



# Representing food preparedness:

A WPR analysis of consultation responses to Swedish food preparedness strategy

---

Hanna Koivukangas

Degree project/Independent project • 30 credits  
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, SLU  
Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences  
Environmental Communication and Management - Master's Programme  
Uppsala 2026



# Representing food preparedness: A WPR analysis of consultation responses to Swedish food preparedness strategy

Hanna Koivukangas

<b>Supervisor:</b>	Sofie Joosse, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Urban and Rural Development
<b>Examiner:</b>	Camilo Calderon, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Urban and Rural Development
<b>Credits:</b>	30 credits
<b>Level:</b>	Second cycle, A2E
<b>Course title:</b>	Master thesis in Environmental science, A2E
<b>Course code:</b>	EX0897
<b>Programme/education:</b>	Environmental Communication and Management - Master's Programme
<b>Course coordinating dept:</b>	Department of Aquatic Sciences and Assessment
<b>Place of publication:</b>	Uppsala
<b>Year of publication:</b>	2026
<b>Cover picture</b>	Author
<b>Copyright:</b>	All featured figures and tables are used with permission from the copyright owner.
<b>Online publication:</b>	<a href="https://stud.epsilon.slu.se">https://stud.epsilon.slu.se</a>
<b>Keywords:</b>	livsmedelsberedskap, food preparedness, consultation response, WPR, discourse, problematization, food systems, communication, sustainability

## Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences  
Department of Urban and Rural Development  
Division of Environmental Communication

## Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 intensified Sweden's focus on national defense, making food preparedness a central policy concern. In Swedish policy debates, food preparedness is often framed as a matter of security and associated with short-term crises. In contrast, sustainability-oriented perspectives present food preparedness as part of a longer-term transformation of the food system. This reveals a central tension in how food preparedness is understood by various actors and highlights the different ways sustainability is understood in relation to it. Clarifying what this tension entails is crucial for a meaningful public and academic debate on food preparedness and can provide further insight into the relationship between food preparedness and sustainability goals.

Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to explore how food preparedness is given meaning in Swedish policymaking, with particular attention to its connection to sustainability. To do so, I analyze how food preparedness is understood in Swedish consultation responses to the government inquiry *Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid*. Drawing on Bacchi's *What's the Problem Represented to Be* (WPR) approach, the study examines how food preparedness is understood, the assumptions underlying these understandings, and the effects they produce in relation to sustainability.

The empirical material consists of 14 consultation responses from a selection of actors, ranging from government agencies to interest organizations. In a policy context where national directives are limited and responsibilities are vague, these responses are a valuable site for exploring how food preparedness is given meaning.

The findings show that food preparedness is more than a question of food supply. It is a question of governance, economic viability, national security, household responsibility, and environmental change, all at once. Furthermore, the conflicting perspectives on sustainability lead to diverse opinions on whether the existing food system should be maintained or transformed. One of my most important findings is that the organisations in the consultation responses more often want to stabilize and improve the existing food system than to challenge it fundamentally. Although some actors, both within the research field and in the consultation responses, call for bigger ecological change, these perspectives remain limited compared with the dominant emphasis on production, coordination, and resilience within current structures.

As such, my study suggests that food preparedness is no technical fix but a deeply political issue. It is an issue that continues to reflect not only concerns about shortages but also wider struggles over resilience, responsibility, and future generations' access to food, where sustainability is interpreted in several incompatible ways.

*Keywords:* livsmedelsberedskap, food preparedness, consultation response, WPR, discourse, problematization, food systems, communication, sustainability

# Table of contents

<b>List of tables</b> .....	
<b>List of figures</b> .....	
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Research aim and questions .....	2
1.2 Delimitations.....	3
<b>2. Background</b> .....	<b>4</b>
2.1 Why livsmedelsberedskap? .....	4
2.2 Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid (SOU 2024:8).....	6
<b>3. Theoretical framework</b> .....	<b>8</b>
3.1 Poststructuralism.....	8
3.2 What's the problem represented to be? .....	9
<b>4. Methodology</b> .....	<b>14</b>
4.1 Empirical material.....	14
4.2 Data collection.....	14
4.3 Data analysis.....	17
4.4 Ethical and methodological reflections .....	18
<b>5. Analysis</b> .....	<b>20</b>
5.1 How is food preparedness understood in Swedish consultation responses to the report Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid? .....	20
5.1.1 Food preparedness as a governance problem .....	21
5.1.2 Food preparedness as a market problem.....	23
5.1.3 Food preparedness as a security problem .....	24
5.1.4 Food preparedness as an individual responsibility.....	25
5.1.5 Food preparedness and sustainability – a problematic or productive combination? .....	27
5.1.6 So what is food preparedness (not)?.....	28
5.2 What underlying assumptions shape these understandings and make them appear reasonable and legitimate? .....	30
5.2.1 Underlying assumptions: Governance.....	30
5.2.2 Underlying assumptions: Market .....	31
5.2.3 Underlying assumptions: Security .....	33
5.2.4 Underlying assumptions: Individual responsibility .....	34
5.2.5 Underlying assumptions: Sustainability .....	34
5.2.6 A summary of underlying assumptions.....	35

5.3	What effects do these understandings produce, particularly in relation to how food preparedness aligns (or not) with sustainability ideals? .....	36
<b>6.</b>	<b>Discussion .....</b>	<b>40</b>
6.1	Main findings .....	40
6.2	Limitations .....	43
<b>7.</b>	<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>44</b>
AI Disclosure	.....	45
<b>References</b>	.....	<b>46</b>
<b>Popular science summary</b>	.....	<b>50</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	.....	<b>51</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b>	.....	<b>52</b>

# List of tables

Table 1. Selected material .....	16
Table 2: Identified problem representations.....	20
Table 3: Assumptions and binaries within the problem representations.....	30
Table 4: Effects and (dis)alignment with sustainability ideals .....	37

# List of figures

Figure 1. Occurrence of words similar to food preparedness in public documents between 1900 and 2024 .....	6
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---

# Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description (Swedish translation)
CAB	County Administrative Board (Länsstyrelsen)
CABG	County Administrative Board Gotland
CABV	County Administrative Board Västerbotten
FAO	The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation
HS	The Rural Economy and Agricultural Society (Hushållningssällskapet)
KCF	Swedish Meat Industry Association (Kött & Charkuteriföretagen)
LRF	The Federation of Swedish Farmers (Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund)
NSF	Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (Naturskyddsföreningen)
RISE	RISE Research Institutes of Sweden
RVN	Region Västernorrland
SDVH	Swedish Food Retailers Federation (Svensk Dagligvaruhandel)
SoU	Swedish Government Official Reports
WPR	What's the problem represented to be?

# 1. Introduction

The urban district of Södermalm in Stockholm was historically a working-class neighborhood. In April 1917, the district faced a critical food shortage as local potato supplies were depleted. Although Sweden remained officially neutral during the First World War, its effects were still felt in Swedish society, contributing to declines in imports of food and other essentials (Stockholmskällan 2025). Rationing was necessary to secure access to food, but it came too late. Matters escalated quickly, with people, mostly women, gathering outside shops and accusing storeowners of saving their potatoes for “better” customers or for themselves. Such demonstrations were not confined to Stockholm, as people all over Sweden were growing tired of the weak food supply and the political decisions being made at the time (Stockholmskällan 2025). The key message? Sweden’s food preparedness needs to be an immediate political priority to prevent similar future situations of food shortages and social unrest.

The potato revolution in 1917 is by no means the historical event where Sweden’s food supply has trembled, but it does serve as a reminder of how fragile the food system has been and can be. The COVID-19 pandemic and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022 intensified Sweden’s focus on national defense, and food preparedness was once again a hot topic (Alvstad et al. 2024; Milestad et al. 2025). The purpose of Swedish food preparedness is to secure food and water for the population for both short and long periods (Livsmedelsverket 2025). In Sweden, it is the municipality’s responsibility to make sure it can secure enough food and water for its citizens in a crisis. In practice, there are no national directives on how this should be done, exactly what the municipalities are expected to do, or for how long. This can lead to differences between municipalities with sufficient resources to work with it independently and those with fewer resources (Andersson et al. 2024). This makes it important to investigate how food preparedness is understood by various actors and to reveal the potential effects of such understandings.

One way to approach this is to examine discourses on food preparedness. Food preparedness is often framed as a matter of security or associated with shorter-term crises. For example, the Swedish government has recently decided to re-establish food storages, starting with Norrland. One reason for that is that Norrland is an important geographical area in the event of conflict, for both NATO and the Swedish Armed Forces (Jordbruksverket 2025a). In contrast, Mistra Food Futures (n.d.) brings another perspective into play, stressing food preparedness as a sustainability discourse and as something that demands a longer timeframe. They

state that Sweden's food system is facing two main challenges: first, becoming more sustainable, and second, strengthening food preparedness. MISTRA Food Futures (n.d.) argues that these should be achieved simultaneously, because without resilient food systems, there is no sustainable food preparedness. These examples from Jordbruksverket and MISTRA Food Futures highlight a central tension in how food preparedness is understood in Swedish policy debates.

In 2022, the Swedish government inquired about a report on food preparedness, and the Swedish Government Official Report on food preparedness was produced in 2024. In Swedish, this report is called *Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid* (SOU 2024:8), and in English, the report could be translated as *Food preparedness for a new era*. It was thereafter circulated for consultation, inviting 164 consultation bodies to comment on the report (Regeringen 2024). Among these were various actors from the public sector, businesses, and NGO's. In the end, the report gathered 132 responses, each unique in what it chose to emphasize, include, and exclude. This makes the responses a valuable site for exploring how food preparedness is understood because they reflect a wide range of actors' perspectives in a context where national directives are limited.

Variation can be beneficial, but the uncertainty about what food preparedness entails has led to a desire, especially among municipalities, for cohesive, top-down decision-making, clear leadership, and clarification of responsibilities (Andersson et al. 2026). Previous research on food preparedness in Sweden has established a lack of collaboration among stakeholders and of resources. In addition, there are perceived differences between larger and smaller municipalities (see Andersson et al. 2026).

Exploring the tension between short-term security and long-term sustainability is relevant because it adds another analytical layer to the debate on food preparedness and provides further insight into whether preparedness and sustainability measures can be synchronized. In this way, this thesis will contribute to the growing body of research on Swedish food preparedness, where the role of communication has been underexplored, by asking how the issue is understood, justified, and linked to broader sustainability policy goals.

## 1.1 Research aim and questions

Central to addressing this gap is exploring the tension between food preparedness and sustainability goals, and how this dichotomy is reflected in the responses. This analysis is inspired by Carol Bacchi's WPR approach, which is explained in more detail in the theory chapter.

Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to explore how food preparedness is given meaning in Swedish policymaking, with particular attention to its connection to sustainability. Guided by this aim, the thesis asks:

- How is food preparedness understood in Swedish consultation responses to the report Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid?
- What underlying assumptions shape these understandings and make them appear reasonable and legitimate?
- What effects do these understandings produce, particularly in relation to how food preparedness aligns (or not) with sustainability ideals?

## 1.2 Delimitations

This thesis focuses on how food preparedness is given meaning. Therefore, it does not discuss in depth the proposals made in the report or the consultation responses. For example, it does not discuss strategic storage or cybersecurity, or similar proposed solutions. The focus is on written communication and only those specific consultation responses, not other policy documents or interviews. Because this is a qualitative study with a limited time frame, I focus on a smaller number of responses. The material is further presented and argued for in Chapter 4.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 Why livsmedelsberedskap?

The English term *food preparedness* is used by Swedish researchers to translate the Swedish term *livsmedelsberedskap*, and this thesis follows the same translation (Milestad et al. 2025; Andersson et al. 2026). As research shows, there are many terms used both nationally and internationally to describe the food system and related concepts. Therefore, it is important to make a distinction early on to avoid confusion (see Toth et al. 2016; Milestad et al. 2025). Hence, this section focuses on making that distinction to clarify what characterizes the word food preparedness/*livsmedelsberedskap* from other concepts, such as food security and food resilience, and how food preparedness relates to sustainability. To provide a broader context, this section also introduces food system discourses that impact policymaking on both a national and international level. The report's definition of *livsmedelsberedskap* is provided in the next subchapter, when discussing the report *Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid* (SOU 2024:8). From here on, this report will be referred to as “the report”.

The term *food security* dates back to the aftermath of WWII, when there was growing concern about food security in many areas (Akbari et al. 2022). Through diplomatic negotiations, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Food Summit managed to agree on a definition for the word in 1996:

“Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”. (World Food Summit 1996)

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) highlights four dimensions of *food security*: The physical availability of food, the economic and physical access to food, food utilization, and the stability of those dimensions over time (FAO 2008). This definition does not concern preparedness as such; instead, the focus lies in securing healthy food for citizens *at all times*. In this sense, *food preparedness* has a more narrow, crisis-oriented focus than food security (Milestad et al. 2025).

Another related concept is food resilience, also described as resilient food systems. Toth et al. (2016) view food security as an outcome, for example, the availability of food. Meanwhile, *food resilience* is understood as:

“Food resilience is rather an ability of the food system, which enables it to readily adapt to changes in external and internal conditions, to adjust to shocks to the system”. (Toth et al. 2016, 20)

The food system is shaped to bounce back in a crisis. Compared with food preparedness, food resilience encompasses broader aspects, including public health, producers, consumers, and wider system-level capacities (Toth et al. 2016; Milestad et al. 2025). It's important to highlight that actors within the food system are diverse and thus visualize resilient futures in different ways, as well as how resilience can be achieved most effectively (Bancerz 2018; Zurek et al. 2022). As Kahiluoto (2020, 854) describes it, "Resilience is preparedness for many futures". Mistra Food Futures (n.d.) highlights the importance of resilience in the Swedish food system, arguing that food system preparedness must include environmental and climate perspectives, for without them, there will be no agriculture or food in the future (Mistra Food Futures n.d.). They define food preparedness as:

"Food preparedness is about ensuring that people have access to sufficient healthy food – even in crises such as war, pandemics, droughts or disruptions to trade". (Mistra Food Futures n.d.)

