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Topics and Attitudes in COVID-19 Online News Comments about Italy and Sweden

Appraisal Framework applied to Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

This study conducts a mixed-methods, comparative study of online news comments. The subject of the articles were the two countries of Sweden and Italy during the COVID-19 pandemic. Articles about Italy and Sweden during the pandemic were identified, and the comments posted to those articles were collected and divided into two corpora based on country. The two corpora in total consisted of over 500 articles, and over 4.5 million words. Several computer programs were written to identify that the articles selected were either predominantly about Italy or Sweden during the COVID-19 pandemic, and subsequently to collect the comments posted to those articles. Corpus-assisted discourse analysis was then used to conduct the analysis in two steps. First, the corpus-assisted part allowed for the identification of prominent topics of discussion in the two corpora. Secondly, the discourse analysis part took a sample of comments related to a selection of the prominent topics of discussion and used the appraisal framework developed by Martin and White (2005) to observe frequencies of attitude and polarity.

The results showed among other things that topics such as herd immunity, self-isolation, vaccines, and lockdown were key topics present in the corpora and therefore represent topics of interest and importance to those writing the comments. The discourse analysis was able to show among other things that in the Italy corpus sample Judgement was the most common attitude, while in the Sweden corpus sample it was Appreciation. The frequency of Affect was the same in both samples, as was the overwhelming frequency of negative polarity present in both.

Keywords: Online News Comments, COVID-19, CADA, Appraisal Framework, Corpus Linguistics

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

With the advent of the internet and the proliferation of social media, news consumption has shifted significantly from traditional print and broadcast media to online platforms (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). The internet and its technological affordances, have made great changes, not just to how people consume their news, but also how they interact with it. Among other things it has led to the rise of user-generated content and comments, which have become an important aspect of online news (Hermida & Mellado, 2020; Walters, 2021).

In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit Europe, and had a significant impact on society (Spiteri et al., 2020). One such impact was the way that people received and shared their news. Millions of people were in places that were put into lockdown in order to combat the spread of the virus (Chadwick, 2020), and as such certain, more traditional forms of news media (such as print) became unviable specifically because as a consequence of the pandemic. With millions of people turning to online news sources in order to stay informed about the pandemic, the comments sections of online news articles have become a popular place for readers to engage with both the authors, and other readers, and share their opinions (Eisele et al., 2021; Mihelj et al., 2021).

Comments can have a significant impact on how people perceive the news and the world around them. Exposure to negative comments for instance can lead to a decrease in trust in the media as well as a decrease in political efficacy (Karlsen & Aalberg, 2021; Van Aelst et al., 2021). These comments sections have also become environments where misinformation, conspiracy theories, and hate speech related to COVID-19 are a common occurrence (Andersson, 2022). As a result of this, investigating comments posted to online

news articles during the COVID-19 pandemic is important and relevant, as it provides the opportunity to gain valuable insight into the public's attitudes and inherently held beliefs about the pandemic. It also, more specifically, by analyzing the language and content of the comments becomes possible to gain a better understanding of how a certain group of people are responding to the pandemic. Gaining knowledge of this has wider societal implications since this study represents a possibility to study public sentiment and opinion about a highly significant global event.

News is not objective. One way in which this is so is that the representation of foreign countries in media (both print and online) are subjected to pre-constructed concepts, biased viewpoints, and limited differentiation of sources (Gabore, 2020) or political agendas (Wang, 2021; Zhang & Shaw, 2021), often leading to some form of misrepresentation. In relation to the aforementioned importance of news comments on online news, this research will focus on the possible differences in comments on COVID-19 related news between two different countries being reported on by one news outlet.

Specifically, the countries of interest for this study are: Sweden, Italy and the UK. The UK is the country of origin of the chosen dedicated news outlet, the Daily Mail (moving forward, this will be referred to as "DM" for the remainder of the text). DM is also the second most visited news website in the UK, after the BBC (SimilarWeb, 2023). The two countries of Italy and Sweden were chosen as the foreign countries represented in the news being presented by DM. The reason for choosing the United Kingdom was for reasons of linguistic convenience as well as geographic proximity to the two other countries (all three are in Europe). Regarding why the other two countries chosen were Sweden and Italy, it should be explicitly stated that this is to be a contrastive study. Sweden and Italy were two countries that experienced the COVID-19 pandemic very differently, and their pandemic

response was therefore handled very differently by their respective governments. This study is therefore a possibility to explore various aspects of public sentiment and opinion related to how these two countries handled the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on Italy which was heavily affected by the pandemic. The Italian government subsequently enacted strict measures such as lockdowns and travel restrictions to control the spread of the virus (Euronews, 2021). Sweden on the other hand took an approach different from many other countries in Europe, with a focus on individual responsibility, and promotion of social distancing and good hygiene (Ahlander, 2022).

All this considered, this study represents both a relevant and important undertaking, for multiple reasons. Firstly, its purview falls within the relatively new area of scholarship that is online communication and therefore any new legitimate and valid information, or discoveries related to how to gain such information, is relevant. Secondly, government and medical agencies provide instructions that require public complicity to be successful, and media in all its forms, play a huge role in the dissemination of information to the public by shaping societal perceptions that subsequently influence the core tenants of our society (Ng et al., 2021). Finally, the affordances of the internet and other digital technologies have caused something of a re-arrangement of public institutions in the now online space that justifies further theorizing and understanding. There are therefore multiple important and relevant reasons to conduct a study such as this one.

Research Questions

Delving into further detail, this thesis therefore seeks to answer these specific research questions:

- RQ1: Which are the most recurring topics of discussion present in both corpora?

- RQ2: Which similarities/differences in attitude can be found by analyzing the most common general topic present in the corpora?

The chosen research method to answer these questions is Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis (CADA) which through the aid of computer software (in the case of this study, Sketch Engine) will analyze the corpora of comments in order to identify and explore what relevant patterns, themes, discourse structures and attitudes are present in the in the comments. The theoretical framework of "Appraisal Theory" which was originally developed by Martin & White (Martin & White, 2005) will be utilized. Through its study of attitude, appraisal theory will be used to evaluate the use of language by users in their comments.

Within the following chapters, the literature review provides a comprehensive understanding of the current state of research in the fields of cross-national comparative coverage of news, digitalization of news consumption, and audience engagement in online journalism – with a focus on COVID-19 news. The research design gives a better understanding of CADA, and under which criteria the corpora of data have been collected, while the data analysis describes CADA implementation within the study and the application of the Appraisal Framework. The results chapter presents the results of the data analysis, followed by the discussion which highlights their implications for understanding online commenter's reaction to health news concerning foreign countries. Finally, the conclusions offer a summary of the main findings, their implications for future research in the field, and the study's limitations.

Literature Review

This thesis addresses a novel research area, with specific research questions that have yet to be fully explored. It is challenging to precisely categorize the topic within a specific academic discipline due to its unique and interdisciplinary nature. Therefore, this literature review seeks to cover as broad an area as possible in regard to relevant previous research:

- Cross-National Comparative News Coverage

- Digitalization of News Consumption

- Audience Engagement in Online Journalism and COVID-19 News

Cross-National Comparative News Coverage

In news production and subsequent dissemination, the media presents communities and countries in a non-objective fashion where facts are inevitably intermingled with cultural notions and individual assumptions. The assumption is often that foreign countries are labelled as "others" by the media and therefore tendentially negatively depicted, especially when the country to be represented is considered dissimilar by the country that is portraying them (Gabore, 2020). Studies have then been conducted to see how well this assumption fits in with reality, the answer often being more complicated and eluding a simple "yes or no".

One example of this is a study made by Gabore (2020) exploring how differently Western and Chinese media source and frame events in Africa – in particular the COVID-19 pandemic. The results demonstrated that Western media covered most events in both a positive, negative, as well as neutral tone. This goes against the aforementioned assumption about the media that foreign countries might be often depicted in a negative light. A further interesting finding that has wider implications for the study as a whole was the fact that Western media had a tendency to utilize African official, African non-official, as well as

Western non-official channels as news sources. Chinese media on the other hand tended to mostly use African and Chinese official sources, with the result being that Chinese coverage was mostly positive in tone. The implication for this finding is that sourcing might be the thing that shapes frames, tones and representation of "others" in news media (Gabore, 2020). This finding has been corroborated in a different study comparing the framing of Chinese overseas students in America by Chinese and American newspapers. The results showed a similar discovery, that Chinese media, using Chinese official sources, mostly framed the overseas students in a positive light, although it must be said that Chinese newspapers running positive stories about Chinese students might be a result of an ulterior motive as well (Su & Borah, 2021).

The media's role in constructing images of foreign countries and the understandings and communications of international relations that engaged with the public has become an important topic in media and international relations' studies. Political agendas of UK newspapers heavily impact their reports of political issues (Wang, 2021). Findings of this study comparing four UK newspapers' coverage of China during the COVID-19 pandemic showed that the different political opinions between the newspapers were clearly demonstrated through the "subjects of coverage" (topics) and "associations with China" (threat or cooperation) in the coverage, showing that their political agendas do indeed leave an impact on the coverage itself. Similar conclusions have been drawn in other studies (e.g., Zhang & Shaw, 2021) which examined how the online versions of the BBC, The Guardian and the Daily Mail reported on the coronavirus outbreak in China. The study reported how the discussion and presentation of the issue of the COVID-19 outbreak in China differed between newspapers, largely along ideological lines.

Freedom of the press, however, has been found to not be the only dimension that affects the ability to and the way in which news media produce their reports. Mancini et al. (2017) explored the way that the topic of corruption and similar topics was covered by newspapers in three European Democracies: Italy, France and the UK. The findings showed that though newspapers within countries may have differences (primarily political affiliation), there are nonetheless common patterns that differentiated the newspapers along national lines. The findings from this study then seem to indicate that one can expect a difference in the way a topic or issue, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, will be reported on depending on what country the newspaper is located in. Such a statement does however need to be tempered by the clarification that this does tend to depend on the topic being covered. For instance, a similar study by Irom et al. (2021) studied the prominent news frames present in coverage of Rohingya refugee crisis by comparing news reporting of the crisis in four countries – Bangladesh, Pakistan, Canada and the US. The most relevant finding showed that there were minimal to no differences in the use of frames and sources when it came to the reporting of refugee characteristics. The implication for this being that this occurred because of the homogeneity of newsroom culture that largely slots refugee stories into convenient reporting formulas.

"Individuals often turn to news media to make sense of new, unfamiliar risks. As such, the news media's initial framing of risk is vital as it is likely to influence risk perception and individual attitudes" (Hubner, 2021, p. 117). COVID-19 became a highly polarized topic within the United States and therefore studies have been conducted in order to try to understand how the news media initially framed the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis of one such study found that early news coverage of the pandemic largely focused on two aspects of COVID-19, its spread and subsequent detrimental effect on society (Hubner,

2021). Similar results were found in a different study examining the thematic content of Italian media coverage of COVID-19, that Italian coverage largely followed the framing strategies used by the American media during the initial outbreak (Ophir et al., 2021). Both studies arrived at a similar conclusion that news media coverage of the pandemic – which emphasized its social and economic implications, while important for conveying information surrounding the crisis – may have inadvertently led to reduced levels of concern among the public, and may have potentially undermined adherence to COVID-19 guidelines.

Digitalization of News Consumption

Research about online journalism has been largely dominated by a discourse of technological innovation, a so called "techno-approach" (Steensen, 2011, p. 312) regarding research about online journalism that has been predominantly preoccupied with three aspects of this technology which have been considered to have the strongest potential impact on online journalism. These include hypertext, interactivity and multimedia, with the assumption being that any innovative approach to online journalism contains the implication of the utilization of these assets of that technology (Steensen, 2011).

This is not however a homogenous view of research into online journalism. Over the years scholars have gone further and broadened the list of those technological assets. Archival, figurational and personalization assets have been conceived of, as well as interactivity, hypertextuality, and multimodality, among others (Steensen, 2011). There exists no consensus among researchers as to what these terms mean, and whether they indeed describe separate, similar or the same phenomena. This can create confusion as to what each of the aforementioned characteristics represent, and how they indeed differ from one another.

There also exists little consensus as to whether or not digital technology is transforming the nature of storytelling and the presentation of news itself. Some scholars made precisely that argument, saying that the previously used method of news-writing style, the "inverted pyramid", had become obsolete in an online news world, and that this was being supplanted by immersive and interactive multimedia news reports (Pavlik, 2000, p. 232). However, other researchers might disagree with this claim. One study concerning the presentation of news reporting in the Swedish General Election in 2010 found that there were no significant differences between how major newspapers reported the aspects, issues and actors online compared to in print, with news production following similar rules across different media platforms, and journalists choosing similar news stories regardless of the platform (Ghersetti, 2014). Such a finding implied that news stories that are produced for one platform can be adapted and shared on another platform. However, a study exploring media in national leading news organizations in Israel, comparing print, online, radio and television news (Reich, 2016), found that different media outlets employ different methods, conditions, and time frames for reporting news, meaning that news media outlets are not just places that package and distribute news, but also places where news is created and produced in unique ways.

As the increasing diffusion of digital news media raised concerns in regard to whether readers were gradually switching from printed newspapers to the online counterpart, studies put great interest into investigating people's reading patterns and news consumption. One comparative study of a Swedish newspaper in its printed compared to online version found that, print readers engage in different topics during their reading in comparison to online readers, however the overall time spent on individual articles is rather similar for both categories (Von Krogh & Andersson, 2016). Time was found to be an

important factor in another study of news consumption via mobile phones among US adults, another facet of online journalism. Molyneux (2018) found out how news sessions on mobile platforms were much shorter than via other medium and occurred more often. The implication of these studies is that gaining insight into the differences in reading patterns of online as opposed to print media may be one of the most problematic areas of study within online journalism because of all the factors that might influence any potential outcome.

Social media represents one of the most frequently investigated yet also problematic areas of online journalism. News organizations are rapidly adopting social media, with services like Facebook and Twitter characterizing opportunities for news organizations to market and distribute content. People are also increasingly turning to social media to get their news, however this new affordance that technology provides contains certain drawbacks. One of the most relevant is the difference of perception of news found on a news website, opposed to that found on social media. Multiple studies (e.g., Karlsen & Aalberg, 2021; Nielsen & Schrøder, 2014; Salaudeen & Onyechi, 2020) have ended in results that demonstrated that distribution of news via social media has a negative effect on the perceived credibility of the news story. Karlsen and Aalberg (2021) in particular found that, when the same story was retrieved via social media instead of a news organizations website, there was a corresponding decrease in people's trust in what was written. However, studies also proved that journalists started adopting a more strategic perspective of social media, due to its power to bring in new audiences. Audience engagement evolves from being something experimental to a normative expectation (Hermida & Mellado, 2020; Walters, 2021), specifically becoming one of the focuses of news organizations, described by Walters (2021, p. 1492) as "audience-first mindset".

What was discussed there leads us to wonder how different digital journalism is from classical journalism. Steensen et al. (2019, pp. 339) argued that "digital journalism studies is journalism studies – with a little twist", the difference being simply that digital journalism contains a greater focus on technology and the audience. Many scholars are in agreement with this statement, with some (e.g., Perreault & Ferrucci, 2020; Zelizer, 2019) arguing that defining journalism simply in conjunction with the technology it utilizes defaces the image of journalism as a whole. Zelizer in particular argues that too strong an emphasis on technology can blind people to which is the most important factor, journalism or the technology it utilizes. Like other enterprises that have been transformed by digital technology, it is the enterprise that gives the technology "purpose, shape, perspective, meaning and significance" (Zelizer, 2019, p. 349).

Audience Engagement in Online Journalism and COVID-19 News

The digitalization patterns of news consumption by individuals is something that became highly relevant for a huge number of people during the COVID-19 pandemic. Millions of people were in lockdown, because of this the digital forms of news, such as those available over the internet became more relevant than ever for many people.

The COVID-19 pandemic represents an unparalleled global health crisis strongly impacting both public as well as private life. Mass media therefore plays a part in communicating crisis measures and provides an institutionalized channel to disseminate important information to a broad audience (Freimuth & Quinn, 2004). This has become especially relevant for the digital outlets of news organizations because of the changing nature of the crisis.

Without overemphasizing the influence of technological processes, digital news nonetheless offer the unique affordance of the opportunity for audiences to engage with the news content they are viewing. Engagement possibilities such as comments on online news articles are now often taken as a given (Hermida & Mellado, 2020; Walters, 2021) and this has given scholars the opportunity to analyze the dynamics of emotional reactions to crisis news coverage, such as that related to COVID-19. Studies exploring this have been able to "zoom into" the emotionality of audiences as social life was forced under lockdown (e.g., Eisele et al., 2021, p. 954) and were able to draw conclusions, among which was the finding that emotionality is a crucial factor to consider in order to understand the nature of online interactivity and news engagement.

The way news organizations have attempted to tackle the issue of audience engagement has varied. The development of new Web 2.0 technologies provided new opportunities for people to participate in the news. However, due to the rapid expansion of these technologies, different news organizations had different ways of letting people participate in creating news stories. In research made by Lawrence et al. (2018), the variation in procedure could be arrayed along several dimensions, encompassing how news organizations measure and practice audience engagement, whether they think of audiences as active or more passive users, how they incorporate audience data, and how skeptically or optimistically they view their audience. This is a development of how the topic was viewed just ten years prior, with Domingo et al. (2008) performing a similar study that ended with results that showed that of the online newspapers in their dataset, most of them interpreted online user participation as simply an opportunity for their audience to debate current events, while all the other stages of news production were closed to them. This illustrates

how news organizations have changed their attitude to audience participation and engagement in a small amount of time.

Journalists and digital news audiences value virtual conversations about the news, largely because it facilitates a functional method for journalists to engage with their audiences and vice versa. However, both groups express concern about the quality of discussion occurring in the comments (Ksiazek, 2016). Thus, both journalists and online news audiences value these virtual conversations, but only if they embody a civil discussion.

An emerging common focus on present-day studies of user-generated comments in online news regards civility in the comments section, as well as what factors might explain the degree and quality of user comments on websites. The patterns seem to suggest across different studies that one of those factors is whether or not the article is about a controversial topic, and if it is, there tends to be greater incivility in the comments (Ksiazek, 2016; Ziegele et al., 2017). The "hotter" a topic was, the "hotter" the comments section had a tendency to be. By taking a closer look to the pandemic situation specifically in quality of "hot topic", Andersson (2022) corroborated this pattern by analyzing attitudes and impoliteness from two social groups with different values system – supporters and opponents to Sweden's anti-COVID-19 – among Facebook comments under SVT official posts in spring 2020. Although the two groups tendentially shared different attitudes, the topic contributed to creating a situation for exchange of clashing opinions which, often, resulted in incivility.

Anonymity or the lack of it was also found to be a strong indicator of the level of expected civility in the comments section. The findings indicated though that the removal of anonymity in the comments section was one of the strongest measures a news organization could take to improve the level of civility in the comments, while it could not eliminate

incivility altogether (Santana, 2013; Springer et al., 2014). This has been further

corroborated by studies investigating comments made on social media (e.g. Hille & Bakker,

2014) which discovered that many news organizations instead prefer to outsource the

comments to social media sites such as Facebook, the results indicated that by discouraging

anonymous responses, the quality of comments greatly improved. However, it must be

stressed that the same studies were in agreement that there were arguably a great number

of factors that served as indicators for the level of potential incivility in the comments

section, and that oftentimes they were too many to objectively see which was the most

responsible (Ksiazek, 2016; Ziegele et al. 2017).

Comments therefore represent one of the most common formats of audience

participation in online news. Online journalism studies have thus taken an increased interest

in investigating what factors exist that can be used to explain the presence, or lack of,

audience engagement via comments. One of these factors is the presence of disagreement

and negativity in the comments section. In research by Segesten et al. (2020), it was pointed

out how comments in disagreement tended to increase the attention of audiences to the

comments section but had no effect on the likelihood of the audience to read the news

article associated with the post. Another study by Cavasso and Taboada (2021) using the

Appraisal Framework to analyze the attitudinal meanings expressed in online news

comments, also highlighted how negative evaluations were comparatively greater in

frequency than positive ones. There does however exist a level of disagreement between

scholars on whether or not it is the characteristics of the news article, or the user comments

that most accurately predict the overall intensity and quality of the user comments. Ziegele

et al. (2017), for example, argued that news website visitors consider both the

characteristics of news and articles and user comments when deciding whether or not to

post further reactive or interactive comments, but that the answer is highly dynamic and

dependent on many different factors that are difficult to pin down.

Research Design

The research design was formulated to explore and interpret information from the large quantities of data that was collected. The theoretical and practical aspects of the research design also warrant a description of for what reason they specifically were chosen. The following chapter will describe what methods were used for the CADA, how the data was collected, as well as pass comment on the ethical considerations that were made, and finally to argue for the reliability and validity of the answers that were obtained trying to answer the research questions.

Method

To answer this study's research questions, a mixed-method approach was chosen. The method combines discourse analysis, a research method that involves in-depth examination of language usage in context, with corpus linguistics, studies into the form of and/or function of language which incorporate the use of computerized corpora in their analyses. Corpus linguistics is also useful because of its affordance of the usage of computers and their large processing power to facilitate handling such large data and the tools to interpret it (Partington et al., 2013). The following paragraphs will explain in greater detail the two methods, as well as important terminologies and approaches within this research method.

Corpus linguistics is a methodology that uses computer software to analyze large collections of texts, called corpora, in order to examine patterns of language use (Partington et al., 2013; Taylor, 2008). These patterns of language usage include:

- Wordlists: frequency lists of various kinds of words (e.g., nouns, verbs, adjectives)

    (Lexical Computing CZ s.r.o., 2021)

- Collocations: a sequence or combination of words that occur more often than would be expected by chance (Matuška, 2019)

- Keywords: words that can be used to identify what is specific to one corpus in comparison to another (usually much larger) corpus (Matuška, 2023)

One of the key advantages of corpus linguistics is that it enables researchers to analyze language use in large datasets, providing a more representative sample of language use than individual texts. This also allows researchers to more easily observe phenomena such as recurrence and larger scale findings. Furthermore, it also allows for the study of phenomena of a more probabilistic kind, for instance making assertions that "word X is common and word Y is rare", and making such assertions requires a large amount of data, as well as the tools to handle and study it (Partington et al., 2013; Taylor, 2008).

Discourse analysis on the other hand, is a methodology that examines the usage of language in social contexts. It is, however, a very broad field drawing its theories and methods from disciplines such as linguistics, sociology, philosophy and psychology (Kamalu & Osisanwo, 2015). As such there are many different things one can do with it, however the foci that we are concerned with are the way it aims to understand the social and cultural meanings of language use, its effects and subsequent consequences, as well as the ways in which language is used to construct social identities and relationships but also to represent experience and encode ideology (Harris, 1952; Kamalu & Osisanwo, 2015).

The combination of these two methods is called "Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis" (CADA), which is defined as a hybrid approach combining the quantitative techniques of corpus linguistics with the qualitative techniques of discourse analysis (Baker, 2020). CADA aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how language is used, including the social and ideological aspects of language use. It assumes that language use in discourse is

not arbitrary, but rather constrained by social and ideological factors. This approach recognizes that language use is shaped by both linguistic patterns and social contexts, and that these two aspects cannot be understood in isolation (Baker, 2020; Partington et al., 2013).

CADA therefore represents a good approach for this study, since the combination of both approaches serves to create something new, which not only becomes a new method to conduct the study, but also serves to guard against the shortcomings that would arise from using only one of either approach. Specifically to this research, CADA will be used to study two corpora of comments on news stories about COVID-19 in Italy in Sweden. The plan is for the analysis of patterns and meaning found within the corpus to highlight what possible differences and/or similarities exist within the two corpora.

Data Collection

Selection of News Outlet

DM is a British tabloid newspaper and is the second most highly circulated newspaper in the United Kingdom, after the free newspaper Metro (Statista, 2022), as well as the second most visited news website, after the BBC (Similar Web, 2023). The newspaper is considered to have a political affiliation leaning towards center-right (Gaber, 2014; Meyer, 2010; Stoegner & Wodak, 2016). The newspaper has an online presence as well, with a website that features news articles, opinion pieces and multimedia content. The DM website also has an active community of commenters who can leave comments on articles and engage in discussions with other users.

The choice of news outlet for this thesis was based on a number of reasons. First and foremost, DM is a large and popular newspaper. As mentioned above, it has the highest paid

circulation, and the most significant online present of any tabloid newspaper in the UK. The website also has the feature of a comments section attached to online articles. Finally, DM has an article archive where every article that has been published on their website has been stored. Related to this is also the fact that the layout of the website allowed for the possibility of the comments to be scraped for data collection purposes. This was done with Scrapy, a program that uses Python, a programming language (*Scrapy | A Fast and Powerful Scraping and Web Crawling Framework*, n.d.).

The choice of DM allowed for the comparative element of the study to focus on the differences between the comments made on articles about Italy, and those about Sweden. DM provides a fitting platform for this since it has the affordance of a comments section on its online articles, as well as allowing those comments to be scraped for analysis. It should also be stated that DM is a purposive sample, that is it was selected because of the information it contained. That information being comments posted to articles about the pandemic in Italy, contrasted with those about the pandemic in Sweden.

