



Vetenskapsrådet

# A safe place for preparedness

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# 'Doing' household preparedness: A critical approach to preparedness discourses and practices

- Funded by the Swedish Research Council (VR), January 2022 – December 2024
  - Purpose: *to critically examine constructions of household preparedness*
  - Research questions:
    - *Which conceptions of 'preparedness' and 'household' dominate current social security discourses, and which conceptions are made invisible?*
    - *How can such conceptions be understood in relation to power relations such as class, gender, ethnicity, functionality and age?*
    - *Which economic, social and material resources do households use while practicing preparedness and how can these resources be understood in relation to stratification in terms of class, gender, ethnicity, functionality and age?*
- Project team:
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# A safe place for preparedness

- **Points of Departure**
  - An interest in how the home and its characteristics influence individuals' thoughts on household preparedness.
  - Although previous research on individuals' and households' crisis preparedness has shown that the home and everyday practices play a crucial role in how people engage in preparedness, there is a need to further explore *how* the home becomes the place for such preparedness.
- **The Sociology of Home**
  - The home as a site for identity formation
  - The home as the place where various social roles, particularly gender roles, are reproduced
  - The home as "a locale in which people can work at attaining a sense of **ontological security** in a world that at times is experienced as threatening and uncontrollable" (Dupuis & Thorns, 1998:24)

\*Dupuis, A. & Thorns, D.C. (1998). "Home, home ownership and the search for ontological security." *The Sociological Review*, 46(1):24-47.



# Empirical material

- 26 interviews (via zoom and face-to-face)
- Age: 25 – 71
- Gender: 16 women /10 men
- Place of residence:
  - Metropolitan area, suburb, small town (<100,000): 17
  - Farm, village, or small community: 9
- Dwelling
  - Privately owned villa/townhouse: 15
  - Condominium apartment: 6
  - Rental apartment: 5