Further, they address sustainable food preparedness, which seems to incorporate all previously described concepts. Sustainability, then, can be understood as a result of long-term resilience within the system (Toth et al. 2016). Both food preparedness and sustainability are intertwined with other areas, such as agricultural, social, and economic policy. Therefore, disagreement arises when more detailed strategies are developed, as this reveals their contested nature (Bancerz 2018). The different policy domains engage various stakeholders and, consequently, (re-)produce very different understandings of the word sustainability (Bancerz 2018). For example, Konefal (2018) has identified two main discourses of sustainability within food systems that suggest whether changing its structure is possible. The first discourse frames sustainability as the improvement and stabilization of the current food system. The second discourse shows sustainability as a transformative change that demands distancing from current capitalist agricultural systems (Konefal 2018). Another example of international food system discourses is provided by Espluga-Trenc et al. (2018), who explored how EU policies used metaphors to discuss food quality and food systems. The metaphors (or discourses) they found were linked to economy-business, technology-building, war-fight-battle, and life-health-strength. This brief overview of sustainability and international food system discourses shows how these policy areas are interconnected and helps situate food preparedness within a broader food system context.

In conclusion, food preparedness can be understood as a more specific, crisis-oriented concept than both food security and food resilience. This conceptual clarification helps situate the Swedish term *livsmedelsberedskap* within a broader international discourse and prepares the way for the analysis of how it is understood in consultation responses to the report.

## 2.2 Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid (SOU 2024:8)

The emergence of food preparedness in Sweden, as such, came during the pandemic in 2020 (Milestad et al. 2025). Earlier in history, people used other terms for preparedness and food security, such as försörjningsberedskap (supply security) and självförsörjning (self-sufficiency). Figure 1 illustrates the occurrence of similar words in public documents between 1900 and 2024.

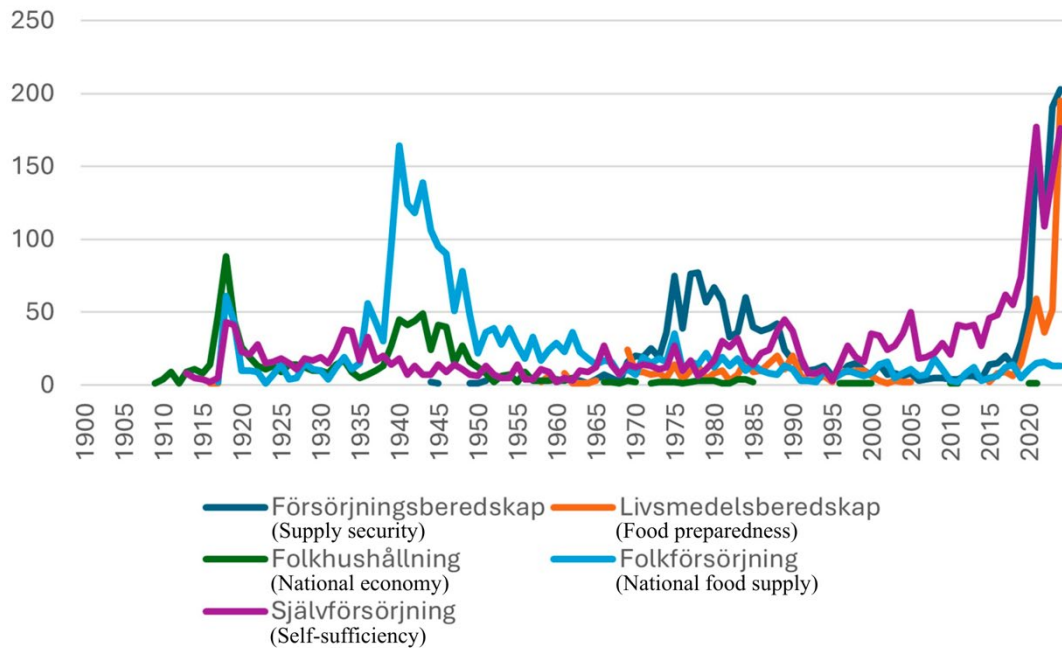


Figure 1. Occurrence of words similar to food preparedness in public documents between 1900 and 2024 (Source: Milestad et al. 2025, 17). Note: My own translations into English.

Figure 1 shows clear spikes that can be linked to specific events, such as the potato revolution in 1917, WWII, the oil crisis in 1973, and finally the pandemic in 2020 (Milestad et al. 2025). Sweden has been spared direct involvement in wars, but has, of course, not been able to evade the impacts of events in the surrounding world. The pandemic and Russia's war on Ukraine highlighted how fragile international and national food systems are, with disruptions to the food supply and transportation (Livsmedelsverket 2026a). As a result, Sweden's defense budget has increased from 59,8 billion SEK in 2020 to 175 billion SEK in 2025 (Regeringskansliet 2026), indicating greater awareness among both citizens and the state that preparedness is a legitimate priority. Since 2020, the Swedish government has been actively working on questions of both military defense and food preparedness, resulting in new policy recommendations.

Therefore, the Swedish government appointed an inquiry called *a new food preparedness*, in Swedish *en ny livsmedelsberedskap*, in April 2022. The purpose

was to find new ways forward in working with food preparedness. In addition, the report was to address how developments within other sectors could benefit and strengthen food preparedness efforts (Regeringskansliet 2024). A summary provided by the press secretary highlights the responsibility of individual citizens, the municipality's responsibility, contingency storage, and protection of agricultural land (Regeringskansliet 2024). Not all of these are relevant to this thesis, but they provide a general sense of which aspects the Government Offices consider "belong" to food preparedness.

Food preparedness (*livsmedelsberedskap*) is described by specifying what it includes, who it includes, and what should be achieved with it. The quote below is an example of how *livsmedelsberedskap* is conceptualized early in the report, and the original quote can be found in Appendix 1.

"We propose that food preparedness be defined as activities aimed at maintaining the food supply necessary for the survival of the population, ensuring the most important societal functions, or contributing to the military defense capabilities. The activities are carried out by a large number of actors, including government agencies, municipalities and regions, as well as individuals, businesses, and civil society. We propose that the goal of food preparedness should be to ensure that the entire population has access to necessary food over time in the event of a serious disruption or an imminent risk of a serious disruption in food supply." (SOU 2024:8, 13-14)

In other words, the core purpose is to propose a renewed and strengthened national framework for Swedish food preparedness, updated to current and future risks. In addition, the report also proposes that Sweden adopt a new law on food preparedness (Regeringskansliet 2024). It also addresses other critical aspects such as digitalization, drinking water, fuel, and payment systems, offering a more nuanced picture of Sweden's preparedness (Regeringskansliet 2024). The important societal functions they include in the definition are primary production, food production, food distribution, public meals, food safety, animal health and welfare, and foreign trade (SOU 2024:8).

The report is 364 pages long, so neither this thesis nor the consultation responses can comment on every section. Key policy proposals, however, include legal responsibility for municipalities to plan for potential disruptions and ensure local food distribution. Another suggestion is that the National Food Agency should coordinate efforts, and that a national food preparedness council could strengthen early warning and cooperation. Additionally, the report emphasizes that a robust food supply chain is essential for food security (SOU 2024:8).

The next chapter introduces the theoretical framework and illustrates how the different parts fit together.

## 3. Theoretical framework

The chapter begins by discussing poststructuralism to explain the theoretical foundation of Bacchi's WPR approach. Following is a review of WPR and its questions, including a brief introduction to discourse theory. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an understanding of this study's theoretical underpinnings before moving on to methodology and analysis.

### 3.1 Poststructuralism

Ever since its emergence in the 1960s, poststructuralism as a philosophical and sociological approach has attracted both admirers and critics. Its roots trace back to thinkers such as Heidegger, Nietzsche, and Kant, and over time, poststructuralism has evolved from a response to previous philosophical traditions into a somewhat coherent concept, though it is by no means a singular theory (Williams 2005). Modern thinkers who have contributed to shaping poststructuralism include, among others, Bruno Latour, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault (Boonstra & Rauws 2021).

Poststructuralism sees change as a prerequisite for our becoming. Nothing is fixed, and representations are merely viewed as human constructions. Everything and anything should be questioned to deconstruct the surrounding world and thus our becoming (Boonstra & Rauws 2021; Krylova 2024). A characterizing element of poststructuralism is precisely this questioning. People are governed through rules and legislation, and most accept this governing because the experts with the most knowledge have said it's for the best (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016). Foucault then challenges the standard definition of government, proposing that any way of knowing, trying to shape or affect how people are, should be included in its definition. It is not limited to traditional governmental institutions, and it includes social actors and any mechanism that shapes social rules (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016).

Critics of poststructuralism question its potential. Krylova (2024) argues that the promised "liberation and openness of poststructuralism" are themselves a fixed logic, in which Foucault's ideas operate in the background, structuring knowledge and practice accordingly. Further, Krylova argues that poststructuralist thinkers fail to question their own premises, instead turning their critique of fixation into an equally rigid foundation for analysis (Krylova 2024). Williams (2005) brings up the lack of truth as further criticism: Poststructuralism is committed to a seemingly endless loop of critical work in which no final truth can be established. Foucault's

concern, however, is not with what is true. Rather, it is with what is in the true, meaning the focus is on uncovering how the truth became accepted as the truth (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016).

Setting aside the perks and disadvantages of poststructuralism, Bacchi's WPR approach is built on a Foucauldian understanding. That is why the framework, along with her questions, is presented in the next subchapter.

### 3.2 What's the problem represented to be?

Bacchi & Goodwin (2016) argue for the need for more poststructuralist research within the policy field. A central argument is that policies and decisions are not the result of rationality and objectivity, which is why policymaking needs to be scrutinized. In contrast to positivism, poststructuralism challenges the existing knowledge underpinning policies. The "What's the problem represented to be" (WPR) approach treats policies as constitutive of problems and asks how a problem is represented to be within a policy text (Bacchi 2009). The WPR approach is not concerned with intentionality or with identifying real problems. Instead, it is the underlying assumptions and presuppositions that should be paid attention to (Bacchi 2014). It critically shifts attention to what governmental practices produce, how they produce it, and the effects they have (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016). WPR thus shifts the view from the government as a problem-solving instance to a problem-creating one, in which the government is active in shaping the nature of policy problems (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016).

Bacchi argues that problematizations need to be studied to break down the meaning of a concept and the accepted knowledge surrounding it. Problematizations can be defined in multiple ways. In this thesis, Bacchi's understanding is used. A *problematization* is the way that an issue or situation is thought of as a problem, and what enables that understanding. Bacchi believes that every policy proposal embeds an implicit problematization, that is, what is understood as problematic, who or what is causing the problem, and what is the appropriate solution (Bacchi 2009). Sexuality and mental illness are used as two examples to show how those concepts have been contested, challenged, and reproduced through history. How these concepts are filled with meaning affects how they are treated in the political debate and real life, affecting people directly (Bacchi 2012).

Critical thinking is central to poststructuralism, so WPR, too, needs to be scrutinized. The WPR approach has been developed and applied for around 25 years, with many scholars adapting it to their own research. An advantage of WPR is that researchers can select the questions most relevant to their analysis, making

it easy to understand and apply (Rönblom & Edwards 2025). Because of this, however, WPR could be perceived as an easy way out, with step-by-step instructions that no one can fail, hence creating a false sense of security (Rönblom & Edwards 2025). This conclusion came after Rönblom & Edwards (2025) reviewed papers labeled as WPR, but the content was mostly filled with identified problem statements and lacked analytical depth. Another criticism of WPR concerns the researcher's power to shape knowledge, in which the researcher's interpretation dominates the discussion. The researcher "chooses" which perspectives to include or exclude, which can reproduce dominant structures instead of challenge them (Hickman & Muir 2025). Bacchi (2009) acknowledges similar issues with the WPR approach. To counter these, Bacchi proposes familiarizing oneself in detail with the context and *nesting* – constantly applying WPR to problem representations. Sometimes a problem representation is lodged within another, and therefore, this exercise of application is necessary.

Bacchi's WPR approach fits well with this study's aim because of its flexible nature and compatibility with communication, thus allowing for deeper analysis of what makes problem representations possible (Bacchi 2009). The material consists of consultation responses in which *livsmedelsberedskap* is framed in different ways, along with the underlying assumptions. By treating these texts as problem representations, rather than neutral descriptions of a fixed problem, WPR allows the analysis to reveal how food preparedness is constructed and understood, and what effects this has for the relationship between preparedness and sustainability.

In the WPR approach, six original questions guide the analysis. A seventh step was added later on, which considers self-problematization. For the remainder of this chapter, the questions are further elaborated upon.

### **Q1: What is the 'problem' represented to be in a specific policy?**

Adopting a WPR approach means working backwards, as Bacchi (2009) puts it. This first question lays the foundation for further analysis, and the point is to read off what the proposed solution to the "problem" is, and thereby establish the problem representation (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016). To illustrate how this works, I'll describe the Swedish Armed Forces' work with gender equality (Försvarsmakten 2026). A proposed solution to increase the number of women within the Armed Forces is more education. This shows an understanding that women lack education or need more of it to match their male counterparts, simultaneously closing off alternative possibilities. The idea with Q1 is that by directly reading off the solutions, you can tell what they consider the problem to be. This also illustrates how "problems" can limit solutions, and why problematizations are important to study.

## **Q2: What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the ‘problem’?**

If the first question scratches the surface of problem representations, Q2 digs deeper into their foundation. It questions the epistemological and ontological knowledge, so how knowledge is built and how we can know it (Bacchi 2009). Further, a distinction is drawn between knowledge and assumptions held by policymakers and those embedded in problem representations. The latter, problem representations, are the focus of the WPR approach. It is not what the policymakers think that is important, instead it is how they came to think it that matters (Bacchi 2009). How does the knowledge make sense for them? How is it underpinning their arguments? Bacchi (2009) describes this as conceptual logics, referring to the assumptions or “meanings that must exist for the problem representation to make sense”.

