is one that not merely survives over the long term, but also flourishes – passing the test of time (British Standards Institution, 2016, cited in Fischbacher-Smith, 2017, p. 91).

Whilst slightly different, both definitions above highlight the importance of adjacent concepts such as resilience, and BCM as a wider concept than mere crisis recovery or continuity *planning*. Leaving the means - activity or capability - a definition can also be based solely on the end - the purpose - as shown in Tammineedi's (2010) definition, "[BCM]Aims to ensure continuous availability of essential business resources and functions, enabling the business to maintain critical operations in the event of a disruption (p. 36). Similarly, ISO 22301:2019 defines the purpose of implementing a Business Continuity Management System as "to prepare for, provide and maintain controls and capabilities for managing an organisation's overall ability to continue to operate during disruptions" (ISO, 2019, p. ix).

For this research, this paper considers BCM as a set of tools that aim at building organisational resilience and the ability to perform previously identified, key operations, at a predetermined quality, in adverse conditions. This allows for a great deal of flexibility when identifying Business Continuity Management efforts among the sample companies. The tools; various

continuity measures, preparations, risk mitigations or similar may vary between the companies depending on their size, financial means, industry or ambition. The aim to build resilience and ability (to perform...) also differs depending on stakeholder demands, such as from customers or legislators. On one hand, such a broad definition relies on understanding the terms used within it, ie. *resilience* and *adverse conditions* and the understanding of these might differ between respondents. On the other hand, using a broad definition reflects well on the heterogeneous nature of this paper's sample, companies are expected to implement a variety of continuity practices that might not all fit well into a tighter definition.

As an ability, the definition of BCM has widened over time, from a mere ability to recover technical systems, to a more holistic term (Herbane et al. 2004). Niemimaa et al. (2019) present the product of this development and offer a working definition of BCM as the *socio-technical* ability of an organisation to withstand and recover from both internal and external uncertainties. The socio-technical aspect introduces the condition that BCM as a capability must extend beyond mere technical recoverability, including the ability to maintain and recover organisational processes and functions. This begs the recoverability of different functions to be connected so that BCM does not isolate individual functions - parts - in an organisation but considers the continuous ability to deliver the final products, services, or capability as a *whole*. This concept is further explored below.

2.3 Previous Research

This section highlights previous research related to the BCM field, focusing on literature which discusses the role and effects of BCM in company operations.

2.3.1 Embeddedness & Strategic Role

In recent years, scholars studying BCM have increasingly emphasised the importance of viewing and implementing BCM as an integrated process rather than a separate function, or merely reducing it to a planning tool (Herbane 2010; Fischbacher-Smith, 2017; Niemimaa, 2017). Herbane et al. (2004) initiated this strand of thought by arguing for a 'strategic role' for BCM. For this purpose, they define *strategy* as the long-run process of creating and preserving

competitive advantage. If a firm ever expects the continuity of these capabilities to be threatened, ensuring continuity becomes of strategic interest. BCM then, they argue, is a tool for firms to preserve value in terms of protecting the capabilities that constitute a firm's competitive advantage.

Aside from protecting existing capabilities, there are multiple ways to gain a strategic advantage through BCM, Herbane et al. (2004) argue. They propose that BCM can be leveraged to gain a 'recovery advantage', or a superior ability to protect continuity in an industry-wide discontinuity, eg. a major power outage or natural disaster. A recovery advantage, they highlight, may be achieved by having preemptively negotiated contracts or relationships built with "recovery suppliers" that provide various services necessary to recovery, or by building redundant supply chains by using multiple suppliers even in day-to-day operations. As BCM maturity generally varies between industries, a firm in a low-maturity industry can gain a competitive advantage by investing in better-than-average BCM, branding the firm as reliable. Whilst indirect, these examples illustrate the effects of BCM on day-to-day operations by letting BCM seep into 'regular' strategy formulation, make-or-buy decisions, or supplier negotiations.

Integrating BCM strategically as described above requires "embeddedness" (Herbane et al. 2004, p. 442). Embedded BCM contributes to an organisation's resilience, improves the ability to mitigate risk and ensures superior disaster recovery compared to competitors with less mature approaches (Bakar et al. 2015; Niemimaa, 2015; 2017). Embeddedness is defined as when,

aris[ing] when strategic thinking and participation in the business continuity process is not only evidenced among the top management but also manifests itself throughout the organisation. BCM is then not merely a plan but constitutes the organisational processes of leadership...As this process becomes ongoing, BCM is more likely to become aligned with strategic initiatives within the organisation (p. 442).

As defined above, embeddedness requires continuity management to be an ongoing process spread throughout the organisation, in some degree of harmony with the firm's overall strategy,

rather than a stand-alone activity. It also requires BCM to extend beyond mere technical solutions (eg. IS recovery), instead becoming a socio-technical process (Herbane et al. 2004; Niemimaa, 2015; 2017; Niemimaa et al. 2019). Similarly, Bakar et al. (2015) argue that to yield effective continuity, BCM measures must be deeply embedded in the daily processes and mindset of the organisation. Embeddedness, they argue, should be viewed as a critical success factor of a company's BCM implementation, with greater embeddedness implying a more mature BCM.

Nimeimaa (2015; 2017) provides several examples of what such a socio-technical approach implies in practice; working with organisational knowledge, relational and other human components rather than mere technical processes such as physical infrastructure or IT systems. It requires an ongoing commitment by management and employees, as well as integrating BCM into everyday work routines and organisational culture. Niemimaa (2015; 2017) highlights that to achieve embeddedness, a company must be prepared to adapt its routines and culture accordingly.

Bakar et al. (2015) similarly argue for embedding a BCM mindset, making BCM a part of an organisation's routines and culture. This, they argue, requires integrating BCM into key business processes, eg. by considering supply security, redundant or independent systems, or keeping buffers or key inputs. On an organisational level, they propose conducting regular BCM training and introducing awareness programs tailored to different levels of the organisation. Finally, continuous communication that highlights the importance of BCM should be provided to both employees and external stakeholders such as customers and suppliers.

Fischbacher-Smith (2017) provides similar examples of must-have embeddedness into eg. strategic HR and succession planning, strategic communication, and organisational memory & knowledge preservation. Practically, embeddedness can take many shapes, including considering the position of BC-responsible personnel in the organisational chart, considering the joint capabilities/knowledge-backgrounds of those responsible for BCM within an organisation, and

including BCM-aspects of product development (Herbane et al. 2004; Fischbacher-Smith, 2017; Niemimaa 2017).

2.3.2 BCM & Organisational Performance

Several authors have highlighted the benefits of successfully implementing BCM, and on the contrary, the risk of poor or no implementation. Fischbacher-Smith (2017) argues that a lack of BCM may cause failing performance, stating that “Ultimately, a failure in the project management process for BCM has the potential to incubate vulnerabilities into the organisation and move it into a state of crisis.” (Fischbacher-Smith, 2017, p. 96).

Speaking of benefits, Sawalha (2013) highlights that BCM can be used to increase business effectiveness, focusing on the Business Impact Analysis (BIA) as a key tool. A BIA analyses different functions or assets in an organisation according to their level of importance to continued business operations (Păunescu et al. 2018; Sawalha, 2013). If the assessment is accurate and honest, firms can better anticipate and mitigate risks. It also allows for letting BCM affect operations and firm strategy by adjusting accordingly (Sawalha, 2013). On a similar note, ISO 22301:2019 states several potential benefits of implementing management systems for business continuity in an organisation. Besides enhancing resilience, BCM can “support [the organisation’s] strategic objectives; creating a competitive advantage; protecting...reputation and credibility...reducing legal and financial exposure; [and] reducing...costs of disruptions” (ISO, 2019, p. ix).

The relationship between operational performance and BCM is however not uncomplicated. Problematising this relationship, Fischbacher-Smith introduces an “effectiveness-efficiency paradox” (2017, p. 96), arguing that BCM measures force concessions of operational *efficiency* to ensure the operational *effect*. The argument is presented that a slimmed-down organisation with little human, systems or physical redundancy is likely to be efficient, but is quickly rendered ineffective when facing a low-probability, high-impact event. As such, he warns against sidelining BCM to a non-strategic support function; if BCM is viewed as a response to rare, exogenous events, then it may miss incumbent issues or crises emerging from within the

organisation, such as management failures. Following this, he argues for BCM approaches to be embedded into organisational processes, as discussed above.

In summary, this section has introduced the discourse on BCM to date. It has introduced the scattered effort to define BCM and its evolution from a planning tool to a broader management process. The discussion on granting BCM a strategic role to build competitive advantage has been highlighted. This section has introduced embeddedness, the process of embedding BCM in an organisation and its management practices, including embedding BCM into company culture, strategy, and HR management.

Rather than deductively predicting outcomes based on the literature, this section serves as a backdrop to the later discussion. Whilst the themes used to discuss the results are not formally stipulated based on the literature, some themes begin emerging already at this stage, such as the concept that embedded BCM may affect a firm's strategy. Whilst no specific theory is formulated as a synthesis of the strands discussed above, the concepts discussed in *literature* will return below, put in relation to the empirical data in the *Discussion*.

Methodology

This section outlines the research methodology, motivating the choice of methodology along with the strategy for the data collection, the data analysis and a critical reflection on the quality of the research with the ethical aspects in consideration.

3.1 Research Approach

The research adopts a qualitative approach for several reasons. Unlike quantitative methods, which typically measure predefined variables and yield statistical data, qualitative methods allow the researcher to capture rich and detailed narratives instead (Bell et al., 2019). It is particularly well-suited for understanding complex phenomena, such as BCM since it enables the researcher to delve into the lived experiences, perceptions, and motivations of individuals involved in these practices (Silverman, 2017). Furthermore, qualitative research is flexible in both data collection and analysis, which enables a deeper exploration of research areas where there may be limited previous research (Bryman, 2016; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Given the descriptive nature of the research question, framing the study within the contexts of inductive or deductive approaches did not appear essential as the study adopts neither approach. Rather, the focus was directed toward detailing the influence of BCM on organisational practices, as captured through the narratives of the participants in semi-structured interviews.

3.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

The use of semi-structured interviews means that there are predetermined areas of focus for the questions, while at the same time, the participants have the opportunity to provide direction throughout the interview. It allows for asking the interview questions in a different order, or manner between the participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), and enables follow-up questions if the participants mention something the researcher would like to investigate further. Galetta & Cross (2013) similarly argue that it is even essential to change or add various sets of questions to be able to examine the participants of the study in-depth.

This methodology was chosen because it is well-suited for exploring different experiences and knowledge from participants by enabling a comparative analysis of their answers while still allowing the participants to be flexible, as their experiences and knowledge will be unique to them (Bryman, 2016). Since the research investigates how and if continuity management affects the company's daily operations, using a method that allows participants to be flexible will be of use since there is a high possibility that the organisations are working with continuity in very different ways.

The interview guide (detailed in Appendix 1) functioned primarily as a flexible framework to facilitate dialogue, ensuring that critical topics were addressed while allowing room for spontaneous exploration based on the participant's responses. This guide was not strictly adhered to linearly; rather, it served as a navigational tool to help navigate through the conversation if it steered off course or if pauses occurred, keeping in mind the necessity of adaptability and responsiveness to the conversation's natural progression (Bryman, 2016). The beginning of the interview guide was most structured, including questions about the participant's role at the company and their perception of BCM. These questions served several purposes, to build rapport with the respondent, and ensure that the respondent *actually* had relevant knowledge and capacity to contribute to the study. The answers to the initial questions, which were asked consistently across all interviews, helped contextualise the answers to the main question which followed.

