

**Framing COVID-19:  
Analysing the Effect of Framing on the Popular Understanding of the Coronavirus  
Pandemic**

Clement Francony  
Columbia University  
ccf2143@columbia.edu

April 1, 2021

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Methodology.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2.1 – What is a security frame? .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2.2 – The Index.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2.3 – Possible limitations .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>3. Data and Analysis.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3.1 – Example Index for Japan.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3.2 – Example Index for the US.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>3.3 – Dependent variable analysis.....</b>	<b>31</b>
Covid Performance Index.....	32
YouGov Polls.....	35
<b>3.4 – Why did countries choose the frame they did?.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>3.5 – Further General Discussion .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>4. US Case Study .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>4.1 – Trump’s preoccupation with remaining in command and in control .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>4.2 – Focusing on the physical/material aspect of the response .....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>4.3 – Freedom and Individual Liberties.....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>5. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>6. Bibliography.....</b>	<b>84</b>

## **1. Introduction**

On December 31, 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) was first made aware of cases of “viral pneumonia” in Wuhan, China. On January 11, 2020, the WHO received the genetic sequence of what was now determined as a novel coronavirus, and the first death was reported. Just two days later, the first international case was recorded in Thailand.<sup>1</sup> From there, it spread worldwide to reach 128,991,488 cases and 2,817,908 deaths globally at time of writing.<sup>2</sup> Between then and now, countries shut down, economies crashed and the world ground to a halt. It was also a time of political reckoning, with governments debating how best to handle their response to such an unprecedented pandemic. The global nature of this event has created a real-life experiment in pandemic response and should help the world community learn from this experience, the same way lessons were learnt and applied after the failures of the international community in keeping peace in the lead up to World War II. Of particular interest with the coronavirus pandemic is the way governments talked about the crisis. Some countries downplayed the threat whilst others took draconian measures. Some governments sent a message to their population to brace for the impact of the pandemic, whilst other governments reassured people of their ability to contain the virus. Governments adopted varied frames to present the crisis, leading to varied individual understandings and responses to the pandemic.

“The way we say something often matters much more than what we say.”<sup>3</sup> This is the essence of framing in politics. A frame is a viewpoint or angle with which to approach a particular

---

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, ‘Timeline of WHO’s Response to COVID-19’.

<sup>2</sup> Center for Systems Science and Engineering, ‘COVID-19 Map’.

<sup>3</sup> Rathje, ‘The Power of Framing’.

issue, “which highlights one aspect of a political issue over another.”<sup>4</sup> Frames allow different parties to use the same issues for their own political gains, and to propose their own solutions to these same issues. For example, both a left- and a right-wing party might agree that a particular trade treaty with another country is bad. The left-wing party might say ‘this would allow foreign products to flood into our market and bypass our stringent safety standards, hurting our people as final consumers who will face dangerous goods’, whilst the right-wing party might raise the same objection over a lack of enforcement of standards, but focus instead on local businesses and producers that will face unjust competition and higher production costs than their foreign counterparts. The problem is the same, but the approach is different, which may well lead to different proposed solutions.

Framing is particularly powerful because it is often done by people in power, like politicians or the media, who can share their frames on a large scale, and who often benefit from speaking from a respected platform that people trust. In complex crises like with the coronavirus, where little information is known about the origin, consequence, or solution to the problem, framing becomes a crucial tool in the government’s response arsenal. Individuals do not know how to make informed responses to the crisis as public knowledge is lacking, so they turn to their government to receive information and instructions. When audience autonomy is limited, individuals rely on framing to plan their individual responses.<sup>5</sup> Regardless of the laws or budgets passed, if a government says publicly that masks are not very important, like many European countries did at the beginning, then it is evident that people will follow whatever the government said. Framing is also important because it impacts how people perceive the policies the government passes, and determines whether or not people feel like these are good policies to be followed or

---

<sup>4</sup> Lecheler, ‘Framing Effects in Political Communication’.

<sup>5</sup> Entman, ‘Framing’.

restrictive policies to be ignored. Governments are also usually the first, and at times only ones, to receive information in crises, so their frames are seldom challenged in the early stages. Frames clarify what the heart of an issue is, and what sort of an issue it is. They also imply the solutions that should follow, by creating an easy and narrow narrative that puts aside the broader context or opposing arguments.

Selection and salience are key aspects of framing, as the framers pick a specific part of the issue they want to highlight, and then bring that to the forefront of the discussion.<sup>6</sup> Selection means not just what to include, but also what to choose to exclude. The exclusion of frames is just as important as inclusions,<sup>7</sup> as excluded options will likely never be considered viable or desirable by the audience. Salience on the other hand is “making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences.”<sup>8</sup> It is telling people why that particular frame is the more desirable one, especially when there are competing frames.

A frame is both a way to present and to understand information.<sup>9</sup> A research paper could thus either focus on either how the media and government present a particular issue, or focus on how the audience and general population understands and interprets that issue. This paper will focus on the presentation aspect, looking more at how people acted in response to that frame, rather than think about how people understood the frame. In a way, in a crisis it is of secondary importance to explore the detailed processes of how people internalize the government’s message, and more crucial to assess simply whether or not the government’s attempts at getting people to follow guidelines are successful. Still, it remains important to keep in mind how individuals

---

<sup>6</sup> Entman.

