Dread Expectations?
Prepping, Culture, and Fear in Late Modernity
By Elias Mellander

The interest in prepping – i.e., the practice of preparing oneself and one's household for future crises – has been on the rise in Sweden since the 2010s, made visible through numerous blogs, handbooks, podcasts, social media forums, and specialty stores. This interest reached new heights during the Covid-19 pandemic and once again peaked during the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine,[1] as people looked for strategies to handle a sense of growing uncertainty. With its cultural roots in North America, prepping culture has spread globally (Barker 2020:486) and today exists as an intersection of subcultural community, hobby activity, and civil defence – often focusing on the development of skills and material preparations for situations where the proverbial "shit hits the fan".

The emergence of the Swedish prepping culture coincided with a period when civil and military preparedness has been the object of scrutiny and debate. From a global perspective, the spread of prepping is closely connected to the proliferation of nebulous existential threats to individuals and society in late modernity, such as terrorism, climate change, or economic instability. In turn, prepping has often been explained as a strategy for maintaining control and staving off anxiety and fears in an increasingly uncertain world (Bounds 2021:31; Fetterman et al. 2019:508; Sims & Grigsby 2019:115; Smith & Jenkins 2021:2). With some frequency medialized depictions of prepping have framed it as a deviant, paranoid, or even pathological disposition, where distrust of others and overreliance on material possessions become symbols of a delusional aspiration to master the uncontrollable (Barker 2020; cf. Foster 2014).

With an understanding of feelings and emotions as historically and socially situated forms of embodied experience, the aim of this article is to explore how cultural fears and anxieties in late modernity are negotiated within Swedish prepping.[2] Of particular interest here is the processes whereby collective fears are articulated and how these in turn relate to prevailing societal moods and imaginaries, as well as to governmental discourse and national policy. This posits fear as an analytical tool to map how understandings of risk, danger, virtue and moral action intermingle in contemporary culture.

The Study
The term prepping encompasses numerous strategies for bolstering self-sufficiency and dealing with short- or long-term disruptions in consumer markets and societal infrastructures (Barker 2020; Garrett 2020a; Kabel & Chmidling 2014; Mills 2019). In practice, it manifests as a cultural repertoire of materialities (water filters, canned foods, breathing masks, etc.), skills (first aid, growing vegetables, making fire, etc.), personal capacities (in terms of physical, mental, and cognitive resilience), and social networks – ranging from getting to know one's neighbours, to establishing strategic prepper communities (Mellander 2021:2; Sims & Grigsby 2019:96). Furthermore, what separates prepping from e.g. bushcrafts, wilderness survival, or farm- or homesteading in a more general sense, is its anticipatory disposition and orientation towards the future as a field of risk (cf. Barker 2020:487). A motto used among English-speaking as well as Swedish preppers is that one needs to think of potential crises or disasters as a question of *when*, not *if*.

This article is primarily based on in-depth interviews, conducted between 2020 and 2022, with individuals[3] who already were actively engaged in prepping at the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. The majority of the interviewees were contacted through open calls in Swedish social media groups for prepping and crisis preparedness. The call asked for participants who possessed "long-term crisis preparations", i.e. planning beyond the one-week preparations recommended by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency. It also made clear that the participants did not need to identify as preppers, as early fieldwork as well as the research on European preppers by Campbell, Sinclair & Browne (2019) suggested that this is a contended identity category.

As it turned out, some of the participants happily identified as preppers, while others expressly resisted the epithet, due to the perceived association with "gun-crazy Americans" and doomsday romanticism (cf. Campbell, Sinclair & Browne 2019:817). Yet, others had a more pragmatic view of the prepper label, simply stating that they prepped and that that technically made them preppers. Regardless, all took part in prepper discourse through social media, and they were united through prepping practices, having stocked supplies to last from a couple of weeks up to several months. Among the twenty participants were twelve men and eight women, in the age range from the early thirties to the late sixties, with a majority being born in the 1970s and 1980s. Geographically, they were located throughout Sweden and evenly distributed between cities, smaller municipalities, and rural areas. In terms of socioeconomic status, the participants can

with a few exceptions be situated within the middle class, holding professional titles such as teacher, engineer, or programmer.

The study encompasses two primary temporal dimensions: the future imaginaries of situations the participants feel they need to prepare for, and the actual preparations that they engage with in the here and now. Interviews are suitable for examining the former, as they can capture intangible aspects of everyday life, such as past experiences and expectations of the future (Davies 1999:95; Gray 2003:71). Because of the limits placed on the fieldwork due to the ongoing pandemic, the latter had to be explored through the participant documentation, which resulted in a variety of materials, ranging from guided video walkthroughs and photographs, to extensive Excel sheets listing supplies – sometimes down to the last calorie. Besides providing insight into the quantities and qualities of the preparations, the documentation also served as a reflexive instance where the ideals, emotions, practices, and materials of prepping could be discussed in concert (Heidenstrøm 2020:386; cf. Czarniawska 2007; Fletcher & Klepp 2017). The interviews generally followed a thematic structure, inquiring into the participants' personal biography, household economy, entry into and views on prepper culture, actual crisis preparedness, media usage, interpersonal and societal trust, as well as views on the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic[4] and of the future in general.

The futurity of prepping practices means that that-which-may-be extends into the present life world, being experienced through the intermingling of materialities, affects, and imagination (cf. Beckert 2016:51; Merleau-Ponty 2002:159). In

moving forward through the socio-material landscape of everyday life, objects in the surroundings draw attention and intention, serving as guideposts that help in establishing a sense of one's place in the world – of having a sense of direction and being oriented. Whether they serve as goals to aspire to or as taboos to be avoided, these objects, which may take the form of material things as well as more intangible entities such as dreams or emotions, give the movement meaning (Ahmed 2006:27; Frykman & Gilje 2003:42; cf. Frykman 2012:20). As these orientations are learned and shared, they become cemented as lines in the cultural landscape, manifesting as collective norms and expectations.

Orientations can be traced in the expression and description of feelings, as experienced enthusiasm or antipathy shape patterns of proximity and distance (Flatley 2008:25f; Svensson 2011). Here, feelings as a concept encompass the emotional as well as the sensory; responses to external stimuli as well as tactile examination of one's surroundings (Edwards 2010:24; Frykman & Löfgren 2004:9). Since the aim here is not to determine their nature, but to examine how they set things in motion (Ahmed 2004:4; Svensson 2011:68), the use of feelings provides circumnavigation of the theoretical divide between affects and emotions, where the former typically is defined as pre-discursive and the latter as imbued with cultural meaning (cf. Frykman & Povrzanović Frykman 2016:13f). As orientations are understood to be shared and collective, so are feelings – never existing in isolation from previous experience, nor the surrounding life world. In turn, the expression of feelings is a social act, performed within a cultural logic

that affords it meaning and that influences how bodily experiences manifest (Stattin 2006:9f; cf. Anderson 2014; Hörnfeldt 2018:155).