The main question, '*Do you observe any effect of BCM on the company's daily operations?*' followed. It was devised with the intention of gathering data that more directly relates to the research question. This question was intentionally made broad to ensure that the participants were not steered in a specific direction. Additional questions about the implementation of BCM, stakeholder expectations, and related challenges were also included. These additional questions were intended to stimulate recall, as suggested by Galletta and Cross (2013). Leading the participants to tell stories or recall past events at their companies, these questions eventually did help the participants state additional effects of BCM on various areas of daily operations. This

proved useful as early interviews revealed that participants struggled with the broad scope of the initial question about BCM effects on their daily operations.

In the initial interviews, respondents struggled with the broad scope of the main effect question. After two interviews, it was noticed that the additional questions produced more valuable responses due to their more applied nature. Drawing inspiration from this, the main question was supplemented with examples of potentially affected areas of daily operations, eg. strategy formulation or company culture. This guided the participants to better articulate their experiences. Some participants introduced new areas altogether, which were added as examples to later interviews, too. This caused the interview guide to develop over time (presented in the Appendix is the final version). This development was important as the analysis relies on the perspectives of the respondents and how such perspectives are understood by the authors.

There is a possibility of misconceptions or inconsistencies in how participants perceive and articulate the effects of BCM as well as the perception of their 'daily operations', since the interview questions did not cover definitions of daily operations. Instead, respondents described their businesses in general terms, of eg. size, product portfolio and 'respondents' personal roles within the firm. Over the course of the interviews, it becomes apparent that daily operations is a spectrum; from a narrow definition of all functions operating as intended, to a more generous definition where minor discontinuities are so common that they are included in the thought of daily operations. Taking the variety into account, asking respondents to clearly define daily operations would likely have made it easier for the respondents to provide examples of BCM effects on those operations. Some participants also answered several questions within one answer, which led to some questions being skipped. Despite this, the interview guide was maintained as a reference point, which was of importance since it enabled a thorough analysis of the respondent's answers.

The interviews were conducted in Swedish on various online video call platforms. Online interviewing offers a great deal of flexibility, both location and time-wise (Keen et al., 2022) Additionally, online interviews can foster a comfortable environment for participants, as they can

engage in familiar surroundings, which may help them feel more at ease and open during the conversation. This comfort can be beneficial for obtaining rich, qualitative data, as participants may be more inclined to share their thoughts candidly (Keen et al., 2022). The fact that we were in a comfortable and familiar environment (home or office) hopefully provided a level of comfort to the participants and ensured minimal disturbances.

Online interviewing also comes with difficulties as well. Technological issues are a primary concern, including problems with internet connections, difficulties in understanding the software being used, and disparities in access to digital tools (Lobe et al., 2022). During one of the interviews, there were disturbances in terms of internet connection. This meant that several questions and answers had to be repeated in order to capture the full conversation. To ensure that there were no misunderstandings, the interview was summarised for the participant several times.

3.2 Data Collection

The data consists of answers gathered in semi-structured interviews and the sample stretches across with one company representative from seven companies in five different industries. The following part will explain why both such industries and in turn companies were of interest while also reflecting upon the final selection of participants. It also describes the method for the sampling itself.

3.2.2 Sampling Method & Selection of Participants

The participants were selected using snowball or chain sampling. This method, while less structured than purposive sampling, tends to guide researchers to well-informed and knowledgeable respondents (Bryman, 2016) which is well-suited for this study for several reasons. Snowball sampling, by leveraging existing networks and recommendations from initial respondents, facilitates access to participants who are deeply embedded in the intricacies of an area but might be difficult to reach through conventional sampling methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This was especially useful given the authors' limited personal networks within BCM.

After an initial conversation with the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, industries that potentially could be familiar with or house somewhat mature BCM processes were identified. Selecting industries that already recognise and possibly have relatively mature BCM processes is motivated by the aim of this research; to delve deeper into the implications and effects of BCM within these companies' daily operations. From there, several industries were identified that serve important societal functions according to the list "*List of important societal functions - A basis for strengthening societal preparedness*" provided by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB, 2024). Narrowing industries to those deemed societally critical mirrors the argument for this study's relevance of researching companies that contribute to societal resilience.

Based on the criteria of critical services and the high likelihood of meaningful BCM processes among these, different umbrella organisations were contacted that maintained extensive networks of companies across various sectors. These organisations included Swedish Electricity Cooperation (Elsamverkan), Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (Svenskt Näringsliv), The Financial Sector's Private-Public Partnership (FSPOS) and Swedish Water (Svenskt Vatten). The research purpose was explained in this initial outreach, along with a request for their cooperation in identifying potential participants. The reason behind this was to be able to tap into their networks, to reach companies that potentially are engaged in BCM. Moreover, participants who are recommended by their acquaintances may be more willing to provide detailed and candid insights, further enriching the collected data (Creswell and Poth, 2018; Bryman 2016). During these interactions with the umbrella organisation, the authors asked for referrals to other potential participants. This was particularly important when initial contacts were unable to participate but could recommend others who might have relevant insights and experiences.

Parallel to working with umbrella organisations, LinkedIn was used for outreach by personalised messages to different potential participants, introducing the research project and inviting them to participate. Apart from this effort to reach as many participants as possible, personal networks were also used to reach out to participants. These efforts eventually resulted in the following participants, presented in the table below. The final step of the selection process, after identifying

industries, and from there relevant companies, was to further narrow down by respondent's professional role.

3.1.3 Table 1: Overview of Participants

Participating Companies	Participant's Company role	Duration of interview
<i>Municipal Power Grid Company</i>	<i>Head of Grid Operations</i>	<i>Ca 45 minutes</i>
<i>Large Power Grid Company</i>	<i>Head of Grid Operations</i>	<i>Ca 75 minutes</i>
<i>Research Institute</i>	<i>Head of Security</i>	<i>Ca 40 minutes</i>
<i>Small Manufacturing Company</i>	<i>CEO</i>	<i>Ca 80 minutes</i>
<i>Large Manufacturing Company</i>	<i>Head of Risk</i>	<i>Ca 45 minutes</i>
<i>Financial Services Provider</i>	<i>Chief Information Officer</i>	<i>Ca 50 minutes</i>
<i>Large Construction Company</i>	<i>Head of Risk & Compliance</i>	<i>Ca 40 minutes</i>

Reflecting upon the final sample, the snowball sampling proved effective in finding well-informed and knowledgeable respondents, as suggested by Bryman (2016). The sampling resulted in finding seven companies across five industries - manufacturing, construction, finance, utilities, and research - each of which plays a crucial role in societal infrastructure. The participants themselves were not only diverse in terms of their industry backgrounds but also held significant roles directly relevant to BCM, such as heads of continuity, compliance, or risk management. These individuals brought years of experience and provided in-depth knowledge about their organisations' practices in relation to business continuity management.

3.2 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was chosen for analysing the collected data. Such a process involves categorising the data by identifying themes, after which those themes are coded into patterns, recurring topics and connections (Galletta & Cross, 2013). This approach is commonly used in qualitative research as it can provide a rich and nuanced understanding of complex phenomena such as attitudes, beliefs and experiences that might arise from interviews. Thematic analysis also allows for a flexible approach to match the flexible nature of the interviews in which the data was gathered (Bryman, 2016). This analytical approach was employed to identify key themes related to how respondents perceive the effects of BCM on various aspects of daily operations.

Despite its many advantages, thematic analysis poses challenges, including potential researcher bias. The subjective nature of theme identification and interpretation can be influenced by preconceived notions, affecting the reliability of the findings (Bell et al., 2019). Addressing these limitations involves maintaining transparency in the coding process and engaging in reflexivity, consistently examining one's beliefs and biases throughout the analysis. Employing multiple coders and conducting peer debriefings can enhance the trustworthiness of the findings (Silverman, 2017).

The analysis began with reading through interview transcripts separately to identify emerging topics, differences or similarities. Both authors had in mind to search for answers that implied an effect on areas of daily operations due to BCM practices. Comments such as *"Yes, it has an effect on..."* or *"It has changed the way..."* were noted and highlighted, as they could be an indication of an effect. After this initial coding, the transcripts were exchanged between the authors. As anticipated by Silverman (2017), this interchange facilitated the analytical process. By challenging each other's interpretations and comments, the aim was to minimise individual biases and ensure a more balanced view of the data.

After the review, all indications of findings in the transcripts were aggregated, and sorted by company. From there, the findings were summarised into overarching categories based on

similarity. Examples of these are “sales”, “customer relations” or “employee behaviour”. These can be viewed as sub-themes. Sub-themes were subsequently grouped with similar sub-themes, to form broader categories such as "*Culture*" "*Relations*" and "*Organisation*". Each broader category was assigned a colour, providing a visual means of tracking thematic development across the data set.

The transcripts were then revisited with these colour-coded categories serving as reference points, marking answers with each colour that implied an effect within the specific area. This step ensured that each identified theme was thoroughly grounded in the data. This structured yet flexible process allowed the analysis to capture a comprehensive picture of how BCM influences daily operations. Through this analysis, the themes presented in the '*Results*' section were developed.

3.4 Literature

The literature used is collected from the field of Business Continuity Management and includes both peer-reviewed journal articles and published books. Most of the literature cited within was published in the last 20 years, reflecting the development of BCM as a field; interest rose following 9/11, and again after the 2007 financial crisis.

Cited articles span a wide array of publications, mainly from journals in business, information systems, and disaster management (or similar). This wide sampling reflects the scattered nature of Business Continuity as a field, as highlighted by Fischbacher-Smith (2017). Journals have been scrutinised using services such as SCImago Journal Rank, ensuring that articles from which central concepts eg. definitions have been drawn, or that are extensively highlighted have been published in qualitative journals.

Several databases were used to find the source material, eg. SCOPUS, Emerald Insight, Econlit, Web of Science, and EBSCO. These were searched using keywords, most importantly “Business Continuity”, “BCM”, “BCP”, and “Continuity Management”. Similar to the method for finding interview subjects, relevant articles were identified using a snowball method from articles

identified early on, both from databases' "relevant/related articles" functions and through scanning reference lists or finding relevant literature in articles' literature reviews. Some articles were received as recommended readings from scholars who were contacted directly, notably Dr. Brahim Herbane.

3.5 Critical Approach

The previous sections have focused on the inherent challenges with using a qualitative approach, such as difficulties with interviewing and the chosen method for analysis. The following section evaluates the representativeness of data and discusses the ethical dimensions that are crucial to conducting sound research.

3.5.1 Quality of Research

Data saturation occurs when there are no new findings in the data, or when the data starts to become repetitive. Determining when this point has been reached is difficult. This challenge is inherent to the dynamics of qualitative data, the diversity of participant perspectives, and the development of research themes (Hennink et al., 2017). For this thesis, it was necessary to roughly predetermine the sample size due to time constraints. This poses a challenge because saturation only becomes apparent after data collection has begun (Hennink et al., 2017), meaning that it can be difficult to predetermine a suitable sample size. As a result, while a theme or code could be identified as early as the initial interview, a more comprehensive understanding of the researched phenomenon typically requires conducting further interviews.