Q2 is the entry point for discourse. Discourses are meaning systems, socially produced forms of knowledge that pose limits on what can and cannot be said and thought (Bacchi 2009). These meanings can never be truly fixed, which opens up for struggles in meaning-making processes (also called discursive struggles), characterized by a lack of consensus (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002). In discourse theory, power is understood as both liberating and limiting. Power and politics are highly interrelated, constituting the world around us whether we acknowledge it or not (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002). Therefore, people and society are understood as the result of history, reproducing everyday life that keeps society functioning without disruption. In contrast to discourse theory, the WPR approach is not concerned with linguistics and rhetoric (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016). Instead, Bacchi (2009) uses binaries, key concepts, and categories to examine discourses and their underlying conceptual logics.

When performing the WPR analysis, it is important to identify possible binaries. Using binaries can help emphasize a point in the policy by pitting one side against the other. This happens because binaries are built on the premise that something is either X or not-X. The divide clearly separates the two, perhaps unintentionally making X more important than not-X. These implications shape how a problem is understood and the solutions proposed (Bacchi 2009). Key concepts, on the other hand, are open-ended policy concepts that can be interpreted in various ways. Food preparedness, for example, is a key concept in the chosen policies because of the term’s contested nature. Categories are concepts that affect how governing works by grouping people (Bacchi 2009).

Binaries, key concepts, and categories should not be taken for granted. They must be closely examined to understand how they shape problem representations.

**Q3: How has this representation of the ‘problem’ come about?**

This question is not relevant to this thesis, and therefore, it won’t be discussed in detail. The premise is to trace the problem representation back in time, to find when key decisions were made and how they affected its direction. There are many examples from the judicial system here, such as legislation concerning mental illnesses and substance use. What is lawful and appropriate has changed over the years, thus shaping how it is perceived today (Bacchi 2009). A brief introduction to the term food preparedness is provided in previous chapters of this thesis, along with a summary of the report. A historical report is very time-consuming to do for each paper, nor is it the purpose of this study, which is why I decided not to include this question in the analysis.

**Q4: What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the ‘problem’ be thought about differently?**

This provides a critical perspective for policy analysis, partly building upon findings in Q2. The objective is to break apart the problem representation, identifying what has not been problematized. Cross-cultural comparisons, for example, can aid in understanding how a practice has come to be, or how it could be perceived differently (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016). The scope of this thesis is already limited, and an international comparison is not feasible.

**Q5: What effects are produced by this representation of the problem?**

Question 5 examines discursive effects, subjectification effects, and lived effects. There is a set of sub-questions to assist in the analysis: (a) What is likely to change with this representation of the ‘problem’? (b) What is likely to stay the same, (c) Who is likely to benefit from this representation of the ‘problem’?, (d) Who is likely to be harmed?, (e) How does the attribution of responsibility for the ‘problem’ affect those so targeted and the perceptions of the rest of the community about who is to ‘blame’? (Bacchi 2009). Clearly, Q5 urges critical reflection. The WPR approach assumes that problem representations create difficulties for some groups, while benefiting others. That is why effects are particularly relevant to examine (Bacchi 2009).

Discursive effects are the consequences or impacts that discourses have, since discourses limit the representation of the ‘problem’ and sideline alternative views. An acceptable solution to a problem is based on what the problem is understood to be, creating limitations on what can be considered legitimate and what is silenced. Subjectification effects, on the other hand, are how subjects and subjectivities are constituted in discourse (Bacchi 2009). Bacchi uses the term subject positions, defining it as:

“When such a position is assumed, a person tends to make sense of the social world from this standpoint, all the while being subjected to the full range of discourses constituting this position. Hence, who we are - how we feel about ourselves and others - is at least to an extent an effect of the subject positions made available in public policies”. (Bacchi 2009, 16)

Subjectification effects also produce so-called dividing practices, where the policies’ problem representations pin perspectives against each other (Bacchi 2009). Often, these representations imply responsibility for a particular group of people, underscoring the importance of including this in the analysis.

**Q6: How/where has this representation of the ‘problem’ been produced, disseminated and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted or replaced?**

The final question builds on Q3 and how certain problem representations become hegemonic and legitimate. It addresses resistance and how the problem representation could be challenged (Bacchi 2009). Q3 has not been included in this study, making it difficult to answer Q6. That is why Q6 has not been included either.

Bacchi has later introduced a seventh step for the analysis, which entails “self-problematization”, a form of reflexivity (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016). Reflexivity is discussed more in Chapter 4.4.

This section has reflected on WPR as a method and theory, focusing on how the questions can be applied in practice. In the next chapter, the material, methodology, and ethical reflections are presented.

## 4. Methodology

This chapter outlines the research process from data collection to data analysis. In Chapter 3, I laid out my theoretical framework. These theories, especially the “What’s the problem represented to be” (WPR) approach and poststructuralism, go well with a qualitative research design, as such a design enables me to explore how policies construct problems, how assumptions are legitimized, and what type of effects this produces. In this chapter, I introduce and motivate the choice of material, explain my data collection, describe my data analysis, and finally share my ethical and methodological reflections.

### 4.1 Empirical material

For this thesis, I have chosen consultation responses to the report *Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid* (SOU 2024:8) as my empirical material. Examining these responses is important because it enables me to investigate how various actors respond to the same report, which reveals how they understand food preparedness. It also shows what sections of the report they emphasize and what they exclude. The material can be found in Table 1.

In the conceptualization of food preparedness, as described in chapter two, the report identifies the actors that should be involved: municipalities, regions, government agencies, individuals, businesses, and civil society. Individual citizens have not submitted any responses, so their perspectives are not represented. The vast number of actors represented in the responses, and their focus on food preparedness, therefore make the consultation responses an appropriate site for analysis.

### 4.2 Data collection

The data collection process was initiated by skimming all 132 consultation responses and sorting out those that did not meet the general criteria. A first general selection criterion was that the selected papers had to contain more than one page of text, for there to be something to analyze. A second criterion was that food preparedness was mentioned and, to some extent, developed in the text. Many state agencies, for example, are not involved in food preparedness, such as the Swedish Customs (Tullverket 2024), and therefore, they only submitted a short text respectfully declining to respond. These were immediately disregarded, resulting in 54 eligible documents. The data collection process was documented in Excel to

enhance the study's reliability, and the selection and coding process is described in more detail in the following sections.

Simultaneously with the first reading, the documents were coded into categories. In an Excel document, basic information was recorded, including the organization's name, the number of pages in the response, the sector they belong to (public/private/civil), and the extent to which they discussed food preparedness. For the latter, code 0 meant they did not mention food preparedness, 1 meant they mentioned it to some extent, and 2 meant they discussed it in their response.

To ensure sufficient material for analysis, responses coded 1 or 2 were selected for a second screening. Of 54 responses, 25 were coded as 2. Of these, I sorted out three regions and two county administrative boards (CAB's). The region's primary responsibility is healthcare and transportation, so I did not consider it necessary to have five responses from them. Regarding the CABs, all of them submitted a CAB-general text. This means that those coded as 2 held county-specific information, in addition to the general text. In the third selection, I chose the two CABs with the most "additional" information. Additionally, responses with more pages were prioritized if the organizations were similar. For example, both Formas and RISE were coded as 2, but RISE had more material to analyze. This left me with 14 responses, and the selected organizations are listed in Table 1 below.

In total, there are seven representatives from the public sector. These are distributed over both local, regional, and national levels. Naturskyddsföreningen (the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation) was the only representative from the civil sector. This is mainly because there were fewer than five representatives from there in total, and the rest did not match the criteria. From the private sector, there are six organizations. The report (SOU 2024:8) emphasizes businesses, which is why diverse perspectives were prioritized. For example, two organisations coded 1 have been included because they represent the trade and meat industry.

There is no scientific consensus on the appropriate amount of material for a qualitative content analysis (Funck & Karlsson 2021). Because of this study's qualitative nature, limited scope, and time frame, document quality was preferred over document quantity. The selection process resulted in 14 documents, which gave me enough time to read them in depth and conduct the WPR analysis.

*Table 1. Selected material (Created by author)*

Name	Role	Page nr.	Code
Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid	Report	361	-
Name	Role (Sector)	Page nr.	Code
Hagfors Municipality	Municipality (Public)	6	2
Malmö City	Municipality (Public)	8	2
CAB Gotland	County Administrative Board (Public)	17	2
CAB Västerbotten	County Administrative Board (Public)	16	2
Region Västernorrland	Region (Public)	8	2
Livsmedelsverket	Government agency (Public)	18	2
RISE	Research institute (Public)	6	2
Hushållningssällskapet	Knowledge transfer organisation (Private)	10	2
Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund	Interest and business organisation (Private)	13	2
Naturskyddsföreningen	Environmental Non-profit (Civil)	7	2
Svensk Handel	Business and employers' association (Private)	2	2
Lantmännen	Agricultural cooperative (Private)	9	2
Svensk Dagligvaruhandel	Organization for grocery retailers in Sweden (Private)	5	1
Kött- och charkföretagen	Swedish Meat Industry Association (Private)	4	1
<i>Total nr. of analyzed pages</i>		129	

An alternative research design could have been to conduct interviews. However, given the scope of this thesis, there would not have been enough time to conduct as many interviews, limiting the representativeness of the findings. Another point to highlight is that these consultation responses have most likely been carefully drafted before submission. On the one hand, follow-up questions could have been asked in interviews, allowing interviewees to reflect and expand on interesting points. On the other hand, interviews are time-consuming and would have had to be transcribed and translated (Creswell & Creswell 2018).

In the end, consultation responses were the best fit for this thesis. All of them are drafted by organizations participating in the consultation and are available on the Swedish government's website. The proposals represent each organization's official stance on food preparedness, revealing what they think the problem is and how to solve it.

### 4.3 Data analysis

Bacchi's WPR approach invites the researcher to critically examine and reflect, offering great flexibility in how to operationalize the approach (Hickman 2026). Below, I outline my data analysis process, drawing on the WPR guidelines in Hickman (2026) and Bacchi (2009), and more general guidelines for qualitative analysis in Creswell & Creswell (2018).

First, the material was read through and sorted by sector, page number, and content. Another important step at this stage was to read through the report on which all consultation responses are based. Bacchi's first WPR question does not officially require familiarization, but doing an initial reading helps develop a deeper knowledge of the material (Creswell & Creswell 2018; Hickman 2026). Having a foundational understanding of the material and its context is necessary to examine discursive practices, which is why early familiarization is advantageous (Hickman 2026). A diary was kept throughout this process at my supervisor's recommendation, in which I wrote down emerging thoughts and reflections on the texts. The diary was an asset throughout the writing process, as it allowed me to easily revisit earlier notions, scrutinize them, and compare them (Olmos-Vega et al. 2023; Hickman 2026).

The second step was to address WPR's first question (Q1), *reading off* the solutions and establishing problem representations (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016). For this, I uploaded each consultation response to Qualcoder to keep track of identified codes, patterns, and my own annotations. Qualcoder was used only to organize my findings and to bring structure to the analysis, and the AI tool was not connected. The codes I used at this stage were implied problem and proposed solution, inspired by those used in Hickman (2026). Each consultation response was analyzed from start to finish, meaning all WPR-questions were applied and coded before moving on to the next response. This allowed me to focus on one text at a time, instead of constantly switching between perspectives.

Moving on to Bacchi's Q2, I built upon the problem representations identified in the previous step. The toolbox Bacchi suggests consists of identifying *categories*, *binaries*, and *key concepts*. These three, along with assumptions, have constituted the codes used in this step. Central at this point is examining how these problem representations are sustained, and what makes them possible to exist (Bacchi 2009; Hickman 2026). As before, the text was coded through annotation in Qualcoder. Since the data is in Swedish, the annotations were too.

The abovementioned steps require going back and forth with the material to ensure codes are fairly represented and correctly categorized (Creswell & Creswell 2018).

After coding all papers, they were reviewed once more to see if anything had been missed or misread. I started to puzzle together similar problem representations, which Hickman (2026) calls discursive affinities. Hickman (2026, 8) defines them as “instances where distinct policy statements or issues appeared to rest on common underlying logics, presuppositions, or rationalities”.

Finishing these analytical steps leaves Q5 to be answered. This question was more difficult to code and organize than the previous ones. Inspired by Hickman (2026), I created a matrix for this question (Table 4 in this thesis). The purpose of the matrix is to gather different understandings of sustainability and the effects identified for each. Bacchi provided a set of sub-questions for Q5: (a) What is likely to change with this representation of the ‘problem’? (b) What is likely to stay the same, (c) Who is likely to benefit from this representation of the ‘problem’?, (d) Who is likely to be harmed?, (e) How does the attribution of responsibility for the ‘problem’ affect those so targeted and the perceptions of the rest of the community about who is to ‘blame’? (Bacchi 2009). The findings from Q1 and Q2 constitute the foundation and enable a deeper analysis in Q5. The matrix structures the information, visualizes results for the reader, and illustrates how the findings are connected.

After answering all three research questions, the findings are summarized and integrated into the discussion. The next subchapter covers some ethical and methodological reflections, before finally turning to the analysis.

## 4.4 Ethical and methodological reflections

An important part of conducting research is reflexivity. Reflexivity is an ongoing process that draws attention to personal and methodological factors that shape the study’s outcome or process (Olmos-Vega et al. 2023). Given my personal interest and prior experience in food preparedness, it is important for me to continually reflect on how these experiences could impact the analysis.

Interpretative research, such as WPR and discourse analysis, by nature requires close involvement from the researcher (Creswell & Creswell 2018). Potential issues this could cause include, but are not limited to, unknowingly favoring certain perspectives, disclosing only positive results, or using language that does not accurately reflect what has been said. I acknowledge the critique against WPR, regarding the reader’s dependency on my interpretation. As the writer, I choose what discourses to emphasise in the analysis, which might reproduce already strong structures and discursively limit the analysis. Therefore, I have selected reports

from multiple organizations to represent as many perspectives as possible and as a strategy to minimize potential bias (Creswell & Creswell 2018).

Regarding the empirical material, there are a few suggested criteria for determining whether online material is suitable for a study. First, the material should be publicly archived. Furthermore, it should not require a password, nor should it be sensitive. Perhaps most importantly, there should be no restrictions on its use (Bryman 2012). The material used in this study complies with these guidelines, indicating its appropriateness for analysis.