Of particular interest here is fear along with its affinitive emotions, such as apprehension or anxiety. These feelings demarcate danger and therefore push towards action in order to preserve that which is under threat (Stattin 2006:267). Typically, fear is characterized as being directed towards an object, and the fear intensifies as it approaches or is approached (Ahmed 2004:63ff; Gilje 2016:32f; Stattin 2006:93). The circumstances of any such approach shape the embodied experience, turning fear into a situational and shifting category. In turn, this gives pedagogic as well as moral dimensions to fear, as fearful objects are socially marked, creating collective orientations around them (Hörnfeldt 2018:153; 157; cf. Stattin 2006:22f). This means that one can hold certain objects as *fearful* while not necessarily feeling *afraid*. In contrast, anxiety lacks a definite object and manifests as a mood (Gilje 2016:34) or as a reflective process, producing as a state of unease experienced in the body and mind as one is mulling over dangers that may or may not materialize (Paulsen 2020:55f).

The Dread of Late Modernity

Numerous scholars have described a fearful mood or mode as defining culture in late modernity – particularly in the post-9/11 era – which is expressed in everything from policy to popular culture (see e.g. Bauman 2006; Beck 2012; Brown 2010; Ferguson 2021; Furedi 2006; Määttä 2015). This atmosphere of risk and insecurity is regularly employed as an explanation for

the concurrent spread of prepping culture. This may seem paradoxical since the people of late modernity are better informed than ever about the dangers they face and how to address them (Paulsen 2020:277). But, by knowing, one learns of all the unknowns that still lie out of reach (Garrett 2020a:88; cf. Bauman 2006:130). In turn, the monetary, as well as attention-based economies of media infrastructures, help in proliferating awareness of known as well as unknown dangers at a historically unmatched pace (cf. Bounds 2021:25; Mills 2018:3; Stattin 2006:130). This turns the future in its entirety into an object for calculation and imaginaries, making it a vast canvas on which to project anxious "what-ifs" (Paulsen 2020:93f; cf. Beckert 2016; Brissman 2021).

Accordingly, rather than being fixated on any one specific object of fear, both Mills (2018:7) and Garrett (2020b:4) argue that prepping culture is driven by an "objectless anxiety", where the multiplicity of threats motivate the desire to prepare (see also Campbell Sinclair & Browne 2019:801). Garrett (2020a) articulates this as a sense of dread – a creeping, anticipatory feeling, differing from anxiety in that it is oriented towards the future rather than the here-and-now, and being distinct from fear in that it lacks a specific object. In the words of Kierkegaard, dread is a "sweet feeling of apprehension" (Kierkegaard 1968:38, quoted in Garrett 2020b:5), stemming from knowing the cost of the choices we face in life, as well as our freedom to make those choices. It is the feeling one gets from standing at a precipice, peering over the edge and being filled with repulsion at the prospect of falling, and at the same time knowing that

jumping off is a constant possibility, only guarded by choice.

The kind of dread Garrett (2020a:167) describes originates from the proliferation of anthropogenic, existential threats, starting with the detonation of the first atom bombs during the Second World War and escalating further with the nuclear arms race of the Cold War (cf. Hörnfeldt 2018:157f). By unlocking the power of the atom, humanity reached for the universe's primordial powers, along with the capacity to destroy itself in totality (Brissman 2021:179). While there are many possible existentially challenging disasters in which we collectively or individually have little say – a pertinent example being an asteroid impact like the one that likely led to the Cretaceous–Paleogene extinction event – the nuclear threat offers a special kind of dread, much like peering over the edge. Someone has a say in whether or not the proverbial button gets pushed; whether or not the choice is made. It is seemingly within our control as a collective, but decidedly out of reach for all but a few human individuals. With the end of the Cold War and the "end of history" (Fukuyama 1992), the threat of nuclear obliteration receded from its centre-stage position among anthropogenic threats. Although it is fair to say it has made something of a comeback to the collective consciousness due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, it has to some extent been supplanted by the climatological and environmental crisis (Garrett 2020b:3; Hörnfeldt 2018:165). Along with threats such as the spread of multi-resistant bacteria or zoonotic diseases like the Covid-19 pandemic, these threats transcend the nature/culture divide, making the very infrastructure of progress

and civilization the carrier of our potential undoing (Brissman 2021:202; cf. Anderson 2010:779).

Once again, these threats are actionable in theory, but close to impossible to address on an individual level, shaping a societal mood in the line of what Bauman (2006) has dubbed "liquid fear". This articulates the feeling of being beset by threats that "flow, seep, leak, ooze" (p. 105) and are at the same time everywhere and nowhere in particular, like terrorism, economic collapse or environmental disaster. These threats force us to face the limits of knowledge and of our capacity to fend off danger. According to Garrett (2020a:10), these worries are further compounded by a diminishing belief in the ability of the current political discourse to provide meaningful solutions, making individual preparation a sensible reaction.

Beginnings

The reasons that led the participants to invest (cf. Ahmed 2006:17ff) time, money, and themselves in preparations are numerous, but typically anchored in personal experience first and foremost. Stories of "the road to prepping" tend to fall into one of two categories, where the first frames the term prepping as something the participants have attached to a disposition that was already there. Often this is articulated as a form of heritage, handed down in a more or less conscious manner. A parent with experience from a medical profession or the military may have inspired certain forms of risk awareness, or the drive towards preparedness emerges from growing up in the countryside, where the occasional blackout was par for the course and a certain level of self-reliance a necessity.

In the other category are those who link their decision to prepare to a more clearly defined event – typically a situation where they experienced some form of vulnerability on a societal level. Pontus, who works in IT, links his professional experience with the decision to prep, as he knows "exactly how fragile all that crap that we develop is" and how that fragility is transferred to society "because infrastructure is software today, so if we shut it down, it's over. Then the entire logistics chain will stop, the supply of electricity and water and food and entirely everything." Jakob on the other hand draws on his experience from working in a non-profit organization in 2015, as large groups of Syrian refugees reached Sweden. The muddled response from Swedish authorities frustrated him, as much responsibility was left to volunteers in an initial phase. It also left him with the question of how equipped Swedish society was to handle a more immediate crisis, stating that "if the authorities haven't planned for it, things can become very jumbled in the beginning, and then the individual can get stuck in the middle". In both examples, it is not primarily an instance of personal vulnerability or fear that has spurred preparations, but rather precarity experienced in a more general sense (Campbell, Sinclair & Browne 2019:804f; Mills 2019:2).