<sup>7</sup> Entman.

<sup>8</sup> Entman.

<sup>9</sup> Scheufele, ‘Framing as a Theory of Media Effects’.

perceive and understand frames in the context of this paper, as this naturally also impacts individual decision making as a response to the government's frames. Furthermore, because of the different personal experiences and mindsets individuals have, a frame will work differently on different people, and is not guaranteed to have a successful effect on determining how people understand an issue.

The frame can fail at promoting a particular narrative if the language used is not convincing, or if it does not correspond enough with the reality of the situation. Generally, the more straightforward an issue is, and the more information common people have about that issue, the harder it will be for governments to use a particular frame. This is the case because framing often requires zones of uncertainty that can be used to steer the discussion one way or the other. If there is an increase in drunk-drivers speeding and crashing, a politician could frame it as either a drinking problem, or a speeding problem, as it is not clear what the problem is, nor what the best solution should be. If there is only an increase in speeding crashes, with all drivers being sober, the public would find it harder to agree with a politician blaming the increase in crashes on alcohol. The high uncertainty around the coronavirus pandemic broadly resulted in governments initially being able to use the frames they wanted, as the public did not have enough information to critically assess the government's frame.

Security framing and the emphasis of foreign security threats is not a new tool for governments to unite their populations under a common cause, and for those governments to justify the sacrifices it asks of its citizens. The US's Patriot Act could not have been passed without the calls from politicians that it was a necessary measure to protect Americans from global terrorism. In Russia, Putin remains popular because he represents a safeguard against American and

European aggression. It is usually following wars or acts of terrorism that presidential approval ratings increase, because these events allow everyone to agree that the country's socioeconomic divisions must be put aside temporarily to face the growing security threats. The use of a security frame creates a sense of danger and urgency. The implication in such a frame is that if people want to regain a feeling of safety, they must trust and support their government to be strong and quick in their response to the crisis.

On the other hand, health crises are not traditionally portrayed through a security lens. Health issues fail to grab headlines, with violent acts dominating the public dialogue because of their sensationalist nature. The media heavily reports on the latter acts because they attract more attention. A car bomb in a major city is more interesting to many than another thousandth death from an opioid overdose. Simultaneously, the minister of defence has always ranked higher than the minister of health. However, this does not mean that health issues cannot be framed through a security lens. The War on Drugs in the 1970s in the US is a clear example of that, with Ronald Reagan portraying this health issue as an issue of crime and violence, to be treated through harsh policing. The drug issue was framed by Reagan as a security issue for very political reasons, as this allowed him to target minorities and remain in good standing with voters who put high importance on 'law and order'. Nevertheless, 50 years later there is a mountain of evidence that shows how counter-productive this security framing was, along with the accompanying criminalisation and militarisation of the response. Focussing on drug dealing gangs did nothing to reduce drug usage or drug violence. Countries that did frame drug abuse as a socio-economic issue, like Portugal that decriminalised all drugs, that focussed on the root causes of drug use, such as homelessness or poor mental health, are the countries that have had the best outcomes. Decriminalising, not automatically involving the police, and not treating the topic as one of violent

danger, is what actually ensured that people co-operated with authorities and sought the help they needed.

In the context of the coronavirus, as the virus started spreading the first months of 2020, already it became apparent how differently some countries were choosing to frame and talk about it. Asian countries, who were the first affected as the virus began spreading from China, had already faced similar diseases and government officials there knew how to talk specifically about pandemics and issues of health. Governments there took an alarmist stance, urged people to take it seriously, and demonstrated how ready and aware of the dangers they were. Meanwhile, Western countries did not have such recent experience with viral diseases. However, they had faced many recent violent terrorist attacks, and government there knew how to talk about threats with a particular security frame, emphasising a strong response, asking for national unity, and urging people not to fear the threat. In both Asian and Western countries, initial responses to the pandemic and to framing relied on using pre-existing frameworks and frames that governments were familiar with. This fits in with standard human psychology, in that people apply pre-existing knowledge and solution to both new and old problems, before thinking about new approaches.

Given the scale of the coronavirus and the huge necessary public implication in the fight against it, one could understand why countries' governments would have opted to present the issue as a national security issue. This would have united people, made them aware of the importance of working together with each other and with the government, and given people a reason to follow the government's guidelines. Acting as rational self-preserving beings, if the government says "please do this because it is good for the wellbeing of others", it should be much less likely to elicit a strong personal response than a message of "please do this because otherwise you will die". A



security framing has the advantage of making everyone believe that they are potential victims too. The average person may not care much for policies that reduce drug overdoses or fund soup kitchens, because they do not use drugs and have a secure job, and as such feel like these issues do not affect them. However, the fear of a random terrorist attack or mass shooting is one that can affect anyone, as there is greater perceived randomness with these events. No one is safe from a security risk.

Furthermore, security framing puts the blame on outside forces. One might think “there is no need for myself as an individual to do much, as the problem is not me or my actions. All I need to do is support my country and my government and together we will succeed”. It also puts a lot of responsibility on the government. A socioeconomic framing on the other hand tends to ask for individual actions, for people to re-think how they run their daily life, and for people to think about the way their life choices and interactions impact that of others.