There is one important aspect of this study's choice of DM that must be acknowledged, namely the political leanings of UK newspapers. Most large newspapers in the UK have certain political affiliations (e.g., centre-right or centre-left) and DM is no exception (Smith, 2017). This also applies to their readership, with many people's choice of newspaper influenced by their political beliefs. The implication therefore is that while the argument is that the research design is a strong tool for the study of public sentiment, that same sentiment will inevitably contain a certain number of political opinions in line with the newspaper and the readers, and that the results might have looked different if a different newspaper with a different political affiliation had been studied. We therefore acknowledge

that this thesis is not conducting a study of public sentiment of everyone, but rather a subsection of society.

The aim of this study is to compare how the response to the pandemic in Sweden and Italy was portrayed in the comments to the chosen news publication, their similarities and their differences. The choice of DM as the site where the data was gathered was primarily one of convenience. The contrastive country-comparison that is the main topic of this thesis required that it only use one news source not to introduce additional factors (e.g., differences in results owing to political affiliation of the newspaper rather than different presentation of the countries per se) and therefore this was done to keep the design of the study clean and clear. A cross-newspaper comparison of dataset sources is not what this thesis seeks to test. Rather, what it seeks to compare is how the response to the pandemic in Sweden and Italy was in fact portrayed by those posting comments to the news website in question, that is, how they were similar and how they were different.

Selection of Countries

The two countries of Sweden and Italy were chosen as the two foreign countries represented in the news being reported on by DM. This is because this thesis is specifically conducting a contrastive study. Italy and Sweden experienced the COVID-19 pandemic quite differently. In Italy, the pandemic had a significant impact and was therefore heavily affected. The Italian government enacted strict measures to fight the virus such as lockdowns and travel restrictions (Euronews, 2021). Sweden however was able to take an approach different to other countries in Europe, with a focus on the promotion of social distancing, good hygiene and personal responsibility (Ahlander, 2022). Sweden and Italy therefore represent a very strong contrast in pandemic situation and response, this study

can then contrastively explore aspects of public sentiment related to these two countries

pandemic response.

Collecting the Data

As mentioned in the previous section, DM has an online news archive. Every single

online news article that has been published can be found there (*UK Home | Daily Mail*

Online, n.d.). This archive is divided into years, which are divided into months which are

themselves divided into days. It is therefore possible to go into each individual day and see

every single online article that was published on DM website on that specific date. The

headlines of article are present in the archive; however, the actual body of the article cannot

be seen from the archive directly. Rather, to see the body of the article one has to go to the

article's webpage directly from the archive. The chosen dates for the articles that were to be

collected were from the 1st of January 2020 to the 31st of December 2021. This was done to

cover the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic. The choice of the first two years of the

pandemic was made to make sure that the articles selected covered a wide range of topics

relating to COVID-19

A data scraper was designed using "Scrapy", a free and open-source web-crawling

framework written in the programming language Python (*Scrapy | A Fast and Powerful*

Scraping and Web Crawling Framework, n.d.). Four different python scripts were utilized,

each with a different function. The first (Appendix 2.1) was used to identify relevant articles

based on their headlines. The second script (Appendix 2.2) subsequently crawled the body of

the articles that had been identified through their headline and selected articles that

contained mention of at least one of a set of COVID-19 pandemic-related keywords at least

five times. This was done to ensure that the article not only was about Italy and/or Sweden

but also about the pandemic. The third script (Appendix 2.3) identified which seven or eight-

digit identification code was present in the individual URL of each individual article. Finally, the fourth script (Appendix 2.4) scraped the top-level comments from each article.

In greater detail, the first script (Appendix 2.1) was used to identify relevant articles based on their headline, if the words "Italy" or "Sweden" or their derivatives (e.g., Italian, Swedish) appeared, the article was selected. The second script (Appendix 2.2) was designed to select articles based on certain designated keywords that could be found in the article body. The keywords were the following: "corona", "death", "death toll", "covid", "lockdown", "social distancing", "restriction", "cases", "pandemic", and "virus" as well as their derivatives (e.g., deaths, restrictions). These keywords were devised based on our own intuition which was informed by the reading of circa 50 articles during the refining of our data-scraping process when we observed that they were commonly occurring in these articles. They were therefore chosen to identify as many articles as possible that were about either Italy and/or Sweden, and the coronavirus pandemic. At least two of the keywords (or their derivations) had to be mentioned at least five times in the body of the article for the comments to be retrieved to ensure relevance.

The reason for the specification that a keyword appears at least five times was to minimize false identification of irrelevant articles. For example, there were multiple articles that were simple summaries of sporting events that contained the words "Sweden" or "Italy" in the headline (Batte, 2021), as well as single mentions of the keywords such as one or just two mentions of the keyword "covid" (Mathews, 2020). These articles were primarily about the sporting event in question, not the pandemic. If the five-time occurrence specification had not been in place within the script, that article, which is irrelevant to this study, would have been retrieved and possibly problematized the data analysis.

Following this, the third script (Appendix 2.3) was designed to scan the article URL for

each seven or eight-digit identification number present in them (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Screenshot of a DM article with its URL and corresponding URL numeric identifier

It then printed digit identification number to a JSON (JavaScript Object Notation) file

(Figure 2). JSON is a lightweight format for storing and transporting data in the form of

human-readable text.

Figure 2
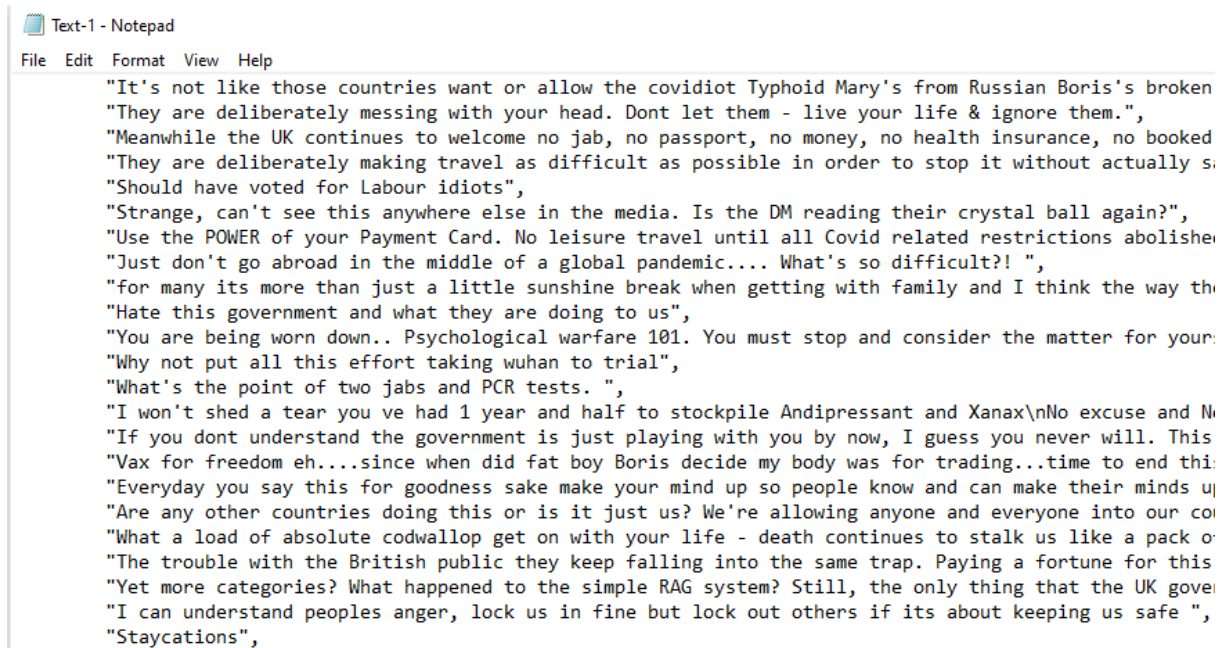
A JSON file containing a list of numeric URL identifiers

```
*urls - Notepad
File   Edit   Format   View   Help
8059321
9185603
9324655
9328281
9368261
9404021
9463385
9612833
9608159
9622373
9620095
9630125
9625381
9632065
9646369
9753337
9772579
9778049
9782125
9818269
9893735
9914531
9947285
```
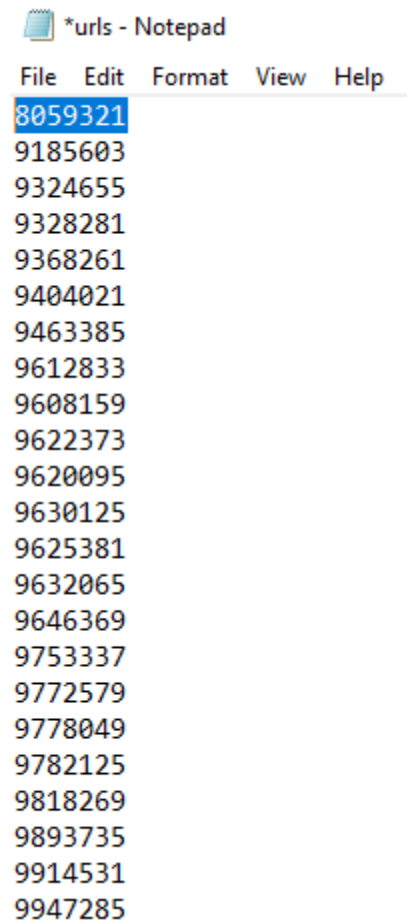
These identification numbers were then fed into the fourth script (Appendix 2.4), which was written to retrieve all the top-level comments of each designated relevant article (Figure 3). A top-level comment is a comment that either does not have any replies at all or is the first in a chain of comments of which the replies follow.

Figure 3

A JSON file containing retrieved comments

```
Text-1 - Notepad
File  Edit  Format  View  Help
    "It's not like those countries want or allow the covidiot Typhoid Mary's from Russian Boris's broken
    "They are deliberately messing with your head. Dont let them - live your life & ignore them.",
    "Meanwhile the UK continues to welcome no jab, no passport, no money, no health insurance, no booked
    "They are deliberately making travel as difficult as possible in order to stop it without actually s
    "Should have voted for Labour idiots",
    "Strange, can't see this anywhere else in the media. Is the DM reading their crystal ball again?",
    "Use the POWER of your Payment Card. No leisure travel until all Covid related restrictions abolishe
    "Just don't go abroad in the middle of a global pandemic.... What's so difficult?! ",
    "for many its more than just a little sunshine break when getting with family and I think the way th
    "Hate this government and what they are doing to us",
    "You are being worn down.. Psychological warfare 101. You must stop and consider the matter for your
    "Why not put all this effort taking wuhan to trial",
    "What's the point of two jabs and PCR tests. ",
    "I won't shed a tear you ve had 1 year and half to stockpile Andipressant and Xanax\nNo excuse and N
    "If you dont understand the government is just playing with you by now, I guess you never will. This
    "Vax for freedom eh....since when did fat boy Boris decide my body was for trading...time to end thi
    "Everyday you say this for goodness sake make your mind up so people know and can make their minds u
    "Are any other countries doing this or is it just us? We're allowing anyone and everyone into our co
    "What a load of absolute codwallop get on with your life - death continues to stalk us like a pack o
    "The trouble with the British public they keep falling into the same trap. Paying a fortune for this
    "Yet more categories? What happened to the simple RAG system? Still, the only thing that the UK gove
    "I can understand peoples anger, lock us in fine but lock out others if its about keeping us safe ",
    "Staycations",
```

Top-level comments can be seen as a direct reply to the article it is posted to, rather than engaging (e.g., as a response) to other posters' comments. This thesis is primarily interested in studying how Sweden and Italy were represented (similarly and/or differently) by commenters language, particularly evaluations. Mostly, the interest was in such language usage and evaluation as they related to the representation of Swedish and Italian situation during the coronavirus pandemic, rather than evaluations between commenters about each other and/or each other's commenting. Stopping at the top-level is a convenient way of doing so given the highly polylogic nature of digital discourse genres like online news reader comments (Marococcia, 2004).

There are also other reasons for limiting the study to the analysis of top-level comments only and not replies. Firstly, this study is primarily concerned with issues of representation, essentially, how Sweden and Italy during the COVID-19 pandemic are depicted by users in the comments. It is not trying to explore the interaction between

people posting (e.g., aspects such as politeness). Secondly, criticism posted as a reaction to a comment could have the effect of distorting the analysis, since the emotion expressed would not be a reaction towards the article directly (Diakopoulos & Mor, 2011; Eisele et al., 2021). The aforementioned reasons are why this study limits itself to the top-level comments to articles only.

The data scraper as just described resulted in 507 articles, with comments totaling 3,481,764 words for the primary keyword "Italy" and its derivatives, and 140 articles, with comments totaling 1,124,516 words for the primary keyword "Sweden" and its derivatives.

Data Analysis

Software used for the Data Analysis

CADA is the name given to any approach towards discourse analysis which uses computer software to assist the analysis (Baker, 2020). This thesis utilized the corpus suite Sketch Engine for the data analysis of the corpus. Sketch Engine is a freeware, multi-platform, multi-purpose corpus analysis toolkit. This website was developed by Lexical Computing CZ and was first released in 2003 (Lexical Computing CZ s.r.o., 2022a)

It hosts a comprehensive set of tools including:

- Concordancer (a tool to find words, tags and corpus structures, and display them in context)

- Word and keyword frequency generators (lists of words, keywords and phrases sorted by frequency)

- Cluster and lexical analysis (words and phrases clustered according to their distributional similarity score)

Corpus Analysis

The data analysis consisted of a process where first the data was explored from a corpus linguistics perspective. Firstly, a corpus analysis was conducted with Sketch Engine to identify relevant key themes, words and collocational patterns for the two corpora. Then, using a smaller number of interesting avenues identified using corpus linguistics, a more focused discourse analysis approach could be informed. Specifically, the Appraisal Theory framework, first developed by Martin and White (2005) for analyzing evaluative language was used as the discourse analytical framework to conduct this, the second part of the analysis.

First, frequency lists were created. These lists consisted of the most frequent nouns, adjectives, verbs, and n-grams. Sketch Engine has the feature of allowing the analyst to create lists of the most commonly occurring words, multi-word terms by frequency. These lists were then created, whereupon it became possible to identify for instance, which noun was most used in either corpus, as well as to compare and contrast, explore similarities and differences, etc. Another feature is the usage of reference corpora to create keyword lists of nouns, adjectives, verbs, multi-word terms, key-n-grams. A keyword is a word that appears more statistically significantly in a focus corpus (the corpus under study) than in a reference corpus, and therefore helps characterize the focus corpus's content. They are used to identify what is specific to one corpus in comparison with another (usually much larger) corpus.

Once the word lists were created, we utilized the top five most frequently appearing nouns, keyword nouns, keyword adjectives, keyword verbs, and multi-word terms to do a collocation analysis. The reason these word lists were chosen over the others (regular adjectives and verbs) was because they returned more interesting, and distinct results.

Keyword lists in particular made it possible to see what words were especially distinguished in both corpora, and therefore further illuminated the differences between them.

In Figure 4 are listed the top five nouns by relative frequency in Italy and Sweden's corpora (moving forward, they will be referred as ITA_C and SWE_C, respectively). The top five most frequently occurring words, and multi-word terms were chosen for reasons of time, as well as feasibility. Collocation analysis requires studying the multiple permutations of each word and is therefore time consuming to perform.

Figure 4

Wordlists' excerpt

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Item	Frequency	Relative frequen		Item	Frequency	Relative frequenc
2	people	25235	5758.29054		sweden	14094	10024.46727
3	italy	12843	2930.60136		people	7877	5602.57760
4	country	12503	2853.01789		death	7484	5323.05329
5	virus	12187	2780.91091		country	6048	4301.68710
6	uk	10530	2402.80560		uk	4788	3405.50229

Note. ITA_C (on the left) and SWE_C (on the right). See Appendix 2 for the full wordlists.

We will use the noun "death" from SWE_C to illustrate step by step how the corpus assisted part of the analysis was done. First, the noun "death", having been identified as the third most commonly occurring noun in SWE_C, was fed into Sketch Engine's concordance finder (Figure 5)

Figure 5

Sketch Engine's Concordance Word-search
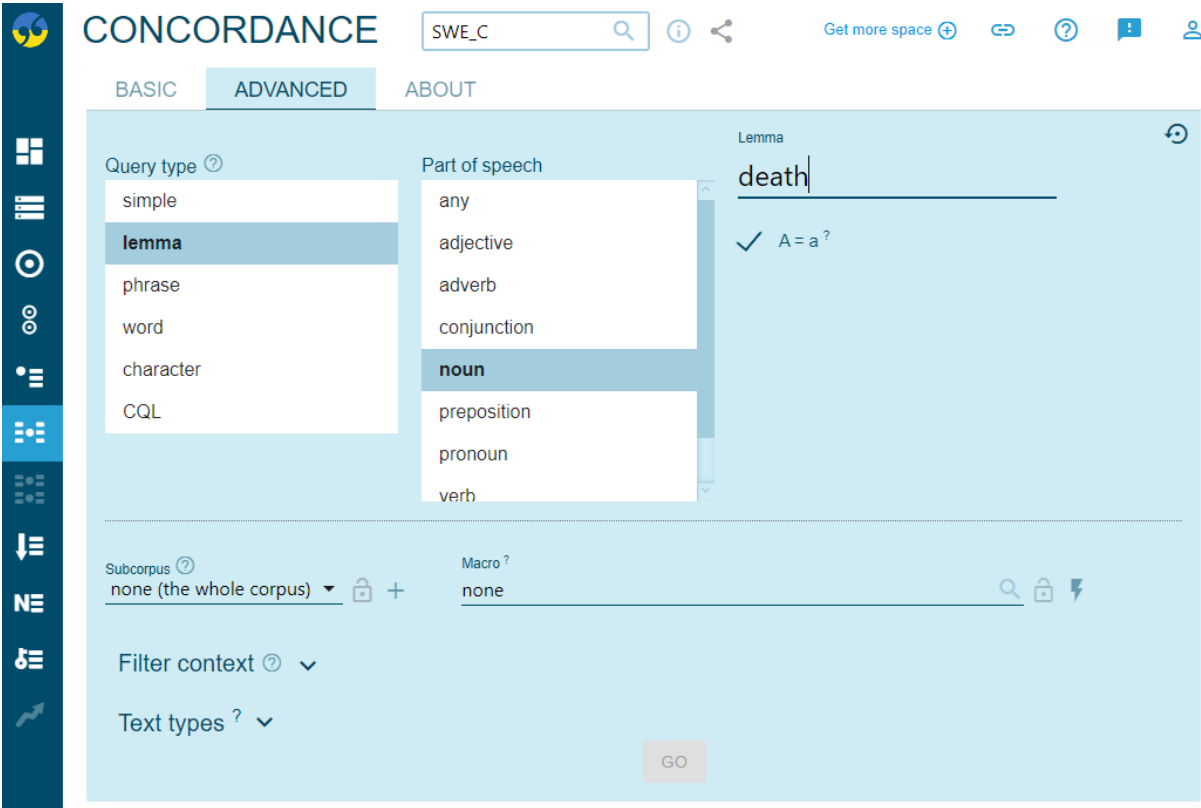
The concordance tool will then find all the occurrences of the noun "death" and display those results in the context of their usage (Figure 6)

Figure 6

Sketch Engine's Concordance Analysis
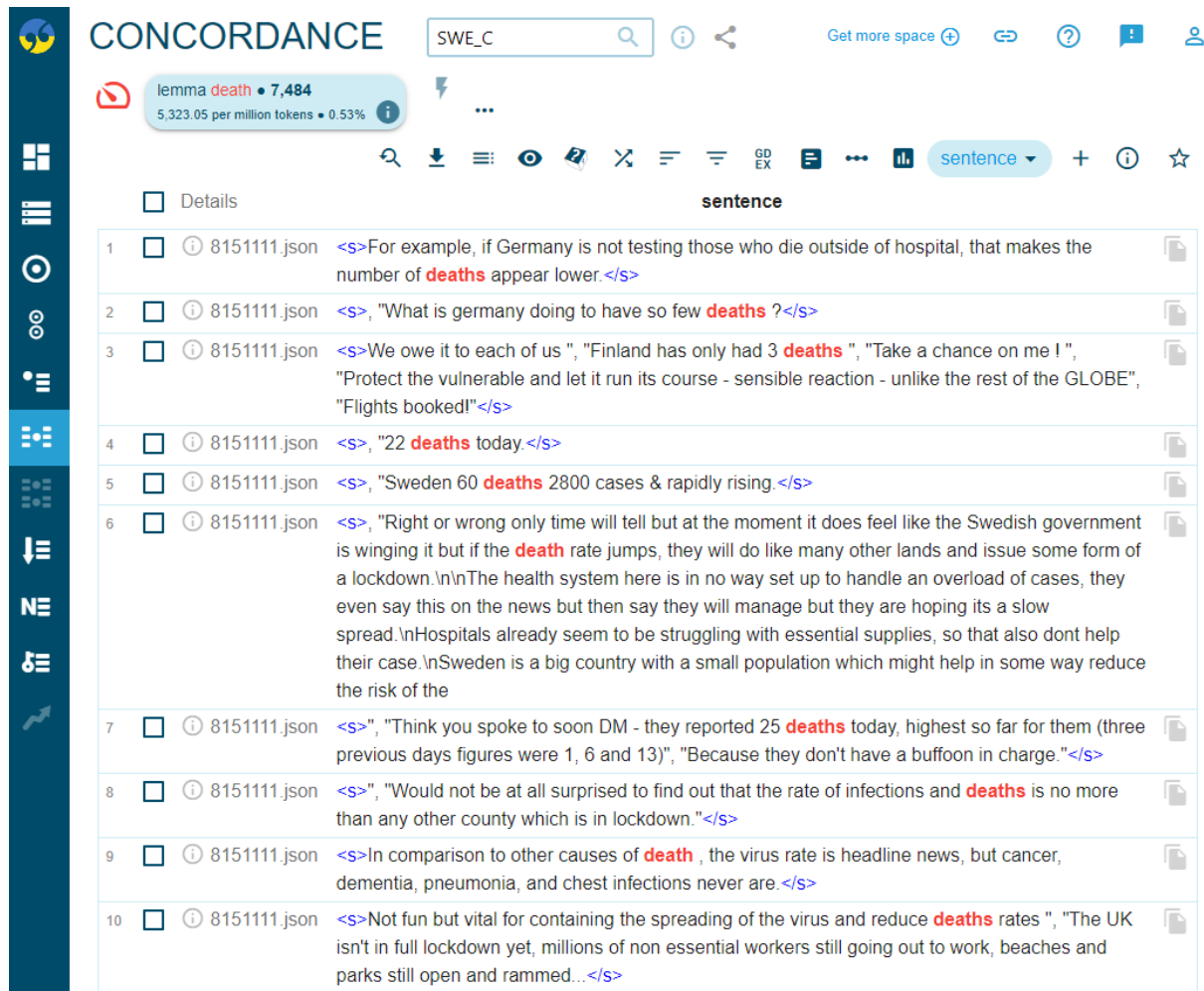
The most common collocations for "death", the sequences or combinations of words that most commonly occur together with that particular noun can then be listed and sorted in terms of logDice. LogDice is a statistical measure for identifying co-occurrence (two items appearing together). Sketch Engine uses logDice to identify collocations, it expresses the typicality or strength of the collocation (Figure 7)

Figure 7

Sketch Engine's Collocations Display
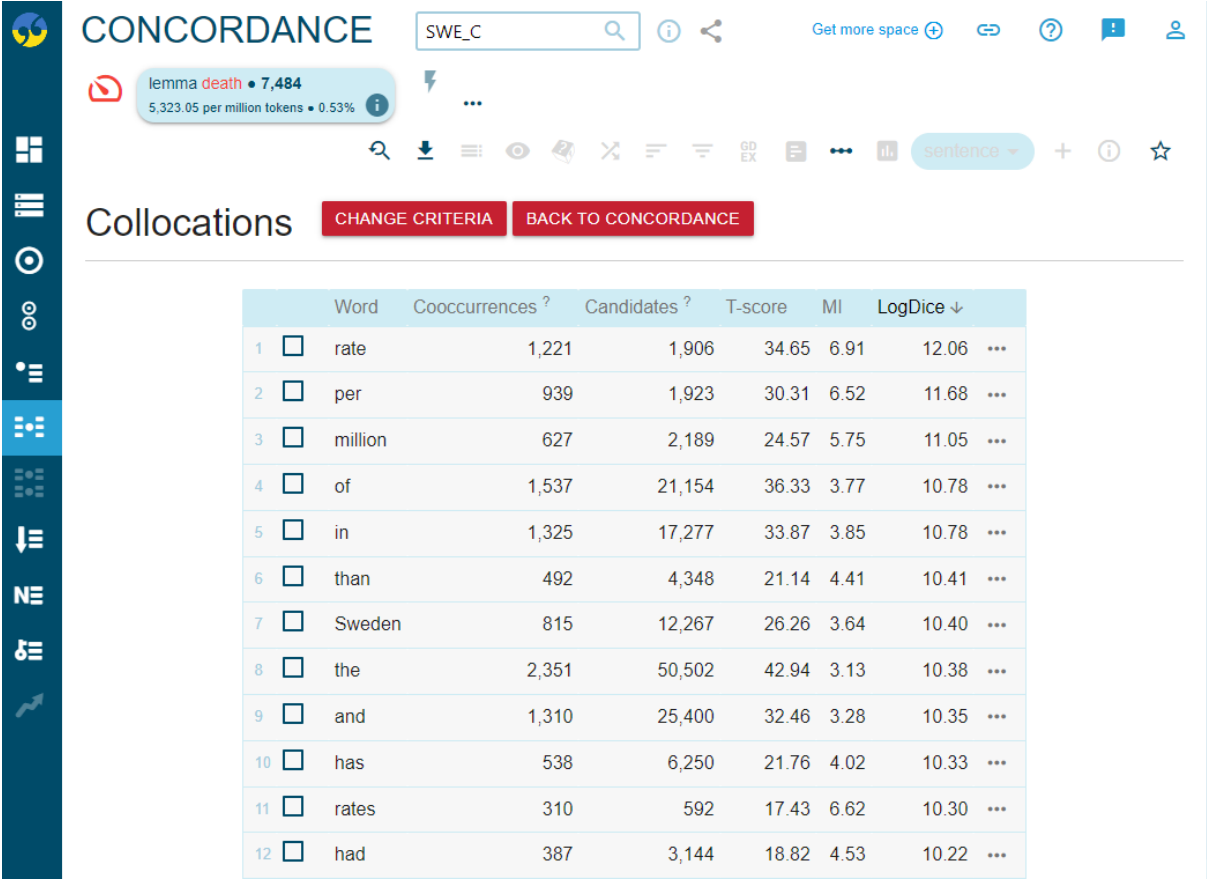
Finally, it is possible to conduct yet another concordance analysis of the strongest collocations sorted by the strength of their logDice. A random sample can then be taken of the concordances, in order to study the context and usage of that word, or multi-word term as a whole (Figure 8)