The participants view their prepping as a strategic response to external risks, although some frame it as in part motivated by more emotional needs. Freja describes it as to some extent being "therapeutic" and something that makes her "feel good". She contemplates whether it would be more rational for her to "fight harder against climate change or antibiotic-resistant bacteria, two things that are likely to cause a lot

of suffering and death", instead of buying "a water filter with a lifetime warranty". She continues:

So why do I do that… the answer is probably that it feels great to have one… it's nice to have a hobby and do something that feels positive for yourself and for others. And it lowers anxiety. It creates a sense of control in a pretty uncertain world. And it is probably that, the feeling that you can do something concrete. Because the other things are so damn big. Climate change and antibiotic resistance – they're huge. But these little things I can control. I can make sure that I and those close to me can get food and water and salt. And that… that is wonderful.

Facing the arbitrary and uncertain aspects of the world can be an invitation to feelings of anxiety or disorientation (cf. Svensson 2011:72). However, unlike the incalculable risks surrounding global, societal threats, prepping practices are here and now, surveyable and navigable, creating a sense of direction beginning literally in the palm of Freja's hand (cf. Ahmed 2006:13). She acknowledges that her preparations might prove not to be the right ones if – or *when* – disaster strikes, but that by "having these things, [she gets] the sense that there is something [she] can control and that is very comforting". This aspirational disposition is here interpreted in terms of *directedness* in a phenomenological sense. Rather than manifesting as any definite sense of control, this establishes what objects to move towards or away from, while in the process attaining agency (Flatley 2008:25f; Svensson 2011:80) and illustrating a tacit assumption attached to prepping practices; doing *something* is always preferable to doing *nothing* (cf. Kabel & Chmidling 2014:259; Garrett 2020a:15).

When it comes to prepping, the objects that draw attention are often material ones – water filters, canned foods, first aid kits, fire extinguishers, gas masks, space blankets. These things share an antithetical relationship with yet-to-be-realized threats like dehydrating, starving, bleeding, burning, suffocating, freezing. As such, they both manifest and make these dangers manageable, if not outright controllable (Anderson 2010:792f; cf. Aldousari 2014). The things won't prevent bad things from happening, but when disaster strikes, the preparations are expected to function as an open-ended and flexible material repertoire that allows the body to extend into action (Barker 2020:488; cf. Ahmed 2006:134).

While preparations require some extent of premeditation and contemplation of "what ifs" (cf. Anderson 2010:783; Mitchell 2002:214), numerous participants question the efficacy of planning for specific scenarios. "Perhaps you prepare for the zombie apocalypse, but forget to go to the doctor for a medical check-up," Jakob jokes. A better way to prep, he argues, is to start with the basics one needs to survive – shelter, heat, light, water, food – and prepare different ways to keep these needs fulfilled, no matter what happens. Seemingly, this also removes any defined objects of fear from the equation.

In the same vein, outright apocalyptic visions play a marginal role in the participants' imaginaries, in contrast to how preppers often have been characterized in media representations (cf. Barker 2020:492; Rahm 2013:75; Kabel & Chmidling 2014:258; Kelly 2016). Talk about "the collapse" is not absent from prepper forums or from the participants' stories, but it seems to serve as a self-referential, ironic, and

playful rhetoric for highlighting or exploring the extremes of prepping – much like Jakob's reference to the zombie apocalypse above (cf. Campbell, Sinclair & Browne 2019:806; Huddleston 2017:242; Mitchell 2002:214f). There is however no doubt that the participants tend towards a pessimistic, glass-half-full-about-to-be-empty disposition. To some extent, this pessimism is tempered by what Mitchell (2002:22f) calls a "delicate optimism", expressed through the conviction that life and some form of normalcy can be maintained if one is sufficiently prepared (cf. Garrett 2020a:170; Mellander 2021:7). When looking out into the world and towards the future, however, the only certainty is uncertainty.

Complexities

As Mills (2018:10) points out, framing prepping as a response to any singular fear would lead to oversimplification, failing to capture the multi-dimensional understanding of risk permeating prepper culture. When shifting the analytical gaze from concrete threats articulated among the participants, to the discourse of danger on an aggregate level, certain outlines emerge around what appear to be shared, fearful objects. For reasons which will be discussed below, the term fear is used sparingly among the participants, but they do nonetheless draw attention to these objects by recurringly marking them out in our conversations, either as direct threats or more indirectly, through similar patterns of avoidance (cf. Ahmed 2006:27). Chief among these is complexity on a societal and systematic level.

In a general sense, complexity denotes circumstances that are not easily mapped out, as things relate to each other outside of linear temporality or three-dimensional space (Mol & Law 2002). More than merely being complicated, complex systems are defined by emergent properties and they can't be surveyed or fully understood simply by being dismantled into their component parts (Dahlberg 2015:546). With the globalization of economics, logistics, and digital infrastructure, everyday life is in a palpable way becoming increasingly entangled in complex relations, reaching out far beyond the individual's experiential horizon (cf. Hörnfeldt 2018:155). The interdependencies of these systems allow for local disasters to have far-reaching consequences, as ripple effects cascade through them in unpredictable and non-linear ways (Anderson 2010:781; Garrett 2020b:5). When discussing the motivation for preparing, Georg dwells on our dependency on electricity in particular:

Georg: […] then there's a solar storm every 500 years or something like that, that messes things up and we don't know what the consequences will be when one of those strikes again […] Then perhaps, there will be a long-term catastrophe. Because when the sun causes problems, there's nothing we can do. We have no control over that kind of power.

Elias: No, and that would affect electronics and things like that?

Georg: Yes, electronics and the electrical system as well… the supply of electricity is what I see as the largest problem. […] Fifteen to twenty terrorists that strike at four or five places, that would cause enormous damage and take months to repair… and we know that there are evil people in the world, with bad intentions. Perhaps not directed at us, right here right now, but they exist and you never know what will happen. So, I think that is one of our… we are so incredibly reliant upon electricity. Without it… it's over. And relatively quickly.