It has been recorded that for interviews, between 6 and 12 interviews should be conducted to reach somewhat of a saturation (Hennink et al., 2017). There is reason to believe this thesis reaches a degree of saturation, partly because of the number of conducted interviews (7), and partly because during the interviews, themes began to repeat themselves. This repetition is indicative of approaching saturation where additional interviews might not have yielded significant new insights into the primary research question.

Moreover, the explorative nature of interviews, particularly semi-structured or unstructured ones, allows for wide-ranging discussions, further complicating the saturation assessment (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). As described above, the researcher's own interpretation plays a significant role in understanding the data. This subjectivity can affect when and how saturation is perceived, as different researchers might assess the completeness and depth of the data differently. The iterative data collection and analysis process in qualitative research means that the researcher's understanding of the topic evolves, potentially leading to shifting goals and focus areas as the study progresses (Hennink et al., 2017; Sekaran & Bougie 2016). An example of this happened during the initial stages of coding. A theme labelled “security” was identified across the transcripts, which was initially thought to relate to the daily impacts of BCM on security operations or measures. However, as the analysis progressed and the research focus sharpened, this theme was eventually discarded. It became apparent that what was initially tagged as an effect of BCM was, in fact, a measure of BCM itself.

3.5.2 Ethical Considerations

When conducting qualitative research, ethical considerations must be considered, such as being aware of the integrity of the participants throughout the research process through confidentiality, informed consent to participate and the utility of the data collected (Robson & McCartan, 2016; Silverman 2017). During the initial contact with the participants, an email was sent out with general information regarding the research (Appendix 2). Once decided with the participants that they wanted to participate, a formal consent form was sent out, providing further information about the research, data management and storage (Appendix 3).

When meeting with the participants, any additional information was provided along with an opportunity for the participants to address any questions or concerns regarding their participation or the research as a whole. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms or other measures have been taken to protect the participants and the companies they are representing. The ethical consideration for utility means that all data collected should only be used for the research (Silverman, 2017). This was stated in the consent form and once the research is completed, such

information will be removed. This entails everything from initial emails with participants to audio recordings and transcripts.

3.5.3 Limitations of Research

Certain limitations to this work are worth mentioning. These arise primarily from its methodological approach, particularly the use of interviews to determine the effects on daily operations by BCM measures. The subjective nature of interviews is a limitation, as the insights and reflections shared are inherently influenced by the individual perspectives of the respondents. This subjectivity could lead to discrepancies in the understanding of the organisation's strategy, processes and effectiveness of continuity management. Furthermore, the author's own perspectives of both concepts such as 'daily operations' and 'BCM measures' may limit the study's findings. The authors' understanding of these terms may be limited, prohibiting the authors from identifying relevant themes. Mitigation of author biases is discussed under 3.2

Data Analysis.

The thesis involves interviews with representatives from seven companies across different industries, which, while providing a diverse range of insights, limits the generalisability of the findings. The experience of potential effects of BCM on daily operations is personal to each respondent, and colleagues within the same organisation may disagree or observe additional effects which this study subsequently does not cover. Meanwhile, the participants are all picked based on their expertise, occupying roles with responsibility for business continuity. This was actively sought for in the sampling, and verified through the introductory interview questions on the interviewee's role and responsibilities. Sampling this way aimed to mitigate the risk of interviewees not being representative of their firm, especially as interviewing additional representatives was deemed unfeasible.

A final note is on the use and usefulness of the literature. The literature on BCM's effects on company operations is limited. As opposed to the explorative nature of this thesis, the existing literature is quite strongly normatively inclined, suggesting what role BCM *ought* to take within the firm, as described in the discussion of *embeddedness* and BCM's *strategic role*. Whilst this

literature has proven useful in situating the reader on BCM and helped facilitate the discussion, it was deemed too limited to facilitate a deductive approach, where it would have acted as a theoretical framework on which to base the research. On the other hand, the relatively narrow literature review exhausts the relevant previous research on BCM's *effects*. Literature concerned with detailed BCM implementation guides contains little discussion of its consequences and has thus been omitted. A deductive method would have raised questions about the amount of relevant literature; however given this thesis' explorative nature, the literature covered within sufficiently fulfils its purpose of supporting the discussion.

Results

This section outlines the data obtained from the interviews. The themes are as outlined in 3.2 *Data Analysis*, based on areas affected by BCM. The themes are substantiated by quotes from participants and summaries that describe their processes, structures, and BCM methodologies.

The data is organised around these themes because they frequently emerged in the interview transcripts. The themes highlight aspects of daily operations and serve as a foundation for discussing how BCM practices influence these operations. Within each primary theme, several sub-themes are discussed. The sub-themes correspond to specific activities of day-to-day operations that BCM measures may have impacted.

4.1 Financial Discourse

BCM's impact on the financial aspects of company operations and management emerges as a clear theme. The first-order impact - a common feature across all respondents - is that even *considering* implementing business continuity measures sparks discussions about finances. These discussions commonly revolve around the economic utility and cost of BCM measures. Such discussion permeates the dataset; it could be described as BCM affecting the company's discourse regarding finances. These discussions take a variety of turns and ends, some resulting in the second-order effect that continuity measures directly affect companies' investment strategies and spending habits. Several respondents highlight the difficulty in motivating BCM spending, and deciding where to allocate the cost. When asked about investing in systems redundancy, Large Power Grid Company said,

We are investigating now, asking "how much?". There is a cost aspect. Looking at [economic] growth in the last 20 years, it all stems from streamlining delivery flows. Continuity is associated with large costs - accumulating inventory and having redundancy in personnel. It's a balancing act where to position ourselves. What do we want to be? Do we want to be super safe - it can cost whatever it costs? Do we take a careless 'It'll work out somehow'-approach? We want to be somewhere in between. We want our

business and delivery to be economically justifiable to society. The cost cannot be astronomical, it can't cost whatever it wants because ultimately it's the electricity customers who pay for it. So it needs to be reasonable...all in all, it's an interesting question: what will this [continuity measures, generally] cost, and who should pay for it?" (Large Power Grid Company, 2024, own translation).

Similarly, Municipal Power Grid Company stated,

Within the company, there's a saving culture, everyone is supposed to save money. That has previously led to a discussion, asking 'can you reduce the number of people [technicians] who are on standby?' There is, of course, a certain cost involved in compensating those who are on standby. But now, there is a slight shift in perspective on this. Yes, that [reducing standbys] might work fine until the day shit really hits the fan. Then, suddenly we need it, and so it justifies its fair share of money in 'peacetime' too, if you like (Municipal Power Grid Company, 2024, own translation).

The cost-consciousness displayed above was similarly brought to light by the Large Construction Company. For the purpose of this comparison, think of Large Power Grid Company viewing it as a cost-benefit analysis between continuity measures and the unattractive implication of pushing costs onto customers. Meanwhile, Large Construction Company argue that, due to the nature of the construction industry, discontinuities and their associated costs are systematically pushed onto the customers, affecting Large Construction Company's business model. Prices and timeframes in construction are difficult to predict, as business is often accompanied by various disturbances such as red tape, weather, delivery delays and difficulty synchronising subcontractors,

Our business model is designed so that we charge for the risk. If construction of a large project takes an extra month, we get paid for that too...I mean, it's not that we pass the cost onto the customer, but our model is built around having a certain flexibility because there are already so many disruptive factors in advance. It could be a delayed building

permit or heavy traffic when delivering to the site. There is so much [potential disturbance] built in that isn't present in other industries that are more centrally controlled and process-based (Large Construction Company, 2024, own translation).

There is some difference between the long-term investments and preemptive measures discussed by the Large Power Grid Company, and the more ad hoc-like risks that Large Construction Company discuss pushing onto customers. The latter however also translates to costs; whatever is needed to ensure operations continue, eg. paying extra labour, material or a delay. To conclude, the Construction Company's costs for business continuity are similar to the Power Grid Companies' but simply occur after the fact.

Aside from discussing who should carry the cost, a common effect noticed across the respondents' organisations is allowing business continuity to motivate investment decisions. These decisions can be framed differently. Examples are found of where business continuity is brought in as an additional perspective, almost as a set of control questions on upcoming investments and business decisions,

At [Research Institute] we have an investment committee for investments exceeding SEK 500 000. The investment must then pass through the committee where I represent a security perspective, information security perspective, and continuity perspective...I ask what risks they [colleagues] see, what measures they've taken, if they have considered spare parts availability, etc. To pass, they have to present solutions. They've started thinking more and more about this, often now including continuity perspectives already when they first present the plan. I don't want to be asking these questions, the thinking should be automatic (Research Institute, 2024, own translation).

There are also examples of continuity arguments affecting investments and initiatives by guiding their prioritisation with the underlying goal of reducing known risks. Municipal Power Grid Company again,

Yes, we're ensuring a greater level of flexibility and redundancy built into our systems. Ring feeds [Grids with redundant paths] of course come with some cost. It requires fairly heavy-duty cables to build and entails a higher investment cost than regular radial networks. But then again, in a radial network, you need to be prepared to roll out backup generators if, say, a cable breaks...since we are owned by the municipality, we are involved in their risk and vulnerability analysis. Based on that analysis, we identify our weak links and ask ourselves how to strengthen them: 'Can we eliminate them or at least be aware and at least mitigate the associated risks?'...Then there's the long-term planning of the power grid. In long-term investment plans, we try to eliminate risk. Even there, when we identify a risk we might invest to eliminate it sooner than thought or planned (Municipal Power Grid Company, 2024, own translation).

Similarly, the Large Power Grid Company experience that BCM affects their order of investments,

We have the important task of planning investments, transforming and expanding the electricity grid [facilitating increased consumption/renewable production] whilst ensuring stable deliveries...This means taking inventory of what capabilities we need in a continuity scenario. Assessing, 'what capabilities are truly necessary core capabilities?', 'What assets are critical to those capabilities, eg. certain critical personnel?' We keep that perspective in mind when we invest (Large Power Grid Company, 2024, own translation).

The participants also encounter more cost-focused arguments for BC implementation. business continuity benefits might be used as a qualitative argument for investments, ie. that investments carry additional benefits in terms of strengthening continuity,

It's a useful argument towards the CEO and Board, saying 'I need x millions as soon as possible', because few will say 'no' when I counter with 'well, alright. That puts us at risk of power outages lasting x number of hours'...[Continuity] is a basis for investment. It allows for well-grounded investment decisions. Priorities have to be somewhat flexible,

but the risk analysis is always there in the back of your head (Municipal Power Grid Company, 2024, own translation).

On the other hand, arguments might be of a more quantitative nature. Here, those responsible for BCM might utilise arguments of a more quantitative nature to make an internal business case for investing in continuity. Such arguments might include decreased insurance premia, investment returns, or mitigation of risks whose costs have been estimated, eg. the cost of downtime or the lost value of production. When asked to elaborate on the relationship between efficiency and risk appetite, the Large Manufacturing Company stated,

There's no evading the cost [of continuity measures]. Although it is difficult to accurately estimate the cost of a production discontinuity, our insurance company are experts in that field, quantifying the cost of various risks...For example, some facilities have fire sprinklers, others not, because the cost may not be in parity with the expected utility. They'll tell us 'we expect this cost should this business shut down'. That provides them a premium for protecting it, and we can weigh the arguments of choosing to protect it [eg. the business function or building] or not...despite this, it's difficult to assess the value of the business interaction; if operations grind to a standstill, how much does that hurt our goodwill value? What customers might we lose? (Large Manufacturing Company, 2024, own translation).