With health guidelines, it does not take orders from the government to act upon them. People recycle not because the government threatens to fine them if they do not, but because people have a genuine interest in ecology and the socio-economic issue it represents. Similarly, many people do not recycle simply because they do not care, and they see it as someone else’s problem. With the coronavirus, many people did not wait for their government to issue mask mandates to start wearing masks, or for their government to impose lockdowns to self-restrict their movements. In some countries today we are seeing people going above and beyond what their government is mandating, staying indoor when their government says they can go out. In others, people are fighting against the government’s rules and doing everything they can to avoid them, going out as much as they can when their government asks them to stay in.

The social contract is built in large part around the idea that the government exists to protect people from physical threats. Issues like education and healthcare are secondary, and can only come after security has been achieved. Even proponents of small government are usually favourable of high security spending. The coronavirus is as deadly and as challenging to address as any traditional physical threat, and yet it does not fit within the traditional definition of a physical threat. That makes it so hard for government to create consensus and convince people to follow the rules.

This thesis aims to explore how countries' governments actually did frame the coronavirus pandemic during the first months of the crisis, and the impact this had on these countries' populations' personal responses and compliance with health guidelines. Is there something in the way governments presented the coronavirus that had an impact on people's reactions to coronavirus-related policies? And how does a government's decision to frame the coronavirus more as a security issue than a socio-economic issue have an impact on people's actions and receptions to government policies? To do this, I created an index of framing to compare countries on a set list of issues, to identify how much of a security frame they used. By asking specific questions about the way a country presented the coronavirus, each answer gives a country a certain point, and the total of all of these points, or the total of all of the questions that form my index, gives the index score.

This paper will focus on the early period of the pandemic as there seems to have been a convergence of discourses with time, as more and more governments adopt a socioeconomic frame

as they realized how unhelpful their original security framing was. As scientific information about the coronavirus becomes more available and more accurate, the response to it has also become less of a political issue and more of a scientific fact, though it naturally remains a large part of political debates in many countries. It is also crucial to evaluate the early period of a government's pandemic response, as this is what strongly determines whether countries escaped or heavily suffered from the coronavirus. Most countries with low case numbers now are those that have maintained low rates from the beginning. Furthermore, research on framing seems to indicate that its effects are quite short-term, lasting 2-3 weeks after initial exposure.<sup>10</sup> Though I use no set cut-off date for my analysis, as the virus hit different countries at different periods and in different waves, I generally restrict my analysis to the first half of 2020, with a specific focus on January-May 2020.

The next chapter, Chapter 2, is an explanation of the methodology of the index, what the index is and how it was built, along with the sources used. Chapter 3 begins with the complete index along with corresponding quotes for both the US and Japan is then presented, so as to give readers an example of what the index looks like when applied to real-life countries and help readers understand how the index works. The next section of Chapter 3 introduces the dependent variables of compliance and personal understanding/reactions to the pandemic. I talk about these dependent variables and how they correlate with the framing index, and what this means more broadly about the framing of pandemic. I then go into a longer discussion of what I found out through the research and exploration I carried out in this project and what framing does allow us to understand. Chapter

---

<sup>10</sup> Lecheler, 'Framing Effects in Political Communication'.

4 moves on to an extensive case study on the US to put it all in context and show readers what framing does and does not do for a specific country.

## **2. Methodology**

The main part of my analysis is a framing index I constructed, to evaluate and compare how much of a security frame different governments around the world used. I restrict my comparative analysis to 10 high-income countries with advanced economies and advanced health care systems, to reduce differences in people's reactions and perceptions of the coronavirus pandemic that may be caused by income levels, education levels, or accessibility to quality healthcare.

### **2.1 – What is a security frame?**

I define a security frame as having four main elements:

1. A government response that focuses on a small expert-led response, rather than one that would require wide population involvement

Modern militaries are made up of small elite voluntary forces, and long gone are the days of mass conscription. Similarly, national defence is guaranteed by professional elite agencies, funded and maintained by the government, to look over us and protect us. The public is thus not expected to partake directly in defence efforts, because the government and its agencies will take care of it. This also means that individuals do not need to make efforts in addressing the issue, as the government promises to step up and take care of it. For example, we do not expect average people to have any active role in tackling terrorism. In a socio-economic frame, we expect the solution to come from a population-wide solution, one that involves community involvement in tandem with the government. For example, tackling climate change involves individual changes like recycling

or switching to electric vehicles, even if recycling and electric cars requires infrastructure only the government can build. A socio-economic approach to drug dependence involves reducing societal stigmas, teaching community members how to use naloxone, and placing community organisations as the most visible and first point of contact. A security frame by contrast requires little to no involvement from the public, and allows individuals to keep on living as they always do.

In the context of the coronavirus, a security frame can be interpreted as the belief that individuals do not need to change their habits, such as restricting movements or imposing mask mandates, as the government will manage to solve the pandemic on their own. The response is paternalistic not in the sense that the dad of the household tells his children what to do, but that the dad of the household takes it upon himself to solve the problem without having to involve the children in it.