This thesis is written in English, as are many journal articles and course books. My empirical material is only available in Swedish. Therefore, the emphasis is on providing accurate translations and reflections. For instance, I have used the official Swedish/English glossary from Sveriges Domstolar (2019) to ensure the correct translation of government agency names and official terms, such as "consultation response". Furthermore, the original Swedish quotes presented in Chapter 5 appear in Appendix 1. Unfortunately, there is not enough space to include all the interesting findings from the responses, so I have decided to include only selected quotes.

As a reminder, all abbreviations can be found at the start of this thesis. This may be useful to know before reading the analysis, which constitutes the upcoming chapter.

## 5. Analysis

This chapter is organized around the three research questions, which form the title of each subchapter. Each subchapter includes a table and quotes that summarize the findings relevant to that section. The quotes have been translated into English, and the Swedish quotes can be found in Appendix 1.

### 5.1 How is food preparedness understood in Swedish consultation responses to the report *Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid*?

*Table 2: Identified problem representations (Created by author)*

What is this a problem of?	Example:
Governance	"It is essential that planning not be based solely on individual municipalities, as it is important to establish an effective national system that is not constrained by municipal boundaries." (Malmö City 2024, 5)
Market	"To maintain the country's productivity, it is necessary to meet the demand for food, which is best achieved through a well-developed and profitable primary production and food industry that can operate efficiently and competitively." (Hushållningssällskapet 2024, 5)
Security	"(...) there are no guaranties that other countries will supply Sweden with food if the security situation deteriorates or if a regional crisis arises. Rather, it may be the case that a wealthy and well-developed country like Sweden is expected to supply other countries, such as the Baltic states, with essentials and food during a crisis or war in our region." (Lantmännen 2024, 4)
Individual responsibility	"(...) we know from experience that it only takes a small portion of the population that lacks solidarity - and, for example, begins hoarding - to risk undermining the entire purpose of home emergency preparedness." (Svensk Dagligvaruhandel 2024, 4).
Sustainability	"It would be devastating for agriculture, food security, and the climate if climate measures that do not increase productivity and competitiveness are imposed on agriculture. (...)" (Lantmännen 2024, 5)

The most prominent problem representations are compiled in Table 2. These provide an initial idea of the type of problem representations that have been identified, and each "problem" is thereafter discussed in its own subchapter.

### 5.1.1 Food preparedness as a governance problem

The most prominent problem representations within the consultation responses were connected to governance, technical, or administrative issues. One of the key proposals in the report is to increase the municipality's role in food preparedness. The actors have different opinions of this, starting with Svensk Dagligvaruhandel (SDVH):

“Svensk Dagligvaruhandel agrees with the report's intent regarding municipal responsibility in this matter but believes that the report leaves room for misinterpretation and over-implementation by municipalities, as well as a risk of a lack of coordination and 290 different solutions” (Svensk Dagligvaruhandel 2024, 2).

With over-implementation, SDVH presumes that municipalities might interpret national directives more strictly than they must, resulting in different conditions for businesses depending on what municipality they reside in. For context, there are 290 municipalities in Sweden. Malmö City similarly points out that:

“At the same time, it is essential that planning not be based solely on individual municipalities, as it is important to establish an effective national system that is not constrained by municipal boundaries.” (Malmö City 2024, 5)

Both Malmö City and SDVH thus indicate that they would like the overarching responsibility to lie at least at the regional level. Svensk Handel (2024, 2) describes an almost identical opinion. In both SDVH and Malmö City's responses, municipalities are described as “constraining boundaries” with potential for “misinterpretation and over-implementation”. Malmö City calls for an “effective national system”, constructing municipalities as ineffective. RISE proposes education and enhanced collaboration among municipalities to support effective governance, writing:

“We see a great need to support municipalities in carrying out their responsibilities through coordination at a more operational level than that proposed. There'll be a need for forums for exchange of experiences, knowledge development, and collaboration among municipalities, and with other responsible organizations.” (RISE 2024, 3)

RISE's suggestions portray food preparedness as ultimately the municipality's responsibility, while acknowledging that municipalities need support to fulfill it.

“We propose clarifying the business sector's responsibility for supply security, as this lack of clarity leads to uncertainty about what is expected, which in turn leads to hesitation in decision-making and results in lower preparedness.” (Hushållningssällskapet 2024, 8) and “Most companies (...) have a strong interest in and willingness to participate and will continue to do so; however, if responsibility is to be formalized, this must be done through an agreement.” (Svensk Dagligvaruhandel 2024, 5).

Hushållningssällskapet (HS 2024, 8), Livsmedelsverket (2024, 2-3), Svensk Dagligvaruhandel (2024, 5), and Svensk Handel (2024, 2) all emphasize the need for clear instructions for businesses. These can be provided through judicial measures such as agreements or laws. This frames food preparedness as an administrative problem that could be addressed by signing agreements. This legislative responsibility falls to the state, which is often described as a “knowledge-producing”, “governing”, “funding”, and “responsible” actor (Malmö City; Naturskyddsföreningen; Lantmännen; Hushållningssällskapet). Most actors say they consider the state responsible for funding food preparedness initiatives, as total defense is its responsibility. The state should set boundaries, guarantee funding, and ensure competitive neutrality (Svensk Handel 2024, 2).

“Representatives from Gotland, with their experience of a county facing unique challenges and occupying a strategic location of significant national interest from a defense and preparedness perspective, must be given a voice in councils and decision-making forums.” (The County Administrative Board of Gotland 2024, 10).

CAB Gotland (CABG), on the other hand, highlights Gotland’s strategic geographic location from a defense and preparedness perspective. Gotland depends on shipments from mainland Sweden, yet it is also of great importance to Sweden and the Swedish Armed Forces. The problem is framed as disorganized preparedness that fails to account for geographic differences or provide opportunities for representation in forums. Region Västernorrland (RVN) also expresses dissatisfaction with the limited attention to regional representation. RVN describe themselves as a necessary collaborator, constructing RVN as an active partner that wants acknowledgment, representation, collaboration, and funding.

Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund (LRF), on the other hand, presents the problem as a lack of leadership. Some of the most common formulations in the responses overall were “unclear governance”, “lack of collaboration”, “lack of knowledge”, “unclear definitions”, “lack of structure”, “unclear mandate”, and “lack of resources”. These administrative responsibilities are expected to be dealt with by state agencies (Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund 2024, 6; CAB Västerbotten 2024, 3). Not everyone, however, agrees that regional or national agencies are fit to coordinate food preparedness measures. Kött- och charkuteriföretagen (2024, 2) instead propose creating a new agency to coordinate food preparedness, because they consider the existing state agencies to have trouble with collaboration, efficiency, and governance.

These representations don’t construct the problem of food preparedness as a lack of food or import dependence. Instead, they view inadequate food preparedness to be the result of poor management.

## 5.1.2 Food preparedness as a market problem

"Region Västernorrland sees the need for clearer incentives to encourage companies to participate in preparedness work (p.2) (...) If the business sector is not prepared from a preventive perspective, it is difficult to succeed during a crisis (p.6)" (Region Västernorrland 2024)

This proposal from RVN presents the problem as a lack of incentives for businesses to engage in preparedness measures. It does not specify what these measures should be, nor who would be responsible for providing these incentives. The proposal above portrays businesses as important subjects that are willing to help. With clear responsibility and directives, businesses can become partners and bearers of food preparedness (Hushållningssällskapet 2024, 3).

"To maintain the country's productivity, it is necessary to meet the demand for food, which is best achieved through a well-developed and profitable primary production and food industry that can operate efficiently and competitively (...). Clear measures are needed for strengthened domestic production; on the one hand, regulations need to be simplified, and on the other hand, we need to ensure access to essential input materials through domestic production or strategic storage." (Hushållningssällskapet 2024, 5)

Both HS and Kött- och charkuteriföretagen (KCF) emphasize production (Hushållningssällskapet 2024, 5; Kött- och charkuteriföretagen 2024, 2). According to HS, clear measures include simplified regulations and ensuring access to input materials. KCF directly relates food production volume to preparedness. Food preparedness is thus a problem of limited production and food supply. KCF emphasizes "regulatory burdens" and focuses on more abstract issues, such as the supply of skills, capital, research, and innovation, while HS frames the problem as one of logistics and access to physical resources. Hagfors municipality (2024, 5) suggests that the state should create incentives for private actors rather than trying to "take over" their roles.

"The more food we produce, the better prepared we are. (...) Better conditions are needed in all areas that affect domestic food production, such as regulatory burdens, skills supply, access to capital, research, and innovation." (Kött- och charkuteriföretagen 2024, 2)

Most actors describe businesses as active, willing partners in food preparedness. Businesses are described as "solution-oriented and adaptable", eager to help create "robustness and resilience". However, the reasons for not doing so are external factors, such as a lack of formal responsibility and funding (Svensk Handel 2024, 2). Businesses can be understood as passive subjects, waiting for regional or national actors to make the next move. A common denominator is a reliance on the market to "solve," or at least provide food in the event of a crisis. While most actors

seem to focus on improving Sweden's self-sufficiency and reducing imports, Lantmännen instead suggests looking at international cooperation and agreements:

"Some examples of how exports can benefit from this include appointing significantly more agricultural and food councils in strategically important countries, organizing more delegation trips with high-level representation, and ensuring that significantly more export agreements are established with key countries." (Lantmännen 2024, 8)

This frames the problem as insufficient international partnerships, proposing solutions such as "delegation trips" and establishing more export agreements. Lantmännen sees potential in the international market, creating tension with other actors who want to see a self-sufficient Sweden.

### 5.1.3 Food preparedness as a security problem

"Considering the current global situation we are in, it is desirable to reduce vulnerabilities in the near term. Therefore, preparedness measures need to be based on the structure that the food chain has today and reduce vulnerabilities within it." (Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund 2024, 4)

Food preparedness is constructed as a security problem by multiple actors. This example from LRF reflects an understanding of food preparedness as a security problem within the food chain. By using terms such as "current global situation," "reduce vulnerabilities," and "preparedness measures," they convey a sense of urgency. Furthermore, LRF also proposes moving toward fossil-free agriculture to reduce dependence on fuel imported from "third countries associated with geopolitical risks" (Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund 2024, 8). While the measures could be seen as promoting sustainability, they primarily seem to promote self-sufficiency and a desire to eliminate potential threats to the food system. HS, too, constructs the problem as a dependency on "third countries", who could pose a security risk in the future:

"It is particularly important to reduce dependence on third countries as soon as possible, especially on countries that may be assumed to act antagonistically over time." (Hushållningssällskapet 2024, 5)

Furthermore, Lantmännen presents a similar problem representation, but instead of third countries, the focus is on citizens:

"In the event of a crisis, war, or disruptions in trade flows, the food supply would quickly be subjected to great strains, and it would likely not be possible to provide the entire population with the nutritious food they need to function, work, and maintain their will to defend, as well as to avoid social unrest and riots." (Lantmännen 2024, 3)

Both citizens and third countries become security risks that must be managed. Citizens can cause “social unrest and riots” if the food supply is weakened. All the above-mentioned problem representations propose similar solutions aimed at improving overall food security. What they understand as the problem differs, as reflected by their different understandings of it. Lantmännen proceeds with:

"(...) there are no guarantees that other countries will supply Sweden with food if the security situation deteriorates or if a regional crisis arises. Rather, it may be the case that a wealthy and well-developed country like Sweden is expected to supply other countries, such as the Baltic states, with essentials and food during a crisis or war in our region."  
(Lantmännen 2024, 4)

Food preparedness is portrayed here as a problem stemming from other nations being less wealthy and less developed than Sweden, which becomes a burden for Sweden in a crisis, as Sweden would need to help other countries. A binary of Sweden/Baltic is presented, conveying a lack of trust in countries other than Sweden and cementing a discourse of self-sufficiency.

Turning to regional actors, a proposal by CABG is to appoint Gotland as an area of national interest because of its importance for the Swedish Armed Forces and national security (CAB Gotland 2024, 10-12). For example, they write “Gotland’s important defense strategic location, which can mean suddenly arising needs for food supply to larger military forces” (CAB Gotland 2024, 2). Because of its geographical location, CABG notes that it has important knowledge of factors and risks affecting the island. This portrays the CABG as an experienced, legitimate actor, making its suggestions worth considering. CABG wants more attention toward Gotland, and by using terms such as national interest and relating their importance to war and military needs, they show that they understand food preparedness to be a security problem.

#### 5.1.4 Food preparedness as an individual responsibility

One part of the report addresses how to prepare citizens for a potential food shortage or other crises that could affect their access to food. In the consultation responses, some organizations place more responsibility on citizens than others. The way individuals/citizens/residents should take responsibility varies by organization. The proposal in the report is that every household should have enough food and water to manage at least one week on its own, without help from authorities. Although neither the report nor this thesis focuses on individuals, looking into this section revealed interesting points. For example, Hushållningssällskapet (2024, 3) constructs the problem as a lack of knowledge among households:

“We propose that consideration be given to requiring a certain level of self-sufficiency in household preparedness regarding food, or alternatively, that very clear recommendations be issued to households. (...) we propose that an entity be commissioned to conduct regional and local training initiatives aimed at increasing knowledge about effective household preparedness.” (Hushållningssällskapet 2024, 3)

Households are constructed as responsible subjects in preparedness. They should be prepared for up to four weeks, rather than the current recommendation of one week (Hushållningssällskapet 2024, 3). It is assumed that, by educating themselves, they can contribute to national preparedness. This is not the only proposal intended to increase citizens' knowledge. CAB Västerbotten (CABV) agrees, adding that citizens should know how to produce, handle, and store food to complement their energy intake (CAB Västerbotten 2024, 7). Kött- och charkuteriföretagen (2024, 3) reports difficulty recruiting qualified staff, constructing the problem as “unqualified staff,” meaning citizens need more training to do jobs in the meat and deli industry.