Following the discussion on sprinklers and premia, the same respondent was asked whether spending decisions on continuity measures were made based on sacrificing efficiency and financial return to the benefit of redundancy,

Yes. Definitely. I'd say that we are prioritising long-term feasibility...A downside of continuity measures is their cost. Some companies have quarterly reviews [on earnings]. They are very short-term-oriented in the sense that they seek to deliver on the bottom line each quarter or even monthly. We don't, we're more long-term oriented. There is an acceptance [from the owners] that profits may not appear in Q1 or Q2 but in ten years.

We're very stubborn and persistent...meanwhile, to accept a risk-reducing investment of say SEK five million, whoever is financially responsible will want to somehow know they will get that money back. They will wonder if there was any business-mindedness behind the decision. The answer might be in the insurance company, who will respond to the investment by lowering their premia. Essentially, it [BCM] needs financial underpinning, you have to be able to make a financial case, we cannot just increase security indefinitely...So we're constantly asking 'at what cost?'; there's always money in the game...internally, it's like making a business case for continuity (Large Manufacturing Company, 2024, own translation).

The sample contains one outlier, the Small Manufacturing Company, whose view does not adhere to the idea of an effect vs efficiency tradeoff, but rather views BCM as a natural vehicle for introducing growth, and greater flexibility, into their company's operations. When asked about the cost of introducing redundancy, for example in personnel training or production capacity, the Small Manufacturing Company argue,

Doing something properly from the start costs less than having to struggle later. If I train someone in printing, win a tender worth SEK hundreds of thousands, and suddenly that person quits, I cannot deliver. In response, I probably have to pay to train someone else in a hurry, hiring extra staff or a subcontractor in the meantime. The delivery might be delayed, I might lose customer trust. Or I simply train *two* from the get-go (Small Manufacturing Company, 2024, own translation).

When asked in a more direct fashion about quantifying the benefit of investing in business continuity and the opportunity costs, Small Manufacturing Company continued on a similar train of thought,

It's impossible to measure [the benefit] when everything is running smoothly. What you can measure is the cost of downtime and the associated trouble. If questioned because our operations are running smoothly, I refer to previous discontinuities and ask 'what did it cost then?...Despite having doubled the size of the company, we've reduced downtime...Now we are in a position with less resources spent on maintenance; we used to put a lot of resources into solving operational issues that troubled our production. Now, instead, we have one person working full-time with preventative maintenance and continuity. That preventive work increases efficiency. I could have been more short-sighted, but the investments we have made [into continuity] require continuous follow-up, to keep track of our operations and maintain the benefits (Small Manufacturing Company, 2024, own translation).

Concluding, BCM's effects on the companies' financial discourse emerge as a significant theme across the dataset. The discussions forced as an effect of implementing or considering implementing, BCM often revolved around its cost-effectiveness, company resource allocation and investment decisions, and the struggle to accurately assess the financial benefits of BCM or the potential costs of *not* implementing certain continuity measures.

4.2 External Relations

Another theme throughout the sample is the effect BCM has on a company's external relationships. These include customers, regulatory authorities, and suppliers that participate in daily activities such as procurement, compliance checks, and delivery processes. A common topic, applicable to almost all participants, was that BCM affected their sales, particularly through enhancing the value proposition to their customers. This was reflected in the companies' ability to reliably meet customer demands and gain a competitive advantage, meaning that they could command higher prices. When asked whether BCM affects their customer relations, Small Manufacturing Company responded,

During my last meeting with one of my biggest customers, he asked how we could always deliver. We can always say yes, while others say no because we have knowledgeable staff, we have inventory, and we have the capacity. We are growing, we are building customer trust. We gain a reputation for... being incredibly good to call when there's a fire to put out. And that strengthens us (Small Manufacturing Company, 2024, own translation).

Similar to the Small Manufacturing Company, other participants highlighted a positive effect on their customer relationships based on their BCM,

The positive effect is that our customers feel naturally secure knowing that we have a stock of their upcoming products lying on the shelf, meaning we can always deliver to them and they can feel more satisfied with us as a supplier. This applies not only to X (products) but also to all spare parts that we provide. I believe that it is very important that our customers know that we are working with continuity (Large Manufacturing Company, 2024, own translation).

Similarly, two other participants mentioned that based on their improved customer relations due to BCM, they also gained a competitive advantage since they could guarantee safety for their customers,

I think we're perceived as a bit expensive but reliable. It is our ability to create trust throughout the whole project from avoiding fatal accidents to IT security and continuity planning. We don't need marketing that much. If we're engaged in continuity planning, you can trust us. Show, don't tell, if you will (Large Construction Company, 2024, own translation).

The Research Institute argued similarly, explaining how they use BCM as a selling point towards customers,

I often talk with our internal marketing managers and when we meet larger customers. There, I bring up supply security, asking how confident we want to be in our deliveries from a continuity perspective. This is done so that our customers understand how serious we are. Choose us over anyone else, so to speak. We definitely carry this with us, from a business opportunity perspective. It becomes like a selling point almost (Research Institute, 2024, own translation).

Another sub-theme that emerged was the effect of BCM on the demands placed by companies on their external partners, or vice versa. This interaction often reshaped how contractual obligations are defined and how procurement processes are approached by the companies. As stated by the Research Institute, “Continuity affects the daily operations by... for example, having other requirements in contracts or a different approach in the procurement process itself.” (Research Institute, 2024, own translation). This was also stated by the Large Construction Company,

We often get questions in contracts like this, asking what our business continuity looks like, etc. Usually, most of the questions are almost part of the usual routine, and we do that a bit ourselves in our General Terms and Conditions too. But some customers want to delve deeper into this area, and then we do that with them (Large Construction Company, 2024, own translation).

Another participant similarly highlighted BCM impacting the requirements they put on their suppliers and other external partners,

We are careful to check on their [suppliers] continuity efforts in turn as well, and that's something we discuss in our quarterly meetings. We require that they can manage uninterrupted service. This applies to heating, gas, and electricity. We demand that their

equipment used in our systems is really...maintained properly, and we discuss continuity with them in this way (Large Manufacturing Company, 2024, own translation).

The sample companies operate under different market and regulatory conditions. Some companies operate under monopolistic conditions due to market regulation, eg. the Power Grid Companies. This fosters distinct relationships between different actors on the market, as they do not compete. Due to the nature of their products, they operate in environments where the stability and continuity of their service are regulatory requirements. Across the study's sample, participants noted that BCM practices had an effect on their relationship with local and national authorities. It also helps foster a form of collaborative competition among peers in the industry, which in turn enhances their operational preparedness and ability to comply with standards. As mentioned by the Large Power Grid Company,

We make sure that our continuity management is working, and this entails that we have to place demands external on our suppliers, as we also have demands on ourselves from regulatory authorities. The authorities impose requirements on us and demand that we should be able to do certain things. They do this partly through regulations, but they can also make decisions on electricity collaboration. Potentially, they could say 'now we want to see your continuity plans'. We feel prepared and able to show them such plans, because we make demands in turn [on suppliers] to ensure our continuity (Large Power Grid Company, 2024, own translation).

The Financial Services Provider similarly displays an effect of BCM on their external relations. They discuss how regulatory requirements are in effect 'pushed downward' through demands they put on their service delivery partners. This creates something akin to a continuity supply chain,

It's actually several services that we have nothing to do with, but where we turn to them [industry partners] and require, for example, [partners to invest in] a satellite link. Their response will be 'That seems very expensive', and in turn, we can say 'Yes, but you just

have to have it, otherwise, *we* cannot meet the continuity requirements.’ Because it doesn't matter if *we* meet those requirements if they [partners] don't as well. If they do not, operations don't work all the time, which they must. It becomes interesting because it leads to much more corporate governance between companies and it's quite complicated, as we are talking about quite large investments or development that a company does not want to take on (Financial Services Provider, 2024, own translation).

The Municipal Power Grid Company discussed how their relationship with authorities is also affected by BCM. They also acknowledged that their particular market structure of regulated local monopolies meant BCM helped them build stronger relationships with other actors through collaborative networks,

You can make use of the contacts within the network itself. I can just reach out to anyone in the network and ask if they have experienced the same event that I am experiencing, and this is the beauty of our industry - that they answer and tell me straight up how they did it and the things they would have done differently and so on. There is no prestige, there is no competitive mindset, we are just really open (Municipal Power Grid Company, 2024, own translation).

The participant proceeded to explain that the partnership with other actors also manifested through sharing spare parts and helping each other out in unexpected events. The Financial Services Provider operates under similar monopolistic conditions. As such, they stated that BCM affected their collaboration with other actors, similar to the experiences shared by the Municipal Power Grid Company.

I believe that it [nature of collaboration] has led to a joint emergency planning. It is now easier to do. We have a completely open dialogue with other actors and authorities, where we engage in certain activities together to support each other's continuity management [omitted]. This is also applicable with competitors, regarding our product development

and where we see similarities and that we can collaborate to a certain extent (Financial Services Provider, 2024, own translation).

Summarising this section, BCM affects sales contracts, partnerships, and competitive advantages. It shapes how the company interacts with external parties, setting expectations for continuity and resilience that can influence contractual terms and competitive positioning in the market. As displayed in the interviews, companies implementing robust BCM practices could consistently assure customers of uninterrupted service, a crucial factor in customer retention and satisfaction.

4.3 Organisation

Organisational structure and decision-making processes are defining features of any organisation. For the purpose of this thesis, *Organisation* is concerned with how BCM affects organisational hierarchies, strategy formulation, decision-making processes and similar procedures.

A key series of decisions in any organisation are those leading up to the organisation's strategy. Several respondents indicated that continuity measures or BCM considerations influence the process behind, or outcome in the design of, the company's strategy. A clear example is that of the Small Power Grid Company. Their responses largely related to prioritising investments and funds, therefore their strategic considerations were discussed above under *Financial Impact*. The same applies to the Large Manufacturing Company, who have been described stating how strategic investments in BCM are entangled in financial metrics and ROI considerations. The Research institute also showed signs of strategic impact by discussing the continuity perspective included on their investment committee, as described in *Financial Impact*.

The Small Manufacturing Company is likely to be the company with the least formalised strategy (an inference drawn based on its size, mission, and answers compared to other respondents). Yet, BCM affects their strategic priorities,

I view it [the way BCM supports the strategy formulation] as a spotlight. First, we direct the light here, to where our attention is most needed. Then we redirect it and focus on other areas. Continuity affects how we keep up with maintenance. When you set out on a journey like this [implementing continuity measures] the spotlight is everywhere; ‘oh, we’re not dual sources, we’re not ensuring the continuity of our machinery, our personnel are not interchangeable, our truck keeps breaking down’. You simply start somewhere. Now, the lights [focus] have been all over our company, and when we face a disruption, that’s where we put our spotlight (Small Manufacturing Company, 2024, own translation)

What the Small Manufacturing Company views as strategic, ie. prioritising the development of various parts of their operations, the Large Power Grid Company would likely classify as operational considerations. This reflects their somewhat different answer to the same questions, how BCM affects their strategy,

Yes, our strategy and continuity management interact. They interact with how we equip our facilities and what capabilities we [decide to] build. We need to ensure continuity of some services, ie. mitigate and handle any unwanted scenario. Meanwhile, our regular strategy is what we *want* to achieve...how do we enable a transition to green energy? How do we ensure high availability of green energy at a low cost? That’s what our mission is to think about on a daily basis (Large Power Grid Company, 2024, own translation).