Figure 8

Sketch Engine's Concordance analysis of Word + Collocates
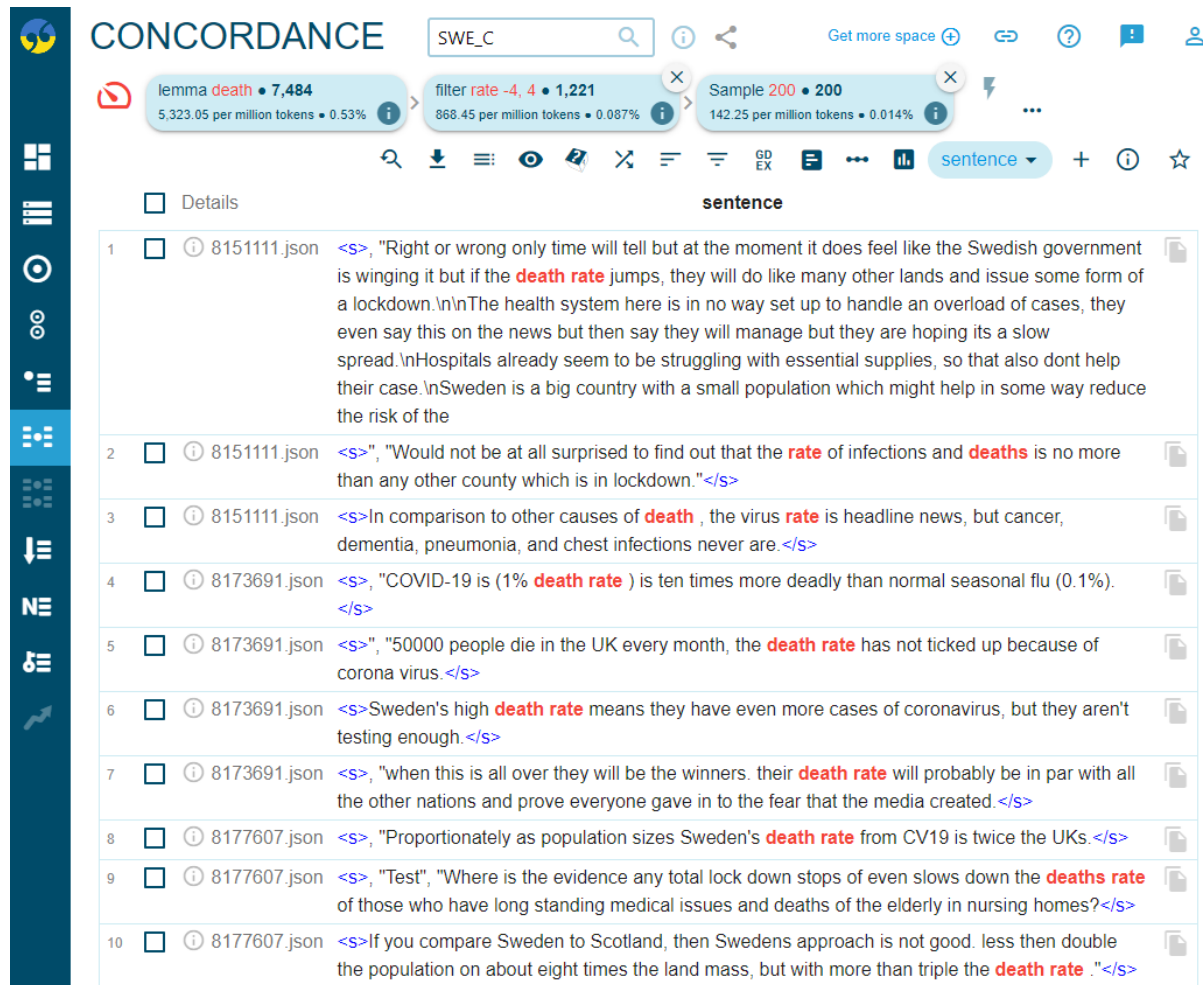
This method facilitated the study of the most common themes, patterns, topics of discussion and issues present in both corpora, both what was similar, and distinct. It then became possible to make note of what these themes, patterns and topics were, and for them to be presented in the first part of the analysis, the corpus-assisted part of the analysis. It could therefore exhibit what major things were being talked about in the comments section of the DM articles that had been retrieved.

Discourse Analysis

The corpus assisted part of the data analysis allowed for the identification of common themes, patterns and topics of discussion that were being talked about by commenters in

the corpora. It should be mentioned that the sheer size of the corpora (nearly four million words in total) makes it impossible to pinpoint with great accuracy what topics are the most prominent, or what issues are being discussed of the greatest frequency. However, it was possible to identify certain areas of discussion that clearly stood out, one of which was in regard to measures for COVID-19 containment. The choice was therefore made so to explore this area in greater detail and thus observe more specifically what similarities and differences could be found in the corpora. To do this, Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Framework has been utilized to conduct discourse analysis of the comments.

Appraisal refers to a framework for understanding, classifying, and describing the linguistic resources used to express evaluation. It is both a linguistic system of meanings for evaluation, and a description of resources for evaluation (Andersson, 2022; Cavasso & Taboada, 2021; Martin & White, 2005). Following a systemic functional approach, it characterizes the linguistic resources for evaluation as a system of choices, categories, that speakers and writers choose from as they express evaluation. The three main classifications categorize evaluation into Attitude, Graduation, and Engagement, of which Attitude constitutes the most salient and important classification of evaluation into emotion, ethics, and aesthetics (which correspond with Affect, Judgement and Appreciation respectively). Affect captures emotional responses, Judgement refers to how people appraise other people, and Appreciation is the more general evaluation of objects from an aesthetic point of view. These attitudes can then be further divided into Sentiment, positive or negative (Martin & White, 2005). This, the discourse analysis part of the analysis was concerned specifically with appraisal divided into the three forms of attitude and corresponding sentiment.

The analysis process therefore was done like this. First, one word, and three multi-word terms were identified that had a strong presence within the more general discussion related to measures and strategies for COVID-19 containment, and they were designated as:

- Lockdown

- Herd Immunity

- Social Distanc*[1]

- Self-Isolat*[2]

A concordance analysis was then performed on each word/term, in both corpora which generated multiple lines of concordance, showing the words/terms usage in context. A random sample of one hundred lines of concordance each, was then taken for each word/term, from both corpora. This resulted in eight-hundred lines of concordance (each representing one comment containing mention of the word/term) in total.

These lines of concordance were then annotated in Microsoft Excel with a codebook that was developed by following the Appraisal Framework (Appendix 3). This then allowed us to mark certain words or phrases within each individual comment into one of the three attitudes, and furthermore into one of the three types of polarity. The result then made it possible to observe and draw conclusions about the frequency of certain attitudes in relation to the words/terms that had been chosen to represent the general discussion of measures and strategies for COVID-19 containment.

The annotating and coding process is what allowed us to objectively observe what noticeable sentiment was present in the comments being posted to articles about Sweden and/or Italy and the COVID-19 pandemic, the most frequently and least frequently

---

[1] wildcard used here in order to look for all the declinations of the term (e.g. social distance, social distancing)
[2] wildcard used here in order to look for all the declinations of the term (e.g. self isolate, self isolated)

expressed attitude, as well as what words or phrases within the sample were most commonly associated with certain attitudes and corresponding polarity.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration in research refers to the set of principles that scientists and researchers should adhere to. Scientists and researchers should therefore always adhere to a high code of conduct when collecting data, especially when that data has been generated by people. When analyzing comments made by people in an online environment there are several ethical considerations that were considered, which were based on the British Association for Applied Linguistics Recommendations on Good Practice in Applied Linguistics (BAAL, 2021):

- Informed Consent: as the comments are publicly available, obtaining informed consent is not required

- Anonymity: it is essential to maintain the anonymity of the participants from whom the data was gathered, especially given that certain comments may contain sensitive or personal information. Therefore, all markers of identity (such as username and location) were removed during the process of data collection. However, it should be noted that any person who posts a comment on a publicly accessible website, like DM, has waived their right to anonymity in the first place, and DM notifies one of this when one creates an account to comment with.

- Data Security: the data was stored in a several secure databases, either computers or cloud-services with password protection and account authentication

- Respect for Privacy: the privacy of those who wrote the comments was respected by the fact that their data was secured, and their anonymity assured as far as could be

reasonably expected considering the comments used for this study were gathered from a publicly available and accessible website, no data was collected for this study that could not easily be collected by anyone with access to the internet

- Reputational Damage: this study is aware of the issue of reputational damage that could be caused by the possible connecting of the account one uses to post comments, to someone's real identity. While this study took every available step to mitigate this, it should be stated that no system is completely safe, and the possibility of reputational damage is always present.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of a measure over time and across different situations (Bryman, 2016). If a study is reliable, it should produce consistent results every time it is conducted. The reliability of this study is strong since the research design is highly specific: investigate comments on articles about the Sweden and COVID-19, compared to Italy and COVID-19. If the subject of the articles that were being commented on was different (e.g., articles about the war in Ukraine) this study would still work reliably as it just be looking at the difference in the comments, as long as the parameters of such a study were to follow this one. Reliability is important in research because it ensures that the results are not due to chance or random errors.

The research design has therefore been developed specifically to assure this, through a systematic approach to the way the data is gathered and later analyzed. There is a highly specific, step-by-step process that was presented earlier in the chapter, and this process, if followed according to plan, can be used to study a multitude of different topics, so long as the main issue one wishes to explore are the comments posted to the articles.

In order to increase the reliability of the Discourse Analysis conducted, an intercoder has been utilized to analyze an excerpt of 100 random comments though the usage of the codebook (Appendix 3). In qualitative research, the term "intercoding" refers to the procedure wherein different coders independently analyze and code the same set of data in order to compare their coding choices to see how much agreement or consistency there is (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). In the specific case, the intercoding has been conducted between the two authors of this paper: while one author took care of the entirety of the annotation process, the codebook had been developed by both and the second author took charge of re-annotating the excerpt for comparison.

Validity refers to the accuracy and appropriateness of the research findings. In other words, if a study is valid, it should measure what it is supposed to measure, and the results should accurately reflect the phenomenon being studied (Bryman, 2016). Once again, due to the specific nature and narrow structure of the research design, validity will most likely not be a problematic issue. The accuracy of the findings should likewise be trustworthy because of the fact that the study seeks to directly investigate the database which consists of the two corpora of article comments.

The study does however attempt to generalize findings to draw conclusions about the various forms of attitude present in the corpora. It is important to point this out and know there does indeed exist the possibility that the sample size, when compared to the size of the data it has been taken from, is small, which is common for studies such as this. Once again, it should also be noted that DM was chosen as a specific, and we did not use other newspapers because the expectation is that they would present evidence of different behavior. Those variables were therefore written out from this study, to not introduce a confounding variable into the data analysis.

Results

The chapter is divided into two sections, the first one concerning the results from the corpus analyses through Sketch Engine, and the second one the results from the discourse analysis.

Corpus Analysis

Topics that were apparently of importance to commentors in the two corpora can be determined by corpus analyses of these datasets, particularly from several types of word lists. Of these word lists, five were chosen (nouns, keyword nouns, verbs and adjectives, and multi-word terms), as they included the most pertinent and relevant issues and topics being discussed in the corpora. The hyperlinks listed return the chosen range of concordance lines for the topics in question. Below each table are listed the more prominent topics being discussed in concordance with the top five words or multi-word terms.

Table 1

SWE_C list of nouns (lemma) ordered by frequency

Item	Frequency	Relative frequency
sweden	14094	10024.46727
people	7877	5602.57760
death	7484	5323.05329
country	6048	4301.68710
uk	4788	3405.50229

Note. Frequency (also absolute frequency) refers to the number of occurrences or hits (Matuška, 2022). Relative frequency refers to a number of occurrences (hits) of an item per million tokens, also called i.p.m. (instances per million) and is used to compare frequencies

between corpora of different sizes – *N(hits) / size(corpus * million token) = freqmill* – (Cukr,

2021). The same applies for all following.

Prominent topics:

- Sweden's size and population density (https://ske.li/v34)

- How Sweden's size and population density allowed it to take a more relaxed

  approach to handling COVID-19 than other countries (https://ske.li/v35)

- How it was mostly old people, or people with prior medical conditions who were

  dying from COVID-19 (https://ske.li/v36; https://ske.li/v37)

- Comparison between the United Kingdom (UK) and Sweden, such as size and

  population density (https://ske.li/v38; https://ske.li/v39)

- Swedish social and cultural norms that make COVID-19 restrictions unnecessary

  (https://ske.li/v30)

Sweden's size and population density was a common topic in SWE_C. Discussion

around this topic mostly centered on a general talk about Sweden's size and population in

relation to other countries, as well as how this, and Swedish cultural norms, allowed Sweden

to take a more relaxed approach to handling the pandemic.

Table 2

ITA_C list of nouns (lemma) ordered by frequency

Item	Frequency	Relative frequency
people	25235	5758.29054
italy	12843	2930.60136
country	12503	2853.01789
virus	12187	2780.91091
uk	10530	2402.80560

Prominent topics:

- How it was mostly old people, or people with prior medical conditions who were dying from COVID-19 (https://ske.li/v30; https://ske.li/v4b)

- Talk about how coronavirus is no worse than the flu (https://ske.li/v4c)

- Reacting to the death toll and rate in Italy (https://ske.li/v4d; https://ske.li/v4e)

This list showcased a high amount of discussion concerning the actual lethality of the virus, with many people commenting that it was mostly elderly or already sickly people who were most at risk, with many arguing that COVID-19 didn't represent anything more dangerous than the seasonal flu.

Table 3

SWE_C list of key-nouns (lempos) ordered by keyness

Item	Frequency	Relative frequency	Keyness
sweden-n	14094	10024.46777	607.067
lockdown-n	4477	3184.30127	518.784
swede-n	1614	1147.97009	472.413
covid-n	1666	1184.95544	238.653
immunity-n	2800	1991.52185	212.841

Note. Keyness (also Keyness score, or Score), is calculated by Sketch Engine by applying Simple Maths which compares the frequencies in the focus corpus with the frequencies in the reference corpus (Lexical Computing CZ s.r.o., 2022b). Frequency and Relative frequency refer to focus corpora. The same applies for all the following.

Prominent Topics:

- Sweden's size, population and population density, often in a comparative context (https://ske.li/v4y; https://ske.li/v4z)

- How Swedish people practice social distancing and follow rules and regulations (https://ske.li/v41; https://ske.li/v42; https://ske.li/v43)

- Talk about herd immunity (https://ske.li/v44)

The discussion found from this list was similar to the one of the regular nouns, with the addition of there being a high amount of talk about herd immunity and its feasibility as a strategy to fight COVID-19.

Table 4

ITA_C list of key-nouns (lempos) ordered by keyness

Item	Frequency	Relative frequency	Keyness
lockdown-n	4546	1037.33655	169.112
covid-n	3360	766.70721	154.488
scaremongering-n	760	173.42186	147.953
jab-n	1801	410.96417	143.448
dm-n	3322	758.03607	141.774

Note. "jab" is an English slang for vaccine, and "dm" refers to Daily Mail

Prominent Topics:

- How people were being marked as having died from COVID-19 when it wasn't the actual cause of death (https://ske.li/v45; https://ske.li/v46; https://ske.li/v47; https://ske.li/v48)

- Discussions about the lockdown in Italy (https://ske.li/v49; https://ske.li/v40; https://ske.li/v5a; https://ske.li/v5b; https://ske.li/v5c)

- Criticism of DM for perceived scaremongering in its coverage of the pandemic (https://ske.li/v5d; https://ske.li/v5e)

- Talking about the various types of vaccines being developed by different companies and their usage (https://ske.li/v5f; https://ske.li/v5g; https://ske.li/v5h; https://ske.li/v5i; https://ske.li/v5j)

This list generated a large number of different topics. One of the most prominent was how people were saying the many deaths from COVID-19 had been falsely recorded as such. Vaccines were also a common topic of discussion, how they were being developed and

utilized. Finally, there was a large amount of criticism directed towards DM for perceived scaremongering.

Table 5

SWE_C list of key-adjectives (lempos) ordered by keyness

Item	Frequency	Relative frequency	Keyness
lockdown-j	402	285.92563	188.609
covid-j	333	236.84885	165.988
swedish-j	1537	1093.20312	103.496
draconian-j	107	76.10458	33.383
scandinavian-j	134	95.30854	31.968

Prominent topics:

- How it was mostly old people, or people with prior medical conditions who were dying from COVID-19 (https://ske.li/v5k)

- How Swedish people practice social distancing and follow rules and regulations as a part of their culture (https://ske.li/v5l; https://ske.li/v5m; https://ske.li/v5n)

- Talking about Sweden's alternative approach to handling the pandemic (https://ske.li/v5o; https://ske.li/v5q; https://ske.li/v5r;

- Talk about the Swedish government handling of the situation (https://ske.li/v5p)

This list too generated a larger number of topics, being a combination of discussion about the perceived true lethality of COVID-19 and falsely inflated death numbers, as well as how Sweden's cultural facets afforded Sweden the option to take a more relaxed approach to the pandemic.

Table 6

ITA_C list of key-adjectives (lempos) ordered by keyness

Item	Frequency	Relative frequency	Keyness
covid-j	769	175.47554	123.158
lockdown-j	374	85.34181	56.756
infected-j	1149	262.18646	33.939
selfish-j	890	203.08614	32.310
heartbreaking-j	334	76.21435	26.384

Prominent topics:

- Comments about lockdown measures in Italy (https://ske.li/v5s)

- How people were being marked as having died of COVID-19 when it wasn't the actual cause of death (https://ske.li/v5t; https://ske.li/v5u)

- How it was mostly old people, or people with prior medical conditions who were dying from COVID-19 (https://ske.li/v5v)

Similar to previous lists, talk about how people were being falsely listed as dying of COVID-19, as well as the perceived low lethality of the virus and that it was mostly elderly people or those with previous conditions actually dying from it.

Table 7

SWE_C list of key-verbs (lempos) ordered by keyness

Item	Frequency	Relative frequency	Keyness
quarantine-v	121	86.06219	35.165
vaccinate-v	182	129.44891	33.119
mutate-v	141	100.28735	30.476
infect-v	426	302.99582	30.109
trash-v	128	91.04100	29.596

Prominent topics:

- Talking about how people should be in self-isolation or quarantine in connection with some kind of travel (https://ske.li/v5w; https://ske.li/v5x; https://ske.li/v5y)

- Talk about how the virus keeps mutating and changing and the problems this causes (https://ske.li/v5z)

- Discussion of the damage the various COVID-19 restrictions could cause to the economy, as well as how Sweden is avoiding this with its lax restrictions (https://ske.li/v51)

Different to previous lists, here there are a number of different topics being discussed. First is about how people should be in self-isolation or quarantine after some kind of travel. Discussion of the damage the COVID-19 restrictions are doing to the economy, as well as how Sweden is avoiding this with its alternative approach to the pandemic.

Table 8

ITA_C list of key-verbs (lempos) ordered by keyness

Item	Frequency	Relative frequency	Keyness
quarantine-v	824	188.02582	76.350
vaccinate-v	1146	261.50192	66.646
jab-v	251	57.27485	37.379
infect-v	1586	361.90405	35.943
holiday-v	220	50.20107	28.854

Prominent topics:

- Talk about the number of days one must be in self-isolation or quarantine after either some form of international or domestic travel (https://ske.li/v54)

- Discussion about how in many situations it a requirement is to have been vaccinated twice "double jab" (https://ske.li/v53)

- Discussion about how many people are fully vaccinated (https://ske.li/v52)

A list that generated some topics not found in the others, the two main topics of discussion in the comments were talk about the number of days one must be in self-isolation or quarantine after traveling. Furthermore, there were many statements made by people talking about it had become a requirement to have two vaccinations (a "double jab") in many situations.

Table 9

SWE_C list of multi-word terms ordered by keyness

Item	Frequency	Relative frequency	Keyness
herd immunity	2017	1434.60693	1165.552
death rate	1438	1022.78870	407.079
population density	572	406.83945	155.068
covid death	204	145.09659	140.675
swedish people	196	139.40652	135.952

Note. Multi-word terms (also simply "terms") refer to expressions consisting of several tokens which appear more frequently in one corpus (focus corpus) compared to another corpus (reference corpus) (Cukr, 2019).

Prominent topics:

- Discussion about Sweden's COVID-19 death rate (https://ske.li/v55)

- General discussion of herd immunity as a strategy to fight COVID-19 (https://ske.li/v56)

- How Swedish people practice social distancing and follow rules and regulations as a part of their culture (https://ske.li/v57)

- Talk about Sweden's size and population density and the culture of Swedish people (https://ske.li/v58)

This list resulted in topics that were similar to previous lists. The main distinguishing topic was the discussion of herd immunity as a strategy to fight coronavirus, here commenters were arguing both in favor and against it as a viable method.

Table 10

ITA_C list of multi-word terms ordered by keyness

Item	Frequency	Relative frequency	Keyness
self isolate	827	188.71037	184.433
death rate	1606	366.46777	146.113
az vaccine	477	108.84504	109.845
corona virus	472	107.70411	89.003
herd immunity	415	94.69746	77.696

Note. "az" is used in the comments as an abbreviation for "AstraZeneca"

Prominent topics:

- Discussion about the feasibility and practicability of the herd immunity as a strategy against COVID-19 (https://ske.li/v59)

- Reacting to the death rate Italy had (https://ske.li/v50; https://ske.li/v6a; https://ske.li/v6b; https://ske.li/v6c)

- Talking about the development and subsequent usage of the Astra Zeneca vaccine (https://ske.li/v6d)

This wordlist allowed us to see that herd immunity was a commonly discussed topic even in the ITA_C, here commenters were arguing for and against it. Another specific part was the discussion of the vaccine being developed and distributed by Astra Zeneca.

Discourse Analysis

As previously demonstrated, commenters' discussions generated by the concordance analyses of words and keywords mainly revolve around issues related to measures and strategies for COVID-19 containment. Due to the high number of comments surrounding the

macro-topic, the focus has been narrowed down to four specific items/topics (here reported under the lemma form) which have been analyzed in both corpora:

- lockdown

- herd immunity

- social distanc*

- self isolat*

These items, in addition to being representative of the theme in question, are also present in the wordlists (apart from social distancing).

In order to proceed with the annotations for the Discourse Analysis, a sample was taken according to the following procedure:

1. For each item in each corpus has been run concordance analysis

2. Top 5 collocates by frequency have been selected to be displayed in their relative comments

3. Sketch Engine's "Random Sample" generator has been run in order to get a maximum of 100 comments for each item

From now on, the sample of comments taken from ITA_C will be referred to as ITA_S (376 comments), while the sample from SWE_C will be referred to as SWE_S. Consequentially, the total number of comments analyzed is 776 (Table 11). Of these comments, 407 contained at least one instance of inscribed attitude, with a total of 596 evaluative instances (Table 11). 257 instances of inscribed attitude were found in ITA_S and 339 were found in SWE_S (Table 11). There were 369 comments that contained no instance of inscribed evaluation, 193 in ITA_S and 176 in SWE_S (Table 11).

Table 11

ITA_S and SWE_S Sizes and Distribution of Annotations

Total Comments Analyzed: 776			
Total Comments Annotated: 407			
Total Comments with No Inscribed Attitude: 369			
ITA_S: 376		SWE_S: 400	
Comments Annotated: 183	Comments with No Inscribed Attitude: 193	Comments Annotated: 224	Comments with No Inscribed Attitude: 176
Inscribed attitudes: 257		Inscribed attitudes: 339	
Total inscribed attitudes: 596			

Note. Albeit ITA_S is smaller than SWE_S, the difference is minimal, and it does not affect the results of the annotations

Regarding the frequency of annotated inscribed attitudes, although the two samples are close in size, they returned a different number of annotated comments. SWE_S contained 339 instances, as opposed to ITA_S which counted a smaller number of 257 instances. Therefore, of all instances of attitude in both corpora, 57% were from SWE_S, and 43% from ITA_S. SWE_S also returned a higher number of instances of inscribed attitude per annotated comment (1.5 instances per comment) compared to ITA_S (1.2 instances per comment).