Georg speaks of the concrete threats posed by the electromagnetism of solar

storms and by "evil people", but they are not primarily articulated as dangers to his personal health. What worries him – the object that holds his attention – is how dependence on electricity produces vulnerability. Prepping is needed in order to provide a "shadow infrastructure" (Barker 2020:489) when the interconnectedness of late modernity can no longer be maintained. Exploring, discussing, and mapping out these complex dependencies is a common form of sensemaking among preppers – a process that Campbell, Sinclair, and Browne (2019) have dubbed "unblackboxing". Discussions along these lines are common in online prepper forums, where the unravelling of interdependencies appears as a form of collective, analytical game along the lines of if-then-else, which can go something like this: Someone asks how people will pay for food in the event of a long-term blackout when credit cards won't work; they receive the answer that any good prepper has cash at home for that kind of situation; a third person retorts that the stores won't even take cash if the checkout system is down; discussant number four reasons that the freezers in stores won't stay cold for long and that the store owners probably will trade food for cash anyway, rather than letting it spoil. In parallel, someone pitches in that you're better off in the countryside in any case, especially on a farm where you can keep animals for eggs, meat, and dairy; this is in turn is answered with a snarky "well I hope you know how to milk a cow by hand" from someone pointing out that the way that most animals are kept is highly dependent on electricity and societal infrastructure. The Covid-19 pandemic provided ample opportunity to turn this form of critical gaze

away from the speculative future and onto the real now, as the movement of global supply chains ground to a halt. The vulnerabilities of just-in-time deliveries that preppers had warned against became palpable as people stockpiled goods faster than the stores could replenish them, leaving shelves empty (see Roos, Floden & Woxenius 2020). Since the participants were already prepared, they were not directly affected by this, and most were more concerned about the lack of societal preparedness, in terms of e.g. medical supplies. All condemn the political decision to dismantle Sweden's emergency stockpiles, in favour of just-in-time management (Mellander 2021). Additionally, the participants expressed limited worry about becoming sick themselves, once again focusing more on the systematic ripple effects that the pandemic might send through the economy due to shutdowns and disruptions to global logistics. As Peter points out, the pandemic served to make visible many of the risks he and other preppers had warned about:

Peter: We have just-in-time deliveries for everything and we need chemicals to clean our water and they're perhaps not produced in Sweden. So of course, a blockade between two countries or something like that may affect us – that's a given. Those are the kinds of things I try to identify or scrutinize and actually understand […] to me, prepping is a question of not relying upon the just-in-time society. To question it and see its faults is better for us in the long run. We had the toilet paper crisis last year – which wasn't a real crisis – but it demonstrated how vulnerable we are when communications or deliveries are cut off, even only for a day, and then the stores are empty. And I'm not really comfortable with that [laugh], so that's what I think.

In addition to providing the participants with grounds to express some variation of

"we told you so!", the pandemic became a part of an experiential repertoire, serving as proof of the need to prepare. This positions the pandemic in relation to other events that have left them with a sense of societal vulnerability, like the storm Gudrun of 2005 (which left hundreds of thousands of Swedish homes without electricity, from a couple of days up to several weeks) or the financial crisis of 2008. Situations like these serve as narrative "hooks" on which the logic of prepping is suspended (cf. Campbell, Sinclair & Browne 2019:805). Simultaneously, the recounting of these experiences comes with a clear moral about the risks of contemporary life. Thus, through the process of "unblackboxing", prepping becomes a kind of critique, questioning imaginaries of sustainable and perpetual growth as well as the stability of late modern societies (cf. Mitchell 2002:214; Rahm 2013:76).

Examining system complexities as a fearful object once again frames prepping as a way to achieve a sense of direction, as self-sufficiency is given primacy in relation to reliance on external forces (Sims & Grigsby 2019:9). Preparation is a necessity because control over the means for one's survival is not a given. Often they are quite literally out of reach due to their distribution on a societal if not global level. Naturally, this may spark worry in the most immediate sense, due to the risk of not being able to obtain the bare necessities of survival, but it does also have the potential to conjure up a sense of dread stemming from feelings of insignificance in relation to the inscrutable and incalculable networks one is dependent upon (cf. Garrett 2020a:154). The infrastructure of contemporary society also turns things that

would otherwise not be existential threats in and of themselves into tangible risks (cf. Dahlberg 2015:554; Garrett 2020a:42). A solar storm would have limited impact in a pre-modern society, but its electromagnetic pulse could potentially wreak havoc on the electricity grid and everything connected to it. Similarly, a zoonotic virus can quickly travel to all corners of the earth along the flight paths of travel and trade. Much like the anthropogenic dread discussed earlier, there is a certain trepidation arising from the sense that the very systems that promised to make life safer and more comfortable simultaneously expose it to new risks.

Because of this, it is hardly surprising that a retrotopic (cf. Bauman 2017) streak and a longing for a less complex life is expressed among the participants, as well as among preppers in general. Modernity has come with a loss of skills and dispositions needed for self-reliance – to farm, to hunt, to craft – and has, in turn, left us alienated from nature. On a personal level, this can be alleviated through the training of skills and by material prepping, where things are within reach and view, ready-to-hand (cf. Campbell, Sinclair & Browne 2019:812; Frykman & Povrzanović Frykman 2016:22).

On a societal level, these relations are harder to untangle. While the reliance on electricity is the most common system dependency that the participants point out (see Mellander 2021), debt is a close second. It too makes one vulnerable to the shockwaves sent through the financial system in times of crisis. Anders muses that contemporary consumer culture is based on people doing things that they can't afford and thus accumulating debt. Student loans, consumer loans, and mortgages, with accompany-

ing interest discounts, all encourage people to live beyond their means, which by extension makes them vulnerable. That is why he and his wife sold their house in the city and moved to the countryside, to a house that they could pay for in cash. There, they intend to become more independent, to "not participate in that system, to the extent that it's possible" and to live the kind of life that "nurtures, rather than consumes". It is not possible for them to separate entirely from the monetary system, but by growing crops and keeping animals, they live a less vulnerable life that he thinks "many want to live […] Many want to look out over a meadow and just enjoy – that's my everyday life now. It's not work, it's life." While it's a life that in many ways is more complicated, it is less open to systematic complexities and unpredictability. With a pessimistic eye on the financial and technological interdependencies of late modernity, the typical prepper response is that one is better off going with safe bets, turning the challenges of systematic vulnerability into a question of individual morals and responsibility.

Responsibilization

Instead of being directed towards external threats, responsibility orients one towards the self and one's place in society. This is a recurring theme in the interviews, which links the individual preparations to the collective good. Conversely, the irresponsible citizen emerges as a fearful figure to be avoided, as when Ian explains the feeling that prepping gives him.

Ian: That is my… my attitude towards life. And it's also that I… I love the feeling of knowing that I'm prepared and that if anything should happen, I won't have to regret not having prepared for it.

That is very much part of my motivation, that I know that when shit goes down, I can feel proud, and of course that my family will feel happy and content because of me. But above all, I will feel proud of not being caught with my trousers down. That's a big motivation for me.

On the one hand, preparation promises pride, contentment, and even happiness. On the other hand, there is the threat of being caught off guard, not only risking the very real consequences that this may implicate, but also the shame associated with finding oneself with one's trousers down. This is a question of how Ian will be viewed, in terms of reliability, accountability, and of being a dependable family father (cf. Sims & Grigsby 2019:114). Simultaneously, this is an internal process, driven by what he does not want to be: unprepared, irresponsible, remorseful. The motivation is a form of premeditated regret, a fear of the future self judging him in hindsight.