Malmö City (2024, 4) places responsibility on the individual, stating that sustainable consumption patterns are necessary to reduce the climate impact of food. How to achieve this and what exactly defines sustainable consumption have not been developed. Part of the problem is understood to be indulgent consumer behavior, which needs to be reduced. Malmö City (2024, 4) also emphasizes the importance of education and learning to cultivate and cook. The responsibility for food preparedness is individualized, raising questions about accessibility. In contrast, Svensk Dagligvaruhandel (2024, 4) expresses the most scepticism toward citizens, writing that:

“(...) we know from experience that it only takes a small portion of the population that lacks solidarity—and, for example, begins hoarding—to risk undermining the entire purpose of home emergency preparedness.” (Svensk Dagligvaruhandel 2024, 4).

Citizens are described as responsible for their own preparedness and for having solidarity. They should relieve pressure on the food industry by avoiding panicky behavior. Lantmännen (2024, 3) similarly describes individuals as “In need of nutritious food” and warns that chaos could erupt if these needs are not met. Trust is placed in structures and increased security to handle food shortages. The citizen is portrayed as a dependent, vulnerable subject who needs nutrition to function and avoid civil unrest.

### 5.1.5 Food preparedness and sustainability – a problematic or productive combination?

“Malmö city believes it is important for food preparedness goals and environmental goals to go hand in hand to avoid conflicting objectives. Rich biodiversity in the agricultural landscape can increase resilience and provide important ecosystem services, which can be essential, for example, in a situation where chemical pesticides are not available.” (Malmö City 2024, 8)

Malmö City’s response shows that it understands the problem to be conflicting objectives, with the key being to strengthen resilience. This posits that the problem is not food insecurity per se but the misalignment between environmental objectives and food preparedness goals. Naturskyddsföreningen (NSF) similarly emphasizes the need for aligned sustainability and preparedness goals (Naturskyddsföreningen 2024, 5). In addition, NSF adds that both sustainability and food preparedness require “integrated and substantial investments, as well as changes in behavior”. This raises the question of whose behavior should be changed and how. However, both Malmö City and NSF seem to acknowledge a direct connection between sustainability and food preparedness.

“Preserving available farmland and pastureland is important for the country’s future ability to produce food for both its own population and to meet the needs of other countries.” (Hushållningssällskapet 2024, 3).

HS, on the other hand, constructs food preparedness to be a problem of poor land management, which ultimately leads to a declining ability to produce food. Unlike Malmö City, which highlighted ecosystem services and biodiversity, HS constructs farmland as an instrumental tool for achieving food preparedness. Lantmännen takes this one step further, arguing that:

"It would be devastating for agriculture, food preparedness, and the climate if climate measures that do not increase productivity and competitiveness are imposed on agriculture. (...) any upcoming climate measures for agriculture must be well thought out, based on practical and theoretical knowledge, enhance competitiveness, and be developed together with the industry." (Lantmännen 2024, 5)

This statement constructs sustainability or climate measures as potentially destructive forces for food preparedness. Phrases such as “imposed on” and “based on knowledge” paint a picture of agriculture as an exposed field, often subject to harmful measures due to incompetence. The key is productivity, where economic growth overrides sustainable measures. No examples of measures are presented. Another tension within sustainability/preparedness is noted in KCF’s proposal:

“In terms of daily energy intake, meat and meat products play a crucial role in food preparedness. Compared to several other food categories at the top of the list of daily

energy intake, meat and meat products provide citizens, in addition to energy, with significantly more essential nutrients, such as vitamins and minerals. In meat, these nutrients are also readily available to our bodies. As the English term “livestock” suggests, the animals in food production are a living inventory.” (Kött- och charkuteriföretagen 2024, 3).

Referring to the word “Livestock” as “proof” of its importance in food preparedness, KCF advocates for increased meat production, thereby conflicting with sustainability-oriented perspectives that aim to reduce meat consumption (Alvstad et al. 2024). This also goes against recommendations from the Swedish National Food Agency that advocate for reducing one’s meat intake (Livsmedelsverket 2026b). Boscardin (2018, 113) offers another interpretation of the word livestock, instead suggesting it shows how farmed animals are viewed as raw material or primary inputs. The problem is portrayed by KCF as insufficient meat production, which hinders Sweden’s food preparedness. On the opposite side of the spectrum, we find NSF, stating that:

“The obvious choice should be on the production and storage of both protein crops and calorie crops” (Naturskyddsföreningen 2024, 6).

NSF emphasises that the report largely focuses on calories in relation to food preparedness, without considering protein crops. The source of food, such as calories, plant-based proteins or meat, becomes a political question. Both NSF and KCF illustrate different standpoints within the sustainability spectrum. Lantmännen’s suggestion to consider only measures that increase or maintain agricultural productivity is another example of efforts to balance sustainability with economic viability and preparedness.

Summarizing the abovementioned problem representations, I find that sustainability is constructed both as a threat and a solution. Interestingly, Svensk Handel and Svensk Dagligvaruhandel did not discuss sustainability, which is why the trade perspective was not represented in this subchapter. This shows that some actors do not seem to consider sustainability a part of food preparedness, although the grocery trade industry is directly affected by functioning food systems.

### 5.1.6 So what is food preparedness (not)?

The purpose of this chapter was to answer the first research question, “How is food preparedness understood in Swedish consultation responses to the report Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid?”

Taken together, the five problem representations show that food preparedness is not a single, coherent issue but instead a contested policy problem. Across the

responses, food preparedness is understood through governance, market, security, individual responsibility, and sustainability logics. Sometimes these representations overlap, and other times they diverge. What they share is the assumption that food preparedness requires some form of action. Exactly what kind of action or change is required, who should be responsible for it, and what the food system should look like are thought about in different ways.

Understanding the problem to be *governance*, constructs food preparedness as an administrative and coordination problem, where unclear mandates, fragmented responsibilities, and weak institutional structures hinder food preparedness. *Market* frames food preparedness as a matter of production, supply chains, and incentives, dependent on a functioning and profitable food system. *Security* links food preparedness to national resilience and vulnerability. *Individual responsibility* shifts responsibility to households and citizens, who are expected to improve their preparedness through information. Finally, *sustainability* shows how food preparedness is often framed as something that should not threaten productivity and competitiveness.

These representations make food preparedness into more than a question of food supply. It becomes a question of governance, economic viability, national security, household responsibility, and environmental change, all at once. The next subchapter focuses on the underlying assumptions and presuppositions that make these problem representations possible.

## 5.2 What underlying assumptions shape these understandings and make them appear reasonable and legitimate?

This chapter addresses the assumptions underlying the five identified problem representations. Table 3 highlights examples from the material to illustrate both assumptions and binaries identified in the texts.

*Table 3: Assumptions and binaries within the problem representations (Created by author)*

What is this a problem of?	Examples of assumptions	Binaries
Governance	Coordinated multilevel governance is the best solution	Local/Regional/National, Municipal/Regional, Fragmented/Coherent
Market	Central market logic: Good preparedness needs continued/increased production	Vulnerable/Robust, Ordinary/Disruptive, Market/Alternative, Import/Export, Production/Regulation
Security	National supremacy - Sweden cannot rely on international support.	Mainland/Island, War/Peace, National/International, Self-sufficiency/Dependency, Long-term/Short-term
Individual responsibility	Rational citizens make correct decisions with more knowledge	Individual/System, Informed/Uninformed
Sustainability	Climate-based/sustainable solutions are instrumental and strategic.	Sustainable/Unsustainable, Isolated/Integrated, Preparedness/Sustainability, Preventative/Reactive, Meat/Alternative

### 5.2.1 Underlying assumptions: Governance

Food preparedness is often constructed as a governance problem, but the consultation responses differ on where they place responsibility and coordination. A shared assumption is that preparedness requires some form of public steering, institutional coordination, and a division of responsibility. At the same time, most organizations assume that the current governance structure is too fragmented or too “local” to ensure robust food preparedness. A commonly held view among the actors is that municipalities possess extensive local knowledge of their population and know the municipality’s specific needs (CAB Västerbotten; Malmö City; Region Västernorrland; RISE; Hushållningssällskapet; Livsmedelsverket). At the same time, municipalities are portrayed as responsible actors with limited capacity and resources, subordinated to regional and national actors.

Several responses assume a binary between fragmented/coherent governance, as well as between local/regional. Municipalities such as Hagfors (2024, 5) and Malmö City (2024, 5), along with regional actors CAB Västerbotten (2024, 2),

CAB Gotland (2024, 3), and Region Västernorrland (2024, 3-4), suggest that responsibility should be distributed over regional or national structures. In Hagfors' case, the local (municipal) level is deemed insufficient for the broader organization of food preparedness, implicitly shifting responsibility upward. The regional actors agree, with the CABs describing themselves as the appropriate level because of their "Competence, local knowledge and network". Several of the public actors' texts presume that governance is possible only if the actor has the competence to act, as seen in Livsmedelsverket (2024, 9), Malmö City, and the CABs' responses.

Many actors rely on coordination to solve the issue of vulnerable food preparedness, which is why coordination can be understood as a key concept. This is evident in texts that call for clearer rules, shared planning, follow-ups, and formalized responsibilities. Livsmedelsverket (2024, 3) understands the problem as one of unclear mandates, while Kött- och charkuteriföretagen (2024, 3), Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund (2024, 7), and Hushållningssällskapet (2024, 2) all assume that governance is only effective when paired with sectoral cooperation. For them, clear leadership is necessary, but it must be combined with partnership with the sector rather than only through top-down control.

Regarding the local/national binary, there are different perspectives. Svensk Handel (2024, 2) and Svensk Dagligvaruhandel (2024, 2), for example, stress that local interpretations create uncertainty, overimplementation, and inefficiency. For them, the local level threatens coherence. By contrast, regional actors assume that the local level must be embedded in regional structures as a connecting node.

In conclusion, several assumptions have been identified relating to governance. First, preparedness requires coordinated public steering. Second, fragmented responsibilities weaken effectiveness. And third, measures must be designed to support and not overwhelm the actors who are expected to implement them.

## 5.2.2 Underlying assumptions: Market

In the analyzed responses, food preparedness is often treated as intertwined with markets, trade, businesses, and supply chains. A common assumption is that the food system is fundamentally organized by private actors, so food preparedness cannot be understood without also understanding market logics. However, the consultation responses value the market's role differently. Some stress that it needs to be protected, while others understand the market as a vulnerability.

One clear binary is between the market as a solution (maintaining the market structures) and the market as a problem (creating alternative structures). The

market/alternative is evident in responses from all public actors, as well as from Svensk Handel, SDVH, and KCF. The underlying assumption is that the state or municipality cannot replace these market structures. Instead, they must create the right incentives for market actors to function in times of peace and crisis and to collaborate with them. This binary frames market structures as inevitable, necessary, and “right,” while an alternative structure becomes unimaginable.

A key concept in these responses is the supply chain, which frames food as part of a mutually dependent system where production, transportation, distribution, and trade are interconnected. This builds on the assumption that the existing market structure already has the necessary preconditions to provide food in a crisis, thereby leaving the market logic unquestioned.

Many actors recognize that the market in peacetime needs to function to handle disruptions. Kött- och charkuteriföretagen (2024, 2) provides a good example: they understand profitable and competitive businesses to be the foundation of food preparedness, with increased production in peacetime linked to enhanced preparedness. Lantmännen (2024, 3), Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund (2024, 2), and Hushållningssällskapet (2024, 9) share this logic to some extent, but conclude that market mechanisms aren't enough on their own. They recognize the market's vulnerabilities and advocate for policy instruments, such as incentives and funding. Lantmännen (2024, 9) describes itself as “a leading actor” representing a large share of the agricultural sector. So, they become subjects with legitimacy to demand investments and research on behalf of the agricultural sector.

Naturskyddsföreningen (2024, 5) and, to some extent, RISE (2024, 2) provide another perspective, arguing that the market is undermining other values. The current market system is portrayed as insufficient because it does not account for biodiversity, resilience, or diversified production. Meanwhile, recognizing that the market can be adjusted through the right political instruments, such as public procurement, CAP rules, and funding that values long-term sustainability. This builds on a central assumption: the market is not neutral, because it already advances a certain type of production while disfavoring others.

In summary, perhaps the most notable assumption is that food preparedness should be based on market mechanisms. Another central assumption is that private businesses are central to the supply chain because competition and profitability during peacetime improve the ability to produce and distribute in a crisis.

### 5.2.3 Underlying assumptions: Security

In many responses, food preparedness is portrayed as a matter of security and the protection of societal functions. A common assumption is that the food system cannot be understood as an isolated supply system but rather as part of a larger infrastructure with multiple vulnerabilities. Food preparedness shifts from a question of food supply to one of national resilience.

A prevalent binary is peace/war or peace/crisis. Hagfors (2024, 3), for example, uses "peacetime" to describe everyday life, implicitly assuming that security is about the absence of disruption from war (Merriam-Webster 2026). By this definition, a natural disaster in peacetime would not be a security issue. However, responses from Malmö City (2024, 2) and CAB Västerbotten (2024, 6) suggest that this definition is not enough, and that natural disasters and other disruptive events need to be counted as matters of security. This builds on the broader assumption that security is not only about war preparedness, but also about other types of crises not caused by weapons. Gotland's position as an island and the CAB's description of it as a geographically and strategically important location reveal an understanding that some places are more exposed (CAB Gotland 2024, 10). They assume that their isolation and contribution to national defense make food preparedness an especially important security question for Gotland. Meaning, security must be understood as a territorial and situational matter. The county administrative boards are portrayed as competent, natural collaborators, and efficient actors (Svensk Dagligvaruhandel 2024, 2; CAB Västerbotten 2024, 3; Hagfors municipality 2024, 3). CABs are experts, making them subjects with authority regarding regional and local needs.

For Lantmännen (2024, 4) and Kött- och charkuteriföretagen (2024, 2), security is closely tied to national security and supply capacity. They assume that food preparedness is not just a question of economy or agriculture, but a central part of society's ability to function and defend itself. A disrupted system is understood to threaten citizens' willingness to defend the country. Food preparedness thus becomes a prerequisite for national security. NSF, on the other hand, ties security to ecological stability, which depends on biodiversity, water quality, and circularity (Naturskyddsföreningen 2024, 5-6). Security is thus framed as long-term ecological resilience rather than protection against immediate threats. This illustrates a binary between short-term and long-term, in which neglecting environmental matters threatens the future food supply, and neglecting national security threatens society's ability to function.