Moving forward, Table 12 and 13 summarize the results of the Discourse Analysis of both samples. In ITA_S, the most frequent type of attitude was Judgement (49.81%, Table 12), which stood for half of the instances of inscribed attitude. In SWE_S the most frequent type of attitude was Appreciation (46.61%, Table 13), at just under half of all instances of

inscribed attitude. Affect was the least frequent of all attitudes in both samples – 11.28% for

ITA_S (Table 12) and 10.62% for SWE_S (Table 13).

Table 12

Distribution of Types of Attitudes and Sentiment in ITA_S

	Positive	Negative	
Affect	3.89% (10)	7.39% (19)	**11.28% (29)**
Judgement	8.17% (21)	41.63% (107)	**49.81% (128)**
Appreciation	9.73% (25)	29.18% (75)	**38.91% (100)**
	21.79% (56)	**78.21% (201)**	

Note. Percentages are calculated on total inscribed attitudes of ITA_S. Totals in bold,

absolute number of issues annotated in brackets

Table 13

Distribution of Types of Attitudes and Sentiment in SWE_S

	Positive	Negative	
Affect	2.65% (9)	7.96% (27)	**10.62% (36)**
Judgement	13.86% (47)	28.91% (98)	**42.77% (145)**
Appreciation	16.22% (55)	30.38% (103)	**46.61% (158)**
	32.74% (108)	**67.26% (231)**	

Note. Percentages are calculated on total inscribed attitudes of SWE_S. Totals in bold,

absolute number of issues annotated in brackets

This is a noticeable similarity between the two samples, and represents an interesting

finding, that Affect gives such a low number of instances of inscribed attitude. One may

believe online discourse, such as that in the comments section of an online news article,

would directly involve a frequent reference to emotions and emotional behavior. One might

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also be of the expectation that commenters usually express their opinion as a description of their emotions using the first person (e.g., "I've decided to self isolate because I feel dreadful", Row 61, self isolat*, ITA_S, Appendix 4). However, this is not what we discovered from exploring the data. Rather, we noticed that to convey opinion Affect is not used that much. Rather, to express opinion, it is done predominantly via Judgement (e.g., "The government needs to act decisively", Row 20, self isolat*, ITA_S, Appendix 4; "[…] this government have not been very good at handling this outbreak have they!", Row 29, self isolat*, ITA_S, Appendix 4) or Appreciation (e.g., "It is safer to self isolate just in case", Row 15, self isolat*, ITA_S, Appendix 4).

In terms of sentiment, both samples displayed a significant majority of negativity, although the difference was more pronounced in ITA_S: over a total of 257 annotated instances, 201 (78.21% of the sample) displaying negativity were counted (Table 12), while in SWE_S this was less lopsided, with 231 negative instances amounting to 67.26% (Table 13). See Appendix 4 for the complete annotated samples. In regard to positivity, it is noticeable that comments under COVID-19 related news in SWE_S (32.74%, Table 13) display more general positivity in comparison to ITA_S (21.79%, Table 12). SWE_S has roughly 11% more positivity than ITA_S, but differences become even much more noticeable upon narrower inspection of the single topics.

Going forward, findings divided into single topics will be presented in detail, and differences between the samples will be corroborated by explanatory examples.

Lockdown

Of the four topics of discussion, "lockdown" displays similarities between ITA_S and SWE_S in terms of average of types of attitudes (Tables 14 and 15). Judgement and Appreciation however showcase most predominantly where the greatest contrast occurs, and one

instance occurs in either sample. Positive Judgement in ITA_S stands at only 4.49% (Table 14), whereas negative Judgement stands for nearly 34.83% (Table 14), positive polarity therefore only occurs at a seventh of that of negative polarity. Positive Appreciation in SWE_S likewise stands at 12.73% (Table 15), but negative Appreciation constitutes over three times as much (41.82%, Table 15).

Table 14

Distribution of Types of Attitudes and Sentiment (lockdown, ITA_S)

	Positive	Negative	
Affect	2.25% (2)	7.87% (7)	**10.11% (9)**
Judgement	4.49% (4)	34.83% (31)	**39.33% (35)**
Appreciation	12.36% (11)	38.20% (34)	**50.56% (45)**
	19.10% (17)	**80.90% (72)**	

Note. Percentages are calculated on total inscribed attitudes of "lockdown" in ITA_S. Totals in bold, absolute number of issues annotated in brackets

Table 15

Distribution of Types of Attitudes and Sentiment (lockdown, SWE_S)

	Positive	Negative	
Affect	0.00% (0)	6.36% (7)	**6.36% (7)**
Judgement	11.82% (13)	27.27% (30)	**39.09% (43)**
Appreciation	12.73% (14)	41.82% (46)	**54.55% (60)**
	24.55% (27)	**75.45% (83)**	

Note. Percentages are calculated on total inscribed attitudes of "lockdown" in SWE_S. Totals in bold, absolute number of issues annotated in brackets

The most prominent attitude for this topic is Negative Appreciation for both ITA_S and

SWE_S – 38.20% (Table 14) and 41.82% (Table 15), respectively. In both cases, most of these

expressions revolve around lockdown in terms of ineffectiveness and unnecessity, at times

also mentioning the detrimental effects that the strategy has on the state of the economy.

"Makes you realize lockdowns don't really work and only destroy the economy" (Row 99,

lockdown, ITA_S, Appendix 4)

"Countries in lockdown will have huge problems to face when they open up, risk for backslash

is high" (Row 31, lockdown, SWE_S, Appendix 4)

"As I said, a lockdown was a complete waste of time and has caused more damage than good"

(Row 67, lockdown, SWE_S, Appendix 4)

Interestingly, comments displaying Negative Judgement sometimes seem to contrast

those expressing Negative Appreciation, as the trend in both corpora seems to be criticizing

the decision of countries not going into lockdown at the right time and people misbehaving.

"For the lockdown to work EVERYONE must stay at home, sadly many Italians are still mixing,

people here are doing the same and worse […]" (Row 32, lockdown, ITA_S, Appendix 4)

"Ignorant man, and ignorant people, watch what happens in 2 weeks time, then you will all

regret not going into lockdown!" (Row 10, lockdown, SWE_S, Appendix 4)

Herd Immunity

"herd immunity" showcases interesting differences between the samples. In regard to

general Sentiment, SWE_S displays Positivity three times more frequently than in ITA_S –

37.80% (Table 17) vs. 12.24% (Table 16).

Table 16

Distribution of Types of Attitudes and Sentiment (herd immunity, ITA_S)

	Positive	Negative	
Affect	2.04% (1)	6.12% (3)	**8.16% (4)**
Judgement	0.00% (0)	48.98% (24)	**48.98% (24)**
Appreciation	10.20% (5)	32.65% (16)	**42.86% (21)**
	12.24% (6)	**87.76% (43)**	

Note. Percentages are calculated on total inscribed attitudes of "herd immunity" in ITA_S.

Totals in bold, absolute number of issues annotated in brackets

Table 17

Distribution of Types of Attitudes and Sentiment (herd immunity, SWE_S)

	Positive	Negative	
Affect	3.66% (3)	7.32% (6)	**10.98% (9)**
Judgement	10.98% (9)	21.95% (18)	**32.93% (27)**
Appreciation	23.17% (19)	32.93% (27)	**56.10% (46)**
	37.80% (31)	**62.20% (51)**	

Note. Percentages are calculated on total inscribed attitudes of "herd immunity" in SWE_S.

Totals in bold, absolute number of issues annotated in brackets

In SWE_S, the positive discussions usually regard the possible effectiveness of herd immunity strategy in Sweden, while for ITA_S the few positive attitudes in regard to herd immunity are only used as means of comparison between UK and Italy, since the latter did not apply that strategy.

"Herd Immunity could work and is probably the best approach to defeating this virus quickly"

(Row 2, herd immunity, SWE_S, Appendix 4)

"Britain's approach in developing herd immunity is by far superior to anything anyone else is trying" (Row 6, herd immunity, ITA_S, Appendix 4)

Regarding the types of Attitudes, Affect is again a point of similarity between the samples (Tables 16 and 17), while the distribution of Judgement and Appreciation highlights an interesting difference. Regarding Judgement, the differences in how it is expressed further show the difference in how the topic is being discussed in both corpora samples. In SWE_S "herd immunity" comments containing at least one instance of Judgement are often positive towards the concept of "herd immunity":

"Sweden got it right in the end and bravely went in the herd immunity strategy" (Row 22, herd Immunity, SWE_S, Appendix 4)

"But they will not have to worry about the so called second wave, as the herd immunity will be working" (Row, 3, herd Immunity, SWE_S, Appendix 4)

"Boris should have gone for herd immunity instead of kneeling to woke scientists..." (Row, 13, herd Immunity, SWE_S, Appendix 4)

However, in ITA_S there are very few optimistic mentions of "herd immunity" to speak of, rather the sample presents a spike in Negative Judgement, with frequency values double as those in SWE_S (48.98% vs. 21.95%, Tables 16 and 17). Instances in ITA_S mostly include criticizing politicians, generally on account of their callousness or incompetence:

"Johnson's inaction and dumb adoption of the "herd immunity" strategy will cost thousands of lives" (Row 4, Herd Immunity, ITA_S, Appendix 4)

"Our government is guilty of experimenting on the UK population with their herd immunity strategy" (Row 6, Herd Immunity, ITA_S, Appendix 4)

"We're all going to pay for the precious first weeks of government inaction while thel with the idiot "herd immunity" strategy" (Row 11, Herd Immunity, ITA_S, Appendix 4)

As for Appreciation, negative evaluations are again the most prominent for both ITA_S and SWE_S but also more balanced by positive instances. Here, the vast majority of comments in both cases address the particular strategies that were implemented to obstruct the spread of COVID-19 (e.g., "Dr. Faucci [sic] originally said masks don't work", Row 71, herd immunity, ITA_S, Appendix 4; "Most scientists believe herd immunity will work", Row 31, herd immunity, SWE_S, Appendix 4), the exceptions being those which refer to the depicting of the virus and its consequences by particular news outlets.

Social Distanc*

"social distanc*" displays a very marked difference in how Sentiment is distributed within the samples. While ITA_S has a clear-cut prominence of Negativity in comparison to Positivity (77.42% vs. 22.58%, Table 18), instances of Negativity and Positivity in SWE_S look almost equal in terms of frequency (53.73% vs. 46.27%, Table 19).

Table 18

Distribution of Types of Attitudes and Sentiment (social distanc, ITA_S)*

	Positive	Negative	
Affect	6.45% (4)	9.68% (6)	**16.13% (10)**
Judgement	8.06% (5)	43.55% (27)	**51.61% (32)**
Appreciation	8.06% (5)	24.19% (15)	**32.26% (20)**
	22.58% (14)	**77.42% (48)**	

Note. Percentages are calculated on total inscribed attitudes of "social distanc*" in ITA_S.

Totals in bold, absolute number of issues annotated in brackets

Table 19

Distribution of Types of Attitudes and Sentiment (social distanc*, SWE_S)

	Positive	Negative	
Affect	2.99% (2)	1.49% (1)	**4.48% (3)**
Judgement	20.90% (14)	31.34% (21)	**52.24% (35)**
Appreciation	22.39% (15)	20.90% (14)	**43.28% (29)**
	46.27% (31)	**53.73% (36)**	

Note. Percentages are calculated on total inscribed attitudes of "social distanc*" in SWE_S. Totals in bold, absolute number of issues annotated in brackets

This topic presents an interesting difference between ITA_S and SWE_S in regard to Judgement and Appreciation. In continuation with the Sentiment, Table 19 also shows how instances of Negative Judgement (31.34%) and Appreciation (20.90%) are more balanced by Positive instances (20.90% and 22.39%). These findings are corroborated by comments showing a general praise of Swedes' common sense and perceived better respect of social distancing norms in sharp contrast with the blame targeting UK citizens lack of control.

> "In practice the Swedes observed social distancing because they have more community spirit than in the UK where we may have had harder lockdown rules but these were widely broken due to the rampant individualism we have here" (Row 59, social distanc*, SWE_S, Appendix 4)

In terms of Judgement, the greater part of the comments pertaining to ITA_S are negative (43.55%, Table 18) and generally focused on the actions and behaviors of civilians and groups of people (as opposed to politicians or governments), with critique centered around perceived irresponsibility and ignorance (e.g. "In this country, too many people are ignoring social distancing rules", Row 53, social distanc*, ITA_S, Appendix 4; "Infantile mass hysteria…", Row 79, social distanc*, ITA_S, Appendix 4), and only a few positive comments

to balance things out ("[…] people treat each other with respect, observe social distancing, wear masks", Row 94, Social distanc*, ITA_S, Appendix 4).

Self Isolat*

"self isolat*" is the only topic showing an inverted trend in terms of Sentiment. Although Negativity is still the predominant Sentiment in both samples, SWE_S displays more frequent negative instances than ITA_S – respectively, 72.50% (Table 21) vs. 66.67% (Table 20).

Table 20

Distribution of Types of Attitudes and Sentiment (self isolat, ITA_S)*

	Positive	Negative	
Affect	5.26% (3)	5.26% (3)	**10.53% (6)**
Judgement	21.05% (12)	43.86% (25)	**64.91% (37)**
Appreciation	7.02% (4)	17.54% (10)	**24.56% (14)**
	33.33% (19)	**66.67% (38)**	

Note. Percentages are calculated on total inscribed attitudes of "self isolat*" in ITA_S. Totals in bold, absolute number of issues annotated in brackets

Table 21

Distribution of Types of Attitudes and Sentiment (self isolat*, SWE_S)

	Positive	Negative	
Affect	5.00% (4)	16.25% (13)	**21.25% (17)**
Judgement	13.75% (11)	36.25% (29)	**50.00% (40)**
Appreciation	8.75% (7)	20.00% (16)	**28.75% (23)**
	27.50% (22)	**72.50% (58)**	

Note. Percentages are calculated on total inscribed attitudes of "self isolat*" in SWE_S.

Totals in bold, absolute number of issues annotated in brackets

Negativity in Affect is expressed in ITA_S (5.26%, Table 20) and SWE_S (16.25%, Table

21) through instances of fear and upset regarding the spread of the pandemic.

"I've decided to self isolate because I feel dreadful and IF I have it I wouldn't want to be

amongst others" (Row 61, self isolat*, ITA_S, Appendix 4)

"Swedes desperate to self isolate can always move to a prison if they're so scared of getting

the virus" (Row 67, self isolat*, SWE_S, Appendix 4)

It is worth mentioning that, in terms of Positive Judgement, the expressions mostly

concern people's common sense regarding the social norms during the pandemic in both

samples. However, within ITA_S (21.05%, Table 20) comments show a pattern in addressing

preferrable social behaviors that people should adopt in a critical situation of pandemic,

while for SWE_A (13.75%, Table 21) they tend to actively commend Swedes' performances

and qualities.

"Those coming back from Italy should have the common sense and decency to self isolate to

protect their family, friends and rest of society" (Row 57, self isolat*, ITA_S, Appendix 4)

"The real Swedes are responsible and can be trusted to keep a distance from each other and self isolate if need" (Row 87, self isolat*, SWE_S, Appendix 4)

Negative Judgement in ITA_S (43.86%, Table 20) also reflects frustration towards people's selfishness and misbehavior, while in SWE_S (36.25%, Table 21) criticism targets governmental decisions and strategies.

"Anyone with even a tiny brain shoulh d [sic] be able to work it out if they are telling you to self isolate if you even go into those regions, obviously there is an increased risk" (Row 3, self isolat*, ITA_S, Appendix 4)

"So many Brits though are too selfish to self isolate and they will ignore the advice" (Row 5, self isolat*, ITA_S, Appendix 4)

"As I've said all along trusting people who are generally selfish to self isolate is tantamount to fanning the flames of the fire" (Row 12, self isolat*, ITA_S, Appendix 4)

"The most dangerous pandemic in Sweden is...politics " (Row 16, self isolat*, SWE_S, Appendix 4)

"Swedes desperate to self isolate can always move to a prison if they're so scared of getting the virus" (Row 67, self isolat*, SWE_S, Appendix 4)

"My son lives in Sweden and he does tell me that most Swedes or perplexed with the governments lack of planning […]" (Row 34, self isolat*, SWE_S, Appendix 4)

Both corpora's samples show similar levels of Positive and Negative Appreciation which do not show significative patterns.

Discussion

In this chapter, the results previously showcased will be discussed and interpreted within the broader context of existing literature. Specifically, the differences and similarities between the two corpora will be presented and discussed below, along with the implications and significance of this study. This chapter will first discuss the findings and subsequent implications of the corpus-analysis results, before subsequently doing the same for the discourse analysis results.

Corpus Analysis

Social media has been shown to be a powerful tool for the study of public sentiment (Agarwal et al., 2022; Bridgman et al., 2020; Eilders & Porten-Cheé, 2022; Xu et al., 2022). This whole undertaking has effectively been an exploration of public sentiment of various aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic using DM and its online comments (a type of social media) as a lens to see them, as well as a particularly constrained case focus, concerning the portrayal of Sweden and Italy in the comments. This study has been able to, through the application of computer-assisted corpus analysis to identify prominent topics of discussion within the comments. The results showed for instance the prominence of terms like "herd immunity", "lockdown", and "death rate" in both corpora, among others. These all represent areas of interest and importance for those writing the comments, and they are therefore important for understanding public sentiment regarding the pandemic in general and these issues in particular. The fact that this study has been able to verify such a method as valid for the study of public sentiment corroborates previous studies that utilized the same approach (Agarwal et al., 2022; Bridgman et al., 2020; Eilders & Porten-Cheé, 2022; Xu et al., 2022; Yan et al., 2021). Furthermore, there are important implications stemming from being able to

show that such a method can be used for sentiment analysis. Firstly, sentiment analysis is a promising tool for authorities and governments to monitor public opinion for improved risk management and response. Secondly, those same authorities have a responsibility to learn about the information circulating among the public, as well as public opinion since this can be very useful in clarifying rumors and developing strategy in a timely manner (Xu et al., 2022).

One such topic was the word "scaremongering" displaying a high level of keyness in the ITA_C's list of key-nouns (Table 4) in comparison to SWE_C. The main topic that appears in the collocations is a critique of DM for its perceived scaremongering about the pandemic. However, it only appears in ITA_C indicating it's found mainly in reaction to articles about Italy and COVID-19. It has been shown that the political agenda of newspapers often heavily impacts their reporting on certain issues (Gabore, 2020; Wang, 2021; Zhang & Shaw, 2021). This finding, that scaremongering as a topic appears mostly in comments to articles related to Italy not Sweden could therefore possibly indicate a manifestation of DM's political agenda in its reporting of the pandemic subsequently being commented on by readers. This could also be a more general manifestation of tabloid journalism. Tabloid journalism has been noted, particularly during the pandemic, for its perceived application of fearmongering in its coverage (Kania, 2022). The results could therefore also simply be corroborating earlier studies which found that fearmongering is an attribute of tabloid journalism in general, and that the reason this was more prominent in ITA_C was because of the more serious situation Italy was in compared to Sweden.

Among the more prominent topics discussed in the corpora, there was shown to be a noticeable measure of discussion regarding Sweden's population density, as well as talk about Swedish cultural norms, and this was often done in conjunction with talk about herd

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immunity, lockdown, and other what could be called strategies or measures taken against the pandemic. A more in-depth exploration of the comments showed that most of the comments were made in an attempt at making sense of the situation being reported as well as argue for how they made sense of it. Sweden famously took a more relaxed approach to the pandemic (Andersson, 2022), different to the more stringent measures adopted by other countries. It has been shown that readers often recur to evaluative language strategically in order to defend their opinion against other commenters or against the text they are commenting (He, 2019). Furthermore, comments have been shown to generally be directed towards the text in question, or other commenters. The analysis has therefore been able to showcase examples of this being true, and that it is indeed a plausible explanation that a large quantity of the comments (maybe even a majority) were cases of readers making sense of the situation being reported on in the article, and then strategically defending their position against the article and against other potential commenters. This would have been easier to observe if this thesis had included replies to comments and not just the top-level comments in its analysis.

Discourse Analysis

One of the more salient findings was the overwhelming frequency of negative attitude in both corpora, circa 80% in ITA_S and 70% in SWE_S. The frequency of sentiment varies depending on the topic being explored, but still the total number of negative evaluations heavily outweighs the number of positive evaluations. Several studies have been conducted investigating similar phenomenon as this one, some looking at online news comments (Cavasso & Taboada, 2021), some looking at comments posted on Reddit about the pandemic (Van Poucke, in press), and others looking at comments posted to social media in

general about the pandemic (Gupta et al., 2020; Oyebode et al., 2022). The findings of our study align with those of previous research, as they too observed a predominant presence of negative sentiment in online comments. Hence, this study provides further support and validation for their documented outcomes. Alternative methodologies may yield divergent findings, as our study employed a specific approach of evaluating inscribed attitudes within individual comments through annotation. For instance, Mittal et al. (2021) conducted a study like the ones above, but by annotating the entire comment (in this case Twitter tweets). The results of this were that neutrality was the most common sentiment, not negative.

Following off from this, the discourse analysis seems to indicate a larger amount of political polarization in ITA_S than in SWE_S. It was mentioned in the results that "self-isolate" was the only term where the difference between positive and negative sentiment was more pronounced in SWE_S. Italy was arguably more badly affected by COVID-19 than Sweden was. Italy had strict measures such as lockdowns and travel restrictions to combat the spread of the virus (Euronews, 2021). The reporting on these events subsequently represented an interesting and for many people perhaps a controversial topic where emotions ran high in reaction to them. It has been shown that controversial topics tend to generate a larger number of contradictory and clashing opinions that can be read in the comments (Andersson, 2022; Ksiazek, 2016; Ziegele et al., 2017). The fact that there appears to be larger amount of polarization in ITA_C, and the fact that Italy was the country that experienced the more stringent measures to fight the virus, it's likely the two are linked. The inverse, the lower levels of polarization in SWE_C could therefore be a result of the less stringent measures adopted in Sweden, reported on DM, and subsequently commented on by readers. However, there are usually other possible explanations. Another could be

related to the possibility that Sweden's trust in its government and authorities meant there

wasn't a large amount of hysteria in and around Sweden (including that being reported on

by the UK press) compared to Italy. This would confirm certain assumptions about Swedish

people and their culture made in previous studies (e.g., Andersson, 2022).

Affect was the least common type of attitude present in both samples at 11%

frequency on average for both (see results). This is a noticeable similarity between the two

corpora, and represents an interesting finding, that Affect gives such a low number of

instances of inscribed attitude, both overall and in either corpus. It is a commonly held belief

that online discourse, such as that in the comments section of an online news article,

directly involves a frequent reference to emotions and emotional behavior. It is also a

common expectation that commenters usually express their opinion as a description of their

emotions using the first person (Cavasso & Taboada, 2021). However, our exploration of the

data showed that Affect was not used very much to convey opinion, rather it is done

predominantly via Judgement and Appreciation. This phenomenon has been noted in

previous studies, most notably by Thompson in 2014. Thompson pointed out what he called

the "Russian Doll" phenomenon, whereby an expression of one type of attitude commonly

functions as an indirect expression of another type (Thompson, 2014). Cavasso and Taboada

(2021) made a similar finding studying comments posted to a variety of opinion pieces on

the online newspaper website *The Globe and Mail*. Kolhatkar et al. (2020) also studied online

articles and comments posted to those articles, and likewise noted a surprisingly low

occurrence of Affect in the comments and a higher occurrence of Judgement and

Appreciation. Our study therefore has made a similar finding, in that Affect is not used as

often to directly express an opinion. Rather it is more common for Judgement and

Appreciation to be used to indirectly express opinions, which would therefore explain the greater frequency of Judgement and Appreciation at the expense of Affect.

The discourse analysis illustrated a number of key differences between the corpora, and there were indeed differences. However, arguably not to an extreme degree, or more accurately, the large differences could be seen on the micro-level, not the macro-level. What is meant by this is that for instance, as mentioned above, ITA_S contained about 80% negative sentiment, while SWE_S contained roughly 70% negative sentiment, not a large difference. Similarly, when looking at the overall occurrence of judgement, the differences are not that strong either. Affect is the same in both samples, and while Judgement is the most occurring in ITA_S and Appreciation is the most occurring in SWE_S, the margins are still close. It is first when one delves into the micro-level that the more prominent differences in the frequency of attitude and sentiment appear. This is a relevant finding, with implications for further studies. Those implications being that while on the surface there may not appear to be a significant difference between the two samples, when one divides up the data, and looks more closely, it becomes apparent that there are indeed important and relevant differences between the two. Producing averages, and summing up different topics, may therefore serve to distract from the actual more predominant but smaller differences that are present within the aggregate.

Conclusion

This study set out to do two things. Firstly, to conduct a corpus-assisted exploration of the two corpora of online news comments in order to identify prominent themes and patterns of discussion, and secondly, to conduct a discourse analysis of a sample of those comments that had to do with one of those prominent topics. This study has subsequently been able to do achieve that.

We have identified, through the corpus-assisted analysis, in particular the collocation analysis, that there were indeed certain prominent topics being discussed in the corpora. These included, among others, discussion of the various strategies being employed to fight the pandemic, topics such as herd immunity, vaccines, social distancing, self-isolation and lockdown. We have been able to prove through various wordlists, and subsequent collocation analysis that these topics were indeed prominent in the corpora of online news comments that came from articles about Sweden and Italy during the pandemic. Examples include (among others) how topics such as vaccines were more prominent in ITA_C, while topics such as Sweden's population density were more conspicuous in SWE_C. We have also been able to show that the discussion relating to the UK was possibly the most common topic and that this could be readily seen in both corpora. These therefore represent a significant area of discussion going on within the comments and showcase important facets of the public opinion and sentiment, facets that we have shown can indeed be identified and studied through a corpus-assisted approach such as the one this study performed.