2. A focus on the material aspect of the response, with an assumption that more money and more resources thrown at the problem is the best solution

Continuing with the first point, a small professional security apparatus is one that heavily relies on technology and resources to amplify the government response. The over-reliance on resources and the false belief that any problem can be solved with enough money can be seen in the US' recent military interventions in the Middle East, and even going as far back as the Vietnam War. In these cases, the US ignored the human and social aspect of the conflict, and assumed that bombing the enemy into submission would be a sufficient medium- and long-term strategy. A socio-economic frame emphasises the human aspect of the response, and acknowledges that the problem is not just financial or resource-based, but that it may also stem from societal norms,

stigmas, or a lack of human capital such as insufficient hospital workers. A socio-economic frame also deems that success is not dependent on the absolute amount of money and material resources invested, but more on the quality of that investment and the ways in which these material resources are integrated with human and community resources.

The recent debate around defunding police forces in the US is a perfect example of the security versus socio-economic framing of resource use. The traditional security approach to policing has been one that emphasises massive police budgets and the use of high-tech equipment, and one that increased budgets and the use of material resources whenever crime rates did not go down. The socio-economic approach that is being talked about is one that rejects the assumption of the security frame that money leads to success, and that instead tries to focus resources on community and human-centred approaches.

When thinking about the coronavirus, a technology-heavy and resource-heavy approach to crisis-resolution is one that would over-emphasise claims of ‘miracle cures’ and have vaccines be the main tool against the virus. A security frame for the coronavirus also ignores the broader social and economic impact that everyday people feel, such as unemployment, worsening mental health, or children stuck at home and unable to socialise or go to school.

### 3. A need for the government to remain strictly in control and on top of the situation

In a security frame, the threat is minimised not so much to stop people from panicking, but to hide the fact that the response to the threat is insufficient, to avoid losing face in front of the public. If the press reports on the government not doing anything about an issue commonly framed as a socio-economic one, such as homelessness or unemployment, it just shows elitism and a lack of

heart from the government. If the press reports on the government not doing anything about an issue commonly framed as a security issue, such as terrorism or rising crime, it shows a powerlessness and weakness. Governments do not like appearing weak, and there no better way to appear weak than by losing a war. A government that approaches the coronavirus through a security frame will thus be less reluctant to lie and manipulate data, will push aside doctors and health experts that may be too realistic and alarmist, and will be sure to control the narrative so as to embellish the government's actions and coronavirus record.

4. An assumption from the government that the usual military and security state apparatus will be able to solve the problem

The most visible and obvious part of a security frame, the one that people will likely be most receptive to and internalise, is the level of involvement of the army, police, and broader security apparatus in responding to the crisis. The state has the monopoly of violence, and it exercises that monopoly through the security apparatus. Using soldiers or police officers to help with crisis response thus sends a strong signal, even if the army might be commonly used for regular disaster relief. Furthermore, a government using a security frame will not show reluctance to send the army, but instead present it as the natural first step and the natural solution to resolving the problem. My index will thus look at both the actions carried out by the army, along with how the government presented and communicated about the army's involvement.



## 2.2 – The Index

The index is made up of a list of 11 questions, with each question being answered by a score of either 1 if the answer is one that suggests a security frame was used, and 0 if it suggests a security frame was not used. There can also be a 0.5 if the situation is a bit ambiguous. For example, a government that might frequently compare the coronavirus to fighting a war would receive a score of 1 for Question 2, a government that has never compared it to a war would receive a score of 0, and a government that has compared it only once or twice would receive a score of 0.5 The list of questions that make up the index can be found below, along with a short descriptor.

(Note: colour coding is for legibility and has no meaning)

Index number	Short descriptor	Question the index point seeks to answer
1	Attitude to foreign entities' responsibility	Did the government blame other countries for the pandemic?
2	Comparisons to war	Did the government compare the coronavirus crisis to being at war, or say that the country is at war against the coronavirus? (Alludes to war mobilisation)

3	Comparisons to terrorism/domestic attack	Did the government compare the coronavirus to being hit by terrorism/being the victim of a violent attack? (The threat is coming from outside, it is us vs them, and we are victims)
4	Hidden leadership	Who takes major decisions? Is it a Council of Defence, a Council of Health? Is it made up of primarily doctors, or experts from the national security apparatus?
5	Visible leadership	Who makes major speeches? Is it the President, the Minister of Health? What place do health experts have in official government communications?
6	Name of laws passed	What were the names of major laws/proclamations/actions passed to combat COVID?
7	Publicity around the army's intervention	How did the government present the army's role/actions in tackling the crisis? ("We chose to send the army because they can do it" vs "sending the army was really our last choice")
8	Resource management	Was there an emphasis on viewing medical supplies as "strategic resources" or needing to mobilise industry to gain strategic independence? (The same way countries often talk about petrol, steel or armaments)
9	Use of war-time acts	Were war-time acts (e.g.: Defence Production Act, or state of emergency) used?

10	Army's intervention	How big of a role did the armed forces have in early COVID response? (This only considers actions that could equally be handled by civilian agencies. For example, the repatriation of citizens living abroad by using a military plane is justified, as it is the norm for the army to step up in these cases)
11	Army's social media	What messages/tones were shown by the army's social media?