# The home as a safe haven

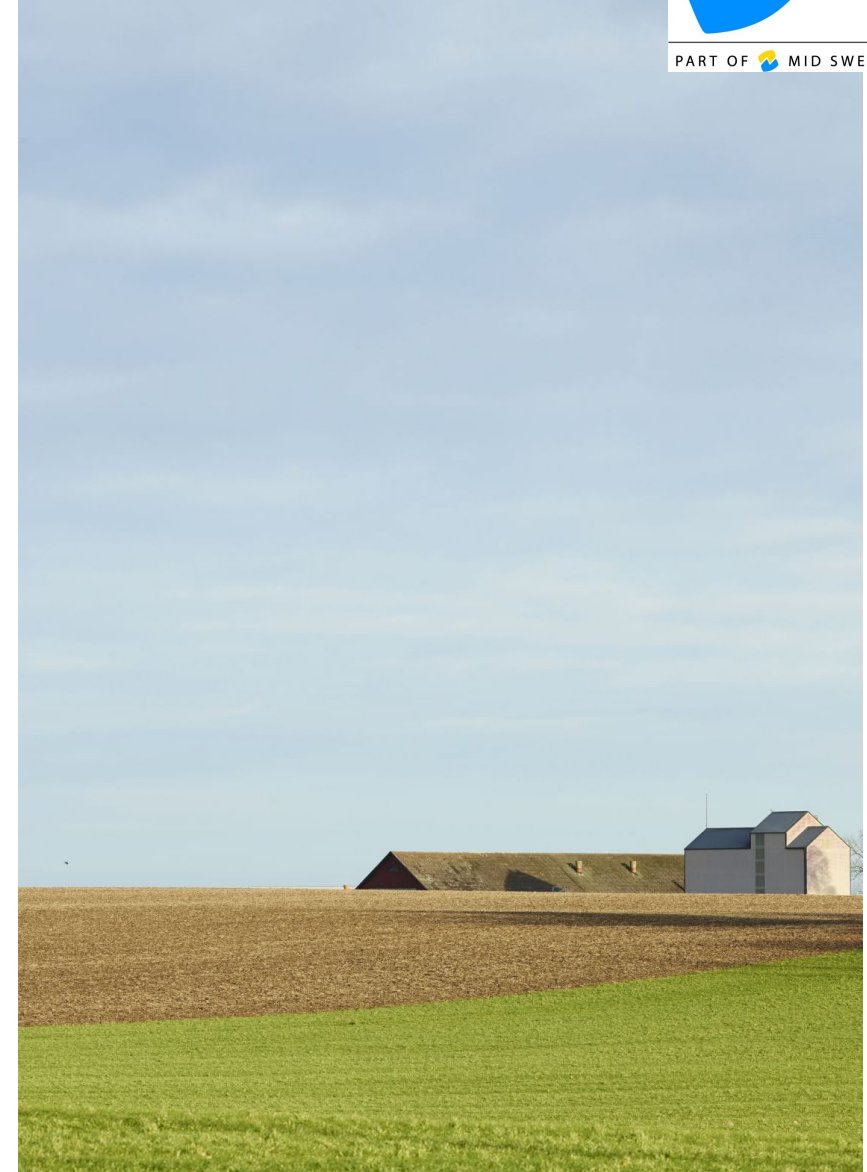
## A safe place for preparedness

- *I hope, if we were to end up in such a situation, that it would be possible to stay at home, and that's really what I'm mostly prepping for ..., in an ideal scenario that we can stay in the house. (Woman, age 42)*
- *For me, home preparedness also includes those closest to me, and that one is actually prepared... I want my closest relatives to be just as prepared ... that's basically my parents, my siblings, and my family in my household because they are the ones I think should be together in our home if something happens. (Woman, age 34)*
- *I have the MSB's pamphlet, which I've used as my first checklist. (Woman, age 68)*
- *It is much better to stay put in a familiar environment, with familiar people around if a crisis occurs, rather than heading out to some undefined summer cottage far away in the forest. (Man, age 69)*



# Leaving home: gathering the family

- *I haven't thought about what I would do if I needed to leave my home, actually. No. (Woman, age 64)*
- *If there is a significant crisis, then I must go up to Hälsingland, where my son and his family live, out in the countryside. (Woman, age 71)*
- *If we had to leave, like just leave the house, then we could gather at my in-laws', here in the countryside we could all gather, and then we also needed to help each other. (Women, age 35)*
- *I have a past of living in the countryside, though I live in the middle of the city now, but I have my parents' farm out in the countryside, and there you know how dependent you are on electricity. ... I have a prepper box here at home in the city ... [but] Okay, if something happens, then I'll go out to the cabin in the countryside," because there we have even more options than I would have in the tiny house in the city. (Woman, age 68)*



# Leaving home: individual survival in the wilderness

- *To the hunting cabin, ... up there on the mountain, ... I have good knowledge of where we have springs, ... it's quite isolated there too, with a few houses nearby ... There's firewood, a stove, a spring, and plenty of food there as well. (Man, age 32).*
- *Most of what I actually need fits in my hiking backpack ... kitchen, food, tent, sleeping bag, and clothes. Then I'm ready to go. That's the advantage of outdoor activities; you get used to bringing as little as possible that needs to last as long as possible. (Man, age 29).*
- *For now, I'd probably go to my mom's, or maybe to some cabin in the woods. I have the means to survive there easily ... I mean, as long as there's a lake to fish in and a forest with animals, I think I'll manage. (Man, age 63).*
- *I have a camper van I have most of what's needed to get by for a week. (Man, age 71).*
- *So, if it's a larger evacuation due to a significant gas release or something like that, floods, then it's quite extensive... then it's really up to everyone who can move themselves to do so. This way, society, in this case the municipalities, can focus on transporting the elderly and those who cannot move and get somewhere on their own. (Man, age 68)*



# Conclusions

- **Home - A place where preparedness is established and identity is formed**
  - A place where preparedness is practiced
  - A place where ontological security is constructed
    - (Imagining...) Leaving home: a disruption in ontological security
- 'Doing' household preparedness - 'Doing' gender
  - Just as the home is related to gender performances – so are the practices of household preparedness, *and* the imaginings of leaving home