Secondly, we have been able to identify, through discourse analysis and the implementation of the appraisal framework, the frequency of various attitudes within a sample of comments collocated with the terms "lockdown", "herd immunity", "social

distancing" and "self-isolation". We have been able to show that in ITA_S the most common attitude was Judgement, while in SWE_S it was Appreciation but also that levels of Affect were the same. We have also been able showcase that Negativity was the most common sentiment in both samples. This study was also able to corroborate findings made in certain previous studies, such as the low occurrence of affect in online news comments, or the overwhelming frequency of negative polarity. Furthermore, we have been able to study in greater detail other predominant features trends within the corpora samples in terms of attitude and sentiment, as they relate to the four chosen terms, and been able to identify many other smaller differences as well as similarities between the two. Our discussion of the results then related our findings back to many previous studies in areas such as this one, with different explanations for the results being presented as possible reasons for the results turning out the way they did.

There are certain limitations to this study that need to be acknowledged. Firstly, that this study only explored and utilized top-level comments in its data collection. Therefore, the results must recognize that a large number of potential comments were not studied, and while there were good reasons for not including them, it must still be admitted that the results might have looked different had they been included. Secondly, this study did not take into account the context or content of the online articles from which the comments were collected more than confirming whether or not they contained the necessary keywords to be retrieved. Therefore, there could be facets of the contents of the articles influencing the appearance of certain topics and themes, which this thesis unfortunately cannot take into account. Once again, there are reasons for why the study was designed this way, but the limitations resulting from said design must still be conceded.

The limitations subsequently then highlight possible directions for future studies related to this. This thesis explored the two corpora of comments as they appeared over a period of two years, however a future study might do a comparison to see what differences occur when the first year and second year of the pandemic are put up against one another. Another option could be to perform a discourse analysis of a different segment of the corpus, such as study sentiment being expressed around the discussion of the various vaccines that we could show was prominent in the corpora. Doing the same study as this one did, but with different countries is yet another option.

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Appendix 1 – Scripts

Appendix 1.1

```python
import requests
import json
from bs4 import BeautifulSoup

# Base URL for Daily Mail Archive sitemap
base_url = "https://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/sitemaparchive/day "

# Primary Keywords to be searched
primary_keywords = ["Italy"]

# URLs to be excluded
excluded_urls = ["reuters", "sport", "ap", "wires", "tvshowbiz"]

# Initialize an empty list for storing the URLs
urls = []

# Loop through each month in 2021 and check for the keywords
for month in range(1, 13):
    # Loop through each day in the month and check for the keywords
    for day in range(1, 32):
        # Create URL for the day's sitemap
        url = f"{base_url}2021{month:02d}{day:02d}.html"

        # Make a GET request to the URL
        response = requests.get(url)

        # Parse the HTML content using BeautifulSoup
        soup = BeautifulSoup(response.content, "html.parser")

        # Find all the links in the HTML content
        links = soup.find_all("a")

        # Loop through each link and check if it contains the
primary keywords
        for link in links:
            href = link.get("href")
            title = link.get("title")
            text = link.text
            if href and any(keyword in text for keyword in
primary_keywords) and not any(ex_url in href.lower() for ex_url in
excluded_urls):
                article_id = href.split("/")[-1].split(".")[0]
                urls.append({"url":
```

```
f"https://www.dailymail.co.uk{href}", "title": title, "text":
text})

# Write the URLs to a JSON file
with open("urls.json", "w") as f:
    json.dump(urls, f, indent=4)
```

Appendix 1.2

```
import json
import re
import chardet

# Open the Word document and read its content
with open("keywords.txt", "rb") as f:
    doc_bytes = f.read()
    result = chardet.detect(doc_bytes)
    doc_text = doc_bytes.decode(encoding=result['encoding'])

# Find all 7-digit numbers in the document using regular
expressions
numbers = re.findall(r"\b\d{7}\b", doc_text)

# Print the numbers without quotation marks and commas
for number in numbers:
    print(number)
```

Appendix 1.3

```
import json
import scrapy

class NewsKeywordsSpider(scrapy.Spider):
    name = "newskeywords"
    headers = {
        "User-Agent": "Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 10.0; Win64; x64)
AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/58.0.3029.110
Safari/537.36."
    }

    def start_requests(self):
        with open("urls.json") as file:
            lines = [line.rstrip() for line in file]
        self.keywords_dict = {}
        for article_id in lines:
            url = f"https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-
{article_id}/"
```

```python
            yield scrapy.Request(
                url=url,
                callback=self.parse_keywords,
                headers=self.headers,
                meta={"article_id": article_id},
            )

    def parse_keywords(self, response):
        article_id = response.meta.get("article_id")
        article_text =
response.css('div[itemprop="articleBody"]').get()
        if article_text is not None and (
            article_text.count("Italy") >= 5 and (
                article_text.count("corona") >= 5 or
                article_text.count("Corona") >= 5 or
                article_text.count("covid-19") >= 5 or
                article_text.count("covid") >= 5 or
                article_text.count("COVID") >= 5 or
                article_text.count("Covid") >= 5 or
                article_text.count("Pandemic") >= 5 or
                article_text.count("pandemic") >= 5 or
                article_text.count("lockdown") >= 5 or
                article_text.count("virus") >= 5 or
                article_text.count("quarantine") >= 5 or
                article_text.count("vaccine") >= 5 or
                article_text.count("vaccination") >= 5
            )
        ):
            self.keywords_dict[article_id] = {
                "Italy_count": article_text.count("Italy"),
                "corona_count": article_text.count("corona"),
                "Corona_count": article_text.count("Corona"),
                "covid-19_count": article_text.count("covid-19"),
                "covid_count": article_text.count("covid"),
                "COVID_count": article_text.count("COVID"),
                "Covid_count": article_text.count("Covid"),
                "Pandemic_count": article_text.count("Pandemic"),
                "pandemic_count": article_text.count("pandemic"),
                "lockdown_count": article_text.count("lockdown"),
                "virus_count": article_text.count("virus"),
                "quarantine_count":
article_text.count("quarantine"),
                "mask_count": article_text.count("mask"),
                "vaccine_count": article_text.count("vaccine"),
                "vaccination_coun":
article_text.count("vaccination")
            }

    def closed(self, reason):
```

```
        with open("keywords.txt", "w") as f:
            json.dump(self.keywords_dict, f, indent=4)
```

Appendix 1.4

```
import json
import scrapy

class NewsCommentsSpider(scrapy.Spider):
    name = "newscomments"
    headers = {"User-Agent": "Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 10.0; Win64;
x64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/58.0.3029.110
Safari/537.36."}

    def start_requests(self):
        with open("urls.json") as file:
            lines = [line.rstrip() for line in file]
        self.comments_dict = {}
        for article_id in lines:
            url = f"https://www.dailymail.co.uk/reader-
comments/p/asset/readcomments/{article_id}?max=9999&order=desc"
            yield scrapy.Request(
                url=url,
                callback=self.parse_comments,
                headers=self.headers,
                meta={"article_id": article_id},
            )

    def parse_comments(self, response):
        article_id = response.meta.get('article_id')
        comments_dict = json.loads(response.text)
        valid_comments = []
        if comments_dict.get("payload") and
comments_dict["payload"].get("page"):
            for comment in comments_dict["payload"]["page"]:
                valid_comments.append(comment["message"])
        self.comments_dict[article_id] = valid_comments

    def closed(self, reason):
        with open("comments.json", "w") as f:
            json.dump(self.comments_dict, f, indent=4)
# this script saves the comments to one big json file
```

Appendix 2 – Wordlists and Key-wordlists

Lists of nouns (lemma) ordered by frequency

ITA_C			SWE_C		
Item	Frequency	Relative frequency	Item	Frequency	Relative frequency
people	25235	5758.29054	sweden	14094	10024.46727
italy	12843	2930.60136	people	7877	5602.57760
country	12503	2853.01789	death	7484	5323.05329
virus	12187	2780.91091	country	6048	4301.68710
uk	10530	2402.80560	uk	4788	3405.50229
death	9673	2207.24963	population	4572	3251.87061
china	9544	2177.81355	lockdown	4477	3184.30112
eu	8880	2026.29760	virus	3747	2665.08293
vaccine	7850	1791.26533	immunity	2800	1991.52181
time	7772	1773.46677	time	2711	1928.21986
government	7626	1740.15152	rate	2521	1793.08088
world	6642	1515.61584	government	2426	1725.51139
day	6389	1457.88461	economy	2273	1616.68895
n	6148	1402.89163	herd	2204	1567.61217
year	5946	1356.79792	case	1952	1388.37520
week	5683	1296.78483	n	1930	1372.72753
case	5251	1198.20819	number	1903	1353.52357

Item	Frequency	Relative frequency	Item	Frequency	Relative frequency
number	4862	1109.44357	world	1860	1322.93949
life	4563	1041.21576	year	1857	1320.80571
lockdown	4546	1037.33659	day	1847	1313.69313

Lists of adjectives (lemma) ordered by frequency

	ITA_C			SWE_C	
Item	Frequency	Relative frequency	Item	Frequency	Relative frequency
good	7701	1757.26552	good	2976	2116.70318
more	6282	1433.46864	other	2438	1734.04649
many	6087	1388.97224	more	2388	1698.48360
other	5640	1286.97280	many	2168	1542.00688
bad	4563	1041.21576	same	1730	1230.47597
same	3510	800.93520	high	1699	1208.42698
last	2956	674.51979	swedish	1537	1093.20322
high	2868	654.43936	bad	1433	1019.23241
old	2829	645.54008	right	1229	874.13582
own	2677	610.85571	wrong	1176	836.43916
few	2607	594.88264	few	1079	767.44715
new	2337	533.27224	low	1062	755.35577
most	2308	526.65483	most	1053	748.95445
first	2242	511.59451	different	934	664.31477
next	2083	475.31283	old	924	657.20220

big	2073	473.03096	social	877	623.77308
only	1953	445.64856	only	833	592.47774
great	1924	439.03115	big	830	590.34396
italian	1837	419.17891	less	808	574.69629
safe	1694	386.54821	own	783	556.91485

Lists of verbs (lemma) ordered by frequency

ITA_C			SWE_C		
Item	Frequency	Relative frequency	Item	Frequency	Relative frequency
be	189309	43197.78969	be	59363	42222.39609
have	60417	13786.35384	have	23411	16651.25608
do	35816	8172.73366	do	13232	9411.36305
go	17064	3893.77728	get	4910	3492.27574
get	16536	3773.29472	go	4623	3288.14476
know	8407	1918.36531	say	2857	2032.06350
say	8306	1895.31845	know	2614	1859.22786
take	8024	1830.96981	think	2559	1820.10868
think	8010	1827.77520	make	2363	1680.70215
make	7888	1799.93643	see	2332	1658.65316
need	7385	1685.15853	take	2216	1576.14726
come	7275	1660.05800	work	1991	1416.11426
die	6522	1488.23344	die	1881	1337.87590

see	6419	1464.73021	look	1860	1322.93949
want	5994	1367.75088	need	1639	1165.75151
stop	5438	1240.87909	come	1626	1156.50516
look	4579	1044.86675	compare	1600	1138.01246
tell	4479	1022.04808	want	1476	1049.81650
let	4354	993.52475	tell	1411	1003.58474
give	4149	946.74648	live	1225	871.29079

Lists of n-grams ordered by frequency

	ITA_C			SWE_C	
Item	Frequency	Relative frequency	Item	Frequency	Relative frequency
the rest of the	640	146.03947	the rest of the	352	250.36274
rest of the world	441	100.63032	rest of the world	257	182.79325
the rest of the world	400	91.27467	the rest of the world	232	165.01181
do n''t want to	282	64.34864	has a population of	141	100.28735
I do n''t think	281	64.12045	Sweden got it right	137	97.44232

the end of the	265	60.46947	the rest of us	136	96.73106
the rest of us	248	56.59029	the size of the	123	87.48471
nothing to do with	240	54.76480	I do n''t think	110	78.23836
I do n''t know	225	51.34200	the number of deaths	108	76.81584
in the first place	223	50.88563	twice the size of	101	71.83704
is going to be	204	46.55008	the rest of Europe	99	70.41452
at the end of	201	45.86552	size of the UK	86	61.16817
all over the world	182	41.52997	Sweden has a population	86	61.16817
a lot of people	168	38.33536	the size of the UK	85	60.45691
to do with the	159	36.28168	be interesting to see	82	58.32314
a couple of weeks	157	35.82531	twice the size of the	81	57.61188

the rest of Europe	149	33.99981	in the long run	77	54.76685
they do n''t want	148	33.77163	with a population of	76	54.05559
I do n''t believe	144	32.85888	Sweden has a population of	72	51.21056
at the same time	143	32.63069	I do n''t know	71	50.49930

Lists of key-nouns (lempos) ordered by keyness

	ITA_C			SWE_C	
Item	Relative frequency (focus)	Keyness	Item	Relative frequency (focus)	Keyness
lockdown-n	1037.33655	169.112	sweden-n	10024.46777	607.067
covid-n	766.70721	154.488	lockdown-n	3184.30127	518.784
scaremongering-n	173.42186	147.953	swede-n	1147.97009	472.413
jab-n	410.96417	143.448	covid-n	1184.95544	238.653
dm-n	758.03607	141.774	immunity-n	1991.52185	212.841
boris-n	659.91583	123.070	tegnell-n	206.97601	205.715

nthe-n	118.42888	104.284	herd-n	1567.61218	167.075
wuhan-n	207.64987	91.883	dm-n	766.02460	143.266
flu-n	979.37720	89.244	nthe-n	150.07539	131.917
italy-n	2930.60132	74.744	nsweden-n	98.15357	99.149
virus-n	2780.91089	74.270	distancing-n	423.90964	95.676
vaccine-n	1791.26526	72.793	boris-n	443.82486	82.832
corona-n	257.62274	72.698	worldometer-n	78.23836	78.503
clot-n	213.35454	70.849	covid19-n	107.39993	78.487
quarantine-n	296.41449	62.592	virus-n	2665.08301	71.177
covid19-n	84.65726	62.020	covidiot-n	66.14697	66.859
isolate-n	172.28093	57.937	stockholm-n	350.65009	63.628
astrazeneca-n	96.29478	57.281	lock-down-n	70.41452	63.494
az-n	283.86423	56.502	corona-n	211.24356	59.661
fauci-n	75.75797	55.629	scaremongering-n	67.56949	58.164

Lists of key-adjectives (lempos) ordered by keyness

	ITA_C			SWE_C	
Item	Relative frequency (focus)	Keyness	Item	Relative frequency (focus)	Keyness
covid-j	175.47554	123.158	lockdown-j	285.92563	188.609
lockdown-j	85.34181	56.756	covid-j	236.84885	165.988

infected-j	262.18646	33.939	swedish-j	1093.20312	103.496
selfish-j	203.08614	32.310	draconian-j	76.10458	33.383
heartbreaking-j	76.21435	26.384	scandinavian-j	95.30854	31.968
pathetic-j	129.15366	25.784	elderly-j	432.44473	28.050
amber-j	66.40232	25.292	hysterical-j	72.54829	27.088
irresponsible-j	96.06659	23.696	populated-j	74.68207	26.957
elderly-j	341.36725	22.156	sensible-j	221.20117	26.634
incompetent-j	77.35528	20.813	infected-j	192.75085	24.985
self-j	201.26064	20.372	nordic-j	105.26615	23.332
disgusting-j	86.93912	20.190	pointless-j	107.39993	22.391
disgraceful-j	40.16085	19.638	smug-j	49.78804	21.931
pandemic-j	70.96606	19.127	overpopulated-j	24.89402	21.821
dont-j	51.57019	18.146	cashless-j	34.85163	21.576
contagious-j	58.64397	17.841	pandemic-j	72.54829	19.548
rubbish-j	48.83195	17.335	covid19-j	17.78144	18.310
inept-j	35.14075	16.445	irresponsible-j	71.83704	17.781
tory-j	42.67091	15.624	idiotic-j	36.98540	16.341
ridiculous-j	169.54269	14.327	contagious-j	51.92182	15.831

Lists of key-verbs (lempos) ordered by keyness

	ITA_C			SWE_C	
Item	Relative frequency (focus)	Keyness	Item	Relative frequency (focus)	Keyness
quarantine-v	188.02582	76.350	quarantine-v	86.06219	35.165
vaccinate-v	261.50192	66.646	vaccinate-v	129.44891	33.119
jab-v	57.27485	37.379	mutate-v	100.28735	30.476
infect-v	361.90405	35.943	infect-v	302.99582	30.109
holiday-v	50.20107	28.854	trash-v	91.04100	29.596
panick-v	62.97952	27.219	panick-v	62.59069	27.053
mutate-v	81.23445	24.744	populate-v	202.70847	26.361
clot-v	44.04003	20.294	lock-v	723.34918	22.283
panic-v	70.05331	20.102	herd-v	50.49930	21.846
cant-v	123.44899	17.308	distance-v	91.75226	17.990
dont-v	181.63658	17.042	dont-v	187.06079	17.548
dither-v	26.46965	16.234	wreck-v	88.19597	16.442
wont-v	68.45600	16.223	fair-v	23.47151	15.791
cough-v	64.34864	14.427	overcrowd-v	38.40792	15.398
self-isolate-v	15.28851	14.387	cant-v	106.68867	14.977
rubbish-v	17.11400	14.372	panic-v	51.92182	14.972
isolate-v	214.26727	13.787	didnt-v	68.99200	14.727
hospitalise-v	19.62405	13.317	criticise-v	99.57609	13.971

sneeze-v	29.66427	13.260	wont-v	58.32314	13.857
boycott-v	41.75816	13.022	flatten-v	74.68207	13.527

Lists of multi-word terms ordered by keyness

	ITA_C			SWE_C	
Item	Relative frequency (focus)	Keyness	Item	Relative frequency (focus)	Keyness
self isolate	188.71037	184.433	herd immunity	1434.60693	1165.552
death rate	366.46777	146.113	death rate	1022.78870	407.079
az vaccine	108.84504	109.845	population density	406.83945	155.068
corona virus	107.70411	89.003	covid death	145.09659	140.675
herd immunity	94.69746	77.696	swedish people	139.40652	135.952
blood clot	178.89835	74.229	infection rate	200.57469	129.278
infection rate	85.11362	55.228	second wave	206.26476	109.572
underlying health	59.78491	52.403	social distancing	389.05801	105.958
eu country	103.82494	51.411	number of deaths	168.56810	97.428
green list	48.60376	48.798	excess death	105.97741	96.380
number of deaths	81.46264	47.380	care home	274.54550	95.472

Item	Relative frequency (focus)	Keyness	Item	Relative frequency (focus)	Keyness
second wave	87.39549	46.731	swedish government	103.13238	88.278
death toll	126.41541	43.630	death toll	190.61708	65.614
self isolation	43.35546	43.285	old people	128.02640	59.935
covid death	41.75816	41.171	swedish model	59.03440	57.755
red list	45.40915	40.526	total death	63.30194	56.346
spanish flu	47.46283	40.411	swedish approach	55.47811	56.243
seasonal flu	47.23464	39.586	populated country	59.74566	55.222
open border	53.85205	39.294	uk population	63.30194	54.639
people die	46.77827	37.454	low population	61.16817	52.648

Lists of key-n-grams ordered by keyness

	ITA_C			SWE_C	
Item	Relative frequency (focus)	Keyness	Item	Relative frequency (focus)	Keyness
have had this and	974.35712	974358.062	population of sweden	97.44231	85541.883
covid not because of	97.89208	97893.078	in care homes	97.44231	21210.137
for the virus is	9.81203	9813.027	death rate per	94.59728	64626.645

a sudden heart problem	9.81203	9813.027	a second wave	93.88602	23660.438
the dm just love	9.81203	9813.027	sweden is not	92.46352	76499.484
a laughing stock on	9.81203	9813.027	deaths per million than	9.95761	9958.609
additional equipment and supplies	9.81203	9813.027	about how sweden	9.95761	9958.609
idiots want to	9.81203	9813.027	sweden made the	9.95761	9958.609
all lock ourselves	9.81203	9813.027	say that sweden	9.95761	9958.609
must all stay	9.81203	9813.027	in lockdown and	9.95761	9958.609
any leader on the	9.81203	9813.027	swedes will be	9.95761	9958.609
oh dearie me	9.81203	9813.027	same sweden that	9.95761	9958.609
thing back in november	9.81203	9813.027	with the lockdown	9.95761	9958.609
deaths are way	9.81203	9813.027	no excess deaths	9.95761	9958.609

headline is misleading	9.81203	9813.027	twice the land	9.95761	9958.609
heart attack within	9.81203	9813.027	sweden is doing the	9.95761	9958.609
you control the media	9.81203	9813.027	vulnerable and let	9.95761	9958.609
over till the fat	9.81203	8793.496	lockdowns are not	9.95761	9958.609
them by letting	9.81203	8614.494	death rate is lower	9.95761	9958.609
just proves what	9.81203	8442.636	lockdown will be	9.95761	9958.609

Appendix 3 – Coding manual

This coding manual was developed for and used in the following thesis: Danielson N. and De Luca A. (2023). 'Topics and Attitudes in Covid-19 Online News Comments about Italy and Sweden'. *University of Gothenburg*.

The purpose of this manual is to present the procedures used to identify and compare attitudes between two corpora of Daily Mail's online comments under news regarding Covid-19 in Italy (ITA_C) and Sweden (SWE_C). Attitudes will be classified into the main three categories illustrated by Martin and White (2005): *Affect*, *Judgement* and *Appreciation.* Sentiment will also be taken into account in relation to the context and classified into *positive* or *negative*.

Identifying and itemizing attitudes

Below are the general guidelines that should be followed when identifying attitudes in the comments. Attitude is the domain that deals with emotions in the Language of Evaluation framework. According to Martin and White (2005), it is divided into three categories: Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation.

- Affect: encoded-in-text speaker's own emotional responses to behavior, text/process, or phenomena, e.g. "<u>Frightening</u> it really is god help Italy";

- Judgement: evaluative proposition concerning behavior and character. Judgements comprise socially shared values of esteem, such as how remarkable, capable, or dependable someone is or behaves, as well as societal sanction of behavior or character in terms of ethics, honesty, and authenticity, e.g. "[...] because there's so many <u>selfish</u>, <u>ill-disciplined idiots</u> who are unwilling or <u>intellectually incapable</u> of adhering to the social distancing rules";

- Appreciation: evaluative proposition based on socially shared aesthetical values (qualities and significance in social contexts) of objects, text/process, and natural phenomena, e.g. "she will make a <u>great</u> Queen".

Attitudes can be either *inscribed* – explicitly conveying an evaluation – or *invoked* – implicit and context-bounded.

E.g.: "Was this part of the initial herd immunity strategy or just <u>dithering</u>?" [negative judgement]

E.g.: "The herd immunity strategy at work" [invoked]

As this study's focus is solely on the comments without dwelling on the online articles under which they were generated, the context surrounding each comment is not self-evident. Henceforth, only inscribed attitudes are to be itemized, while invoked attitudes are to be left unmarked.

Identifying and itemizing sentiment

All attitudes identified following the rules above should be classified according to whether they convey a positive or negative assessment/emotion. Sentiment can be either expressed through simple nouns, adjectives or predicates (verbal and nominal) or by the combination with a negation (no, not).

E.g. "she will make a <u>great</u> [positive appreciation] Queen"

E.g. "Makes you realize lockdowns <u>don't really work</u> [negative appreciation] and only <u>destroy</u> [negative appreciation] the economy".

Coding rules

The easiest way to code the comments is by using a combination of color and font schemes that can be easily filtered afterwards using any spreadsheet program.

The color combination used to address each category is the following:

- Red for Affect (e.g.: "Frightening it really is god help Italy")

- Green for Judgement (e.g.: "[…] because there's so many selfish, ill-disciplined idiots who are unwilling or intellectually incapable of adhering to the social distancing rules")

- Blue for Appreciation (e.g.: "she will make a great Queen")

The color combination used to classify the sentiment is the following:

- Underlined for Positive (e.g.: "she will make a great Queen")

- Bold for Negative (e.g.: "[…] because there's so many **selfish**, **ill-disciplined idiots** who are unwilling or **intellectually incapable** of adhering to the social distancing rules")

Evaluative items are annotated according to the following rules:

- Annotate nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbal and nominal predicates, and combinations thereof (e.g. "ill-disciplined idiots", "spreading lies")

- When the evaluative item has other grammatical elements in-between (e.g. "no amount of lockdown is going to help"), highlight everything as an entire item (e.g. "no amount of lockdown is going to help")

- Group together common expressions (e.g. "the lockdowns haven't made one iota of difference")

- Items separated by punctuation count has to be counted individually (e.g. "many selfish, ill-disciplined idiots who are unwilling or intellectually incapable")

Appendix 4 – Annotated Comments

ITA_S

Lockdown

Sending planes into lockdown areas was the **hight of stupidity** that the rest of the world is now **paying the price**"

, "No excuses now,at last we can close our borders."

, Is this scientist going to pay my rent and bills if we go into lockdown ?