Continuing, the line between strategic impact and lack thereof appears blurred,

In the back of our heads is continuity; preparing for disturbances and knowing what to do...Continuity doesn’t factor into the regular company strategy but more into the daily operations; it’s managed alongside the regular strategy...On the other hand, it [BCM] factors into some certain strategic parts, eg. supply [of electricity] and there, continuity has to have a strategic perspective. The same applies to designing our facilities and certain strategic decisions [omitted]. There, continuity becomes strategic. Summarise it, if

you like, that with the capabilities most crucial in a ‘continuity scenario’, that is where you find continuity management on the strategic level (Large Power Grid Company, 2024, own translation).

The interviewed Research Institute more explicitly connect their operations and strategic considerations,

Ensuring operational continuity is a part of our mission [as stated by the mission set by their owner]. Our mission is continuously being clarified in that aspect...Our strategy is essentially being able to perform the tasks set by our customers. So it ties together, we’re being tasked to conduct certain research, begging continuously functioning HR, IT, Finances...An essential part of our strategy is reliably delivering our research (Research Institute, 2024, own translation).

The Large Manufacturing Company also provided examples of BCM’s impact at the intersection between strategy and operations,

Our products contain a small but crucial plastic component [omitted description]...It’s unique and instrumental to our delivery...it’s manufactured at a factory in Sweden, and at two identical sites abroad. These three factories all do the same thing. If one stops, the two others continue. Organising our operations this way was definitely a conscious strategic decision. Similar decisions include other crucial components of which we have decided to keep abundant supplies in storage, as a buffer. Should production of these components cease, we have several months' worth backed....Building excess stocks of parts brings costs for storage facilities, sourcing and managing the stock...Essentially, it costs us some efficiency, where instead we choose to prioritise long-term capabilities (Large Manufacturing Firm, 2024, own translation).

On a related, operational note, one respondent saw effects on their product development,

In other areas such as product development or lifecycle management of old products, we ask ‘are they fit for purpose?’ and ‘have we included a continuity aspect here?’. We make sure someone is assigned responsibility for continuity [as a capability] related to this product. If we are developing something new, we ask ‘how do we ensure that it complies with our continuity requirements [omitted]?’, even if it is just a small part of the product portfolio...This is incredibly important; if we stray from our continuity thinking for designing or building products or solutions, we will eventually reach testing and realise ‘hang on, this doesn’t cut it’, and we have to start over. So it [continuity] has to permeate the whole firm, really (Financial Services Provider, 2024, own translation).

Strategy and operational considerations aside, several respondents report the effects of BC measures on how their company is organised. The first order of effects is quite naturally assigning responsibility for continuity, eg. to a certain manager. These assignments are different to each company, and as they constitute core business continuity measures themselves, rather than *effects* of such, the different structures are *not* presented. Rather, the next section presents the broader organisational impact of such assignments of responsibility.

The Large Power Grid Company reports that BCM has increased the demand for clarity regarding the division of responsibilities within the firm. Starting with continuity, the phenomenon is spreading,

Responsibilities have become more centralised - a shift from functional silos to a more integrated approach, if you like - that’s how far we’ve come. If we keep working, I think we’ll reach there [an integrated approach]...As our legal obligations develop and become more comprehensive, our daily operations have to become more integrated, too...The whole [BCM] question is becoming more centralised, that’s happening now...with time, [it will be] more clear who is responsible where (Large Power Grid Company, 2024, own translation)

Later in the same conversation, the same respondent noted that,

[BCM] responsibilities trickle down from central support functions to the operational branches in order to secure continuity. I think it is natural; it's very difficult for a central organisation sitting close to company management to understand how things work in daily operations, no matter the type of organisation. Take face masks during COVID-19, where procurement departments at hospitals had no clue about the quantities needed to run vaccination programs or receive patients. That knowledge only existed furthest out, on the line. It's a redistribution and clarification of responsibility (Large Power Grid Company, 2024, own translation)

A clearer view of the division of responsibilities and their subsequent impact was that held by the Financial Services Provider where the organisation has been expanded to facilitate focus on business continuity,

We have recruited and built our own department with a head of continuity and civil preparedness...we need to continuously interpret legal requirements and work with plans and training. [Additionally] we have created a continuity management team, led by the CEO and senior management, which meets regularly to maintain situational awareness and assess [continuity] test results. This I think will affect our operative work. Any change management is easier when you start with senior management's involvement (Financial Services Provider, 2024, own translation).

At the Large Manufacturing Company, responsibilities are clearly outlined but believed to have little effect,

There's a [centrally administered] framework and policy for continuity management...the policy is global but only spans two pages...Each operation, department or facility has a risk owner. They are often the head of that function [for which they own the risk], and are responsible for ensuring there is a continuity plan...I don't think it [risk ownership]

affects their daily work too much. It's well integrated into the daily work; once or twice a year you fill out a self-assessment in an internal system which is then assessed by the risk department...To a large extent, business continuity management is 'business as usual'. It's a part of the risk owners' day-to-day reality (Large Manufacturing Company, 2024, own translation).

By far the largest impact on operations, as assessed by the respondents, is found in the Small Manufacturing Company. They work around a structure dubbed "1-2-3" which assigns employees to tasks based on their proficiency, ensuring that any task has a "1", the responsible, and a "2", someone trained and capable to step in should "1" be unavailable. This approach to continuity is heavily ingrained in their day-to-day operations,

When you review your company, you realise there's always someone who's best at each task. That person is our no. 1, the person who really knows what they're doing. In some areas, we used not to have a no. 2, the second best at that task. Then, if no. 2 was also away, we wanted someone at least capable of helping out, a no. 3...we've implemented it widely across the firm...we use this method daily, I'd say...compared to other [firms], this method is very simple...If we had a framework or policy I'm convinced we'd be talking about implementing it but I rather doubt we *actually* would...the great advantage is the simplicity...it allows operations to continue despite illnesses, employees taking days off, or quitting...it also creates very independent employees; if an employee wants time off, they organise it themselves between the no. 1 and no. 2. They solve the production planning & workflow management without my [the CEO] involvement (Small Manufacturing Company, 2024, own translation).

Continuing, the respondent details the effect of implementing this system,

Decisions are pushed much further down the hierarchy, easing my burden...This effect permeates everything; machinery, IT, forklifts, sales, anything. We achieve more independent groups [within the organisation], and push decisions downwards. I have

created an independently-minded organisation of 35 people who thanks to a continuity process now make their own decisions (Small Manufacturing Company, 2024, own translation).

Lastly, the Large Construction Company along with the Municipal Power Grid Company did not mention an effect on organisational structure in any similar terms that the other participants did, e.g. the division of responsibilities. However, whilst stating no specific effect Large Construction Company added that, “Much of the decision making is decentralised in our organisation. It is very good for the continuity” (2024, own translation).

4.4 Knowledge Retention & Succession Planning

Another emerging theme is that BCM places demands on knowledge retention within organisations. This theme was frequently mentioned across the sample, with effects seen on processes for knowledge transfer, recruitment, succession planning, operational training and educational initiatives. This theme focuses on these effects, including concrete examples of the impact on organisational strategies for developing and retaining talent, facilitating knowledge sharing regarding BCM, and preparing personnel for potential disruptions.

One effect of BCM is that on internal training and exercises. All of the participants highlighted that BCM impacted internal training and educational content for employees, and training exercises and subsequent evaluations affect employees’ day-to-day work in several respondent organisations. When asked about BCM’s impact on employee training, the Financial Services Provider stated,

We have a number of digital training programs for all new employees, and all our consultants who have been with us longer than six months must take the training as well. We make them do these every year and then we try to make sure that we test their knowledge. We cannot test everyone in the company, but we try to rotate as many as

possible. If there were 30 people in Q1 testing a critical situation, then there are maybe another 20 in the next quarter (Financial Services Provider, 2024, own translation).

They elaborated further that this was also measured through evaluations with the top management of the company, which was also shared with the rest of the employees,

We work a lot with plans, meaning that we should know how it should be done, who should be where, where can one go if there is a crisis and so on. And then a lot of work follows, where we go through everything in the continuity chain with IT, with the product department, dialogue arises with our customers, with HR. What did we learn? What was good? What can we do better next time? (Financial Services Provider, 2024, own translation).

Another participant also highlighted a similar subject, with the difference that the evaluation was done in a more decentralised way, out in the operational branches and then communicated to the top management,

We conducted an exercise where we looked at what a crisis entails. What happens with our gates for example? Will they unlock automatically? How do we reach each other when our communication systems are disabled, if we do not have each other's phone numbers etc.?". They work a lot with that within the business units and further out in the organisation. When there have been crises and such, evaluations are conducted and the top management gets to have a part in that of course, but it is also largely their [business units] job to communicate that further (Large Construction Company, 2024, own translation).

As BCM requires such extensive training outside of the ordinary tasks that the employees perform, it affects the daily operations by occupying significant time. This was also supported by the Large Power Grid Company, "We have several educations which are mandatory for all

employees to attend, where we talk about security in many different ways [omitted], which lie outside their daily work” (2024, own translation).

The Small Manufacturing Company highlighted that a key impact of creating their own continuity method was having to train employees to become more versatile across the company’s operations. This training scheme was further expanded due to their very positive attitude to redundancy,

We launched a very large training package, you could say. We specified everything one needed to know, like if a machine breaks down. So we trained them on all those parts. This also applies when I send someone on an external training course nowadays, I always send two people. It becomes double up on everything (Small Manufacturing Company, 2024, own translation).

The Research Institute claimed that BCM affected their internal systems that contained research projects and that such systems were managed securely, to be able to store it for new employees.

We have systems in place so that, if there is a long-term research project, it is managed and documented properly in secure systems, and that is why continuity falls under security, as we have an information security perspective on it, we have a cybersecurity perspective on it (Research Institute, 2024, own translation).

The Large Manufacturing Company experience effects on their information sharing processes, as they store their educational content and plans both digitally and physically. They also have personnel dedicated to ensuring that the information reaches the right people. This means that routines regarding storage and sharing of knowledge across the company have improved over time, due to BCM.

Additionally, another sub-theme that emerged from the interviews was regarding recruitment and succession planning, which highlighted that BCM affected the organisation's knowledge transfer and preservation. Many of the participants highlighted that today's working climate and the trend that many employees only work for a short time before switching to another, imposed a problem.

If we look now, people want to move around differently, they want to work in the same position for only three or four years. Then they want something new and interesting, and then we really need to have the succession thinking there to cover, 'okay, how do we replace this person who had very broad experience.' The new person replacing may have a much narrower experience. Then we must continue the continuity work but think differently. Maybe we need a broader palette of people who can cover the entire skills gap (Large Power Grid Company, 2024, own translation).

When asked if this affected the personnel directly in their daily work, the same participant said,

It affects them in that they must understand what their role would be in a wartime organisation. And we need to ensure that the type of skills they possess are continuously available. If someone retires or quits, we need to replace that person while keeping that knowledge. We must have someone with the kind of skills we need. That's why I say it is continuous. You don't just make a plan or set up routines once. It is something that happens all the time because people move on to other places (2024, own translation).