Being the dependent rather than the dependable is a recurring motif in stories of contemporary fears (Stattin 2006:148). This goes double in prepping culture, and perhaps even further among Swedish preppers. In the participants' stories, an oft-repeated understanding of Swedish society is that it is particularly vulnerable, due to its long history of peace and a strong welfare state. According to Gunnar, one doesn't have to go far to find different attitudes to preparedness:

Gunnar: […] many of our neighbours have been unfortunate to experience war and the problems that come with that, you know… Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania. Russian occupation and so on. There, they have an entirely different understanding of individual responsibility and the capacity to take care of yourself.

Swedes are from time to time described as being a bit spoiled, naïve, and reliant on societal safety nets. Such claims tend to be qualified with reassurances, like Lars who is careful to point out that he wouldn't like to live anywhere else, but that the welfare state has nevertheless caused damage. People rely on "pappa Staten" – "the nanny state" – to take care of everything, making them loath to make decisions and take action. By shouldering responsibility, those who prep break out of such conditioning, claiming the moral high ground while in the process articulating a zero-sum rationale, where peace and prosperity don't come without a price.

While the belief in the virtues of personal responsibility is something that unites the participants, they are by no means a politically homogeneous group. In a North American context, prepping has traditionally been associated with right-wing individualism or libertarianism (see Bounds 2021). Among the participants, there are those who mainly frame their prepping in a similar, individualist manner, finding people around them more concerned about their rights than their responsibilities and that the state cannot adequately protect its citizens. However, most invest their preparations in a collectivist logic, where the emphasis is placed on the individual's prepping as part of the overarching, societal preparedness. Those who have the means to prepare should do so, so that in the event of an emergency, societal resources can be allocated to those more needing or deserving. Personal preparations are thus not juxtaposed with preparedness on a societal level, but are understood as an essential part of it. That it is hard to be generous and helpful if one hasn't prepared is the prevailing common-sense wisdom or, as Jakob expresses it: "You need to put your own oxygen mask on before you can help the other passengers on the aeroplane."

When viewing prepping as a part of the political landscape, there are historical parallels to be drawn. According to Garrett (2020a:57;66f), the first seeds of what was later to become prepper culture were planted in the US during the early days of the Cold War as the existential threat of nuclear weapons led to a commercial "doom boom". Unlike many European countries – including Sweden – the US government did not provide its citizens with bomb shelters. Garrett claims that this led to the emergence of a new economic sector, as companies started to market bunker solutions to consumers. Consequently, this also laid the foundation of contemporary prepper culture, where the individual shoulders the responsibility for their own security, either due to a sense of duty or distrust towards the government. While the emergence of Swedish prepping likely can be attributed to a number of factors, such as the spread of social media and the changing landscapes of fear, it also coincides with the downsizing of Swedish emergency stocks as well as of the military and civil defence (see Sandstig 2019). This allows prepping to be framed as private security initiatives set in motion by a sense of governmental neglect, if not necessarily distrust.

One political question that unites the participants is the need for strengthened societal emergency preparedness and a move away from reliance on just-in-time management of critical infrastructures. On a collective level, however, there is little in the way of political organization or activism on the participants' part, other than

their framing of their own prepping as a contribution to societal resilience. In this manner, they align with Campbell, Sinclair, and Browne's (2019:816) description of preppers as a kind of "non-communitarian community", as they work towards similar goals in parallel rather than together (see Rahm 2013:76f). Somewhat ironically, this also places them very much in line with the prevailing, neoliberal management strategies that have shaped Swedish crisis preparedness policy since the 2000s (Kvarnlöf 2020).

Neoliberalism can be traced in ideology as well as in policy, but is best understood as a form of economizing rationality that pushes societal relations and interactions towards forms that can be measured in monetary terms. This becomes particularly noticeable when institutions in the public sector are managed in accordance with the needs of market forces, rather than operating as a counterbalance to them (Brown 2015:9f; 63). Freedom of choice is one of the main virtues within neoliberal rationality, but is typically contingent upon an expectation on actors to make the "right" and rational choice in terms of economic optimization (Bajde & Rojas-Gaviria 2021:493; Fahlgren, Mulinari & Sjöstedt Landén 2016:9). In terms of emergency preparedness, this translates into shifting responsibilities onto individuals as a means to save resources (Ray 2021:182; cf. Garrett 2020a:16; Huddleston 2017). Emergency stocks are passive capital, awaiting a situation that may not come to pass. From an immediate economic perspective, those resources' potential for growth can be better realized elsewhere.

According to the Swedish sociologist Linda Kvarnlöf (2020) the governmental campaigns promoting emergency preparedness during the 2000s have been permeated by the message that societal resources are limited in the event of a crisis and that the Swedes need to take responsibility and prepare themselves. Typically, these campaigns don't take an authoritative stance, but encourage the recipients to choose to increase their level of preparedness by framing it as a contribution to the collective good (Kvarnlöf 2020:10f). A prime example of this came in the spring of 2018, when the Swedish Civil Contingency Agency sent out the folder *If Crisis or War Comes* to millions of Swedish households. The campaign was the first of its kind since the end of the Cold War and its aim was to raise the public's knowledge of the need for preparedness in case of "serious accidents, extreme weather and IT attacks, to military conflicts" (MSB 2018:3; cf. Hörnfeldt 2018:160; Marshall 2021:15). The authors of the folder have taken care not to be alarmist, emphasizing that Sweden is a safe country, but that there is always the possibility of unforeseen events. Checklists for emergency supplies and information about warning systems and shelters share the pages with descriptions of the individual's duties, which are qualified with a familiar adage: "The better prepared you are, the greater the opportunity you will also have to help others who do not have the same ability to cope" (MSB 2018:5). As Kvarnlöf (2020:10f) points out, this an appeal to responsibility through solidarity, targeting emotion and reason in equal measure (cf. Bajde & Rojas-Gaviria 2021:496).

Generally, the participants do not claim to have been greatly influenced by the campaign, as most were already prepping when

it launched. Some feel that the relatively simple approach to crisis preparedness may lower the bar for engaging with preparedness. Others express that the campaign is too restrained and that a more severe message might be necessary to make people "wake up" and take preparedness seriously. At all events, the similarity between the campaign's message and the collectivist logic employed among the participants is clear. By shouldering responsibility, the participants invest in the form of neoliberal security subjectivity articulated through contemporary preparedness policy (cf. Berlant 2011:171; Dahlberg 2015:548). While preppers have often been framed as societal deviants (Barker 2020:485f), their practices increasingly align with imaginaries of a virtuous citizen who makes something "productive" out of their anxieties through internalizing discipline, preparing not to be caught "with their trousers down". According to Stattin (2006:92), this form of internalized fears is typical of modernity, as apprehensions in premodern societies tended to be more concrete and external to the individual or group. This also illustrates how Swedish prepping exists at a contradictory intersection of resistance and governmentality, at once opposing many of the late modern systematic expressions of neoliberal globalization while at the same time being very much in line with its ideal subject positions.