#### 5.2.4 Underlying assumptions: Individual responsibility

Individual responsibility is portrayed as a prerequisite for a functioning food preparedness. A recurring assumption is that individuals and households can be strengthened through information, education, and practical skills. Malmö City (2024, 4), for example, links food preparedness to citizens' ability to cook, preserve food, and cultivate. Underlying this assumption is a trust in the rational individual to act in line with what they have learned, forming a binary between informed and uninformed citizens. Region Västernorrland (2024, 1) agrees, implying that increasing citizens' knowledge and awareness will make them act.

CAB Västerbotten (2024, 7) and CAB Gotland (2024, 7) presuppose that the individual's responsibility is complementary to structural preparedness. Livsmedelsverket also acknowledges that not everyone has the same ability to prepare (2024, 14). Hushållningssällskapet (2024, 3), Svensk Dagligvaruhandel (2024, 4), and RISE (2024, 4) stress that knowledge is not just about general preparedness, but also practical, technical, and specific competence. Therefore, education, training, and competence development are seen as key to translating knowledge into actual practice.

#### 5.2.5 Underlying assumptions: Sustainability

Sustainability is a key concept, and it is assigned different meanings depending on the actor. Many actors, however, understand sustainability as a way to create a food system that is resilient over time, thereby establishing a binary between short- and long-term measures.

Hagfors municipality (2024, 4) writes about sustainability-related themes, such as local production and shorter transportation distances, arguing that when it comes to food production and agriculture, the Nordic climate brings both challenges and vast geographical differences. They continue, "If the domestic food production is to be secured in times of war, it is necessary to create incentives for consumers to shop locally even in peace." This shows that increased production and economic growth are prioritized over, for example, securing long-term resilience in agriculture. This assumption rests on the idea that sustainability can be achieved by strengthening production and creating better market incentives for it.

Malmö City (2024, 2) and CAB Västerbotten (2024, 11) represent a more systemic understanding of sustainability by assuming that food preparedness and ecological resilience must go together. This builds on the assumption that current food structures can be part of the problem, especially when they are contingent on high resource use, long transport distances, and fossil fuels. CAB Gotland (2024, 4) and

Region Västernorrland (2024, 3) share this view and highlight that sustainability should include building systems that function across all geographic regions. This view assumes that future preparedness cannot be guaranteed unless the production and distribution systems are made more resilient.

Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund (2024, 7-8), Hushållningssällskapet (2024, 5), and Lantmännen (2024, 5) display another view on sustainability. They assume that climate measures and food supply need to be coordinated, without sustainability hindering production and competitiveness. In this view, sustainability is understood as climate adaptation, technological advances, and efficient resource use, and it should not be a constraint on production. The underlying assumption is that preparedness, productivity, and sustainability are compatible if the right technical and economic solutions are applied. This reveals a binary between production as a problem and production as a solution. Some texts assume that increased production will burden the environment, while others see it as a prerequisite for sustainability and supply security. Likewise, Svensk Handel (2024, 1) and Svensk Dagligvaruhandel (2024, 1-2) give sustainability organizational and economic meaning by assuming that preparedness needs to be sustainable for businesses by not creating “unreasonable costs or administrative burdens”.

Naturskyddsföreningen (2024, 2), by contrast, takes a transformative approach to sustainability. They assume that short-term preparedness measures are insufficient if they “lock” the system into an unsustainable model. Sustainability is thus a necessity for preparedness, not a goal to be achieved later. This means food preparedness must be built around circularity and climate adaptation, among other measures. NSF recognizes the farmers’ role in food preparedness (2024, 3), describing them as carriers of food production and nature conservation, while noting that they suffer from low profitability and a lack of funding models. Farmers are constructed as subjects important to the ecosystem and biological diversity. Their role as food producers is equally important, making them flexible and diversified subjects capable of contributing to food preparedness.

### 5.2.6 A summary of underlying assumptions

The purpose of this chapter was to answer my second research question, “What underlying assumptions shape these understandings and make them appear reasonable and legitimate?”. The analysis shows that the five problem representations rest on a few recurring assumptions. Food preparedness is assumed to depend on coordination at the “right level,” with municipalities often seen as too limited and regional structures as more effective. The material also assumes that (1) the food system is fundamentally market-based, (2) security requires resilience

against external threats, and (3) citizens can contribute through knowledge and their own preparedness. Sustainability, then, is assumed to matter either as a condition for long-term resilience or as something that must not threaten production.

These assumptions are important because they make certain solutions possible while closing off others. They show that food preparedness is not only represented in different ways but also built on different ideas about governance, responsibility, and what a future system could look like. The next section, therefore, turns to the effects of these representations and what they make possible or impossible in relation to sustainability and food preparedness.

### 5.3 What effects do these understandings produce, particularly in relation to how food preparedness aligns (or not) with sustainability ideals?

Having examined how food preparedness is represented in the consultation responses and the assumptions that make these problem representations possible, the next step in this thesis is to consider what effects these understandings produce. In this way, the analysis moves from how food preparedness is understood to what those understandings make possible regarding sustainability and food preparedness.

Based on the previous findings in this thesis, the various understandings of sustainability in relation to food preparedness can be summarized into seven different standpoints (see Table 4). These are sustainability as (1) economic/organisational viability, (2) ecological resilience, (3) continued productivity, (4) competitiveness and efficiency, (5) threat to production, (6) prerequisite for preparedness, and (7) regional/geographic robustness.

First, sustainability is understood as organizational or economic viability. This view is prevalent in trade organizations (Svensk Handel and SDVH). For them, food preparedness must be sustainable for businesses, making it a matter of administration or economics rather than ecology. A sustainable business is a business that does not face high or unnecessary costs, administrative burdens, or parallel structures. Businesses are positioned as actors whose preparedness capacity depends on manageable costs. This framing could lead to less burdensome policy designs, while also downplaying broader structural transformations.

Table 4: Effects and (dis)alignment with sustainability ideals (Created by author)

Sustainability as	What is likely to change?	Stays the same?	Who benefits?	Who is harmed?	Responsibility/blame
<b>Organisational/ economic viability</b>	Less burdensome policy design could emerge.	Market/logistics structures	Businesses and sectors with limited margins.	Potential structural transformation.	<b>Responsibility</b> is placed on the state to avoid excessive burden. <b>Blame</b> may fall on overregulation.
<b>Ecological resilience</b>	Environmental goals as more central to preparedness policy.	The need for production.	Ecosystems, climate adaptation actors.	Actors dependent on extractive solutions	<b>Responsibility:</b> the whole food system (and policymakers/producers). <b>Blame:</b> unsustainable production models.
<b>Continued productivity</b>	More support for farmland protection, local production, incentives for more farming.	Productivist logic stay central.	Farmers, rural producers, national supply security.	Environmental transformation as secondary.	<b>Responsibility:</b> producers to keep production going. <b>Blame:</b> weak incentives, land conversion.
<b>Competitiveness and efficiency</b>	More technologically advanced production (technical upgrades, resource efficiency etc.)	Growth and competitiveness stay central.	Agricultural businesses.	Slower/smaller/less capitalized actors.	<b>Responsibility:</b> on producers to adapt and modernize. <b>Blame:</b> inefficient regulation or poor incentives.
<b>Threat to production</b>	Could weaken or delay environmental measures if they are seen as costly or restrictive.	Existing production models.	Large-scale producers.	Environmental goals/long-term ecological goals.	<b>Responsibility/Blame:</b> regulators or policymakers if they impose harmful measures.
<b>Prerequisite for preparedness</b>	Restructured food system.	Food security goal, but by different means.	Resilient ecosystems, future generations.	Actors relying on short-term/extractive solutions.	<b>Responsibility:</b> on the whole system. <b>Blame:</b> unsustainable structures.
<b>Regional/geographic robustness</b>	Could strengthen local logistics, regional adaptation.	National food security as the goal.	Rural regions, regional systems.	Centralized models that disregard local conditions.	<b>Responsibility:</b> national policy to account for the differences. <b>Blame:</b> centralization.

On the same end of the spectrum, sustainability is understood as competitiveness and efficiency. Here, sustainability is framed as something compatible with economic growth, given that production becomes more efficient or climate-smart, and it is treated as an instrument to improve the system. LRF, Lantmännen, and, to some extent, HS emphasize adaptation, technological improvement, and competitiveness without limiting production. This understanding could harm smaller agricultural businesses, with less funding to invest in high-end technology.

In addition, Hagfors municipality, Livsmedelsverket, and HS view sustainability as continued productivity. The focus is not on transforming or restructuring the food system. Instead, the aim is to ensure it remains capable of producing enough food in the future. This could include measures such as strengthening local production or protecting farmland. These perspectives seem to promote a productivist logic, leaving environmental measures secondary.

Lantmännen offers a fourth perspective, framing sustainability as a threat to production if the initiatives reduce productivity or competitiveness. While Lantmännen is the clearest example, this tension also appears in other agriculture-oriented responses such as KCF. In this view, sustainability becomes problematic when it is seen as “imposing costs, restrictions, or bad climate measures” on agriculture. This perspective discursively limits the space for more environmental regulation by linking it to lower productivity and, above all, security risks. Farmers are portrayed as vulnerable actors in need of protection from weak policymaking, shifting responsibility and blame onto policymakers. Although not explicitly mentioned by KCF, the impacts of sustainable measures would probably not be beneficial for increasing meat production.

Moving toward the other end of the spectrum, ecological values and resilience are emphasized. In responses from Malmö City, RISE, CABV, CABG, RVN, and NSF, sustainability is understood as biodiversity, reduced dependence on fossil fuels, soil protection, and long-term ecological viability. This understanding positions farmers, public authorities, and, in some cases, consumers as co-responsible ecological actors. In contrast to Lantmännen, this could support more diversified production and stronger environmental regulation. Rather than benefiting farmers, producers, or food preparedness today, understanding sustainability as ecological resilience could help ensure the future food supply and benefit ecosystems in the long term.

A sixth perspective to include is NSF’s understanding of sustainability as a prerequisite for preparedness. This understanding reframes food preparedness as impossible without ecological change and makes unsustainability itself part of the

problem. Both businesses, institutions, and households are positioned as needing to change their practices. The goal of food security remains, but they believe this can be achieved through different means. Responsibility is placed on the whole system, and unsustainable structures are to blame.

The seventh and final perspective is sustainability as regional/geographic robustness. CABG and RVN add this spatial dimension, highlighting regional inequalities and making regional actors key for resilience. This could benefit peripheral regions and local production systems, placing responsibility on national policy to account for these regional differences.

Taken together, the analysis shows that sustainability is neither a stable nor a clear concept in relation to food preparedness. Rather, it is constructed in multiple and sometimes conflicting ways that produce different effects on how preparedness is understood, who is positioned as responsible, and what kinds of change become imaginable. While some representations reproduce existing productive and market logics, others link food preparedness to ecological transformation and long-term resilience.

The purpose of this chapter was to answer my third research question, “What effects do these understandings produce, particularly in relation to how food preparedness aligns (or not) with sustainability ideals?”. The seven identified standpoints suggest that food preparedness and sustainability are not naturally aligned (nor are they unaligned) but are negotiated through competing understandings of what sustainability should mean in practice. The main effect is therefore not just one or two concrete proposals, but rather a contested field in which food preparedness and sustainability are used to justify different standpoints.

## 6. Discussion

This chapter shifts the focus from individual consultation responses and discusses my findings in relation to existing literature on food preparedness and sustainability. It begins by first zooming out and providing an international context and then zooms in on what my findings entail for Swedish food preparedness strategy.

### 6.1 Main findings

In the introduction to this thesis, the tensions in food preparedness were presented as a trade-off between short-term security and long-term resilience. Milestad et al. (2025) and Bancerz (2018) both discuss these tensions, both within the food system in general and in food preparedness.

This study has found that the main tension within the consultation responses seems to be between representations that seek to make food preparedness compatible with the current food system and those that treat sustainability as requiring more fundamental change. This confirms earlier research on contested sustainability discourse (see Bancerz 2018; Espluga-Trenc et al. 2018; Konefal 2018) and further develops it by showing how sustainability becomes tied to food preparedness and national security.

At its core, food preparedness seems to be simultaneously understood as a governance, market, security, and sustainability problem. Consequently, these understandings produce different assumptions about the changes that could become imaginable. In that sense, the analysis follows Bacchi's claim that policy does not only respond to existing problems but actively constructs them in ways that shape what can be done and who is expected to act (Bacchi 2009; Bancerz 2018). This constitutes the study's key contributions to the literature by showing that food preparedness in Swedish policymaking is not only a matter of supply security, but a contested discursive field in which different political interests compete.

Of course, food preparedness as a concept does not exist only in Sweden. As shown in Chapter 2, there are many similar words used internationally. The most common ones are food security and food resilience, but what they all have in common is the focus on food (Milestad et al. 2025). Then, how do my findings from a Swedish case compare to food system discourses elsewhere? Zooming in on the EU-level, food systems have been described using metaphors such as economy-business, technology-building, war-fight-battle, and life-health-strength (Espluga-Trenc et al.

2018). To some extent, the metaphors at the EU-level remind of the discourses identified in this thesis, on a national Swedish level. The focus on incentives, markets, trade agreements, competitiveness, and production aligns with the economy-business and technology metaphors. Espluga-Trenc et al. (2018) found that sustainability-related metaphors were few and that the dominant ones concerned economic impact. Although this specifically concerns EU policy on food quality, some of the same goals remain. For example, the wish to boost the economy and productivity, create incentives, protect farmland, and ensure competitive neutrality. These similar priorities at the EU and national Swedish levels show that markets and the economy remain important when discussing food systems and presumably help explain why food preparedness prioritizes them as well.

Shifting focus back to the national level, Mistra Food Futures has researched food preparedness in Sweden. Most importantly, they have examined sustainable food preparedness, focusing on how preparedness and sustainability can strengthen each other (Mistra Food Futures n.d.). Their proposals are technical and include a fossil-free agriculture, crop rotations, and creating environmental conditions that benefit pollinators. They argue that it is of utmost importance that investments are directed toward climate-resilient agriculture (Mistra Food Futures n.d.). Some of the findings in this thesis agree with this standpoint, but some actors believe this will lead to inefficient production systems and unnecessary costs. Mistra Food Futures (n.d.) and the findings in this thesis show that sustainability often comes second place when discussing economic measures. While Mistra Food Futures focuses on more technical solutions, my thesis shows that a large challenge here are the strong competing discourses that instead favor short-term, unsustainable solutions.