The same respondent explained that due to people changing positions, the company has had to change their onboarding process, with a quicker introduction to key aspects of the operations. They have also changed their recruitment process to ensure continuity, as further supported by the Financial Services Provider,

This means that we look at how it affects recruitment within our organisation. It affects what kind of resources we should recruit...Those who work centrally, are economists by background usually, but they should be able to take other roles as well. Being able to go

in and support other parts of the business. Otherwise, it's often easy to become specialised. You have only worked in the finance department or only within product development, or only as a system developer. A tech lead is very specific, but all other roles can be broader. We have revised our interview templates when we recruit, for example (Financial Services Provider, 2024, own translation).

The Financial Services Provider continued to explain that their perspective on how to keep their employees for longer (as they provided extensive BCM training) had changed due to BCM. They worked intensely with staffing plans to ensure that people stayed as long as possible,

There are far more staffing plans than we've had before. And a much long-term perspective at a completely different level of detail. And there we also work based on staffing plans, and competence plans, how can we retain employees? Because career paths are a soft part, it's clear that one should always be able to describe so that people can advance their careers, especially if they are young and newly recruited. And it doesn't necessarily mean that one becomes a manager as quickly as possible, but there are many paths one can take in one's career, but we try to make that clearer at least. Because the purpose is to retain those we train. The other part is to share, meaning that if we recruit one of you guys - it's not just in your head. We ensure that several people have access to the same information so that it doesn't become a vulnerability (2024, own translation).

The Large Construction Company highlighted succession planning as something that had been impacted by BCM, as they also had noticed the trend of people changing jobs more often today. “The whole organisation is built for continuity, where there are very few scenarios where it isn't already built into the process, which means that the handover becomes smoother [for new employees]” (2024, own translation).

The final participant to highlight how BCM had an impact on knowledge retention and succession planning was the Large Manufacturing Company,

We have instructions and routines that go from one person to another. We always have a stand-in person. For example, there is a colleague of mine, who is quite knowledgeable about the same things as I am, so in case I disappear, they have him as a backup function (2024, own translation).

Concluding this section, it shows that BCM affects training, education, and knowledge transfer within the organisation. It ensures that continuity in knowledge and skills is maintained, even with personnel changes, by implementing systematic training programs and succession planning, along with testing of such knowledge.

4.5 Culture

When discussing BCM, the respondent companies occasionally return to company culture. Across the study's sample, BCM has an impact on the organisational culture, shaping employee behaviour, and affecting attitudes towards risk and continuity. A culture which is concerned with continuity, where employees are aware of its importance and consider it in different aspects of their tasks and roles can be described as a *BCM Culture*. Aside from those who experience such a culture already, several respondents express a strong desire to create one. Several respondents offer concrete examples of continuity measures that help carry the culture, or on which the culture rests. Finally, examples are provided of how having a BCM culture affects the day-to-day operations of their organisations.

A common theme is that when asked about the effects of BCM, the respondents report *no effect*. When asked whether being a risk owner at the Large Manufacturing Company, the respondent replied,

I'd say it [being a risk owner] is to a large extent 'business as usual'. It's simply a part of their day-to-day routine. It's a culture we have built (Large Manufacturing Company, 2024, own translation).

This answer indicates that the experienced lack of effect is because of the extent to which BCM is engrained in the culture or *perceived* as status quo. The Municipal Power Grid Company was similarly asked whether continuity management affected their daily operations, replying,

No, I can't say it does, not immediately. We've always thought [prioritised] 'power first and foremost', not 'we must build redundancy over here' or 'we must focus on this instead of our daily work'...we trundle on as usual (Municipal Power Grid Company, 2024, own translation).

This statement is interesting in light of the many effects of BCM noted on daily operations by the respondent later in the same interview, many of which have previously been highlighted. Recall the respondent's discussions on strategic priorities, investments, and external relations with both colleagues and regulatory authorities. The Research Institute when asked if BCM has any effect on their daily operations similarly noted,

There's no effect [of BCM on daily operations] because we're not good enough at continuity management. I'd like the effect to be that there was none felt, but that the thinking is always there; knowing what parts of your operations are crucial, what weaknesses those crucial operations have and what has been done to mitigate them. Done in a structured and systematic way, that [process] should not be noticeable...it should be a natural part of our operations (Research Institute, 2024, own translation).

Much like the Municipal Power Grid Company, BCM's impact on the Research Institute has been explored and discussed above in economic, relational, and strategic terms. Seemingly, there is a discrepancy between effect, and the perception of the same effects. The possible causes and implications of this contradiction are discussed below.

Some respondents noted a positive impact on their daily operations. When asked about the impact of BCM on their corporate culture, the Small Manufacturing Firm confirmed the existence of a strong, positive effect, providing the examples that were stated above in the

organisation, eg. more autonomous employees and greater decision-making capabilities further down the hierarchy. Similarly, The Large Manufacturing Company, explained that “we keep in the back of our minds that we’re each other's back-ups”, (2024, own translation) referring to a tacit 1-2-3 system similar to the Small Manufacturing Company’s more formal system of personnel backups.

Building a BCM-concerned culture is not always tacit, but sometimes an active process. The Small Manufacturing Company explains that a BCM-positive culture is built by showing employees how BCM benefits them,

I motivate them by making them understand that in order to take a longer vacation, it’s worthwhile for them to put effort into training their no. 2...Rather than preaching the importance, I turn focus to the possibilities we generate by working like this, eg. more flexible time off (Small Manufacturing Company, 2024, own translation).

BCM can also emerge as a cultural component through less individually driven processes, as reasoned by the Large Construction Company. Talking about continuity aspects of project management, such as monitoring the financial health of subcontractors and backing up crucial deliveries, they stated,

It’s [integrating BCM into decision-making processes] a natural process. There’s a built-in continuity mindset in setting up risk margins in projects etc, asking ‘how difficult will this be?’, ‘how dependent are we on this contractor?’...It’s a natural consequence of our operations. I cannot take credit for people doing it, it’s old, bitterly acquired experience of having stepped on these mines before (Large Construction Company, 2024, own translation).

When asked about culture in relation to BCM, several respondents give normative answers, either to describe desirable scenarios of BCM mindedness or to emphasise the importance of the cultural aspect of their current continuity measures. The Financial Services Provider put it

plainly, stating that “we *should* constantly be thinking [from a continuity perspective], when we’re building solutions or designing things. It must permeate our business (2024, own translation). Large Power Grid Company concluded that continuity

has to be at the back of our minds. Not something you think about every day, but it still has to present, ‘oh shit, could this [a decision] affect us?, Yes it could, then perhaps we should talk to the experts’...that’s why we have the training, to build the subconscious base plate...eg. not letting information leak or providing a stranger with physical access (Large Power Grid Company, 2024, own translation).

The Research institute followed a similar reasoning stating that,

We’ve made a firm-wide decision, centrally, to work with continuity but managers are not following suit...many come from working environments where this is not viewed as important. One lives in the protected Swedish world with a ‘it won’t happen here’ mentality...the business continuity management culture *has* to improve. It [business continuity] should not be felt at all. It ought to be a natural part of our operations. (Research Institute, 2024, own translation).

Besides broad statements about the *should be’s* of continuity culture, several respondents explored conditions or prerequisites for building a continuity-minded culture. The Large Power Grid Company argued that in their experience, for continuity to become concrete and actionable, the company has to actively monitor and consider ongoing crises elsewhere,

When you’re observing from a safe place [Sweden], it’s easy to feel quite safe thinking about continuity and crisis. It’s only when the crisis becomes real that you understand the implications. [Take eg.] Russia’s invasion of Ukraine...as you watch technicians fix cables in a war zone. It opens new dimensions of your continuity management. It’s difficult here to imagine, ‘how do we respond to a missile strike? There’s no drinking water, what do we do?’...[to think in terms of continuity] you must be able to match these

events with your conceptualisation of the world...in the daily work, we think that *everything* must work. It's difficult to imagine a scenario where we drop 90% of our work because the situation begs for it, and focus on the most crucial part; and what is that part? It's difficult to imagine (Large Power Grid Company, 2024, own translation).

On an even more concrete note, the Financial Services Provider concludes that creating a business continuity-minded culture requires a time commitment from the management,

As with all change management, it's easier if you start with senior management, showing our employees why we really do this. If our CEO spends time in meetings, talking about this, it signals the importance. It [meetings and senior management attention] comes with an increased cost for the company to spend on management rather than development...but it [continuity] permeates the company. I think it becomes rather obvious, given the fact that we have a designated continuity management as part of the company management. It truly reaches from top to bottom (Financial Services Provider, 2024, own translation).

Returning to the subject later, the same respondent states,

It's important to keep testing and testing [continuity scenarios]. That's how you become a learning organisation. We have to put ourselves in difficult situations. For example, with changing our means of communications we had tested it once, but hadn't expected a live fault to be of the scale it was [explains sensitive & detailed case of loss of communications]. We have to keep on learning...otherwise we forget all of this pretty quickly (Financial Services Provider, 2024, own translation).

In the sample regarding how BCM has an effect on organisational culture, it becomes evident that the integration of BCM often blurs with established company practices, making its effects less perceptible. Respondents frequently use the 'culture argument' to describe BCM as a

seamless part of daily routines, suggesting that when BCM is deeply embedded, its impacts on operations might not be immediately apparent.

Discussion of Results

The discussion of results aims to bridge previous research and the results. It does so by first considering each theme individually, after which the understanding of BCM is discussed in a more general sense.

When discussing the results, it is appropriate to return to the central question of the study;

What are the effects of Business Continuity Management on a company's day-to-day operations?

An attempt to answer this question has led to the identification of several key themes, or areas of daily company operations affected by BCM. These cover a broad range of daily activities and processes and effects vary between having outright negative, neutral, or positive effects on daily operations.

5.1 Financial Discourse

As stated in *4.1 Financial Discourse*, the impact of BCM on company finances is present across the entire sample. The smallest common denominator is that BCM triggers a discussion about financial priorities. Often being preemptive in nature, the benefits of investments in continuity measures are difficult to accurately assess and quantify. Several respondents report continuity measures competing with other financial interests, such as short-term financial gain or product affordability.

Continuity measures affect discussions on companies' financial priorities by presenting yet another area in need of investment. As suggested by Fischbacher-Smith (2017), BCM introduces a *negative* argument to these discussions, ie. concepts such as risking a certain cost if investments are *not* made, eg. in the case of a halt in production. The ability to assess those costs varies across the sample; the manufacturing companies who are not under regulatory, but financial, pressure to maintain output both discuss quantifying the risk and cost of downtime to measure returns on BCM. Meanwhile, the power grid companies and the Financial Services Provider, who are all under regulatory pressure to avoid downtime, rather view financial

prioritisation as continuously reducing risk in order of urgency. For the less regulated companies - specifically the manufacturing companies - there is also a tendency to consider the qualitative costs of downtime, such as customer trust and reputation. These costs, reportedly, are difficult to quantify. These differences indicate that the external conditions imposed on the firm - market mechanisms, regulation, and mission - likely affect the nature of BCM-related financial discussions.