Fear Itself

When I ask Jakob if all the effort and resources that he and others who prep couldn't be put to better use in some other way, for example by raising preparedness on a societal level, he shrugs. Even if the government had sufficient emergency stores, there would still be need for prepping on an individual level. In a crisis, it is likely that infrastructure and logistics would falter and there's no certainty that the help will reach those who need it in time. Individual prepping is just a way of decentralizing collective preparedness, he reasons. It makes the local community less susceptible to systematic vulnerabilities. It's just common sense.

While there is some variation among the participants, a recurring motif is that prepping is an expression of sense, rather than sensibility. Fittingly, a recurring adage among Swedish preppers as well as in preparedness policy discourse is "var förberedd, inte rädd" ("be prepared, not afraid" – although there is a play on words that gets lost in translation). Gunnar is one of the participants who insists that his prepping isn't driven by fear, but that it's merely a precaution akin to getting insurance for your house or car. Practicality and mundanity are also at the forefront when Elisabeth talks about her preparations, as she exclaims that there is no direct link between her gloomy outlook on the future and the supplies she has in her cellar. The supplies "will always be there, because they have always been there. It has nothing to do with anxiety, but rather the opposite. They're there because they make life easy and practical" she explains and then continues:

Elisabeth: So, it's not a question of… fear or the outside world doesn't have a lot to do with my prepping – not that they make me want to be less prepared. […] I don't prep because I'm afraid, no. And I never have. I prep because I know things can get messy from time to time. I don't know what to compare it to... Like, it's good to have an extra pair of shoes because you know that sometimes shoes get worn out. It's like that.

Elias: You have a change of clothes with you when you're out with the kids because…

Elisabeth: Yes, exactly. Wet wipes, a banana [laughs] absolutely!

Emphasis is placed on the practical, and the rational. "Common sensing", as Campbell, Sinclair, and Browne (2019:806) describe it, is commonplace in online prepper forums and a central component in delineating prepper identity. This is visible among the participants as well, especially in mundanifying similes like the comparison to insurance made by Gunnar, the previously mentioned moral of putting on your own oxygen mask first, or the recurring metaphor of the seatbelt: Just because you put it on doesn't mean that you will crash, but you'll be sorry you didn't if something happens! This situates prepping practices in the safety of everyday life, far away from imaginaries of the zombie apocalypse.

Despite the dominance of rationalistic rhetoric, there are openings where fear can seep in. Veronica, like Jakob, gives further perspective to the reluctance to discuss particular scenarios, as they emphasize how specific imaginaries can be an entryway for more dystopian thought spirals, leading towards despair. It is better to focus on one's needs, keeping your mind on what can be done rather than what can't be controlled. Lina in turn describes this as a balancing act. Being prepared means that she doesn't hold the naïve belief that nothing could ever happen, but her mental health demands that she does not linger on all the potential disasters the future might hold: "So, you need to somewhat restrict those thoughts so that they don't become too exaggerated."

Even though the participants don't typically identify as being afraid and many of them claim to have become less anxious since they started prepping, it is by no means a given that efforts to increase security lead to a reduction of negative emotions. Along with becoming more informed and better prepared comes an increased awareness of all the lurking dangers that still need to be addressed (Bauman 2006:130). This leaves feelings of fear and anxiety as insistent neighbours that one has to be careful not to invite. I would also argue that this posits the feeling of fear as a fearful object in itself, which affects how intention and effort are directed within prepper culture (cf. Ahmed 2006:2f; Frykman 2012:20). Primarily, it is fear as a psychological state that needs to be kept in check, in much the same way as Veronica, Jakob, and Lina describe how thoughts need to be managed, lest they become pathways for dark imaginaries. By extension, this presents a threat to any sense of control established through prepping, as anyone whose actions are dictated by unpredictable emotions won't be able to make the rational, "right" choices. Thus, fear represents danger in the immediate sense, but it also constitutes a threat against the formation of a rationalist identity. Fear is an object of consternation when it comes to how one is viewed from the outside. Projecting fear or having it projected onto oneself by others spells trouble, as this might destabilize the common-sense rationale and its derivate production of meaning. For example, Freja becomes noticeably annoyed when she describes how people in her immediate surroundings have responded to her preparations, both before and during the pandemic:

Freja: There are always people who tell you that you shouldn't be afraid.

Elias: Yes.

Freja: Or if you behave in a risk-aware manner because of Covid, and they talk to you like you're acting that way because of emotions. "Oh, you have this emotion, fear, and you need to get rid of it because it's a bad feeling." I'd like to say that… Well, I can have that emotion, or not have it. It doesn't matter. This is a rational decision, considering what information we have. […] It would be great if people got this, that being risk-aware doesn't mean that you're afraid […] They're completely different things.

Fear is framed as the opposite of rationality, while being placed adjacent to paranoia and delusion. Losing the claim to common sense is a loss of legitimacy and normalcy (Campbell, Sinclair & Browne 2019:805ff). In this example, the participants seemingly align with the real or imagined others that ascribe fear to them, as both separate common sense from feeling. While Freja touches on an idea that is tellingly absent from most participants' rhetoric – that fear might sometimes be a rational response – she ultimately creates a clear divide: being risk-aware and being afraid are "completely different things".

Concluding Remarks

In this article I have explored contemporary Swedish prepping culture through the analytical perspective of feelings, more specifically in terms of fear. In line with previous research on prepper culture (Garrett 2020a; Mills 2018), the participants did to a large extent resist naming specific objects of fear as a motivator for engaging in prepping practices. I would however argue that the participants' stories find resonance in the "second-degree fear" that Bauman (2006:3f) describes, which is not directed at any immediate threat, but rather cultur-

ally sedimented through experience and social action. It is felt as a sense of susceptibility, vulnerability, and insecurity – an internalized state of threat that does not directly relate to any exterior forces, but that may still motivate response and propel action as if it did. Furthermore, when turning to recurring themes in the material, certain fearful objects emerge. Here, these have been articulated as *complex system dependencies*, *the irresponsible citizen,* and *fear itself.* These objects do in different ways challenge a sense of control, or rather directedness and agency, in relation to a world that can at times appear arbitrary and chaotic. In turn, they can also be said to darkly mirror virtues within prepping culture that all manifest aspects of knowing one's place and orientation; *self-sufficiency, responsibility,* and *rationality* (cf. Campbell, Sinclair & Browne 2019).

This points to aspects of Swedish prepping culture that warrant further examination, such as its material premeditations and composition of future imaginaries (cf. Anderson 2010), as well as the gendering dimensions of prepping, which here has been shown to be aligned with a "masculine" logic of independence and rationalism (cf. Kelly 2016:100; Kvarnlöf 2020). An additional area of investigation is the correlation between the rise of prepping culture and more mundane threats that increase everyday insecurity, such as precarious work and the dismantling of welfare support (cf. Barker 2020).