My methodology is inspired by the Economist Intelligence Unit's (EUI) Democracy Index, which aims to give countries around the world a democracy score by asking about 130 questions on various aspects of a country's democratic processes and institutions. I use a binary 1-0 score to minimise potential biases and the complex task of judging how much or how little a government might engage in a certain behaviour. The score of 0.5 helps for ambiguous cases, and is also used by the EUI. To come up with an overall score to compare countries, I simply add up the score of each index question for a given country. That way, each country will end up with a final score between 0-11, and will be compared on the same issues.

An advantage of my methodology is the way it facilitates comparisons by focussing on specific actions and words, and only trying to find out whether these actions and words were present. I do try to consider national specificities in the cases where national laws or traditions make it so that specific laws or specific actions will always occur a certain way, regardless of the issue, which may falsely make it appear that a government is using a security frame. If it is clear that a government had no choice or leeway in their actions, I take that into consideration and look at actions for which it is more obvious they had a say in.

I answer the index questions by analysing a host of sources such as: government speeches, government reports, government websites, newspapers relaying government speeches and actions. My main approach was a thorough reading of all speeches and publications made by the head of government of the studied country in the January-May/April 2020 period, looking for phrases and keywords that allude to war and security, such as the words “frontline”, “soldiers”, “battle”, “war”, “mobilisation”, “sacrifice”, “duty” (more so towards the nation than towards others), “sovereignty”, “enemy”, “victory”, “defeat”, “security”, “strategic” (especially when talking about stocks or supplies). The broader context and meaning the sentence is also considered and commented upon.

The timeframe studied is not strict, because the pandemic affected different countries at different times, and after reading enough speeches a trend in framing often becomes apparent. However, I focus on the early period of the pandemic to focus on early response, and to minimise the impact that the intensity of the pandemic may have had on framing. It could be that countries that had more cases were more inclined to use sensationalist security frames. By focussing on the first months of the crisis, I analyse a time period in which all countries had relatively low case numbers, or were only facing their first wave. It was a time of equal uncertainty for all countries.

For the specific question of the army’s social media, I focussed on Instagram because the combination of captions, hashtags and picture provide greater context and information, and which help better understand the message the army tries to send. It seems also that generally, the accounts of armed forces on Instagram get more or as many followers as those on other social media sites (such as Facebook or Twitter), so by analysing the Instagram accounts I am sure to look at a popular means of communication for the army.

The index also has the potential of being expended by adding more questions to it, or by simply applying it to more countries. I had to limit myself in how many countries I analyse because of time constraints in filling in the index for each country. I also had to limit myself because I extend my analysis to look at popular compliance and popular response to the pandemic, and I found it easier to naturally control for variables like education or income by only comparing similar countries. The index however could be used for other analytical purposes or comparisons, similarly to how the Democracy Index or the Global Health Security Index, also designed by the EUI, are used today.

### **2.3 – Possible limitations**

As I am looking at framing and its impacts on popular compliance and popular response, only the more visible aspects of a government's frame are relevant. As such, for example if I can find evidence that the top members of the government did compare the coronavirus to a war, then that is evidence enough to suggest that in that respect, the government did use a security frame. If I cannot find anything about a government comparing the coronavirus to a war, I cannot prove that the government never did do such a comparison. However, if a thorough Internet search for major news articles and a reading of major government speeches cannot find any such language, that is evidence enough that no such government comparisons to war have found their way into the main public scene and the main public discourse.

I only speak English and French, so I was limited to translated sources for my analysis of Sweden and Japan. Thankfully, these governments do a tremendous job of translating virtually all government speeches and statements into English, so I am confident that my analysis of these

countries did not fail to accurately understand these countries' frames. However, there may be language nuances lost in translation. For example, Abe of Japan frequently talked about avoiding an “explosion” of cases, though I cannot be sure whether he intentionally wanted to make it sound violent, or whether the original Japanese words is less militaristic. For Instagram posts of the Swedish and Japanese armed forces, I had to rely on less-than-optimal auto-translations.

My potential biases should also be considered. As a young adult who spent the pandemic in both the US and in France, having been personally affected by the policy choices in both governments, I have a lot of personal opinions about the pandemic and the way governments responded to it. However, I strived to keep these opinions out of my analysis and out of my data gathering for the index. By giving specific quotes and clarifications for each index point and index score, I ensure the reader can understand my reasoning and hopefully come to the same conclusion that I did.

### **3. Data and Analysis**

I include here the complete index for Japan and the US, along with the citations and quotes I used to determine index score, to help the reader visualise and better understand what each index question represents and aims to assess. Due to lack of space, the full questions are not included in the table and can be referred back to in the methodology section. Specific sources have also not been included here, though they can be found in the Excel sheet.

I highly encourage readers to explore the indices for the other countries to understand what governments were saying, and in what context those words and speeches took place.