, "I live near Milan and we were on a partial lockdown for two weeks while its been a full lockdown for the past week.

, "Sooner or later the quarantine/ lockdown will have to end and the number of those infected will rise **dramatically** again.

In addition they treated the schools shutting as a holiday and finally as towns were going into lockdown , many **fled** to other villages and towns.

, "Does this mean everyone in the country goes into lockdown now?

, "If lockdown does not work ?

, "Please, do not **spread the incorrect message** that the lockdown is not working .

Lockdown **ain't working** .

No wonder the lockdown **is not working** , people cannot work, no school - nothing - but hey lets keep the airports open for travel.

, "Ok so let me get this straight, Italy is on full lockdown yet are **still in crisis** and it's **getting worse**?

No lockdown , option to work from home, schools still open, Universities and Colleges gone distance learning.

, A UK lockdown would not work as the population is **too obtuse to comply** "

"Two days in a row now... maybe lockdown **is working but a long way to go**"

, "Just remember when this is all over....

, "Is DM trying to get the govt to put the country into lockdown ."

, "**Keep thinking** lockdowns work **they dont**, stock prices say a different story, this will go on for a long time so be prepared"

, "Don't be fooled by the **lull** as a lot of us could potentially die.

, Lets hope so"

, "We need to go into 2 week lockdown now before things get **more out of hand**!!"

The virus needs to be completely eliminated from the population before the lockdown is lifted , which probably means another 2 weeks to a month of curfew.

, This only shows a full lockdown works so get it done now!"

, "Italy just had 2 days of decreasing rates of infection and death toll, showing signs that their lockdown is working .

, "Funny the figures fell the day the UK went into lockdown almost as if to portray lockdown as working..."

Not because lockdown isn't working .

Are lockdowns working ?"

If u dont know, **shut the hell up**"

, "So lockdown **hasnt worked** so where is it coming from . Maybe the hospitals and all the workers taking out and spreading it that way . If lockdown is working like they say it is it can only be coming from the shops that are open and key workers"

, "You are **being mislead** being told the lockdown has not stopped this and therefore **people will think it does not work.**

, for the lockdown to work EVERYONE must stay at home, **sadly** many Italians **are still mixing**, people here **are doing the same and worse**.....the numbers would go higher for a while unless a Chinese style lockdown takes place....ultimately 2 weeks of total stay at home and that is it...... people's lives are more important."

, Clearly lockdown **doesn't work** , so why is the UK **still** in lockdown?

I doubt china are being honest with their statistics"

, " Lockdown **doesn't work** , it just **trashes** the economy.

, "Forza Italia "

, "Imagine the **apocalyptic** numbers and scenes if we had never gone into lockdown ."

, **What the hell** is happening in Italy given they are 3 weeks into the lockdown .

Lockdown here in Spain was full lockdown and it's working.

, "The difference with Italy, France and Spain is we're on full lockdown ..

, "Serious question.... in a world with no vaccine surely this lockdown will never end until every single person has been tested and at the minimum all borders are closed after 100% have tested negative or immune... **how on earth** is that possible?

, "As a doctor, I can tell you that there's been a big debate amongst healthcare professionals about how to end the lockdowns and stay at home orders here in the US.

The general consensus I've been hearing amongst healthcare professionals is that the **wisest** plan to end the lockdowns in the US is in gradual phases, such as what Italy seems to be doing here.

, So they are announcing plans to end the lockdown but in the final paragraph they state that it is likely to be extended first.

France is great"

, "We're too **overcrowded**"

, "It's because we have the **weakest** border controls"

, " End the lockdown NOW.

Italy will be the first nation to lift the lockdown .

, "Article further down the page where the headline states the World Health Organisation is Warning not to end the lockdown , yet the Media are still hell bent on it being lifted.

, "Maybe the way to try ending the lockdown would be to let one city end but stop travelling from that city."

Sadly I can see the UK following this path with lockdowns going on into June or July to ensure there is no second wave of infections"]

["The cover photograph to this article clearly shows how NOT to wear a face mask.

Could it be because we **aren't testing enough** or we **went into lockdown too late**"

, "Britain had the **longest Covid 19 warning** Britain took the **least amount of preventative steps** Britain has the **highest death rate** I'm sure these three things are completely unrelated!

The majority occurring on earlier dates, which suggests the lockdown **is working** "

, "Let's tax Chinese goods. \nLet's call it the China tax!"

, "\"mericanmomof3, Charlotte has, United States,\nProof lockdowns **do not work** Italy

has been under a very strict lockdown and people are still getting\" - - - - - - rates were

rising in Italy, doubling every 4 days.

In fact they are considering ending a lockdown after a month or at most two gradually.

, "They will be back into lockdown **in a fortnight**"

, "Dear Daily Mail, please can you take the time to produce **accurate reporting**, instead of

misleading your readers yet AGAIN?

We are the **worst hit** short term, but is it true for the long term... the lockdown only slows

the virus not contains it?

 \n(2) Is the government ready to support those businesses they **force to close** for

another 6 months after the lockdown is lifted ?

, "Spain relaxing it a bit is to keep the country moving is no different to this country calling

on people to work on the farms and vital industry.

\n", "That is **not true**, Sweden will not go into lockdown !

People **forget** that the UK went into lockdown a while after these countries and are at a

different stage.

, The true scale of the **damage done** to the economy will only be clear once the lockdown

ends .

END THE LOCKDOWN .

, "**Crazy** what Spain are doing, but some of it is **misleading**, only self I played are allowed

to work so NO big building sites open, As to estate Agents only the owner can work

However due to lockdown they're not permitted to show property's .....If you live in a

community & they employ Gardner they're not legally allowed to work, however if you are individual Gardner you can work......

, " Lockdown working well then and delivering results........."

Here in the UK we should follow their example and see where we are two weeks after the Italians lift their lockdown on the 18th May.

, "Some say we were **too late to go into lockdown** whist other think we should have saved the economy and accepted the huge loss of lives so whatever direction the government decided on was never going to be agreed by all.

, "Then how can boris lift lockdown he **only wants tax payers cash** if we go back to work we are **putting ourselves abd elderly at risk**.... wat a rat its **too early** to lift lockdown"

, "in 2017-2018 the number of flu related deaths was estimated at 61,000 why no lockdown at that time?"

Start again, full lockdown ,get the Army on the streets,nobody leaves home,no outdoor exercise for 1 month,we need to break this,or we're **going to bankrupt the country**,way it's heading by this **poor decision making**!

Lockdown **isn't going to make any difference**, but whether the lockdown is lifted or not depends on the numbers, which include cases in care homes, and the causes of many residents are being recorded as (1) even though no one else at the care home is sick, which I thought would be impossible given the infectious nature of this virus..."

They won't lift lockdown here for many weeks yet. &\nFrance are proposing Monday in parliament to extend their lockdown until 24 July.

, "What is the logic for **still not stopping** the flights coming in but putting the country into lockdown ?

, "Good to see ALL of Europe lifting the lockdown IN ITS ENTIRETY IMMEDIATELY. the UK MUST follow on IMMEDIATELY."

Yes, there may be future waves, but lockdowns can end with precautions.

, "Pointless"

, "This assumes that Italy lifts lockdown and doesnt take any other precautionary measures.

, Wimps"

, "I believe that lockdown protecting the NHS is exactly what it is - to give them immunity so when we all go back to normal lives the NHS still functions **cynical** but probably necessary - the only **disgusting** thing many were not given a fighting chance with shortages of PPE etc. When lockdown ends for any country there HAS to be a huge resurgence - cocooning oaps is just to stop them bed blocking as they will need more attention as they are the weakest - survival of the fittest..

Has their civil war gone into lockdown .

Most have worked from home and a lot are very cautious about travelling via public transport now lockdown is lifted .

We may have to go back into lockdown so nobody is boasting.\n"

, "Italians have the discipline to wear face masks."

As chancellor he knows **how bad** the economy is right now and how the lockdown needs to be lifted .

, "OR have the survivors developed resistance or has batural selection been at work leaving a higher proportion of the population with greater immunity the process that so

many here shouted down in the early stages of the panicdemic, leading to BOJO % co

being **frightened** into introducing lockdown ?"

This virus isn't an instant death sentence and lockdowns **do not work** ."

I'm no Boris fan, but plenty of Britain's have gone on holiday since lockdown was lifted !

Despite this, the silent enemy Covid-19, hasn't gone away, and won't, until we go into full

lockdown in the UK and Europe.

, "Does the fact that countries that had lockdowns a few months ago are now going back

into lockdown not prove that lockdowns **do not, in fact, work**?"

No thought not. thank you China you got what you want :("

, " lockdowns **don't work** or this would be gone by now, muzzles **don't work** or this would

be gone by now, and experts **don't work** or it would be gone by now so **stop f,,,ing us**

about and let us use our own common sense,,it can't do any worse than their **pointless**

rules,,"

, "Slowly one has to worry less about the measures ordered, but more about the angry

reaction of the people..."

Did they decide to use Wuhan as a \"demonstration city\" to show others that they must

enforce full lockdowns and hence implode their economies?

Makes you realize lockdowns **don't really work** and **only destroy** the economy.

, "It's pretty obvious that the Oxford vaccine will be approved, so just start using it from

now and get us out of these **never ending** lockdowns and tiers."

, "Anyone noticed yet these lockdowns **don't actually work** ?"

Herd Immunity

Whats **shocked** me is that the Government **isnt going to even try** to test people in the community for Coronavirus **just stay home** for 7 days if you dont feel too ill to build up herd immunity .

How callous - how many elderly could a Coronavirus positive young person spread this disease to in the community, just to build up their precious herd immunity ?

It's better to achieve herd immunity through a vaccine than infecting 60 percent of the population.

What if China also took the ' herd immunity ' approach after the novel coronavirus was identified?

Britain's approach in developing herd immunity is by far superior to anything anyone else is trying.

Frightening it really is god help Italy"

, "Only a couple of weeks ago, the UK strategy seemed to be herd immunity .\ni.e let 60% of the population catch naturally.\n

\nLooking at the Italian mortality numbers…

He also said that we needed to build up herd immunity , which was later shown to mean than hundreds of thousands of us would have died.

, "If the number of deaths in Italy do not come down a long way by the end of next week we will know that Lockdown **does not work** and we should go back to Plan A trying to build Herd Immunity "

, "But we're told not to compare numbers with countries as it's case by case.

Must have been far higher than they reported"

, "Dominic Cummings : 'The Governments strategy is herd immunity , protect the economy, and if that means some pensioners die, too bad"

, "More **fuzzy** info.

Johnson's **inaction** and **dumb adoption** of the \" herd immunity \" strategy will cost thousands of lives."

Was this part of the initial herd immunity strategy or just **dithering**?

Wait I think China is safer than the UK at the mo"

, "The herd immunity strategy at work"

, "I'm a pro eu remainer but who is all for free movement of people, but i simply can't understand how/why we didn't shut our borders immediately to people from affected countries when it was clear how **dangerous** this virus was.

, "Our government is **guilty of experimenting** on the UK population with their herd immunity strategy ."

, "Our government's **ignorant** initial \" herd immunity \" strategy , followed by delays in closing schools, pubs, clubs etc is going to cause more deaths in the U.K. than Spain and Italy.

DJT", "Never going to achieve herd immunity with everyone **hiding in their basements**.

If only our government **hadn't wasted** three weeks while Bozo and Cummings tried out the **ridiculous** \" herd immunity \" strategy ", "@hello_uk and what is that?

The herd immunity strategy is the only thing that will work.

It may say **cruel**, but am not sure why the herd immunity strategy could not have been persevered and those that take the **unfortunate** hit, **unfortunately** do.

There was the discredited herd immunity strategy which meany lock down was introduced ten days too late."

Provided Boris is okay and we must not criticise his handling of it, then thousands can die with his herd immunity strategy .

, We're all **going to pay** for the precious first weeks of government **inaction** while theI you're with the **idiot** \" herd immunity \" strategy .

IT was the govts herd immunity approach that caused this.

, "Not to mention the **stupidity** of adopting the **highly flawed** \" Herd Immunity \" strategy , and by not closing schools and introducing lockdown ten days earlier when the scale was first clearly obvious."

Anyone ever wonder why the herd immunity approach wasn't used with smallpox until there was a vaccine?

, "Funny how the DM totally misses the part of the study which demonstrates that one of the main reasons for such a high count is due to the **very slow** response in comparison to other nations especially with us **dilly dallying** around the herd immunity strategy .

, "Because our **incompetent** government got its **do nothing** herd immunity strategy all wrong.

, "Yep when the rest of Europe was in lockdown the Brits were heading to Cheltenham, the pub, the club, the beach, the gym and Boris wouldn't shut anything down with his herd immunity strategy .

, "The deaths are what happens when you **intentionally underfund** the NHS and rely on a \" herd immunity \" strategy to deal with a **deadly** pandemic."

If it is the case I think it's more to do with the herd immunity strategy that was in place at the very start for a fee days allowing Cheltenham and other sporting fixtures."

, "all my ancestors have been dead for decades"

, "DM forgot the herd immunity approach .

We're an island"

, "It's the herd immunity approach .

We do need to build up some herd immunity and only keep the **very vulnerable** at home."

Allow the virus to spread and build herd immunity .

On the minus sign - the death rate is over 12% so the herd immunity strategy can be ruled out.

A government whose original policy for this virus was to get everybody infected so we might achieve \" herd immunity \".

I guess the strategy has always been herd immunity but the lockdowns have been enacted to prevent the various health services from being overwhelmed all at once.

, "Sweden is being criticized for its herd immunity approach .

What we have now is just a revised herd immunity strategy .

Europe are also staging the return to work & building the herd immunity that so many in the UK get their **knickers in a twist** about."

They are also much more resistant to the virus and are the segment of the population in which herd immunity can be build .

We must achieve herd immunity ."

Just let everyone out of this **outrageous house arrest** and build some herd immunity !"

If the gov had stuck to plan A we would have achieved herd immunity by now & it would all be back to normal already."

Herd immunity point is nearly reached .

The vulnerable need to be kept safe until the working age men and women can build herd immunity .

, "We need to build herd immunity now while the virus is weakened during the summer"

, "There are multiple mutations of covid-19 some are more severe, some are less, the more severe strains cause quick reactions upon infection so the chances of spread are minimal, the less severe strains can be spread easily, which explains why some people are asymptomatic, however less severe strains can still have a severe impact depending on certain factors like weight (obese or overweight), Type 2 diabetes, heart conditions, cardio vascular disease, any type of condition that effects

, "If they wanted to reach a level of herd immunity then why lockdown?"

, "If theyve nearly reached herd immunity , what was the point of the lockdown?

It means we can achieve herd immunity without it costing lives.

, "It's going to be a **loooooong** winter .."

, "And yet Sweden, that didn't lockdown like all the other **stupid** nations, has now built herd immunity and is not seeing rising infections.

Let them get on with their lives and build herd immunity .

Noticing that Mike Yeadon has retracted videos and articles concerning his incorrect assertions that we achieved herd immunity over the summer, I went looking in the home of Covid scepticism - Talk Radio.

We did not achieve herd immunity by the summer.

, Cool beans"

, "In order for me to believe this, please explain why we haven't reached herd immunity from the flu.... even though we've had multiple vaccines for dozens of years.

, Putting back coming out of isolation could reduce enthusiasm to be vaccinated, like I won't be able to do anything until June so I won't bother right now"

, "I think we'll reach herd immunity long before the year is out, when you take into account that a lot of young people have probably already had it.

, "So if we reach herd immunity then there's no need for Vaccine passports is there..

, Dr. Faucci originally said masks **don't work**, later recanted and said they <u>do work</u> but didn't want people to buy up all the masks, stated additional 'lockdowns' **not needed** in August 2020, changed that too, said 60% of Americans needed vaccines, to reach herd immunity , then upped it twice to 70% and 85% respectively and excused it by saying he didn't want to scare people.

, Most of the world needs to achieve herd immunity before this thing is really over.

, Last year, the Swedes had no initial lockdown, <u>hoping</u> to achieve herd immunity .

, "After they've vaxxed 80% of the population or however much it takes to achieve herd immunity , whom are they gonna **blame** for all the cases and hospitalizations they **will STILL be having at their hands**?

And, once they've reached herd immunity , they'll say it's **still not enough** and come up with another variant or say that 2 jabs **are not enough**, prolonging this **nightmare**"

, "Resist for the future of humanity!!!"

, "The government have decided to let the virus **rip through** the population to achieve herd immunity .

Social Distanc*

, "The best cure is prevention: Isolate and practice the ultimate social distancing ...stay home!"

, "Italy doesn't practice social distancing with their elderly and the way they greet each other, its cultural.

, "Everyone needs to take the social distancing rules seriously to slow the spread.

, "This is so **heartbreaking** and this is what the people of UK can help to avoid by actually practicing social distancing and self isolation instead of **acting like they can't give up** Friday night drinks for a few months.

It's Abit **frightening**"

, "UK will be exactly the same if people won't stay at home or keep social distancing rules .

, "WOW that's **terrible**"

, "We will be in the same situation in 2 weeks time as too many people are not sticking to the Social Distancing rules .

, "We need total lock down.if u got out to get food social distancing with gloves and masks "

, "Countries closing borders.....except the U.K. and especially welcome for illegals.

Yes we need more but that should be a wake up call to people who think the US is the only country that **isn't adequately prepared**"

, "I am just over 60 & I am following the social distancing rules .

I think we should keep the travel bans, have elderly and high risk people quarantined (continue the no visit policies to hospitals/nursing homes), and maintain social distancing .

, "The company I work for is now saying the social distancing rules only apply outside of work and its business as usual once inside the factory gates.

, "And this advice is coming from a man who said not to wear masks because they **aren't effective** at prevention.\n\nI say social distance plus surgical masks for everyone especially in public.

, "His eyebrows are practicing social distancing !

, "Anyone not observing the restrictions and social distancing has to get to the BACK OF THE LINE for health care."

Putting the responsibility in the hands of individuals to strictly practice social distancing **wasn't enough** and not least because a.

, "Does it really matter how many times a day we exercise as long as we observe social distancing whilst exercising ? It isn't really an airborne virus.

, "As predicted it's a lot less devastating worldwide than the seasonal flu"

, "It should have been prevented had they practice social distancing and enforced lockdown sooner.

With social media Ive seen the anti-vaxxers claim this is a **hoax** so that the government can microchip people to just going out to seeing people not following the social distancing rules .

, "\"Police officer speak to people in Greenwich Park, London, as hundreds of revellers continue to **ignore** the coronavirus social distancing rules \".

, "**More scaremongering and hysteria** !!!! Get testing going, observe social distancing and personal hygiene and get Britain back to work !!!!"

, "Most countries show very similar infection and death rates, i.e. policy has limited effect, nonetheless it's important to manage the rate of infections."

Any sort will do, but just wear one and maintain social distancing .

, "I was watching the news and it showed a police car pull up to speak to a gang of youths in a park ....what **troubled** my was that there was 2 police offices sat in the front of the panda car ....do social distancing rules not apply to police officers ....genuine question ??"

, DM told us last week the virus was giving green shoots"

, "Australia - 1st case 25 January, 1st death 1 March, social distancing rules (not as strict as UK) start 21 March, deaths 35.

Social distancing is being practiced and sensible shopping being adhered to.

Maintain social distancing + dont touch anything unnecessarily kind of staying isolated in public.

, "I have been reading in the major media how Sweden is not practicing social distancing , and how despite that they have not really been impacted by the virus.

When the responsible ones of us were already practicing social distancing .

, "Italys shops will open only in some regions and only to begin with 2 or 3 times a week observing social distancing rules.

, "I hope for Spain's sake the numbers keep down, lockdown cannot last forever in any country but we will probably have to have some rules on social Distancing and wearing masks for months afterwards."

Anyone working must obey social distancing rules and must wear mask and gloves.

Chances are, that '**project fear**' has worked to the extent that people will 'naturally' observe social distancing for months, if not years, to come.

Hopefully, we will be out and about soon - wearing masks and social distancing but out and enjoying that beautiful sunshine."

The shops mentioned can reopen but only in some regions and then only 2 or 3 days a week to start with (to be reviewed) with social distancing etc observed .

, "They are **Mad** !"

, "But will life go back to normal are will they keel these **ridiculous** social distancing rules ?

Those going back to work today in construction and factories can only do so if their place of work permits them to maintain social distancing .

Some shops will be allowed to reopen, but social distancing and face masks are a pre-requisite.

Except we practice better social distancing than that queue outside the supermarket in Austria.

However when watching the news **very few** of the staff in these care homes are wearing any PPE or **even attempting** to observe any kind of social distancing protocols."

] ["Sometimes I get the impression that the police are enjoying these new powers **a little too much** ....."

, "The police seem to be the **main culprits** for **breaking** the social distancing rules "

, "Thank God they found him ! He could have infected thousands lying on that beach all alone ??? **IDIOTS** !!!!"

, "If it's the law, it's the law."

, "**Breaking** social distancing rules ???"

With social distancing rules being followed of course.

In this country, **too many** people are **ignoring** social distancing rules because we **have been too soft**, it's time to **get tough** on the **rule-breakers**.

Why don't they go and pick on people who **ARE breaking** social distancing rules ?

, "May the 4th be with you...always"

, "Looks to me like he is keeping to social distancing rules .

Trying to make a bunch of kids maintain social distance is gonna be **difficult**.

Social distancing <u>can</u> be maintained ."

, "**Too many** people in Britain are **ignoring** social distancing rules which is making the lockdown **pointless**.

Witness the supermarkets where observing social distancing has almost become a **parody**.

Supermarkets stayed open 7 days a week 6am to 10pm to allow for social distancing .

, "Airports in Poland still remain closed until 30th May, and shops will open on May 6th with social distancing , face masks and gloves.

Daftie mannie ."

, "None of these studies factored in the changing lifestyles of people regarding disinfection, wearing masks , social distancing and no return to large enclosed gatherings "

, "Imperial college come on you have enough problems with your **love sick** scientists running away."

Lol"

, "Can't dogs catch COVID-19 from humans?\n

\nThey need to practice SOCIAL DISTANCING , as this is **GROSSLY unfair** to the dog....it puts it at risk."

As someone who is high risk I am finding my needs for social distancing , wearing masks , etc. are being **overshadowed** by **selfish**, **clueless**, **mask-less d-bags**."

, "My theory is that smokers practice social distancing due to the fact non smokers dont want to stand near them.\n"

, "Smokers are in **complete denial** about the **stench** that eminates from them"

, "people who smoke know how to keep a distance since somebody is always against smoking "

, "Maybe they already died of lung cancer?"

, "Everywhere I look, people are wearing masks and observing social distance , so that's a good sign.

They know the tourism industry is their lifeblood to the economy like lots of other European countries & watch now all these **idiotic** social distancing measures & quarantine rules fall like a pack of cards worldwide "

, "You have to feel for the residents of these countries.

I'd like to go to a restaurant (observing social distancing); can't because they're closed.

, "How about telling people to practice social distancing and wash their hands, use common sense etc. No large gatherings.

, "**Infantile** mass hysteria.... simple fact if visitors use (properly) a face mask social distance is **mega useless** and **idiotic**.

, definately agree with this ."

, "Smoking Weed helps keep it at bay"

, "We need to pray that it's weakening because masks and social distancing have gone **completely out the window**."

Or you could let small independent gyms open if they are able to maintain social distancing and wipe down all surfaces between uses like they are in Spain."

, "It's very hot now here in Spain, just been for a ride along the coast, 50 km out and 50 km back, traffic is busier by the week but nothing like back to normal, social distance restrictions being observed , face masks, controlled access to the beaches, people avoiding crowding.....this is AFTER the relaxation of measures that were far, far stricter than those imposed in UK.

Because you allowed people in from overseas unchecked, you dont wear masks, you clearly dont observe social distancing and now you all want to go on holiday.

Local beaches only 2 miles away & a fantastic Golf course to enjoy, so no real need to bother about holidaying abroad or getting in a packed flying metal tube for hours with 150 others . "

, "Oh yeah, having to social distance and wear a mask wherever you go, unable to meet locals and behave normally some holiday.

, "Bring it on, can't wait !"

, "Well good luck with that one....restrictions in those countries much stricter than here....beaches are spaced out for social distancing ..... masks have to be worn....and big fines for breaking any rules....."

Swimming pools shut, bars, cafes all social distancing rules ....it's a no from me!"

They don't observe social distancing !!!!!"

, "It says in the article that they observe social distancing and you can see in the photos that they wear masks even outdoors.

, "How did she feel about Fauci not social distancing or wearing his mask at a ball game, or taking mask off when he thought camera was off?"

, "Just got back from Corfu , people treat each other with respect , observe social distancing , wear masks where applicable and people go about their business.

It's the tourists visiting who think sweden doesn't have covid that **are ignoring** all the social distancing rules .

, "Very weird all country's now going down same curfew rule its as if some one world order is sort of telling them what to do and when to do it I suppose after the reset we can all go back to normal not"

, "JUST HAD TWO PEOPLE I KNOW COME BACK FROM THERE THEY SAID THEY NEVER SAW ANYONE IN MASKS OR SOCIAL DISTANCING "

, "That graph looks pretty **scarry**.

We are seeing a another surge in infections despite all the mandatory masks , social distancing , lock downs, and economic **strangulation** so by all means, lets do it again!

, "Doesn't this just prove that lockdowns and social distancing / mask wearing **doesn't work**?

This is why I don't believe in the masks , the social distancing , lockdowns etc because its been around for so long.