Approaching prepper culture by means of fear has allowed collective anxieties and cultural borders to be mapped out (cf. Stattin 2006:21). It appears that the form of prepping that the participants espouse is not clearly delineated against a cultural

mainstream, nor do the fearful objects described here appear exotic or strange when viewed in relation to late modern society (cf. Mills 2019). Instead, they exist in a dialogical relationship with contemporary preparedness policies and discourse, composing neoliberal security subjectivities (cf. Ray 2021). How the logic of prepping aligns with and diverges from dominant, governmental, and societal rhetoric on responsibilization deserves further theoretical attention, but it seems clear that prepping can be understood as a cultural repertoire for addressing historically and socially situated apprehensions, in a period marked by doubt and insecurity (cf. Paulsen 2020). Even if prepping might dispel such worries on an individual level, as several participants claim, it is far from certain that cultural preoccupation with attaining a sense of security reduces societal fears – there are reasons to believe that the opposite is true (Garrett 2020a:78; Paulsen 2020:21ff). However, the participants' stories clearly show that fear, dread, and anxiety are far from the only feelings permeating prepping culture. A sense of care for others, the joy of learning new skills, or the satisfaction of having one's house in order are all present feelings, far closer to the everyday experience than the nebulous sense of dread, which in turn allows for optimistic orientations within pessimist dispositions.

Elias Mellander
Ph.D.
Department of Cultural Sciences
Gothenburg University
Box 200
SE-40530 Göteborg
email: elias.mellander@gu.se

Notes

1   The research on which this article is based has been funded by the Swedish Civil Contingency Agency (MSB) – dnr. 2020-05097. The ethnographic material presented here predates the Russian invasion of Ukraine and thus the influence of the war on Swedish prepper culture and security policy will not be part of the following analysis.

2   It should be noted that the English word prepping and its derivative terms are used untranslated in Swedish, often in parallel or contrast to the Swedish word "beredskap" (meaning preparedness). These terms are sometimes used interchangeably, but prepping tends to be more descriptive of the individual's preparedness while "beredskap" denotes crisis contingencies on a societal level. Another distinction is the historical association and context of the two words. "Beredskap" carries a connotation of Swedish preparations for the threat of invasion during the Second World War and the Cold War, whereas prepping was introduced in the Swedish vocabulary in the 2010s, post 9/11 and the financial crisis of 2008, with the climate crisis as a backdrop (Mellander 2021:3). In a North American context, prepping is often described as a less radical and more mainstream offshoot of the survivalist movement, where preparedness traditionally has been merged with political conservatism, anti-government sentiments, and paramilitary tendencies (see Garrett 2020a:68f; Huddleston 2017:241; Mitchell 2002). The term survivalism has been used in a Swedish context as well, but seems to have been more or less supplanted by the term prepping.

3   All participants quoted in this paper have been given a pseudonym in order to prevent identification. All quotations have been translated from Swedish to English by the author.

4   For a more in-depth perspective on the participants' reactions to the Covid-19 pandemic, see Mellander 2021; 2022.

References

Ahmed, Sara 2004: *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Ahmed, Sara, 2006: *Queer phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Aldousari, Abdullah A. 2014: Exploring Consumptive Behavior under Perceived Threat. the Case of Doomsday Preppers. *NA – Advances in Consumer Research* 42, 769–769.

Anderson, Ben 2010: Preemption, Precaution, Preparedness. Anticipatory Action and Future Geographies. *Progress in Human Geography* 34(6), 777–798.

Anderson, Ben 2014: *Encountering Affect. Capacities, Apparatuses, Conditions*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Bajde, Domen & Rojas-Gaviria, Pilar 2021: Creating Responsible Subjects. The Role of Mediated Affective Encounters. *Journal of Consumer Research* 48(3), 492–512.

Barker, Kezia 2020: How to Survive the End of the Future. Preppers, Pathology, and the Everyday Crisis of Insecurity. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 45(2), 483–496.

Bauman, Zygmunt 2006: *Liquid Fear*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman, Zygmunt 2017: *Retrotopia*. Malden, MA: Polity.

Beck, Ulrich 2012: *Risksamhället. På väg mot en annan modernitet*. Göteborg: Daidalos.

Beckert, Jens 2016. *Imagined Futures. Fictional Expectations and Capitalist Dynamics*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Berlant, Lauren 2011: *Cruel Optimism*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Bounds, Anna Maria 2021: *Bracing for the Apocalypse. An Ethnographic Study of New York's 'Prepper' Subculture*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Brissman, Henrik 2021: *Framtidens historia*. Stockholm: Natur & Kultur.

Brown, Wendy 2010: *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*. New York: Zone Books.

Brown, Wendy 2015: *Undoing the Demos. Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. New York: Zone Books.

Campbell, Norah, Gary Sinclair & Sarah Browne 2019: Preparing for a World without Markets. Legitimizing Strategies of Preppers. *Journal of Marketing Management* 35(9–10), 798–817.

Czarniawska, Barbara 2007: *Shadowing and Other Techniques for Doing Fieldwork in Modern Societies*. Malmö: Liber.

Dahlberg, Rasmus 2015: Resilience and Complexity. Conjoining the Discourses of Two Contested Concepts. *Culture Unbound 7*(3), 541–557.

Davies, Charlotte Aull 1999: *Reflexive Ethnography. A Guide to Researching Selves and Others*. London: Routledge.

Edwards, Elisabeth 2010: Photographs and History. In *Museum Materialities. Objects, Engagements, Interpretations*, ed. Sandra H. Dudley, 21–38. London: Routledge.

Fahlgren, Siv, Diana Mulinari & Angelika Sjöstedt Landén 2016: Inledning. Feministiska läsningar av nyliberalismen – begrepp och grepp om samtiden. In *Ambivalenser och maktordningar. feministiska läsningar av nyliberalism*, ed. Siv Fahlgren, Diana Mulinari & Angelika Sjöstedt Landén, 7–27. Göteborg/Stockholm: Makadam.

Ferguson, Niall 2021: *Doom. The Politics of Catastrophe*. New York: Penguin Press.

Fetterman, Adam K., Bastiaan T. Rutjens, Florian Landkammer & Benjamin M. Wilkowski 2019: On Post-Apocalyptic and Doomsday Prepping Beliefs. A New Measure, its Correlates, and the Motivation to Prep. *European Journal of Personality* 33(4), 506–525.

Flatley, Jonathan 2008: *Affective Mapping. Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism*. Harvard University Press.

Fletcher, Karen & Ingun Grimstad Klepp (eds.) 2017: *Opening up the Wardrobe. A Methods Book*. Oslo: Novus Press.