#### **3.1 – Example Index for Japan**

Index n°	Short descriptor	Index score	Clarification
1	Attitude to foreign entities' responsibility	0	There was actually a strong emphasis on recognising that anyone could get the virus, and that the priority was not alienating others, but working together towards reducing community spread. For example, Abe said "We have a strong sense of fear towards viruses we cannot see; I feel the same as you. At the same time, I strongly fear such feelings of unease could lead to discrimination against others or actions that reject others."
			When considering other countries, Abe also talked about the need to recognise that the problem was a global one, and that success for Japan could only be achieved through success for the world. He did not blame specific countries, or imply that it was someone else's problem. For example, Abe said that "this is most certainly not someone else's problem. Japan could face the same situation in a short time."
			To add onto the point above, Abe also said, "We must not be absorbed in addressing issues in our own country exclusively. I believe we cannot resolve this global issue from its roots through an inward-looking mindset."

2	Comparisons to war	0.5	Abe said that "fighting an enemy hard to see and hard to understand is not easy." The invisible enemy is similar to what Donald Trump said. Abe also said that Japan "cannot win this battle through the capacity of government alone," and that a "hard and trying battle will continue"
3	Comparisons to terrorism/ domestic attack	0	After analysing the speeches made by Abe Shinzo on the topic of COVID during the Jan-May 2020 period, I found no evidence that the Japanese Government compared COVID to dealing with a terrorist attack or a violent foreign attack.
4	Hidden leadership	0	<p>The main group of decision makers is called the "Novel Coronavirus Response Headquarters" and is part of the PM's office. It is chaired by the Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary, vice chaired by the Assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary (in charge of internal affairs), Assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary (in charge of foreign affairs), Assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary (in charge of situation response and crisis management), Cabinet Deputy Director (Assistant Secretary of the Cabinet Secretariat) and Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare Medical Technology Supervisor.</p> <p>Amongst the list of other members, security apparatus members include the Cabinet Deputy Director (National Security Agency), National Police Agency Security Bureau Chief, Deputy Director-General of Cyber Security and Policy Planning, Ministry of Defense Minister's Secretariat Hygiene Supervisor, and the General Manager, Joint Staff Office, Ministry of Defense. However, it seems that the Novel Coronavirus Headquarters is more a way to get different ministries to talk to each other and work together, and as such its membership is very diverse and seems to include second-level ministry officials from all ministries. It is especially interesting to see that from the Ministry of Defense, one of the representatives is specifically the Hygiene Supervisor for that ministry.</p> <p>Overall, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare led the charge</p> <p>The Novel Coronavirus Expert Meeting is an advisory body to help guide the Novel Coronavirus Headquarters. Its 12 members are made up of 11 health experts and 1 lawyer. There are no security experts</p>
5	Visible leadership	0	Most speeches were made either by the PM, by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, or by a health expert. Health experts had a lot of space to speak publicly about the virus.



6	Name of laws passed	0	The main legal response of the government was done through the "Act on Special Measures for Pandemic Influenza and New Infectious Diseases Preparedness and Response." The law was originally passed in 2012, and its provisions were used in the context of COVID.
			When the government did issue a "state of emergency", it explained on its corona website that "This declaration of state of emergency is not intended to stop most of the socio-economic activities, but rather to focus on situations with a high risk of infection and to ensure effective and targeted countermeasures." It thus frames it very much in a socio-economic way
7	Publicity around the army's intervention	0	The only mention I could find of the government talking about how they "mobilized the Self-Defense Forces to drastically reinforce our countermeasures at the borders." This seems a bit odd, as normally borders are managed by the Immigration Bureau, which is part of the Ministry of Justice. Japan having no land borders, does not really need soldiers to watch the border. In that context, it seems the government chose to send the army, and did not show reluctance.
			Despite the quite sizeable role of the SDF, the government talked very little about.
			When military nurses were sent to help hospitals in Hokkaido, a local official said "We take it very seriously that members of the SDF were sent here as their dispatch has been considered to be the last resort."
8	Resource management	0.5	Abe said "In the fight against the novel coronavirus, medical masks, sanitizers, medical gowns, as well as ventilators—these are all vital items for healthcare workers on the frontline." Yet, the government's approach to increase production was through increased subsidies and through deregulation, so it did not really approach stock management in a 'strategic supply' sort of way.
9	Use of war-time acts	0	The state of emergency was issued, but it was "Pursuant to Article 32, Paragraph 1 of the Act on Special Measures for Pandemic Influenza and New Infectious Diseases Preparedness and Response (Act No. 31 of 2012), [that] the government has declared a state of emergency in relation to the novel coronavirus disease". It thus used a specifically health-related law.