Most firms across the studied sample adhere to Fischbacher-Smith's (2017) "effectiveness-efficiency paradox" introduced above. Stating that companies might sacrifice the ability to effectively face and overcome discontinuities or disturbances for the sake of greater efficiency under "normal" circumstances, several firms touch upon the paradox. The large power grid company discusses it as a tradeoff between cost-efficient delivery and redundancy, as did the Large Construction Company (albeit with less concern for the customers' cost sensitivity). The Small Manufacturing Company appears as an outlier, arguing that they have achieved both greater efficiency, and ensured continuous effect (ability to produce as desired) by investing in continuity. The Small Manufacturer's objection against the premise of the paradox is perhaps no reason to discard its validity, but rather begs the question if the other firms can find ways to identify continuity measures that both allow for greater efficiency under normal circumstances *and* preserved effect in crisis or discontinuity.

When discussing continuity measures from a financial perspective, it is possible to sense that companies view it as a necessary evil; many of the respondents first and foremost conclude that BCM affects the financial standing of their company by imposing costs. Whilst reducing the risk of large costs, eg. disaster recovery or downtime could be viewed as financially beneficial, it is a rather intangible gain. On the other hand, as mentioned in Herbane et al. (2004) and discussed below under relations, investments in continuity measures may provide returns in the form of unique selling points or a form of product differentiation to attract customers based on their reliability. This was indeed the case reported by the Small Manufacturing Firm, who clearly expressed that the financial effect of the continuity measures was positive in a direct financial sense.

5.2 External Relations

As shown in 4.2 *External Relations*, all of the respondents in the sample noticed an effect of BCM on their external relations. For instance, companies in the study reported a significant impact of BCM on their relationships with customers, suppliers, and regulatory authorities, which are integral to their daily operations. Many of these effects can be interpreted as *positive*.

Several of the participants highlight how it strengthens their position in the market, through enhancing their reliability and customer trust. From the sample, it is also evident that the development of redundant supply chains and the establishment of strong relationships with 'recovery suppliers' as highlighted by Herbane et al (2004), has improved these organisations' operational capabilities and resilience, in turn making them reliable suppliers. Making sure that BCM measures trickle down into the daily operations, has led to several of the respondents' ability to consistently meet customer demands, often at a premium due to the perceived reliability.

Furthermore, BCM affected relationships between the companies and their suppliers or other partners in terms of increasing the demands & contractual obligations of continuity between industry actors. This effect is difficult to dissect; on one hand, it was reported to lead to more corporate governance and red tape between companies, indicating more complex contractual agreements which usually bring protracted negotiations. On the other hand, forced collaboration on continuity was indicated by the Financial Services Provider as a potential segue to deeper collaboration in product development, as companies learn to collaborate over time. In sum, the effect of stronger demands placed between companies is highly idiosyncratic.

Additionally, the effect of BCM on peer relationships among the companies operating in monopolistic markets is interesting. As discussed above, the Power Grid Companies and Financial Services Provider operate without competition in their local market. All three mention that such collaboration has led to more open dialogue and a generally more collaborative attitude between peer industry actors. Meanwhile, the sample companies in competitive markets mention no such thing. The benefits - to both continuity and other areas of business - ought to be an

interesting case study for the “competing” companies in the sample. Whilst expecting them to collaborate on continuity with direct competitors is perhaps naive, the findings above signal that there may be benefits to engaging with other stakeholders, such as suppliers or local businesses in industries other than one’s own.

5.3 Organisation

Organisation, 4.3 provides examples of how BCM affects companies’ strategy processes, organisational charts, and decision making. Starting with strategy, most of the interviewed companies indicate that BCM affects their strategy, often in terms of investment priorities or business development. The effects on strategy and their extent vary among companies, from the Small Manufacturing Company and Research Institute, who see continuous delivery as a key strategic goal, to the Large Power Grid Company, who treat BCM more as an operational issue. The effects are similar to those discussed in 2.3.1 under the terms embeddedness and continuity in a strategic role, as introduced by Herbane et al. (2004) and developed by Niemimaa (2015:2017).

One area visibly affected by BCM is firm strategy. BCM may shape the strategy so that the strategy includes an element of continuity, ie. the strategy is not to deliver boxes, but to *be able to deliver boxes no matter the circumstances or conditions*. The effects of such a strategy may include eg. redundant staffing systems, knowledge preservation, financial priority of BCM, redundancy in supply chains and production capacity, and relationships formed with other actors in the same market. As such, emphasising continuous ability in the company strategy in turn affects other areas of business operations. This process has previously been described in the literature as BCM taking a strategic role.

There is some discrepancy between the strategic role as described above and how the strategic role is specified by Herbane et al. (2004). Herbane et al. (2004) define a strategic role where BCM is meant to guide the creation and preservation of a long-run competitive advantage. Put simply, they argue that achieving competitive advantage *motivates* a strategic role for BCM. The strategic role *manifests* through continuity measures closely related to the company’s product,

such as supply chain redundancy. This process occurs across the sample, where several companies discuss using BCM to improve the value proposition by framing the company's delivery as reliable.

However, the sample contains BCM in a strategic role for more reasons than just competitive advantage. For example, the Large Power Grid Company admits to BCM affecting their strategic priorities. Operating under a monopoly, their concern is *not* with a competitive advantage or value proposition, but to deliver affordable energy over time. BCM in a strategic role also manifests in other ways than simply close to the product, for example affecting HR strategies or guiding large investment decisions. Taken together, this shows that whilst Herbane et al. 's (2004) strategic role focused on competitive advantage does occur, a strategic role for BCM should be viewed as a much broader concept, both in terms of *reasons* motivating a strategic role, and ways in which the strategic role might *manifest*.

Besides strategy, BCM has shown to affect organisational structures. These effects differ wildly across the sample. In terms of perceived impact, the Small Manufacturing Company represents perhaps the most affected end of the spectrum, with their 1-2-3 continuity method heavily impacting the division of responsibility within the firm as well as pushing decision-making downwards through the organisation. On the other end, the Large Construction Company and Municipal Power Grid Company did not report or show signs of any effects to their organisational structures. In conclusion, how BCM is implemented has the potential to heavily impact the organisational structure, division of labour, and the location of decision-making mandates within an organisation, but in some cases does not appear to.

In light of the above, it is interesting to discuss how responsibility for continuity is distributed. In some sample companies, the division of responsibility is complex or somewhat unclear. This prompts some concern with the authors, since it raises the question of whether the respondents can accurately assess and explain the effects of continuity measures on their organisations. Responsibility for BCM and its implementation is held in *very* different places across the sample companies. The most pedagogical and coherent 'centre' of responsibility was found at the

Financial Services Provider with their dedicated continuity team. On the other end of the spectrum, the Large Power Grid Company signalled a degree of confusion on where responsibilities for continuity lay.

In several companies, producing frameworks and policies, and motivating the importance of BCM lied with the top management, whilst responsibility for implementing concrete continuity measures laid very far out in the organisational branches. This highlights that managing business continuity within an organisation is prone to confusion. Comparability is low, which makes benchmarking between companies difficult. With responsibilities spread wide also within individual organisations, it is reasonable to believe that putting continuity plans & systems into action in the event of an acute discontinuity or crisis is difficult, as responsibilities are heavily decentralised.

5.4 Knowledge Retention & Succession Planning

A distinct pattern that emerges is how BCM influences knowledge retention and succession strategies within companies, as outlined in *4.4 Knowledge Retention & Succession Planning*. Ordinary staff training has become more adapted to BCM practices or includes elements of it, there are more regular exercises that also have become more advanced and lastly, more personnel have become included in such training or exercises. Such extensive development of this area leads to an indirect effect on the personnel as they are required to spend more time on this, beyond their ordinary tasks. This is necessary though, because similar to what Bakar et al. (2015) state, on an organisational level, regular BCM training and the introduction of awareness programs for different parts of the organisation are vital to creating a ‘BCM mindset’, essential for building a company culture more prone for dealing with discontinuity.

BCM also affects companies by altering the way they consider succession planning and recruitment processes. This is an odd occasion where BCM does not affect a phenomenon on its own, but in tandem with another issue; job hopping. Several respondents described how the increased tendency to change jobs in the modern labour market poses problems for continuity management; it increases the need for training new staff, tacit knowledge is easily lost, and

employees less often stay for prolonged periods in one company, allowing them to gain in-depth knowledge of the company as a whole. In line with the prerequisites for embeddedness presented by Fischbacher-Smith (2017), training, tacit knowledge, and in-depth company know-how have all been highlighted by respondents as key to facilitating continuity management. As such, job-hopping poses a threat to effective BCM.

As a response, companies alter their succession plans and hiring practices, to ensure continuity. The Financial Services Provider highlight the importance of becoming an attractive workplace to effectively keep personnel, eg. by clearly outlining alternative career paths early on for company newcomers. Companies become increasingly reliant on systematically recording and keeping information to replace tacit knowledge. Rather than by time in the company, wider company knowledge has to be acquired by training or in-service training.

Taken together, one might assume these efforts to be accompanied by rising overhead costs. Whilst only the Financial Services Provider explicitly mentions increasing management costs as an effect of BCM, it is likely to affect other participants too based on their similar succession strategies. The Small Manufacturing Company tackled the issue differently. Rather than relying on key personnel and facing the increasing cost of keeping them, they emphasised decentralising and spreading responsibility, knowledge/training and decision-making mandate throughout the organisation. The question remains if this is realistic in a larger organisation, and how strong of a BCM culture is needed to motivate individuals furthest out in company operations to keep continuity in mind on a daily basis.

5.5 Culture

The effect of BCM on company culture is perhaps the most elusive topic, and the reported effects differ widely between the companies. A recurring theme is that the respondents used *culture* as an opposite term to the term *effects*. Several respondents stated that BCM had no effect on the day-to-day operations and rather than ‘having effects’, BCM was part of the culture, or engrained in the daily operations. This was as if “*having an effect*” indicated something drastic or out of

the ordinary. This phenomenon relates to the discussion on how the interview questions were perceived, as per below in 5.6. General Discussion.

BCM being ingrained to that extent, could be referred to as a BCM culture in itself. Such a culture was expressed or perceived as simply ‘BCM being engrained in the day-to-day’ or ‘part of the corporate culture’. No matter the specific wording, several respondents gave examples of the positive impacts of building a BCM culture. Positive effects of a continuity-minded culture include continuity-related questions and considerations becoming second nature in key company processes, as highlighted by the Research Institute; employees becoming increasingly autonomous, as emphasised by the Small Manufacturing Company; and employees naturally taking appropriate security precautions, as insisted by the Large Power Grid Company.

Another concrete theme regarding culture was the desire for awareness of BCM to permeate the corporate culture. Several respondents argue that certain specific BCM measures contribute to creating a BCM culture. These include eg. repeated training senior management leading by example in highlighting the importance of BCM, and relating the company’s own operations to global events & discontinuities. These actions affect the concerned companies by contributing to a BCM-minded culture. As such, they might be referred to as ‘BCM culture bearers’.

The participating companies within this study are at different stages of such process; some express clearly the end state or effects of an existing culture, whilst others are trying to implement the culture-bearing acts whilst expressing a strong desire *to build* a BCM-permeated culture. A recurring theme among both groups is a reference to a past naivité; not having taken BCM seriously due to a lack of perceived threats to their operations. This potentially acts in a circular fashion: Greater BCM awareness or preparedness fosters a culture of identifying and seriously considering risks, in turn leading to better preparedness, further setting the ‘risk-aware’ companies aside from those not considering their operational continuity. It is possible that this chain of events: BCM-culture-bearers leading to cultural impact which in turn manifests through positive effects - can be generalised with the help of the cases presented in this study.