Foster, Gwendolyn Audrey 2014: *Hoarders, Doomsday Preppers, and the Culture of Apocalypse*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Frykman, Jonas 2012: *Berörd. Plats, kropp och ting i fenomenologisk kulturanalys*. Stockholm: Carlsson Bokförlag.

Frykman, Jonas & Nils Gilje 2003: Being There. An Introduction. In *Being There. New Perspectives on Phenomenology and the Analysis of Culture*, ed. Jonas Frykman & Nils Gilje, 7–51. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

Frykman, Jonas & Löfgren, Orvar 2004: Hur känns kultur? *Kulturella perspektiv. Svensk etnologisk tidsskrift* 13(4), 2–20.

Frykman, Jonas & Maja Povrzanović Frykman 2016: Affect and Material Culture – Perspectives and Strategies. In *Sensitive Objects. Affect and Material Culture*, ed. Frykman, Jonas & Povrzanović Frykman, Maja, 9–30. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

Fukuyama, Francis 1992: *The End of History and the Last Man*. London: Hamish Hamilton.

Furedi, Frank 2006: *Culture of Fear Revisited. Risk-Taking and the Morality of Low Expectation*. 4th ed. London: Continuum.

Garrett, Bradley 2020a: *Bunker. Building for the End Times*. London: Allen Lane.

Garrett, Bradley 2020b: Doomsday Preppers and the Architecture of Dread. *Geoforum*.

Gilje, Nils 2016: Moods and Emotions – Some Philosophical Reflections on the "Affective Turn". In *Sensitive objects. Affect and Material Culture*, ed. Jonas Frykman & Maja Povrzanović Frykman, 31–54. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

Gray, Ann 2003: *Research Practice for Cultural Studies. Ethnographic Methods and Lived Cultures*. London: Sage.

Heidenstrøm, Nina 2020: Informal Household Preparedness. Methodological Approaches to Everyday Practices. *Journal of Risk Research* 23(3), 379–397.

Hörnfeldt, Helena 2018: The End of the World. Apocalyptic Narratives in Children's Fears. *Ethnologia Scandinavica* 48, 153–170.

Huddleston, Chad 2017: "Prepper" as Resilient Citizen. What Preppers Can Teach Us about Surviving Disasters. In *Responses to Disasters and Climate Change. Understanding Vulnerability and Fostering Resilience*, ed. Michèle Companion & Miriam S. Chaiken, 239–247. Boca Raton: CRC Press.

Kabel, Allison & Catherine Chmidling 2014: Disaster Prepper. Health, Identity, and American Survivalist Culture. *Human organization* 73(3), 258–266.

Kelly, Casey Ryan 2016: The Man-Pocalpyse. Doomsday Preppers and the Rituals of Apocalyptic Manhood. *Text & Performance Quarterly* 36(2/3), 95–114.

Kierkegaard, Søren, 1968 [1844]: *The Concept of Dread*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Kvarnlöf, Linda 2020: *Hur kan vi förstå hemberedskap? En orientering i hemberedskap som politiskt och empiriskt fenomen*. RCR Working Paper Series 2020:1.

Marshall, Matilda 2021: Prepared for a Crisis and the Unexpected. Managing Everyday Eventualities through Food Storage Practices. *Food, Culture & Society* 2021, 1–22.

Määttä, Jerry 2015: Keeping Count of the End of the World. A Statistical Analysis of the Historiography, Canonisation, and Historical Fluctuations of Anglophone Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Disaster Narratives. *Culture Unbound* 7(3), 411–432.

Mellander, Elias 2021: Med krisen som framtidshorisont. Om mötet mellan prepping och pandemin. *Kulturella Perspektiv – Svensk Etnologisk Tidskrift* 30(2–3).

Mellander, Elias 2022: Bunkra, hamstra och preppa – Om kriskonsumtion och hemberedskap. In *Konsumtionsrapporten 2022*, ed. Johan Hagberg, Lena Hansson, Ulrika Holmberg & Niklas Sörum. Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice 2002: *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge.

Mills, Michael F. 2018: Preparing for the Unknown… Unknowns. 'Doomsday' Prepping and Disaster Risk Anxiety in the United States. *Journal of Risk Research* 22(10), 1267–1279.

Mills, Michael F. 2019: Obamageddon. Fear, the Far Right, and the Rise of "Doomsday"

Prepping in Obama's America. *Journal of American Studies* 55(2), 336–365.

Mitchell, Richard G. 2002: *Dancing at Armageddon. Survivalism and Chaos in Modern Times*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Mol, Annemarie & Law, John 2002: Complexities. An Introduction. In Law, John & Mol, Annemarie (eds.) *Complexities. Social Studies of Knowledge Practices*, 1–22. Durham: Duke University Press.

MSB (The Swedish Civil Contingency Agency) 2018: *If Crisis or War Comes. Important Information for the Population of Sweden*. Karlstad: MSB.

Paulsen, Roland 2020: *Tänk om. En studie i oro*. Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag.

Ray, Emily 2021: Creature Comforts. Neoliberalism and Preparing for Disaster. *New Political Science* 43(2), 171–188.

Rahm, Lina 2013: Who Will Survive? On Bodies and Boundaries after the Apocalypse. *Gender Forum. An Internet Journal for Gender Studies* 45(45), 72–83.

Roos, Magnus, Jonas Floden & Johan Woxenius 2020: Svenska konsumenters hamstrande under covid-19. In *Konsumtionsrapporten 2020 [Acceleration]. En rapportserie om den svenska konsumtionen*, ed. Magnus Roos. Göteborg, Göteborgs universitet.

Sandstig, Gabriella 2019: Riskkommunikation & krisberedskap i Väst – av nöd & lust. In *Ingen kommer undan kulturen*, ed. Anders Carlander, Patrik Öhberg & Elias Mellander. SOM-rapport 75. Göteborg; SOM-institutet, Göteborgs universitet.

Sims, Amanda & Mary Grigsby 2019: Prepper-Worthy Identity Work. A Cultural Repertoire for Constructing a Secure Self in an Insecure World. *Sociological Spectrum* 39(2), 93–115.

Smith, Nina, & Susan J. Thomas 2021: Doomsday Prepping During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Frontiers in Psychology* 12.

Stattin, Jochum 2006 [1990]: *Från gastkramning till gatuvåld. En etnologisk studie av svenska rädslor*. Stockholm: Carlsson Bokförlag.

Svensson, Ingeborg 2011: Vi känner oss fram. Att studera identifikation i termer av känslor. In *Att känna sig fram. känslor i humanistisk genusforskning*, ed. Annelie Bränström Öhman, Maria Jönsson & Ingeborg Svensson, 66–85. Umeå: h:ström – Text & kultur.