So (how) can food preparedness and sustainability be synchronized? Drawing on previously identified sustainability discourses within food systems, Konefal (2018) has identified two main discourses that indicate the extent to which sustainability measures result in transformative change. Within the first discourse, sustainability is framed as the improvement and stabilization of the current food system. In the second, sustainability as transformative change demands systemic change from current capitalist agricultural systems (Konefal 2018). From the consultation responses, only one or two actors align with the second discourse (and none of those are government agencies).

Mistra Food Futures (n.d) agrees with the second discourse and promotes looking at food preparedness and sustainability from a systemic perspective to understand how to create coherent policies. For example, it is necessary to look at ecosystems, consumers, the economy, businesses, and so on. Such an interdisciplinary perspective helps policymakers spot synergies and trade-offs (Mistra Food Futures,

n.d.). Many of the consultation responses focus on their own branch, such as trade, meat, environment, and governance, and they rarely focus on aspects that their organisations do not normally work with. For example, the trade organisations did not discuss sustainability. Based on this, and on my findings, I can conclude that if more organizations took a systemic approach to food preparedness, they would probably be able to recognise possible opportunities and challenges, which could benefit more than one perspective.

When it comes to sustainability, there are multiple ways of defining it, just like there are multiple ways of understanding food preparedness. In theory, food preparedness futures could align with sustainability ideals such as those advanced by Mistra Food Futures (n.d.) and Milestad et al. (2025). In practice, most consultation responses view sustainability as an instrument to increase productivity and secure future production – the purpose is not to, for example, improve conditions for pollinators.

The findings, therefore, suggest that future food preparedness policy will continue to be shaped by tensions between efficiency, resilience, and ecological transformation. Furthermore, food preparedness is not neutral. Food preparedness might be the latest buzzword in Swedish policymaking, but the consultation responses show how food preparedness has already spread into the private and civil sector. Everyone has their own definition of it and what they think is the most important to achieve, making food preparedness deeply political. Implications of these tensions for Swedish policy could be that certain aspects might be lost along the way. For example, a focus on security might overlook the sustainability dimension, while a focus on sustainability may face resistance if it challenges market logic. If EU policies prioritize upholding market structures, this should affect the funding that different sectors and initiatives receive. These priorities continue to reinforce the market, all the while sidelining sustainability and closing off alternative solutions.

Overall, the analysis suggests that food preparedness in the Swedish consultation responses is more often used to stabilize and improve the existing food system than to challenge it fundamentally. This indicates that, in practice, sustainability as transformative change is only partially integrated into food preparedness and the communication surrounding it. Although actors both within the research field and in the consultation responses call for bigger ecological change, these perspectives remain limited compared with the dominant emphasis on production and resilience within current structures.

## 6.2 Limitations

Finally, this study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the analysis is based on consultation responses to a single policy report. This means it captures how selected actors represented food preparedness two years ago, rather than how these ideas are implemented. Therefore, the material shows different positions and discursive struggles, but not the full process and its outcomes. Similarly, the focus on consultation responses excludes individual perspectives and smaller actors. This may lead the analysis to reflect the positions of actors who are already well-positioned in policymaking.

Additionally, the study is limited by its qualitative and interpretive design. The analysis aims to identify patterns of meaning and assumptions, but it does not measure how widespread or representative these views are beyond the selected material. Therefore, the findings must be understood as my interpretations rather than objective descriptions of food preparedness policies.

## 7. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to explore how food preparedness is given meaning in Swedish policymaking, with particular attention to its connection to sustainability. This was done by answering the following research questions:

- How is food preparedness understood in Swedish consultation responses to the report *Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid*?
- What underlying assumptions shape these understandings and make them appear reasonable and legitimate?
- What effects do these understandings produce, particularly in relation to how food preparedness aligns (or not) with sustainability ideals?

This study shows five main problem representations: Food preparedness as a governance problem, a market problem, a security problem, a problem of individual responsibility, and a sustainability problem. Together, these representations reveal that food preparedness is not a neutral or technical policy problem but a contested field in which different actors assign different meanings and futures to food preparedness. The study also identifies seven standpoints that show how sustainability is contested and constructed either as something that supports food preparedness through long-term resilience or as something that could conflict with productivity and competitiveness. As such, the study's main contribution is to demonstrate how food preparedness and sustainability are negotiated through competing policy logics, instead of being aligned or natural opposites. This is important because it shows that the debate over food preparedness is not only about crisis management or food security, but also about the kind of food system Sweden should build for the future.

Reflecting on Bacchi's WPR approach that I used, I find that it mostly worked as planned, although I would revise some aspects if I were to conduct the study again. For example, I would choose fewer documents. With 14 responses, the material was at times overwhelming, and a smaller sample of six or seven documents might have made it possible to present the findings in greater depth.

Further, because the focus of my thesis has been on food preparedness and sustainability, there has not been enough time or space to analyze other potentially relevant factors, such as socioeconomic differences between municipalities. A gap I noticed in the responses was the lack of representation of national minorities. Sweden is a multicultural country, and food preparedness is likely to be experienced differently across linguistic, geographic, and socioeconomic contexts. In particular,

the lack of indigenous perspectives was noteworthy, as Sametinget was not listed as a consultation body. However, the county administrative board of Västerbotten did mention reindeer husbandry in their response, but it seems that the Sámi people themselves have not been consulted in this report. Based on this surprising finding, I therefore suggest that future research could build on this by examining how an intersectional or ecofeminist lens shapes understandings of food preparedness in Swedish policymaking, or how the current system affects underrepresented groups.

To close this thesis, I'd like to return to the potato revolution. The events of the potato revolution and the subsequent social unrest put food preparedness on Sweden's political agenda. The struggles of 1917 and those of today in 2026 are quite different, but both do reflect how a crisis can create new priorities within policymaking. Similarly, my study suggests that food preparedness is no technical fix but a deeply political issue. It is an issue that continues to reflect not only concerns about shortages, but also wider struggles over resilience, responsibility, and future generations' access to food.

## AI Disclosure

I have used AI to help translate quotes from Swedish into English in order to save time. This was done using Quillbot and DeepL, and the original quotes can be found in Appendix 1. I used two different tools to compare the results and then modified the quotes to accurately reflect the originals. I did not use AI to translate quotes that were only one sentence. Additionally, I have used the free version of Grammarly, which provides spellcheck and grammatical tools. However, I noticed that Grammarly sometimes got confused when I switched between Swedish and English, as does the spellcheck in Word. This has made it even more important to double-check spelling and grammar myself before accepting any proposed change. Finally, I have not used generative AI in writing this report at all.

# References

- Akbari, M., Foroudi, P., Shahmoradi, M., Padash, H., Parizi, Z.S., Khosravani, A., Ataei, P. & Cuomo, M.T. (2022). The Evolution of Food Security: Where Are We Now, Where Should We Go Next? *Sustainability*, 14 (6), 3634. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14063634>
- Alvstad, R., Jonell, M. & Lindahl, T. (2024). *Synergies and trade-offs between crisis preparedness and environmental sustainability of school meals in Sweden*. (22). Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. <https://mistrafoodfutures.se/app/uploads/2024/06/Rapport-22.pdf>
- Andersson, M., Granvik, M., Holmström, A. & Milestad, R. (2024). *Kommunen – en ledande aktör för framtidens livsmedelsförsörjning? Kommuners arbete för lokala livsmedelssystem och livsmedelsberedskap*. Uppsala universitet. ISBN: 978-91-506-3058-9 [2026-02-27]
- Andersson, M., Granvik, M. & Milestad, R. (2026). Breaking out of the silos: integrated approaches to food systems planning. Insights from Swedish municipalities. *European Planning Studies*, 34 (3), 467–487. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2025.2599867>
- Bacchi, C. (2009). *Analysing Policy: What's the problem represented to be?* 1st. ed. Pearson.
- Bacchi, C. (2012). Why Study Problematizations? Making Politics Visible. *Open Journal of Political Science*, 2 (1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojps.2012.21001>
- Bacchi, C. & Goodwin, S. (2016). *Poststructural Policy Analysis*. Palgrave Macmillan US. [https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-52546-8\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-52546-8_4)
- Bancerz, M. (2018). Understanding the challenge of problem definition in multistakeholder initiatives: Lessons from sustainability policy frames in Canadian non-state food strategies. In: Constance, D.H., Konefal, J. & Hatanaka, M. (eds) *Contested Sustainability Discourses in the Agrifood System*. 1. ed. Routledge. 224–240.
- Boonstra, B. & Rauws, W. (2021). Ontological diversity in urban self-organization: Complexity, critical realism and post-structuralism. *Planning Theory*, 20 (4), 303–324. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095221992392>
- Boscardin, L. (2018). Greenwashing the animal-industrial complex. In: Constance, D.H., Konefal, J. & Hatanaka, M. (eds) *Contested Sustainability Discourses in the Agrifood System*. 1. ed. Routledge. 111–126.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*. 4th ed. Oxford University Press.
- Creswell, J.W. & Creswell, J.D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 5. ed. SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Espluga-Trenc, J., Di Masso, M., Rivera-Ferre, M.G. & Capdevila, A. (2018). Are food quality schemes an alternative to the conventional food system? Reflections on the EU metaphors on agrifood quality regulation. In: Constance, D.H., Konefal, J. & Hatanaka, M. (eds) *Contested Sustainability Discourses in the Agrifood System*. Routledge. 127–145.
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO]. (2008). *An Introduction to the Basic Concepts of Food Security*. <https://www.fao.org/4/al936e/al936e00.pdf> [2026-02-13]
- Funck, E.K. & Karlsson, T.S. (2021). *Handbok för systematiska litteratur- och dokumentstudier inom samhällsvetenskapen*. (158). Förvaltningshögskolan.
- Försvarsmakten (2026). *Jämställdhet och jämlikhet*. <https://www.forsvarsmakten.se/om-forsvarsmakten/myndighetsinformation/varderingar-och-vision/jamstallldhet-och-jamlikhet/> [2026-02-23]
- Hickman, M.E. (2026). Making WPR Visible: A Worked Example of Operationalising “What’s the Problem Represented to be?” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 25, 16094069261436037. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069261436037>

- Hickman, M.E. & Muir, R. (2025). Integrating co-analysis and researcher reflexivity into Bacchi's 'what is the problem represented to be?' framework: A cervical screening case study. *Critical Policy Studies*, 1–17.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2025.2561142>
- Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. (2002). *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849208871>
- Kahiluoto, H. (2020). Food systems for resilient futures. *Food Security*, 12 (4), 853–857.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12571-020-01070-7>
- Konefal, J.T. (2018). Fault lines in agricultural sustainability. In: Constance, D.H., Konefal, J. & Hatanaka, M. (eds) *Contested Sustainability Discourses in the Agrifood System*. Routledge. 279–286.
- Krylova, A. (2024). Foucault, Post-structuralism, and the Fixed “Openness of History”. *Modern Intellectual History*, 21 (3), 705–727.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244324000088>
- Livsmedelsverket (2026a). *Livsmedelsberedskap - vad är det?*  
[https://www.livsmedelsverket.se/beredskap/livsmedelsberedskap--vad-ar-det/\[2026-02-20\]](https://www.livsmedelsverket.se/beredskap/livsmedelsberedskap--vad-ar-det/[2026-02-20])
- Livsmedelsverket (2026b). *Rött kött och chark*.  
[https://www.livsmedelsverket.se/matvanor-halsa--miljo/kostrad/kostrad-vuxna/kott-och-chark/\[2026-05-13\]](https://www.livsmedelsverket.se/matvanor-halsa--miljo/kostrad/kostrad-vuxna/kott-och-chark/[2026-05-13])
- Merriam-Webster (2026). *Peacetime*. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/peacetime> [2026-05-13]
- Milestad, R., Öhlund, E. & Marklund, C. (2025). *Livsmedelsberedskap – vad menar vi?* (FOI-R--5799--SE). Totalförsvarets Forskningsinstitut (FOI).  
<https://foi.se/rapporter/rapportsammanfattning.html?reportNo=FOI-R--5799--SE>
- Mistra Food Futures (n.d.). Q & A on Sustainable Food Security Preparedness. *Mistra Food Futures*. <https://mistrafoodfutures.se/en/q-a-on-sustainable-food-security-preparedness/> [2026-02-17]
- Olmos-Vega, F.M., Stalmeijer, R.E., Varpio, L. & Kahlke, R. (2023). A practical guide to reflexivity in qualitative research: AMEE Guide No. 149. *Medical Teacher*, 45 (3), 241–251. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2022.2057287>
- Regeringskansliet (2024). *Utredning föreslår förslag för att stärka livsmedelsberedskapen*.  
<https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2024/02/utredning-foreslar-forslag-for-att-starka-livsmedelsberedskapen/> [2026-02-17]
- Regeringskansliet (2026). *Försvarsbudget*. <https://www.regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/forsvarsbudget/> [2026-02-20]
- Rönblom, M. & Edwards, R. (2025). A critical explanation of uses of Carol Bacchi's WPR approach. *Critical Policy Studies*, 19 (3), 518–524.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2025.2555388>
- Stockholmskällan (2025). *Potatiskravallerna 1917*.  
<https://stockholmskallan.stockholm.se/teman/stockholmshandelser/potatiskravallerna/> [2026-02-27]
- Sveriges Domstolar (2019). *Swedish/English Glossary*. (Dnr 938-2010) Sveriges Domstolar. [https://www.domstol.se/globalassets/filer/gemensamt-innehall/for-professionella-aktorer/svensk-engelsk\\_ordlista\\_2019.pdf](https://www.domstol.se/globalassets/filer/gemensamt-innehall/for-professionella-aktorer/svensk-engelsk_ordlista_2019.pdf) [2026-03-03]
- Toth, A., Rendall, S. & Reitsma, F. (2016). Resilient food systems: a qualitative tool for measuring food resilience. *Urban Ecosystems*, 19 (1), 19–43.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11252-015-0489-x>
- Tullverket (2024). *Consultation response LI2024/00248 Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid*.  
<https://www.tullverket.se/download/18.586d06b518b6116f985dc6d8/1715673004424/STY%202024-132%20Tullverkets%20remissyttrande%20-%20Livsmedelsberedskap%20för%20en%20ny%20tid.pdf>
- Williams, J. (2005). *Understanding poststructuralism*. 1 edition. Routledge.