			<p>Considering the state of emergency, the government made it clear that it was for implemented for socio-economic reasons, to make it easier for the government to spend money to help businesses and employees, and to make it easier for the government to ask people to limit their movements. The government did make clear that it would not actually impose any restrictions or lockdowns. The Japanese approach has been to rely on popular compliance rather than enforcement.</p>
10	Army's intervention	0.5	<p>The SDF took a significant role in managing the Diamond Princess cases in February by deploying 2700 troops, and then hosted COVID patients at a SDF hospital. They also helped with quarantines at Narita Airport, with transportation of patients within Japan, and went to Miyagi and Tokyo to help prevent infections there. For each of these operations, the operation was presented as "Disaster Relief," given the constitutional limitations that forbid the SDF from intervening for anything else.</p>
11	Army's social media	0	<p>The aerobatics squadron did a fly by and demonstration in honour of Japan's healthcare workers, and this was shared on the Instagram and Youtube accounts of the SDF air force. However, this was in June 2020, so not at the beginning of the pandemic. On the SDF air force account, there was nothing else about the pandemic.</p>
			<p>Between January and April 2020, the SDF ground forces did not post anything on Instagram. When they did begin resuming posting, after a post about the enrolment ceremony, there were seven posts about how to wash your hands, how to wear a mask, how to sneeze in a tissue, how to don on a full biohazard protective gear, etc. Then they went back to just posting about tanks and explosions and did not mention the virus again. The posts about the virus were more PSA than "this is what the army is doing"</p>

### 3.2 – Example Index for the US

Index n°	Short descriptor	Index score	Clarification
1	Attitude to foreign entities' responsibility	1	White House website lists as achievement: * Halted American funding to the World Health Organization to counter its egregious bias towards China that jeopardized the safety of Americans
			Letter from Trump blaming the WHO for not doing anything and for being a puppet of China
			White House website lists as an achievement: * Took action to authorize visa sanctions on foreign governments who impede our efforts to protect American citizens by refusing or unreasonably delaying the return of their own citizens, subjects, or residents from the United States * Reached bilateral agreements with Mexico and Canada to suspend non-essential travel and expeditiously return illegal aliens * In other words the two lines above mean "we need to get rid of foreigners to protect ourselves from COVID" *
			Trump said "It's one person coming in from China"
2	Comparisons to war	1	Trump said "It's a medical war. We have to win this war"
			Trump said "I view it as a, in a sense, a wartime President"
			Trump said "I view the invisible enemy [coronavirus] as a war"
			Secretary Azar called the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps "America's public health warriors." And he isn't wrong, because they are a uniformed corp.
			Mike Pence wrote an op-ed titled "We Need the American People's Help to Fight Coronavirus Now"
			In a speech, Trump said: "I would like to begin by announcing some important developments in our war against the Chinese virus. We'll be invoking the Defense Production Act, just in case we need it"

3	Comparisons to terrorism/ domestic attack	0.5	Trump said "This is worse than Pearl Harbor, this is worse than the World Trade Center. There's never been an attack like this." However, this seems to be the only time he made such comparisons, with most comparisons between COVID-19 deaths and the 9-11 attacks being made by the media.
			Most of the comparisons of the coronavirus to a terrorist attack or to a violent attack came from the media, who often compared coronavirus deaths to the death toll of 9-11 or to the toll of WWI, WWII, the Vietnam War and the Korean War.
4	Hidden leadership	1	The White House Coronavirus Task Force was in charge. Security roles included: National Security Adviser, DHS Deputy Secretary, Deputation National Security Adviser. There was a team of medical advisers, but it was often commented on the fact they were pushed aside and ignored.
			Trump put Mike Pence in charge of the COVID Task Force because he deemed Pence as being "very good on healthcare"
5	Visible leadership	0.5	The Secretary of HHS, the Director of the CDC, Dr Fauci and Dr Birx were given quite some space in the very beginning to talk, but as soon as cases started increasing and community spread became prevalent, the White House restricted and dominated the narrative.
6	Name of laws passed	0	Most of the focus seemed to be on the CARES Act, which is named intentionally to show how much the government cares.
7	Publicity around the army's intervention	1	There seemed to be no shame in using the Defence Production Act or in sending the army to help in New York. These were some of the first steps the government enacted, and felt much more like Plan A than Plan B. The army was sent before there were federal mandates on mask or distancing.
8	Resource management	0.5	It is called the "Strategic National Stockpile," and the government used the Defense Production Act (a war-time act) to increase production.
			The discussion seemed more about bringing back industries back to the US for economic reasons, rather than guaranteeing strategic independence. It was all quite factual too, in the sense that the dialogue was "we are working hard to get more supplies like masks and ventilators, because we just don't have enough"

9	Use of war-time acts	0.5	White House website lists as an achievement: * Declared COVID-19 a National Emergency under the Stafford Act Note that the Stafford Act is NOT a war-time act, but instead an act specific for natural disasters
			White House website lists as an achievement: * Invoked the Defense Production Act over 100 times to accelerate the development and manufacturing of essential material in the USA * Signed an executive order invoking the Defense Production Act to ensure that Americans have a reliable supply of products like beef, pork, and poultry
10	Army's intervention	0.5	White House website lists as an achievement: * Deployed Federal Task Force Strike Teams to provide onsite technical assistance and education to nursing homes experiencing outbreaks Note that these "task force strike teams" (which sound like SEAL Team 6 going to hit terrorists abroad) were made up of doctors and nurses to help nursing homes. The name chosen is very militaristic
			Achievements listed on the White House website include: * The Army Corps of Engineers built 11,000 beds, distributed 10,000 ventilators, and surged personnel to hospitals * Converted the Javits Center in New York into a 3,000-bed hospital, and opened medical facilities in Seattle and New Orleans * Dispatched the USNS Comfort to New York City, and the USNS Mercy to Los Angeles * Deployed thousands of FEMA employees, National Guard members, and military forces to help in the response * Announced Federal support to governors for use of the National Guard with 100 percent cost-share * Delivered \$81 million for increased inspections and funded 35,000 members of the National Guard to deliver critical supplies to every Medicare-certified nursing home
11	Army's social media	1	The US Army Instagram account had video posts with the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Army talking, and they said things like "tip of the spear of this fight for our neighbourhoods" against "an invisible enemy", using the "best of America" to "defeat the virus, and they will." This was said in March 2020, and there is not just the message of fighting the virus, but also the notion that the army can and will win.
			The US Army launched a hashtag #ArmyCOVID19Fight. There was also #KILLthevirus #fightthevirus #VictoryStartsHere
			Whereas in Canada the Instagram accounts of the Armed Forces re-used posters and infographics from the central federal government to promote social distancing and mask wearing, the US Army had its own infographics with its own visual identity.