Self Isolat*

, "Hahaha are you joking no one is going to self isolate.... what you going to say to your employer oh by the way U won't be in for two weeks I'm going to self isolate .... ffs This advice is **irresponsible**."

Anyone with **even a tiny brain** should be able to work it out if they are telling you to self isolate if you even go into those regions, obviously there is an increased risk."

The government advice is to self isolate .

, "So many Brits though are **too selfish** to self isolate and they **will ignore** the advice."

, "How would you feel if your workmate was told to self isolate , and they day after they turned up at work, because it's only a bit of a cold.... red or green, would you walk out, or agree with them."

, "The government is asking for people returning from Northern Italy to \" self isolate \".

Nobody can complain about the fact they ought to self isolate for the Greater Good."

They don't have symptoms it is not necessary for them to self isolate .

, "What a **selfish** attitude !"

, "They havent been told to self isolate .

, "As I've said all along trusting people who are **generally selfish** to self isolate is **tantamount to fanning the flames of the fire**.

Would it kill them to self isolate just to be on the safe side.

It should now be a **criminal offence** not to self isolate .

We are told the incubation period is 14 days so surely if you have been somewhere where coronavirus is, it is safer to self isolate just in case.

If they don't self isolate then they go to a government run quarantine facility.

In Canada, someone arriving via plane raised concerns and she was told to self isolate but if concerned she should seek medical advice.

, "People were returning from Northern Italy and other heavily infected areas with no health check only advice to self isolate if they felt unwell, this **is not sufficient** as people can test positive to the virus even before feeling unwell.

\nWe are now seeing the spread of the disease from those who came back from Italy and other areas heavily infected with Coronavirus. \n

\nThe Government needs to act decisively to prevent the **unnecessary** death of possibly thousands of people by stopping all travel to the worst effected areas and testing or isolating all those who return to the UK before they are allowed to circulate.

We have allowed people to walk in here unchecked at airports and told to self isolate .

Domino effect "

, "It is impossible for a child to self isolate .

, "Who is really going to self isolate ?

, "Surely it would be more sensible to self isolate anyone who has been to infected areas within the past three weeks, by the time anyone feels ill they will have infected others."

, "**A bit hypocritical** telling people to self isolate when the Government continue to allow daily flights from Italy and China to land at Heathrow."

, "I'd like to think that anyone now who has come back from Italy in the last few days have the sense to self isolate but knowing what people are like I bet most won't"

, "You shouldn't be going to Italy, and if you do, and. you come back... you should be put in isolation for a month.

, Lets just say it the way it is this government **have not been very good at handling** this outbreak have they ! "

, "Can't afford to self isolate for two weeks, simple as that."

, "There's a few people I will be licking and sneezing on if I catch this "

, "Italy is going to need a bail out at this rate \n\n"

, "Be told to self isolate should be put into quarantine or not allowed to fly until they are clear the virus...why do I say this because there will be some people, like the queen granddaughter who said I am not sick so I am not go to self isolate, even though I have been to Italy....\n"

, "Self isolation only works when people are decent.

, "We**'re doomed** captain Mannering"

, "**Too late** on returning, and once they have developed symptoms, to self isolate .\nThey will have already done a **good job of spreading** it!!"

And still now they tell people to self isolate , how about stopping everyone at airports, test everyone and anyone who has been to the worst affected areas get put into quarantine wether they like it or not or have symptoms or not."

, "The mayor of nyc is asking anyone who gets off the plane from a hotbed country to just self isolate ?

, "I hope that if they choose to return home that they have the decency to self isolate ."

Why not insist that anyone coming back from a heavily infected area be registered and told to self isolate .

Amazing how every country suddenly knows how to test for something that didn't exist 3 months ago"

, "There are 1000s all over the uk who have been told to self isolate but none have been tested by the NHS so they don't know the real numbers and are playing it down."

The best course is to self isolate and wait for any symptoms, as the government advises."

, "It's all very well telling people to self isolate , but if you don't work and don't pay your rent or mortgage, you're likely to be homeless quite quickly.

Italy had the decency to let us know"

, "They aren't going to self isolate .

Hardly the action of someone willing to self isolate .

, "Someone said yesterday that some people they know arrived back from Italy last week and were told to self isolate , so they phoned in work and went off sick but apparently they went off to visit their friends and then went off to the pub...

, "All these coming from Italy being told to self isolate just how many people will each one of these unchecked people come into contact with on their way home to self isolate ?"

, "Folk aren't going to self isolate for 14 days if they aren't poorly as if they then get poorly they'll have to self isolate for 14 days more and most jobs **aren't going to be happy** about that in me humble view"

, "Suzyq: italy *is* in lock down but they allowing everyone who wants to leave to leave-without checking them.

Leaving people on their own to self isolate **is dangerous**.

Now the advice is self isolate if you have been to Italy.

And you cant trust anyone to self isolate either..."

, "They're told to self isolate then have to travel on public transport or taxi for two hours to get home."

, They've had recommendation to self isolate ...\nNot how to get from the airport to home in isolation!!!"

, "Those coming back from Italy should have the common sense and decency to self isolate to protect their family, friends and rest of society."

What will happen when Emergency Services all have to ' self isolate ', along with other essential services personnel, and throw the military in as well.

Many will not self isolate either due to Poor Employers who will just **sack** staff, hence more spreading, it may seem extreme for a slight cold but this thing just spreads and spreads.

Time to self isolate .

I've decided to self isolate because I feel **dreadful** and IF I have it I wouldn't want to be amongst others."

, "An Indian telecoms call centre would be more useful than the **useless** 111"

, "It's probably a dead cert that there are many people out there with this who just feel unwell, however this is going to spread quickly because people are not taking extra precautions and self isolating , the advice is totally **inadequate**!"

However the advice to self isolate will be **impossible to implement**.

, "The advice around self isolation is everywhere.

, And this is how it spread through the world people going to Italy and coming into Britain with it"

, "I'm sorry you shouldn't need to be told to self isolate .

, "Why would you need to be told to self isolate when travelling from a country that has a large outbreak surely it is common sense, how many times do people need to be told that

checks at the airport are **not good at detecting** the virus and a **waste of time**, then again it does make for a **media panic spreading story** so print it."

, "I cannot believe people have to be told to self isolate , have you **no common sense at all.**

, "Everyone returning from Italy should be tested and should have to self isolate "

, "The country is full of people with this attitude.

<u>Decent</u> humans should not have to be told to self isolate ."

Hie many will be bothered to self isolate . Wouldn't use uber "

, "**Selfish** man"

, "Its been recommended it's on the news!!"

You shouldn't have to be told to self isolate , use your <u>common sense</u> and don't be **selfish**!!"

, "everyone coming back should be listed and told to self isolate ..and post a bond of debt cleared if they do.. some people **just dont care** ..we need protection from people that do not care"

, "Boris our leader and chief doing a great job hmmmmm well it's what you voted for"

, "Connie a pensioner on the ITV main news has <u>more commonsense</u> than the whole of our government, especially Grant Shapps who has **disappeared on the face of the earth**!"

, "\"No one has told me to self isolate , I'm keen to get back to work.

Surely it's <u>cheaper</u> for the economy to lock down the country now"

, "<u>Stay calm</u>,and <u>think straight</u>,and <u>don,t panic</u> !"

, "You <u>could be forgiven</u> for thinking that the government was trying to thin the herd.....\n"

, "I haver just a come back from Italy, can I get someone to self isolate for me?"

Its been know for ages to self isolate when returning from Italy.

, He knows full well to self isolate for two weeks "

, "Bozo's leadership on this is **disastrous**.

, "Countries around Europe are doing everything to stop the spread, closing schools, cancelling large events etc. U.K. ....wash your hands, self isolate , go to large events and carry on as normal."

In a week if anyone calls up who has cold symptoms they have to self isolate for 7 days even for a runny nose or sore throat.

, "What don't they understand they have been told to self isolate when they arrive back in the UK time to scouce some common sense "

, "Don't think that anyone has much faith in uk borders."

They rang the government helpline when they got home and have been told to self isolate for 14 days.

, "How can we trust these people to self isolate properly and for the correct duration?"

Drop off supplies to those self isolating , maintain our own hygiene ect "

, "So 63 is \"elderly\" but we are expected to continue working until 68....

, "Have a good look people if you think it is **too much bother** to self isolate , this will be the UK in a week or two, yhis is the real **cost** of political correctness, if that's not enough to convince you have a look at the morgue.

It's been said that Italy have the second largest population of elderly people in the world which is where the virus seems to be hitting the most and also large families living together making it **harder** to self isolate .

, "The same people who want everyone to self isolate and be on lockdown will be the same people who will **complain** that they have lost their jobs.

Its easy to establish as they normally ask a load of questions as in address,GP etc When you consider that at this time they are telling infected people to self isolate ...moving forwards they can tell the same to the **drunks** or those coming in for some trivia bite to stop **clogging up** A and E. The NHS needs a complete overall to benefit the NHS itself and patients."

Haven't had the chance to wear the boots, as soon as we got back and it was mentioned on the news that Venice was **riddled with covid**, we were advised to self isolate , and here we are in June, still locked away.

No checks on anyone and none told to even self isolate for two weeks."

SWE_S

Lockdown

I am sure a lockdown will be happening there in due course."

, "I **am against** the herd immunity because it **would have overloaded** the NHS also Bulgaria went into lockdown weeks ago no incoming flights before any deaths and so far 8 people have died"

, "Our Government did not order Ventilators Test Kits & PPe & more beds..because this is what they planned for YOU ..Until the World Health Organisation **Discredited** our Govenments advisors Saying Test Test Test..now they are doing what they should have done months ago..

, "Good for Sweden for not going into a **very damaging** lockdown .

, "Should the Swede Crown Princess not be doing more to facilitate a virus lockdown to save lives rather than smiling for a photo op"

, "Publicity seeking and staged."

, "Yesterday one of their experts said he didn't know why we had lockdown , well friend its not rocket science look at your own country."

, "Obviously Swedish television has not set out with an agenda to **scare** its population to the extent that the Swedish government have no alternative but **to enforce** lockdown .

, **Ignorant** man, and **ignorant** people, watch what happens in 2 weeks time, then you will all **regret** not going into lockdown !"

, "**Too many** non Swedes who do what they want not what the government says, so to call for a lock down would only show the government does not control Sweden.

, "in 12 months, faced with economic **catastrophe** as a result of a) millions of job **losses** and business **collapses** b) **collapsed** income from tax receipts c) facing NHS funding **collapse** from a 3 month lockdown - 300 billion cost estimated, Britain will have wished we had listened to Sweden.

Spain and Italy who have had the most extreme lockdowns for weeks have much higher case and death rates than Sweden.

, "There is **no point** having a lockdown if **idiots** don't adhere to it!

, "Did the people need the government to order a lockdown ?

, The damage was down so I guess they saw a complete lockdown as **pointless**.

, "Sweden has a population of just over 10 million around 1 sixth that of the UK but they are experiencing far more than 1 sixth of the infections that the UK is **suffering** . It almost

seems like Sweden has decided that a fatality rate of between 1 and 5 percent of those infected is an acceptable loss compared to the financial cost of a lockdown . "

, "It's a bigger country with a smaller population so probably easier to socially distance and infect less people."

Up to yesterday Finland (who is in lockdown) has only 42 deaths, Norway (who is in lockdown) the other side of Sweden had 108 deaths but Sweden had 793 deaths.

If you're going to claim population density as an important reason for lockdown , how do you square the circle of S. Korea?

The thing we may **have got wrong** is a lockdown should have happened earlier."

, " No lockdown , no huge outbreak.

Bet we still have **idiots** saying the lockdown **doesn't work** using the Swedish as their example.

, Since everyone is saying Sweden is non-comparable to the UK due to population size, climate etc. I see no one is mentioning a country almost 3 times larger than the UK with warmer climate which has no lockdown either - Brazil! 2500 deaths - somewhat smaller than lockdown UK.

And if it has the effect of encouraging people in the UK to think that our own lockdown **has been unnecesary**, it **is also dangerous** -- and could in fact **kill** people.

Deaths will rise lockdown or no lockdown , we have seen that in other countries.

Sweden has a much lower rate of obesity than the U.K."

, "sweden does kind of have a lockdown though, all their elderly and infirm are in lockdown. everyone is sweden is well educated and responds to common sense though so

this works well for them. people in the us **ruin** everything bc they all think they are correct but are **sadly** **undereducated**."

, " Lockdown has to end.

It's a lockdown in all but name."

Countries in lockdown will have **huge problems** to face when they open up, risk for **backslash** is high.

, "Here's how to flatten the curve while having no lockdown .

, "Population of Sweden 10.23 million Population of the United Kingdom 66.65 million it is **crazy** to compare these two Every country will deal with it the best way they can for the benefit of their individual country surely"

, "If distancing is the key then there is **no excuse** for the government to prolong the lockdown.\n

Just improve the distancing & isolation measures.\n

\nContinuing the lockdown will have **lots more detrimental** impacts."

This is why we have lockdown .

, Why is the DM **dredging up** the Sweden and Britain comparison every few days...its obvious to anyone the population difference per square mile will make a huge difference in the spread of the virus..also consider the size of events we had leading upto lockdown ,Cheltenham,premier league football ,international rugby and the size of crowds youd have mixing at these events...

, I wonder if lockdown doesn't really have an effect as the **damage** was already done beforehand during those damp and cold months.

If we do have effective immunity and the overall death rate without lockdown is not too dissimilar to annal rates for the time of year then perhaps Sweden has the correct strategy.

Sweden actually has less deaths per head than many lockdown countries and **has suffered** with far less economic damage.

Far better than being stuck in a perpetual lockdown with no possible exit strategy.

, "So he**'s attacking** Sweden for not having a full lockdown but at the same time telling his base to protest against their lockdowns ?

It seems they have been very successful . Lockdown is a **failed** experiment."

When Denmark and Norway come out of lockdown they will be a lot nearer a cure or a vaccine than Sweden was when they took the gamble .... delay has been the only way of preventing a **meltdown**...\n"

, "He does have a good point"

, "This sounds more like a defence of Swedens laissez-faire strategy rather than an attack.

, All countries coming out of lockdown will see an **increased fatality rate** there is **no avoiding** it.

, "The UK economy is in a **bad place** and it will take years to recover, the sweeds did the right thing, "

, "They insisted on no lockdown and ate now **paying the price**"

, "Why cant people accept.

E Asia didn't have a full lockdown but they still managed to contain the virus.

, "So here in England we will have lockdown after lockdown , restrictions after restriction and a **collapsed** country.

, But he is the boss so it's all down to him whether they went into lockdown or not ! "

, "To little to late "

, "Nooooooo I thought the leftie luvvie remainers stop brexit brigade said Britain had the highest deaths of corona.

Norway have admitted their lockdown was **unnecessary**, they could have got a similar result without the **cost**.

, "But would fewer have died if they had had a lockdown ?

Doubtless the lockdown has claimed **far more deaths** than the bug itself."

The disease has plateaued and they have had no lockdown .

Wasn't that long ago that the story from the swedish virus expert was stating that they had it **wrong** and should have gone into lockdown .

Indeed the government **caved in** to lockdown because they would have been **accused** of putting the economy before lives.

, "Isn't it odd that not one graph was made to predict how many people would die from cancer/heart issues/ domestic violence/ economic issues etc. with a full lockdown ?

, "Unfortunately our government paid attention to professor lockdown .

It went into total lockdown ; closed everything.

, "Personally I think **no amount of lockdown is going to help** anyone.

, "As I said, a lockdown was a **complete waste of time** and has caused **more damage** than good.

, And no Sweden didnt impose a total lockdown but there were/ are numerous restrictions and recommendations in place.

Two week lockdown turned into 6 months of **house arrest** and steps towards socialism.

, "**Good grief** can you imagine how many would have died here without a lockdown ?

I could remember people saying that Boris was **stupid** and do not want to lockdown as other countries had done so.

, what's more in Sweden NO lockdown **destroying** their economy and jobs, plus health services kept open for all illnesses.

The NHS was at capacity with the virus here with a lockdown , if we had not locked down many would have died purely because they could not receive any treatment for COVID that would have survived with the treatment."

It even repeats this \"Sweden, which <u>never imposed </u>a national lockdown , claimed herd immunity would <u>protect</u> its population\", though it has been stated innumerable times that herd immunity was never a goal.

But, the lockdown **has been crippling** and we won't recover for years, personally I think complete lockdown was a **mistake**."

I suspect in 2-3 years there will be a growing consensus that lockdowns made COVID **more damaging** in the long run rather than better"

, "Do you think the UK government got everything right?

, "Sweden may not have had a formal lockdown , but according to the BBC correspondent in Stockholm most Swedes observed an unofficial lockdown.

, Why don't you try to right an article looking at where Lockdown has been a success?

, "If there are now **six times more deaths** from flu then why aren't we having a flu lockdown ?"

Deaths per million: Sweden 573, (only 53 less than UK who has 623) 49 Norway,61 Finland and 108 Denmark - **not good** reading"

, "suddenly you are not dragging them any more, i wonder why? maybe because they had the right approach and the media constant **cry babying** to score points force the uk into lockdown which the mail was part of"

, "Well done to Sweden, lots of intelligent people could see that their strategy was right from the start.

, "They have the **highest death rate** per 1 million people"

, "good viking blood heratige "

, "Our lockdown was a **farce**, there is no evidence that proves it has been successful when compared to no lockdown in Sweden, in fact we could argue perfectly reasonably that our lockdown has done **more harm than good** when you factor in a **destroyed** economy, the knock on effects on cancer patients, and all the **ill** effects it is having on the mental health of our nation.

But if you look at Sweden: they are human beings, but no masks, no lockdowns , schools work, hospitals works, the economy performs far better than the lock-down states' economies.

Sweden is now more or less covid19 free and did not go into lockdown , kept children at school, workers at work and no **absolutely stupid** face masks.

, So not heading towards a lockdown then ...DM headlines **spreading lies** again "

, "I thought they had herd immunity already?

The local lockdowns will take care of any people who wanted to take a UK holiday so they will have achieved a full lockdown , even if not in name."

Quebec had lockdown , while Sweden remained open for business.

, "Seems that the Swedish government have finally **caved in** to the WHO demands that they go into lockdown !

, "What is **painfully** clear, among all the **lies**, **deceit** and **propaganda**, is that the lockdowns **have n't made one iota of difference** to the **faked** death rate except that our economies have taken a **massive hit**.

, "**FAKE** NEWS\nThere is no discussion about a lockdown in any swedish newspapers"

, "Boris made the correct decision for England.

All a lockdown would do is increase non-covid deaths , **ruin** the economy and **install fear** in the community.

It puts all of the focus on lockdowns , but Sweden has been dismissive of masks!

, "Herd immunity from a **nasty** strain of flu plus common sense works wonders"

, "The numbers tell a very different story as over 13,000 people have **needlessly** died as a result of not having any lockdowns .

Lockdowns and **forced** vaccinations, mask wearing etc must be the way to go.

Herd Immunity

Herd Immunity could work and is probably the best approach to defeating this virus quickly.

Here in Sweden do we have a different strategy called Herd Immunity .

The UK may need to reconsider a herd immunity strategy to defeat coronavirus, he says that long, indefinite periods of lockdown could cause **more harm** than the virus itself ."

A lot of Finns living and working in Sweden are now moving back to Finland to be safe"

, "Sweden clearly going for the Herd Immunity - deliberate mass infection approach.

, Sweden has taken the herd immunity road for dealing with the virus...

The **death rate is higher** but hey, the **silly** swedish people"

, " Herd immunity strategy .

, "I hope for your people's sake you are right but one look at our nurses and doctors here

has me praying for your people"

, "How's that herd immunity working out for you Sweden?"

, "But they will not have to worry about the so called second wave, as the herd immunity

will be working "

, "If they went into lockdown their police wouldn't be able to enforce it anyway.

The fact is covid-19 is a **highly contagious** disease and if social interactions are not

contained to reduce the R0 value to less than 1 it will spread (or at least until herd

immunity is achieved).

, "Perhaps herd immunity worked !"

, Sweden's policy was to not try and flatten the curve, they decided their health service

could cope, this of course means a **big spike in deaths** in the short term , but potentially

less deaths in the medium to long term as herd immunity is achieved . And of course this

doesnt kill your economy . \nThey are not the only country to do this."

, Herd immunity is achieved by either having been previously infected or through

vaccination.

The UK has 727 per mi", " Herd immunity only works on sheeple."

, "Swedish population is 10 millions to achieve the \" herd immunity \" at least 80% of the

popolution has to be infected and if there is only 13k they are nowhere near the herd

immunity.

Herd immunity strategies will get herd immunity but with a **huge death toll** of vulnerable people to go with it...

, "It is the rapid disease this virus causes (as in the name COVID-19) which calls for abandoning herd immunity targets as we saw it here because health services **cannot cope** with its spreading.

, theya re alreadyat 10% deaths/infected. great job, swedish **idiots**, uh? let it spread, see how many can you **kill**, before you discover **no herd immunity is gratned to work** yet. for all everybody knows, for the moment, there is none. you can catch it again,especially if, as it is very usual with coroanvira, there are different strains and mutations. thx swedish **guiena pigs**, suciidal ones but ehi... oh wait, from the north, yeah, lemmings i guess then. thx lemmings."

They've **sacrificed** their elderly as the price for herd immunity "

, "ATenguell **was proved wrong** week after week and then defl6once confronted.

, " Herd immunity **doesn't work** as a short-term solution, because a study conducted in Italy found that only 10% of those who recovered from the virus had any antibodies afterwards."

, "How well did that Herd Immunity thing work for us in 1918-1919?

, "Is't herd immunity a bit **presumptuous** for a virus no one seen before ?", "Sweden has just over 1/6 of the UK population with 1511 deaths so far, the UK has recorded over 15000 deaths with a lockdown.

, "Elsewhere in the Daily Mail, it states that herd immunity **doesn't work** .

Maybe, just maybe .. herd immunity will work for the Swedes....

It is **fake** news as herd immunity **does not work** .

Most scientists believe herd immunity will work .

, "They are going for herd immunity but there is no evidence that you can only get this virus once."

, "Much healthier population"

, "THEY HAVE DECIDED to go for the herd immunity We will have to eventually do that here"

, "More **rubbish** from the Daily Mail they have a **rising death rate** and more have died than the countries surrounding ."

, "See what happens when you treat people like adults "

, "Sweden having one-sixth the population spread over twice the area of the UK would mean less congestion and greater natural social distances has something to do with this wouldn't you think?"

I think herd immunity would work , but people are **scared** of death now.

, "What's the point of social distancing if you're aiming for herd immunity ?

I Hope Sweden succeeds but whatever the outcome we will be better informed for the future "

, "The **sad** thing is this what should be done worldwide, we need herd immunity for every virus being in quarantine **weakens** our immunity claim immunologists, many doctors are coming forward now saying lockdown is a **bad idea** and now we are in it we aren't going to be coming out as they'll keep extending."

Their aim is to prevent infections and not to achieve herd immunity , 100% wearing face masks so the death rate is extremely low compared to Stockholm's 1 million population and thousands of deaths.

, "Sweden volunteered to be the worlds largest testing lab for herd immunity .

, "According to their medical council, Sweden will reach herd immunity within two weeks.

Their first response was to achieve herd immunity , it's no coincidence that millions of people were already affected before the normal person in the street even heard of its existence."

, "Imagine what the UK death toll would have been in Macron hadn't forced Boris Johnson to drop the herd immunity strategy ", "Lets be **brutally** honest.

If no vaccine is created, we just jave to live with it then aim for herd immunity as fast as possible!!

, "Sweden will also probably be the first country to achieve herd immunity and get life fully back to normal.

They will have achieved herd immunity and we will face more deaths according to the experts."

, " Herd immunity probably **not worked** because the people have been educated and are careful when they go out so they did not need a lockdown. hence no herd immunity.

Since the number is low, they've gone with herd immunity **not working** !

, Sweden, kind of made the right decision, in regards to their economy, however they **sacrificed** the vulnerable for no reason as herd immunity **would of never worked**, when the winter season sets in again, this will be confirmed by a second wave & many waves to come in every cold season, until spread is significantly reduced, the chances of a vaccine are very, very slim, the UK up to now is looking at the **most severe** second wave in Europe, possibly the **2nd worst** in the world par the US, this is due to our **failure** at locating & preventing spread.

The herd immunity strategy was always going to cause the first spike to be bigger than it would otherwise be, the success will be measured about what happens with a second spike or not."

Maybe in other parts of Sweden, but Stockholm for certain reached herd immunity by now.

Sweden's relatively low death rate and declining daily deaths speak for themselves, and there will be no second wave there (unlike Norway, Denmark and New Zealand etc) because Sweden will have reached herd immunity ."

Boris should have gone for herd immunity instead of **kneeling** to woke scientists/civil servants and the MSM establishment.

Sweden does not have a ' herd immunity ' strategy , it has a strategy which puts the onus on asking people to act responsibly, work from home and avoid gatherings.

, "Congratulations on reaching herd immunity , Sweden!"

Well forgive my **stupidity** but if herd immunity doesn't work then a vaccination **won't work**.

So in terms of morbidity from the virus, it's not great by any stretch. \n\nAt least 70% of a population needs to be exposed to a virus to achieve herd immunity .

And no, herd immunity cannot be achieved .

There is still sound that herd immunity can even be achieved .

, "**Dithering FOOLS**"

, "Righto let's wait for winter to hit Sweden then we'll see"

, "Trying for herd immunity is one thing but I think the really **scary** thing about covid is the unknown long term side effects.