5.6 General Discussion

Moving from discussing findings in accordance with each theme, the remaining part of the discussion focuses on overarching issues regarding BCM's effect on company operations. As shown, the respondents differ in their descriptions of how and if BCM affects their daily operations. As an example, some assert that BCM is not affecting their strategy but rather "part of everyday life" or other daily tasks, and then change their mind regarding this, throughout their interviews.

An interesting perspective is how the working definition of continuity defines the way it affects regular operations. Some respondents emphasised recovering their regular services after disturbances, such as the Municipal Power Grid Company. There, continuity measurements took a facilitating role, facilitating the processes and tasks that become necessary after a disturbance, eg. cable repair or crisis response. The Large Construction company worked similarly, also highlighting constant minor discontinuity as being *part of* their daily operations, rather than something extraordinary.

Others view continuity rather as a lack of disturbance. The Large Power Grid Company is a prominent such case, where continuity work becomes more closely integrated with regular operations. This was mirrored in their heavy focus on security - IT, site access, and awareness; it was difficult to discern whether this was a part of continuity work or just day-to-day operations. Since the company defines continuity as a state without disturbance rather than the ability to recover, they are in a way in a constant effort to be continuous; the effect of this is manifested in their constant focus on implementation, updating, and education of security measures around their organisation. The discussion above indicates that the working definition or set goal of BCM at a company affects the implementation of BCM, and in turn, its effects.

Previously, inconsistencies within individual respondents' answers have been highlighted several times. As presented in the results, several participants answered the question "*Does BCM have any effect on your daily operations?*" with a '*no, there is no effect*'. Some respondents added to this answer that the lack of effects was due to the everyday nature of their BCM efforts, as

discussed in 5.5 *Culture*. Meanwhile, respondents would at some point mention concrete effects that continuity measures had on their daily ways of operating. The concrete effects mentioned sometimes were not recognised by the respondents as such, but mentioned in passing with little afterthought.

A potential explanation for this inconsistency is that respondents struggled with the broad nature of a general “have *any* effects” question. As mentioned in 3.3.1 *Semi-structured interviews* respondents were more prone to mention effects if they were tied to a specific operating area or one of the themes. This may simply reflect the abstract nature of continuity as a concept. The confusion could also indicate that the respondents lack a thorough understanding of the effects of BCM on their company, either because this has not been discussed internally, or simply because the BCM measures are not very well-developed. Meanwhile, in companies where BCM is very thoroughly engrained, both culturally and operationally, eg. the Small Power Grid Company, the effects may become difficult to describe. As stated in their interview, BCM is so engrained it simply becomes part of the organisational fabric, and its effects are hard to distinguish.

Another observation is that no sample company has managed to implement continuity measures *and* escape comprehensive impact. All companies have been impacted in several, if not most, of the studied areas/themes. Some respondents desired an effect of BCM on their culture; some of the respondents had BCM measures integrated into their strategy formulation; and all of them had seen an effect of BCM measures in terms of financial discussions. These effects were seldom isolated, What is interesting is that no matter the effect, these were rarely isolated from each other. This interweaving of the effects reveals an interesting implication; if one is to reach the sort of cultural or strategic embeddedness for which several companies expressed desire, they must be prepared to implement aspects of BCM into *all* areas of the company’s operations, seeing the effects of BCM in several or most areas, too. This begs the question if companies are aware of the costs, the time investment required, and the structural changes that are likely to follow with a successful implementation of impactful continuity measures.

Conclusion

This thesis aims to explore the effect of business continuity management on companies' daily operations. These include activities and functions such as strategy formulation, financial management, stakeholder relations, and HR management. It does so by posing the research question "*What are the effects of Business Continuity Management on a company's day-to-day operations?*". The research was carried out through a qualitative method, by conducting semi-structured interviews with one company representative from seven different companies respectively. A thematic analysis was conducted of the respondents' answers. The sample companies all belong to industries which the Swedish Civil Contingency Agency has identified as societally critical.

Areas affected by BCM were divided into themes. The most evident theme is the effect on company finances. In Financial terms, BCM affects companies by guiding investments and forcing negotiations regarding its associated tradeoffs and costs, either internally eg. towards company boards, or externally, towards customers and partners. Effects on external relationships constitute a theme; BCM affects company relations by its use as a sales argument, whilst participant's suppliers are put to higher standards than previously. We notice effects on the respondent's organisations as a whole, ranging from companies clarifying roles and responsibilities, to explicit reorganisations to accommodate BCM functions. Within organisation, effects on strategy were a major feature, with BCM being incorporated into company strategies, in turn resulting in spillover effects on the other mentioned areas. Effects were noticed on knowledge retention & succession planning. Here, companies mobilise to retain key personnel and preserve important company information in more formal ways. Finally, BCM has been shown to impact the company culture, a development which is often actively sought after by the respondents.

Whilst all of the individual themes are distinguishable, they are highly intertwined. For example, the effects of BCM on strategy are evident in other areas, such as recruitment or financial prioritisation. Product development and investments affect stakeholder relations, for example by attracting customers or increasing compliance between suppliers or partners. Integrating BCM

into corporate culture, or building a BCM culture, has also proven to be intertwined with other themes, such as knowledge retention and organisation. In sum, the effects of individual BCM measures are seldom limited to one area.

A synthesised effect across all themes is that BCM drives companies towards more structured ways of working. When speaking of implementing BCM measures, all respondents in one way or another returned to the idea that continuity management required the company to add more formal structure to their ways of working: this showed in how formats for financial decisions were formalised to include continuity ‘checklists’; it showed in companies’ efforts to document information independent of key employees, increasing the amount of training, instructions, and gradually relying less on tacit information; it also showed in attempts to increase the clarity with which responsibility for continuity is divided across the organisation. All these examples indicate processes where BCM forces companies to adopt more formal structures across previously tacit, unspoken or simply unexplored (from a continuity perspective) areas of their daily operations. Such structuring often carries a cost, at least of managerial time and attention and often monetarily, too.

This thesis presents an overview of effects of BCM implementation on company operations. By doing so, it contributes to a scarce body of literature which has previously focused on company performance rather than operations, ie. activities and processes, or tasked itself with taking normative stances on what role BCM should take in company operations. This work also provides a study method for identifying effects which can be used in future; there is nothing novel about semi-structured interviews, but this study can serve as a basis for anyone looking to identify the effects of BCM on an organisation or industry, eg. their own.

Providing both an overview of effects and demonstrating a suitable method, this work contributes by helping facilitate BCM implementation. Being able to anticipate the effects of BCM is helpful when implementing BCM; positive effects, such as mature BCM becoming a part of the value proposition, may be used to strengthen the argument for implementing BCM. Viewing the effects of BCM on other companies serves as a method for benchmarking the own

company's BCM implementation, as a difference in effects may be traced back to differently implemented BCM. This may help companies identify areas of their own BCM in need of development. To summarise, understanding the effects of BCM on daily operations may support BCM implementation, to which this thesis contributes by showing a number of such effects.

Looking ahead, large potential remains for future research. The effects covered, or the affected areas which we have found are by no means exhaustive. The effects found within this study are to some degree a reflection of the sample companies, the expertise of the respondents, and the analytical ability of the authors. Innovation, for example, did not emerge as a theme, however, it is plausible to imagine that a company's innovation processes might be affected by various continuity measures. Innovation, for example, played a large role in the digitalisation of the workforce following Covid-19, yet was not mentioned by any respondent.

This thesis has provided analytical themes to which we suggest future research to return. For example, each theme could be studied individually, perhaps, especially the concepts of strategy, organisational structure, and corporate culture which are all well-researched subjects in their own right. Finally, our work has provided a starting point for understanding how different firm characteristics, eg. ownership structure, firm size, or industry may affect how BCM impacts daily operations. A more formal study, eg. by wider survey or structured interviews may allow for firmer conclusions about the causality between firm characteristics, specific continuity measures and their impact.

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Appendix 1 - Interview Guide (translated from Swedish)

1. What is your position within the organisation and what responsibilities do you have regarding continuity management?
2. Does your organisation work with the term '*continuity*'? If so, how?
3. Have you defined continuity management within the context of your organisation? If so, how?
4. How is the responsibility for continuity management distributed within the organisation?
5. Could you describe how your continuity management has evolved over time, have any particular events driven this development? If so, which ones?
6. Do you observe any effect of Business Continuity Management on the company's daily operations?
7. If you've seen effects, how would you say they have manifested?
8. If there are some effects, how have they developed over time?
9. Does this development relate to times when you have needed to use your continuity management?
10. Do you take continuity into account in daily operational or strategic decisions, and if so, how does it manifest? In what contexts?
11. Has continuity management affected the decision-making paths or decision-making in your company? If so, how?
12. Against what does your continuity management aim to protect the business?
13. What analysis underpins your continuity management, what is the method for identifying needs?
14. Do you have examples of when you've needed to activate your plans? If so, how did you experience the outcome? What were the challenges?
15. What is your method for the development/creation of your continuity management?
16. Does continuity management interact with other parts of the business? If yes, which/how?
17. Do you evaluate the quality/effectiveness of your plans/BCM, and if so, how?
18. Is your continuity management flexible?
19. Do you have expectations on your continuity management from external stakeholders? If so, what do these expectations look like? How do you ensure to meet these expectations?
20. Has your continuity management affected these relationships in any other way?

Appendix 2 - Information Letter (translated from Swedish)

Hi,

My name is Elin Roshage (or the other author's name) and I am currently pursuing a Master's in Management at the School of Economics and Management at Lund University. I am writing concerning my thesis that my partner, Sebastian Hockfield Krook (or the other author's name) and I are currently preparing.

Our thesis aims to explore business continuity management within Swedish companies, specifically the effects of business continuity management on daily operations. Through this, we hope to gain an understanding of how business continuity management is integrated into a company's daily operations under normal circumstances.

We believe that your company would be of relevance to study within the scope of this research. If this sounds interesting, we would like to talk with you to further introduce the project. Our aim is to conduct in-depth interviews with individuals holding roles and positions that deal with risk and continuity management in April.

Your contribution to our study would be greatly appreciated.

Thank as you in advance for your interest,

Kind regards,

Elin and Sebastian

Appendix 3 - Consent Form (translated from Swedish)

Consent Form for Participation in Study

Area of study: Study on Business Continuity Management Effects on Daily Operations

Researcher Information:

Name: Elin Roshage & Sebastian Hockfield Krook

University: Lund University School of Economics and Management

Contact Information: el4641ro-s@student.lu.se / se3467kr-s@student.lu.se

Purpose of the Study: This research aims to explore the effects of business continuity management on daily operations. Your participation will involve an interview where your perspectives and experiences in this area will be discussed.

What You Will Be Asked to Do: You will be invited to participate in an interview lasting approximately 60 minutes. The interview can be conducted in person or via video call, and will cover topics related to business continuity management.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time without penalty. You may also choose not to answer any questions that you are uncomfortable with.

Confidentially: Your responses will be treated confidentially. All data will be stored securely and will only be accessible to the researchers. Identifiable information will be removed or anonymized in any reports or publications resulting from this study. Audio recordings will be transcribed, and the original recordings will be deleted after the study is completed.

If you have any questions about the study or your participation, please do not hesitate to contact one of us.

Consent: I have read and understood the information above. By signing below, I consent to participate in the study and agree to be audio recorded during the interview.

[] I consent to be audio recorded during the interview.

Participant's Name (Printed): _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____