- World Food Summit (1996). *Rome Declaration on World Food Security*.  
<https://www.fao.org/4/w3613e/w3613e00.htm> [2026-02-13]
- Zurek, M., Ingram, J., Sanderson Bellamy, A., Goold, C., Lyon, C., Alexander, P., Barnes, A., Bebbler, D.P., Breeze, T.D., Bruce, A., Collins, L.M., Davies, J., Doherty, B., Ensor, J., Franco, S.C., Gatto, A., Hess, T., Lamprinopoulou, C., Liu, L., Merkle, M., Norton, L., Oliver, T., Ollerton, J., Potts, S., Reed, M.S., Sutcliffe, C. & Withers, P.J.A. (2022). Food System Resilience: Concepts, Issues, and Challenges. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 47 (1), 511–534.  
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-112320-050744>

## **Empirical material**

- Hagfors Municipality consultation response Dnr KS/2024:97 (2024-05-13) Remissvar – Betänkande Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid 2024:97.
- Hushållningssällskapet consultation response LI2024/00248 (2024-05-15) Remissyttrande angående betänkande från utredningen om en ny livsmedelsberedskap (SOU 2024:8).
- Kött- och charkuteriföretagen consultation response LI2024/00248 (2024-05-16) Remissyttrande angående betänkandet ”Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid” (SOU 2024:8).
- Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund consultation response LI2024/00248 (2024-05-16) LRFs yttrande över remiss av betänkandet Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid (SOU 2024:8).
- Lantmännen consultation response LI2024/00248 (2024-05-12) Remissyttrande angående betänkandet ”Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid” (SOU 2024:8).
- Livsmedelsverket consultation response Dnr 2024/00987 (2024-04-03) Livsmedelsverkets yttrande över remiss från Landsbygds- och infrastrukturdepartementet angående betänkande Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid, SOU 2024:8.
- Länsstyrelsen Gotland [CAB Gotland] consultation response N2024/00248 (2024-05-15) Länsstyrelsen Gotlands remissvar över betänkandet Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid SOU 2024:8.
- Länsstyrelsen Västerbotten [CAB Västerbotten] consultation response LI2024/00248 (2024-05-16) Yttrande över SOU 2024:8 Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid.
- Malmö stad consultation response STK-2024-412 (2024-06-05) Remiss Landsbygds- och infrastrukturdepartementet-Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid (SOU 2024:8)
- Naturskyddsföreningen consultation response LI2024/00248 (2024-05-15) Yttrande över Betänkandet SOU 2024:8 Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid.
- Region Västernorrland consultation response LI2024/00248 (2024-05-22) Yttrande över remiss, Betänkande SOU 2024:8 Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid.
- RISE consultation response LI2024/00248 (n.d.) LI2024/00248 RISE yttrande över remiss från Landsbygds och infrastrukturdepartementet angående betänkande Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid, SOU 2024:8.
- SOU 2024:8. Betänkande av Utredningen om en ny livsmedelsberedskap. *Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid.*
- Svensk Dagligvaruhandel consultation response LI2024/00248 (2024-05-13) Remiss avseende Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid.
- Svensk Handel consultation response LI2024/00248 (2024-05-14) Remiss avseende Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid, SOU 2024:8.

# Popular science summary

The COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, among other important world events, have made Sweden pay closer attention to national defense. Food preparedness has previously not been a priority, which is why government agencies and civil society have begun to demand a better food-preparedness system. However, there are many different perspectives on what food preparedness is and should be, and for how long we should be prepared and in what way.

This thesis has found five different understandings of food preparedness. In summary, food preparedness is understood as a governance, market, security, individual responsibility, and sustainability problem. These often overlap, and they lead to different ideas about what the main problem is and how it should be solved. This study also shows that sustainability is understood through seven (sometimes conflicting) ways. For some actors, sustainability is the key to a long-term functioning food system. For others, it is seen as something that may conflict with productivity and economic growth. Although previous research and some consultation responses call for ecological change, these perspectives are limited. Instead, the responses emphasise increased production and improving the current food system. These findings are important because they show that the debate over food preparedness is not only about crisis management or food security, but also about the kind of food system Sweden should build for the future.

Using Bacchi's "What's the problem represented to be?" (WPR) framework, my thesis examines how food preparedness is understood in 14 Swedish consultation responses to the government report "Livsmedelsberedskap för en ny tid". Because there are no clear national guidelines for how food preparedness should be handled, these responses offer an important insight into how different actors interpret the issue and what they believe should be done. The study asks how food preparedness is understood, what makes those understandings possible, and what effects they have on sustainability.

Finally, one of my most important findings and contributions to literature with this thesis is showing that organisations more often want to stabilize and improve the existing food system, rather than to change its structure.

# Acknowledgements

First, I want to give a big thank you to my supervisor, Sofie Joosse, for always being an email away. Her support has been invaluable during this process, and although the list of suggested revisions at times has been quite long, I feel so much appreciation for the time and effort that she has spent working through my thesis. So thank you, Sofie, for your continuous support and encouragement.

And a huge thank you to my friends and family for listening to me talk about this thesis, and for supporting me this spring. Last but certainly not least, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my husband, Alex. This thesis has only been possible thanks to his endless love and support, and I appreciate every late-night walk and car drive discussing thesis topics or theoretical frameworks, particularly since he has no idea what any of them mean.

# Appendix 1

*This appendix contains original quotes in alphabetical order, sorted by the organisation's name.*

Organisation (Year, page)	Original Swedish quote
Hushållningssällskapet (2024, 3)	Därför föreslår vi att man överväger krav på en viss uthållighet i hemberedskapen vad gäller livsmedel, alternativt ger ut mycket tydliga rekommendationer till hushållen. (...) Så föreslår vi även att man uppdrar åt aktör att genomföra regionala och lokala utbildningsinsatser i syfte att öka kunskapen om effektiv hushållsnära beredskap.
Hushållningssällskapet (2024, 3)	Att värna den disponibla odlings- och betesmarken är viktigt för landets framtida förmåga att producera mat till såväl befolkningen som till andra länders behov.
Hushållningssällskapet (2024, 5)	Det är särskilt viktigt att så snart som möjligt minska beroendet gentemot tredje land och särskilt mot länder som över tid kan antagas uppträda antagonistiskt.
Hushållningssällskapet (2024, 5)	För att upprätthålla landets produktivitet krävs att man kan tillgodose behovet av livsmedel, det görs säkrast genom en välutvecklad och lönsam primärproduktion och livsmedelsindustri som kan bedrivas effektivt och konkurrenskraftigt. Det behövs tydliga åtgärder för en förstärkt inhemsk produktion, dels behöver regelverk förenklas, dels behöver vi säkerställa tillgången till avgörande insatsvaror genom inhemsk produktion eller strategisk lagring.
Hushållningssällskapet (2024, 8)	Vi föreslår att man förtydligar näringslivets ansvar för försörjningsberedskap då otydligheten leder till osäkerhet om vad som förväntas och det i sin tur leder till avvaktande i beslut och det ger en lägre beredskap.
Kött- och charkuteriföretagen (2024, 2)	Ju mer livsmedel vi producerar, desto bättre förberedda är vi. (...) Det behövs bättre förutsättningar på alla områden som påverkar den inhemska livsmedelsproduktionen exempelvis regelkrångel, kompetensförsörjning, tillgång till kapital, forskning och innovation.
Kött- och charkuteriföretagen (2024, 3)	Sett till den dagliga energitillförseln spelar kött och köttvaror en avgörande roll för livsmedelsberedskapen. Jämfört med flera andra varukategorier i toppen av listan över daglig

energitillförsel, förser kött och köttvaror medborgarna, utöver energi, med väsentligt mer viktiga näringsämnen, såsom exempelvis vitaminer och mineraler. I kött är också näringsämnena lättillgängliga för våra kroppar. Som det engelska uttrycket livestock antyder är djuren i livsmedelsproduktionen ett levande lager.

Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund (2024, 4)	Med tanke på det omvärldsläge vi befinner oss i är det önskvärt att minska sårbarheterna i närtid. Därför behöver beredskapsåtgärder utgå från den struktur livsmedelskedjan har idag och minska sårbarheter inom denna.
Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund (2024, 4)	Vi ser ett behov av ett tydligt ledarskap inom livsmedelsberedskapen.
Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund (2024, 8)	Ett fossiloberoende jordbruk skulle vara mindre beroende av drivmedel från tredje länder förknippade med geopolitiska risker.
Lantmännen (2024, 3)	Vid kris, krig eller störningar av handelsflödet skulle livsmedelsförsörjningen snabbt utsättas för stora påfrestningar och det skulle sannolikt inte gå att försörja hela befolkningen med den näringsriktiga mat den behöver för att fungera, arbeta och upprätthålla försvarsviljan samt för att undvika social oro och upplöpp.
Lantmännen (2024, 4)	(...) det finns inte några garantier för att andra länder kommer att försörja Sverige med livsmedel om säkerhetsläget försämras eller om en regional kris uppstår. Snarare kan det vara så att ett rikt och välutvecklat land som Sverige förväntas förse andra länder, t ex de baltiska, med förnödenheter och livsmedel vid kris eller krig i vårt närområde.
Lantmännen (2024, 5)	Det skulle vara förödande för lantbruket, livsmedelsberedskapen och klimatet om klimatåtgärder som inte ökar produktiviteten och konkurrenskraften tvingas på lantbruket. (...) klimatåtgärder för lantbruket måste vara väl genomtänkta, baserade på praktiska och teoretiska kunskaper, vara konkurrenshöjande samt utvecklas tillsammans med näringen.
Lantmännen (2024, 8).	Några exempel på hur exporten kan gynnas är att placera betydligt fler lantbruks-/livsmedelsråd i strategiskt viktiga länder, arrangera fler delegationsresor med representation på högsta nivå samt tillse att betydligt fler exportprotokoll med viktiga länder upprättas.
Länsstyrelsen Gotland [CABG] (2024, 10)	Representation från Gotland, med sin erfarenhet av ett län med särskilda utmaningar och strategisk plats med högt riksintresse

	ur försvars- och beredskapssynpunkt, behöver ges utrymme i råd och beslutande forum.
Malmö City (2024, 5)	Det är samtidigt angeläget att planeringen inte endast görs med utgångspunkt i varje enskild kommun då det är viktigt att uppnå ett effektivt nationellt system som inte fastnar vid kommungränser.
Malmö City (2024, 8)	Malmö stad anser att det är viktigt att livsmedelsberedskapsmålen och miljömålen går hand i hand för att undvika målkonflikter. En rik biologisk mångfald i odlingslandskapet kan öka resiliensen och bidra med viktiga ekosystemtjänster, vilket kan vara väsentligt till exempel i en situation då man inte har tillgång till kemiska bekämpningsmedel.
Naturskyddsföreningen (2024, 6)	Det självklara fokuset borde vara på produktion och lagring av både proteingrödor och kalorigrödor.
Region Västernorrland (2024, 2)	Region Västernorrland ser behov av tydligare incitament för att stimulera företag att delta i beredskapsarbete.
Region Västernorrland (2024, 6)	Om inte näringslivet rustas i ett förebyggande perspektiv är det svårt att lyckas under en kris.
RISE (2024, 3)	Vi ser även ett stort behov av att underlätta för kommunernas uppdrag genom samordning på en mer operativ nivå än den som föreslås. Det kommer att behövas forum för erfarenhetsutbyte, kunskapsutveckling och samverkan mellan kommuner sinsemellan, liksom med övriga ansvariga organisationer.
SOU 2024:8 (2024, 13-14)	Vi föreslår att med livsmedelsberedskap avses verksamhet som syftar till att upprätthålla den livsmedelsförsörjning som är nödvändig för befolkningens överlevnad, för att säkerställa de viktigaste samhällsfunktionerna eller för att bidra till det militära försvarets förmåga. Verksamheten bedrivs av ett stort antal aktörer, bl.a.a myndigheter, kommuner och regioner samt Enskilda, företag och civilsamhället. Vi föreslår att målet för livsmedelsberedskapen ska vara tt säkerställa att hela befolkningen över tid har tillgång till nödvändiga livsmedel vid en allvarlig störning eller en överhängande risk för en allvarlig störning I livsmedelsförsörjningen.
Svensk Dagligvaruhandel (2024, 2)	Svensk Dagligvaruhandel instämmer med betänkandets intention om kommunens ansvar i frågan men anser att det finns i betänkandet utrymme för feltolkningar och överimplementering i kommunerna men också en risk för brist på samordning och 290 olika lösningar.

Svensk Dagligvaruhandel (2024, 4)	(...) så vet vi av erfarenhet att det räcker med en liten del av befolkningen som inte är solidariska och tex påbörjar en hamstring för att det ska riskera stjälpå hela hemberedskapssyftet.
Svensk Dagligvaruhandel (2024, 5)	Merparten av Svensk Dagligvaruhandels företag har alla ett stort intresse och vilja att delta och kommer fortsätta göra så men ska ansvaret formaliseras måste detta ske genom avtal eller utpekande.

---

## Publishing and archiving

Approved students' theses at SLU can be published online. As a student you own the copyright to your work and in such cases, you need to approve the publication. In connection with your approval of publication, SLU will process your personal data (name) to make the work searchable on the internet. You can revoke your consent at any time by contacting the library.

Even if you choose not to publish the work or if you revoke your approval, the thesis will be archived digitally according to archive legislation.

You will find links to SLU's publication agreement and SLU's processing of personal data and your rights on this page:

- <https://libanswers.slu.se/en/faq/228318>

YES, I, Hanna Koivukangas, have read and agree to the agreement for publication and the personal data processing that takes place in connection with this