Yesterday, the leading Swedish newspaper Expressen released **very concerning** emails from the Health Authority, further proving that they **scarified** elderly in order to reach herd immunity .

Seems clear to me that Prof. Vallance's herd immunity strategy was right from day one.

, Every body **crying** when uk wanted to go for herd immunity ,"

, "What are you talking about?

, "Of course if you lockdown it will stop the virus in its tracks, but as this proves, it will eventually **infect** most of the population until herd immunity is reached .

, "I thought democrats said herd immunity did not work because they said without any scientific explanation.

More important, you can't achieve herd immunity until a very large proportion of the population has had the virus."

And just think, flu and colds have been around since the dawn of time yet no one has achieved herd immunity from them but suddenly Sweden is the first country in the history of the world to achieve a virus herd immunity without a vaccine, miracle.

One minute boris **is outrageous** for suggesting herd immunity .

, "I am here in Stockholm and **bleeds my heart** what we have lost"

, "America **cannot tolerate** the number of deaths necessary for developing herd immunity "

, "As pointed out earlier, Sweden has an educated and generally healthy populace because of universal education and health care.

Herd immunity is the way to go.

, "I saw a headline here yesterday that said herd immunity was almost achieved "

, "'herd immunity' doesn't exist for CV19.

, "I'm not sure how herd immunity would ever work long term, whether in Sweden or elsewhere, because the virus mutates too rapidly.

Say where going for herd immunity when it doesn't exist without a vaccine.

, "course they will say herd immunity wasnt the strategy ... when the attempt **goes down in flames**.

The whole point of their approach was to achieve herd immunity and therefore a high infection rate.

, "I posted 2 months ago, the herd immunity has NEVER been achieved without an effective VACCINE in circulation.\nHerd immunity is one of those ideological, **pie in the sky** theories.

Herd immunity is not nonsense, it is exactly why vaccination is a good idea."

, "So if herd immunity doesn't work how will a vaccine work?

, "Well it was announced in June that Sweden had found no traces of herd immunity so it can't be a surprise if herd immunity isn't working in Sweden as it doesn't exist !"

, "Its an interesting suggestion that Sweden with no lockdown are unable to reach herd immunity but Dr Mike Yeadon thinks the UK have reached it with the country in lockdown for 4 months.

, "Yes but theyre the vulnerable of society anyway they might have died of flu this year"

, "Herd immunity does not exist"

, "I suspect they are using so sort of dominion software "

, "Sweden's \" herd immunity \" strategy **is in shatters**.\nSweden has twice the infection rate as the UK.\nSweden's death rate is exponential.\nYet the DM promoted the Swedish strategy in June !!!!\n"

, "Well they didn't lockdown and went for the herd immunity approach.

This is all due to a **narcissistic** epidemiologist (Anders Tegnell) who believed he could successfully implement a herd immunity strategy against all worldwide scientific conclusions."

, "How's that herd immunity working out for you, Sweden?"

But Nick Abbot says that herd immunity is working out perfectly there!"

, "What happened to herd immunity for these Swedes?"

, " Herd immunity hasnt worked out then ?"

, "Hang on, not so long ago everyone was saying we should do what Sweden was doing.

, Sweden got it right in the end and bravely went in the herd immunity strategy and Australia tried to **wrap themselves in cotton** with negative consequences as their strategy **backfired** - Furthermore Sweden has embraced the vaccination programme with over 60 percent vaccinated and Australia are on a **totally pathetic** 15 percent vaccination rate"

*Social Distanc**

OTH, while out, Swedes should observe social distancing ."

, "There are fewer Swedes out and about, and most of those are observing the recommended social distance, than there are Brits out and about not observing social distancing , during a lockdown.

You can clearly see many people aren't practicing social distancing .

Their death toll will soon start to rise as they are not practicing social distancing ."

Sweden has always practiced social distancing .

We have been practicing social distancing , exercising in the fresh air and not making any **unnecessary** trips to the shops.

And even your photos of Stockholm show that people are observing social distancing recommendations.

, "I very much admire CP Victoria .. she will make a great Queen .. lucky Sweden:)"

, "We'd be better off with masks , social distancing and not closing the country down.

, "Swedes have been practicing social distancing for generations.

, " Social distancing is easier to practice if the population is spread out more.

In Sweden with no lockdown/ or draconian laws & only limited social distancing rules their infection rate based on population is 0.064%, ours is 0.064%, their death rate on population is 0.0037% ours is 0.00661% (2x).

Social distancing of 2 meters **does little**."

, "I can't see why we can't open businesses again with social distancing rules still in place and anyone who doesn't want to participate stays in isolation."

, "Of course one can't believe photos or anything else in the news now or indeed, probably ever, but it didn't look much like social distancing being practiced by the Swedes in the photos I've seen."

, "If the Swedish people are sticking to the social distancing rules there's no need to tighten them.

The British people had the opportunity and did not follow the social distancing rules so the pm had close things down.

, The government-backed Public Health Agency of Sweden contends that Swedes have enough common sense to practice social distancing of their own volition! .....well looking at the pictures in this article it's clear they don't.

, "So many Doris's from Facebook on here"

, "This is what you get when you have liberal leftists running a country immigration vastly unchecked and now this the Swedish people need to stand up and be counted there Viking ancestors **would be turning in there graves**"

, "I think unless a country is practising strong social distancing , increased hygiene coupled with a trace, test and mitigate strategy then this disease's R0 factor will be above 1.

They were told to practice social distancing , they are a much more compliant society and it worked.

He had admitted that a **serious mistake** was made with the lack of ppe for care home workers , and **threatened** restaurants that don't observe social distancing regulations with enforced closure, but to suggest Sweden is changing it's policy is **inaccurate**.

, "In Ireland they have the same number of cases but a third of deaths because they are practicing social distancing ."

, "If social distancing can be observed in the supermarkets why on earth can it not be maintained in the local shops most likely to **be bankrupt** after this."

, "Don't kid yourself, Sweden is twice the size of the UK and only a population of 10 million compared to 67 million in the UK, easier to practice social distancing without the lockdown!"

, "We can't practice a successful social distance in UK especially in London, with delays and cancellations on Trains, London underground and buses.\nThe amount of delays and cancellations on public transport is unprecedented."

If the number of deaths per 1,000 people is a bit lower than the UK's, then it's because Swedes are more sensible than the vast majority of British people and keep to the social distancing rules .

We practice geographical and social distancing as a norm.

, "Sweden a country several times the size of the U.K. But has a population only one tenth of that of the U.K. So their normal state is very similar to the U.K. when we practice social distancing and stay two metres apart, except for the people of your own household.

Truth is, good living conditions, lots of single occupancy households, good adherence to social distancing , good hand hygiene and a superb healthcare system, has really helped nations like Sweden, Taiwan, Singapore, S Korea, Japan etc. Lockdowns aren't a magical cure all.

Imagine the UK or US going without lockdown and only practicing social distancing and hand washing.

They also are operating social distancing and increased hygiene advice.

, "Mayne the Swiss are just better at understanding hygiene and social distancing rules than an awful lot of Brits.

, "Because, as I recall, you were not practicing social distancing but were having huge crowded events until very late.

, "Told you so", "That's why we in the UK closed pubs and restaurants, because there's so many **selfish**, **ill-disciplined idiots** who are unwilling or **intellectually incapable** of adhering to the social distancing rules .

, "Sweden (apart from the big cities) is a well spread out society "

, "A complete lockdown can be avoided if people are more aware and practice social distancing diligently.

Considering that their main argument against lockdown is their pride in respecting rules (namely social distancing) and the fact that population density is very low, sparse and most infections are concentrated in the Stockholm area they **have failed spectacularly**!

While Sweden is likely to continue to have more cases per capita for a couple more months they're manageable and will not be fretting about a second wave/curve/peak thanks to herd immunity. \n

\nSweden have followed an evidence-based and science-led approach.

quite unlike the UK where a political svengali overrode the scientists and demanded lockdown-of-all rather than targeted quarantine (care homes!), social distancing and masks in crowded areas.

, "To make this **worse** for the Swedes, they practice social distancing on a daily basis anyway with the majority living in self isolation since it became a feminist far left state back in 1984.

Total lock down is not necessary if they practice social distancing and use face masks routinely."

And yes the death toll will escalate for a long time but with social distancing and good hygiene the spread will be slower.

Do they wear face masks and ' social distance ?"

, "Apart from food shopping I will not set foot in another non food store until I can browse at will without the mask and social distancing .

Culture in Sweden has always observed social distance of at least a meter. . Bus queues they have always stayed about 2 meters apart.

They didn't practice social distancing and 40% of them didn't wear masks."

I just wish people would put at least some of the **blame** in this country where it belongs...back on the people who are spreading it by not following social distancing rules .

, "What **nonsense** -- masks and social distancing OBVIOUSLY work.

MILLIONS of people would die **unnecessarily** in an attempt to achieve herd immunity in the UK and US.\n

\nJapan, a country that immediately practiced strict social distancing and mask-wearing, is #134 for deaths per million.

, " Masks and social distancing **haven't worked**, Read other reports in this same news source and figure it out.

Ultimately the Swedish government gave their people the right to act sensibly - which they did by following social distancing .

Secondly they practice social distancing by default as every house is separated by a forest.

, "Still made right decision and are the winners !"

, "In practice the Swedes observed social distancing because they have more community spirit than in the UK where we may have had harder lockdown rules but these were widely **broken** due to the rampant individualism we have here.

.\n\nThe closest comparison to Sweden is Denmark and Finland and Sweden has had a **disastrous** outcome compared to both of them.\n

\nSweden's pursuit of herd immunity via permitting the virus infecting the public has **zero scientific support** it is merely an **unsupported** theory of the chief medical advisor i.e. a medical experiment on the entire population without their consent and without ethics committee oversight and should be viewed as such. \n

\nAnyone with a rudimentary understanding of epidemiology would know that if you advise the public to engage in social distancing and hand hygiene and you have high levels of compliance those two measures alone are going to slow the infection rate down enough to prevent the goal of herd immunity from happening."

, There were plenty of measures put in place in Sweden including school closures for older kids, social distancing , hand hygiene and the banning of mass gatherings.

, "In Spain everyone is in a mask and no one social distances anymore, they all think their masks will save them even though a lot of masks are worn **incorrectly** (under the chin or with nose out), fashion masks with no benefit at all and reusing masks repeatedly without washing or throwing away.

I have noticed that mask wearing shoppers in supermarkets no longer operate the 2 meters social distancing rule .

Like the other Nordic nations they are more spread out - Sweden is a very empty country, the Swedes are used to social distancing , they are rule takers and they <u>love</u> being out in the open air.

Swedes do as they're told so they'd obey the social distancing and hygiene rules - plenty of **numpties** in this country who go out of their way not to obey rules. \nC.

The country should have isolated the in danger group then carried on with masks , social distancing and hand washing.

In practice they observed social distancing measure to much the same extent as we did here.

From stay at home orders, to wearing a masks, to **snitching** your neighbours for not wearing a mask or observing social distancing .

Norway were closed for only 6 weeks from March to April, and then continued with social distancing without the masks .

, Did they wear medals and practice social distancing ??"

, "It seem that mask wearing, social distancing and extensive testing and tracing are sufficient to stop the spread.

, "I think we'll end up with 'herd immunity' here in the US by accident, as so many young people are completely **ignoring** the rules of social distancing ."

The reason infections are starting to subside is because everyone has abided by the social distancing rules and worked from home if they could.

, "The most significant passage being \"trusting Swedes to combat the virus by washing their hands and abiding by social distancing rules \".

No, this is because it's a smaller population spread out over bigger area and they follow instructions, that is good hygiene , social distancing etc. Probably a lot healthier as well with better diet.

They have a lot of one person households and practiced social distancing etc and wore masks s lot right from the beginning.

, "Even if so it still proves that masks and social distancing **is nothing more than a placebo**."

Stupid people not social distancing and wearing masks ."

They decide to party, not wearing masks , observe social distancing .

, "What a bunch of **moaning minnies**"

, "Keep them locked up we will see less protests and **vandalism** of our statues "

, "grow up and be a man, there are other people on this planet"

, "How the supposed educated **are hurting**; We have been told, for 6 months, to wash hands; wear masks AND keep a social distance …

It's the tourists visiting who think sweden doesn't have covid that **are ignoring** all the social distancing rules .

Masks , social distancing and personal hygiene, folks!"

Anytime there is a national virus epidemic lockdowns, daily sanitation social distancing , and face masks are the best solutions to slowing the spread.

Right now people in Sweden need to practice social distancing and wait for the the vaccines like everyone else."

I spent summer in Sweden - ferries and underground very busy, no-one wearing masks hardly any social distancing - no body bags piled up on the streets.

, "deaths going up in flu season ,, sort of what happens every year, they had 2701 in 2018 due to flu .."

, "Shopping centers and stores were crowded in Stockholm area this weekend especially, very few wore masks and few kept social distancing .

The way out of this pandemic is vaccines, social distancing , masks , etc., and lockdowns which do reduce the number of infections, etc. "

, "Stop with the Swedish comparisons.

Blame the **covidiots** and the refusal to wear masks and social distance .

, "More than half of the US isn't wearing masks or social distancing - population, city density and gross American habits are the differentiating factors here."

WAKE UP - masks , lockdowns, social distancing , screens etc **make no difference**. \n

\nVaccines work for the vulnerable elderly and young with health conditions but for the healthy young - THEY **MAKE NO DIFFERENCE**"

, "In Sweden where I live, some wear masks but not many, maybe 1 per cent"

, "Respect to Sweden.

, "Lockdowns, masks , social distancing and Blood Clot Death Shots **do NOT work** you cannot stop a virulent virus such as this?"

Self Isolat*

, "Time will tell, but it would have been better for the vulnerable to self isolate and the rest of us go to work to pay for a good health service, we are going to be **bankrupt** with no NHS at this rate.

, "In the Netherlands, they are hoping lots of people get it to become immune while vulnerable people self isolate ."

I personally think self isolation is the best solution at the moment for any country in the world, but hey, to each his own.

, "I <u>wish</u> everything wasn't locked down they should just tell old people and people at risk to stay in and self isolate not whole countries where most won't be at risk of dying and will just be a bad flu for them"

, "Utter **nonsense** \nSame as here!!"

The very very few who aee vulnerable need to self isolate .

, "I can see some reasoning behind their more relaxed approach - self isolation for the elderly and those with pre-existing conditions and those that are aware or believe they have the virus.

Most of the population are in self isolation only going out for essentials or a brisk walk.

, "Sweden has gone from a country envied around the world to one that is regarded as a **cesspit** to be avoided"

, "Let Sweden do Sweden, which every country you resist in, continue to self isolation and keep safe"

, "And it <u>works</u>!

I have self isolated for the last 2 weeks and refused to go to work as a cook in a preschool, they tell me the Government has not told them to close!!!

, Sweden has the highest percentage population that live alone in the world , self isolation is normal standard Swedish lifestyle.

Also the high divorce/ separated families makes it <u>easier</u> to self isolate .

The **most dangerous** pandemic in Sweden is...politics "

, "Lockdown isnt going to stop this,unless someone comes up with a vaccine it will still be there indefinitely.\n

Be realistic.\n

Herd immunisation or self isolation , I know what I choose but **unfortunately** I dont have a choice."

Same as my fellow Brits coming back from Thailand and other places where the Coronavirus is still prominent saying they should be TOLD to self isolate - no, you should just DO it anyway."

I suspect the decision to close all schools was not the governments decision, but because too many teachers skiving off, taking advantage Of pc advice, which was if you have a little sniffle or cough to self isolate for at least 14 days.

At least we know Greta will not be in school;-) "

, "50% of swedes live alone so already self isolated , if we are ill then we get 80% of our wage so we are off after any sign of illness earlier than most countries. 90% of workers have already wfh for a month.

Remember, Boris stopped short of suggesting over 70s should self isolate .

We in NZ are <u>thankful</u> our PM took measures early on to self isolate and close non essential business.

The elderly and risk groups are self isolating (**Stupid** ones who doesnt) A huge amount of the workforce work from home.

The majority of people are working from home, home food deliveries have been common for years meaning supermarkets are rarely busy, social distancing is engrained from birth, over 50% of the population are 1 person households, vulnerable people are self isolating as much as possible.

They've told the at-risk group to self isolate , and everyone else gets on with life.

At least encourage the basics: masks, sanitizing and washing hands, social distancing, and self isolating ,"

, "You can feel the Maily Dail just yearning for a catastrophe.

, "People are asking Where is Greta? she has been in self isolation after her tour of Europe picking up coronavirus to take back to Sweden .Its a **pity** she didn't think about people she may have caused to be infected ,which was their **own fault** for going to these rallies but they then would infect outs after how many families futures did she **ruin** .How many kids have taken the virus back to their homes friends relatives .For whatever good she thought she was doing she shouldn't have continued with her troop of helpers proof of this is the fact she tested positive . It may

We've self isolated for longer than the governmrnt said but my child now has it!

, "The people can self isolate if they want to.

, "My son lives in Sweden and he does tell me that most Swedes or **perplexed** with the governments **lack of planning** however it is right to say that the majority of them are already doing the right thing and self isolating "

, "Sweden is the **Guinea Pig** then.

, "Does it really need a government to tell people to stay indoors and self isolate ?\n

I feel the situation in Sweden **unfortunately** reflects the herd mentality of it's citizens rather than the leaders at the top.\n

Looks more like a cull than Jantelagen to me . . . .\n"

, "DM hasn't reported that Boris has revamped his communications strategy to combat coronavirus and will run it like a political campaign . He and Dom drafted in a new team of

advisers last week (**at our considerable expense**) Following criticism over his mixed

messages in recent weeks they have recruited those who ran

Neighbours can live side by side for years and never talk to each other. \n

\nPeople self isolate already and don't meet other people except for working.

, "Sweden <u>is not the problem</u> India is with billions of people living many to a room not

able to self isolate will be massive number of deaths then as soon as west lifts they come

reinfect us"

, "Please look t other facts and they are doing what is right for Sweden they are

underpopulated, a fast country, small population this is right for then the numbers prove

it when we are set up to handle the deaths then we only have one option do the same or

go back to a cave"

, "The big **disaster** was **wrecking** the world economy.

The very old will <u>gladly</u> stay at home and self isolate if it's for the betterment of the

community, and would never think of asking or expecting everyone else to **suffer**

economic **collapse** to prevent them passing 1 or a few years early.

Look how quickly teachers 'suddenly' had to self isolate when sick pay was extended.

, All these so called **bloody** experts who all have different ideas fed up with them on TV ,

in the papers all **spouting** different opinions huh just do as we are told stop in doors I am

starting my fourth week in self isolation always use to going out every day walking

keeping fit at 77 i think <u>not bad</u> ,and if we do as we are asked to stay indoors"

The UK population are generally **dirtier** in their personal hygiene than the Swedes who

have a more naturally self isolating mentally."

, "Stockholm is as **badly hit** as in other capitals, obviously in other parts where you have to take the car to your closest neighbour it is easier to self isolate ."

, "The only solution is to plan for the time after self isolation ,life will get back to normal eventually.

, "Lets make sure they dont leave their country then, until they are absolutely sure everyone is clear "

, "It is a **great pity** that Sweden wasn't more definitive and declined to give precise instructions about self isolation .

Self isolate if you need but they will not crash the economy for generations to come."

Just because they are not being ordered to lockdown doesnt prevent them from choosing to self isolate .

, Is this guy for real, impose self isolation you **idiot**!

If Swedes themselves **are worried** there is no law preventing them from self isolating .

I think there must be widespread voluntary social distancing and self isolation being practised in that country already.

We also do listen to the experts (press conference every day) and we are self isolating .

, Yes but having read other articles most Swedish are being responsible and self isolating themselves.

Self isolation there is an everyday normality."

England's 671 people per square mile which makes us one of the most **over crowded** countries in Europe"

, "I lived in Norrkoping and we had a place in Vikbolandet (with a quarter acre of land costing 5000) in the country like many Swedes so it is ideal for self isolating .

, And so the Swedish p m has realised that self isolation is the best way to control the virus.

We don't want them coming here and **undoing all the good** most of the Spanish people have done by obeying the self isolation rules.

Self isolate if you feel vulnerable but let people get back to working and being properly educated and just living their lives.

, "I maintain that when this Government and all it's so-called \"experts\" have finished their fit of the vapours; they will have a lot of explaining to do to justify the possible **destroying** of our economy and record employment for an infection that could esily have been endured by keeping separate and adopting reasonable hygeine along with self isolation (like flu) for a few weeks.

Swedes **desperate** to self isolate can always move to a prison if they're so **scared** of getting the virus."

They are still not locked down"

, "In most countries over 50% of transmission is by living with an infected person, 70% of Swedish people live alone, no other country has this dynamic of single households they are more or less always self isolating .

They have lockdown, social distancing and advise the elderly to self isolate it may not be as strict as the UK and certainly nowhere the regulations of Italy but it has brought in measures so stop **distorting the facts** and **sowing dissent**."

Sweden never self isolated, so their infections will have been spread further than what Americans will experience coming out of self isolation .

, Swedes self isolate anyway by sitting at home alone staring out the window...always have done since the Viking culture was wiped out.

The truth is most people have been sensible and self isolated regardless.

Care home deaths have been too high everywhere and it's **difficult** to see how you can self isolate individuals who need constant care.

The policy of self isolation with the rest of the family may also contribute to the UK's **poor** performance.

Social distancing and self isolation for the old and at risk and we would not have a massive increase in debt which will affect us for decades.

All that should have been done is that the over 70s (that have formed the **overwhelming** majority of those that have become very ill or died) should have been asked (not ordered!) to self isolate whilst everyone just got on with life.

, "It's for old people to self isolate , not for the entire population to lockdown to protect them.. **unfortunately** we did the latter..."

We must self isolate !

, "But people were sensible and those in higher risk groups did self isolate and this i think is best way forward.

Infection fell in July because that's when Swedes all self isolate naturally in their summer homes in the woods.

, "Sorry but if you go away anywhere at the moment you need to be planning the **worst** case scenario- that is you will have to self isolate on return.

, If your going abroad have a great time but expect things to change and except it and to all you lot calling us **idiots** up yours"

, "The biggest surprise is the **stupidity** of the people still being **selfish** and going abroad, then complaining when the inevitable happens and they have to self isolate when they come home.

, "I read on Twitter someone came home from Spain and instead of self isolating went off to Turkey for 2 weeks, the person was from England.

DO NOT self isolate upon coming back.

, The real Swedes are responsible and can be trusted to keep a distance from each other and self isolate if need."

, "They **killed** their vulnerable people upfront - the rest are probably self isolating from their **insane** government - NZ has a toll of 36 - perhaps we ought look at their example instead of mad mail insistence on **killing** the elderly and vulnerable"

, "Back when we weren't locking down this paper was in **uproar**.

As for covid 19 if it disappears after 14 days of self isolation , should it have all gone by now????

that are over subscribed, **unfortunately** university's have become **cash cows** that need a lot of feeding \n\

n", "They don't care they will be having a ball inside their halls of residence they will happy to spend Xmas with their mates"

, "This class of students especially the first years have been encouraged to use the student halls of residence now under house arrest doing online Zoom classes They could've done this from family home with a much reduced fee again **greed** and rent wanted , my daughters tutors self isolating and always got some excuse tutors wages guaranteed student experience zero"

, "Boris , youve **lost control** ! "

, "**Hell no**, they knew the risks."

, "So what if theyve got to self isolate .. old people have had to and they dont have many years left.

, "Uni, what a **total waste** of money i wouldnt bother "

, "University is for learning not for partying, if these **Snowflakes** had followed the Lockdown rules in the first place they would not be having to self isolate now, **Selfish** to the core, welcome to the Real World **how the hell** do they think the Older Generation feel, weve been on Lockdown since February and will be for a long time soon, because Prats out there wont follow the Rules, also time to ban all demonstrations, they never prove anything only spread the Virus further, how many students were at the Demos yesterday then went back to their Unis carrying Covid with them."

, Father Christmas must wear a mask and self isolate ..."

It's **pointless** the UK having lockdowns when they let people into the country every day unchecked, and expect them to ' self isolate ' for 14 days with nobody checking up on them.

Nor do they seem to want to publish that a court ruling in Portugal based on clinical data - That the PCR testing kit for covid is **wholly unreliable**, produces false positive & anyone forced into quarrantine/ self Isolation is akin to **false imprisonment** and a **breach of human rights** - Did you read that in the DM ??? Nah, they dont want you to know the truth - They want to **spoon feed you garbage** on a daily basis & anything that does not fit the agenda is omitted.

Statement of Division of Work

With the following, the division of the work of research, analysis and thesis writing among the authors Danielson N. and De Luca A. is reported.

As for the research phase, De Luca A. focused on searching for literature to support the entire project, while Danielson N. was responsible for developing scripts capable of assisting data collection.

For what concerns the writing phase, both authors contributed equally. Danielson N., however, put more effort in the drafting, while De Luca A. focused more on revisioning and re-writing.

As for the analysis part, it has been conducted following an equal division of tasks. Later on, De Luca A. focused on putting down the results in an organic way, while Danielson N. provided with functional links to Sketch Engine.

Both authors contributed to the creation of the Codebook; while De Luca A. took charge of the entirety of the annotating process, Danielson N. took the role of intercoder for a small excerpt of text.

However, in general the workload has been more or less even between the two authors.