			<p>A lot of the posts were PSAs and announcements of what the army is doing to protect its troops/employees from the virus.</p>
			<p>Most of the posts were not very militaristic, though the militarism came in the speeches of the leaders (eg: Chief of Staff, Secretary of the Army) and in the hashtags. The pictures and captions themselves were not overly militaristic.</p>

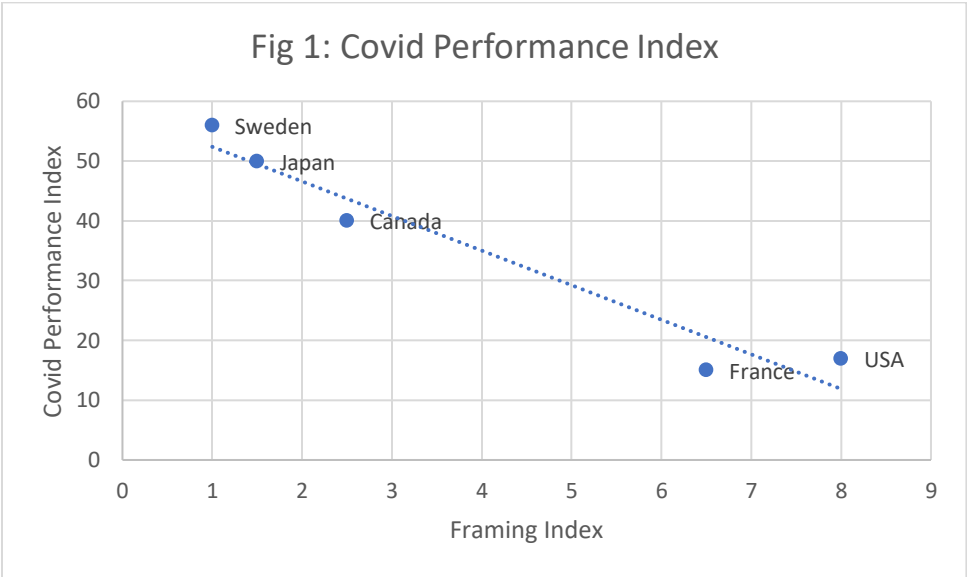
### **3.3 – Dependent variable analysis**

The independent variable is the framing index. I use four dependent variables to look at simple health outcomes, at compliance with health measures, and at cohesion and unity between the government and its people. The four dependent variables I use are the Covid Performance Index, a measure of perception of government handling, a measure of perception of confidence in authorities, and a measure of how much people avoided crowded places. I will explain in their respective sections how these variables are constructed and what they represent. A higher score in all four variables is a better score. For all variables, I use a scatter plot graph with framing index on the X axis and the dependent variable on the Y axis. The aim is not to look for a definite causal relationship, so more advanced statistical methods would not be useful. What a scatter plot does allow us to see is whether a correlation exists, which can then be explored through a qualitative analysis and discussion. I use a best fit linear line to help look for such a correlation.

	Framing Index	Covid Performance Index	Avoiding crowded places	Government handling	Confidence in authorities
Country	/11	/100	/100	/100	/100
Sweden	1	56	71	58	65
Japan	1.5	50	72	39	45
Canada	2.5	40	83	78	80
France	6.5	15	79	37	56
USA	8	17	71	47	60

**Covid Performance Index**

The Covid Performance Index was compiled by the Lowy Institute, and as the name indicates, is a measure of how well a country performed during the pandemic. It combines confirmed cases, confirmed deaths, confirmed cases per million people, confirmed deaths per million people, confirmed cases as a proportion of tests, and tests per thousand people. Fewer deaths, fewer case, and a greater number of tests all indicate success in handling the pandemic. Countries were assessed over the 36 weeks following the 100<sup>th</sup> case. A score of 100 is a perfect score, and the top three scoring countries are New Zealand (94.4), Vietnam (90.8) and Taiwan (86.4). I use this index as a measure of raw health outcomes, to see how framing correlates with health outcomes. It ignores whether framing may have had an impact on popular compliance, and instead aims to see simply whether less people died. I rounded the Covid Performance Index to the nearest whole number for simplicity, as my analysis only looks for a general trend and would not be affected by a few decimal points.<sup>11</sup>



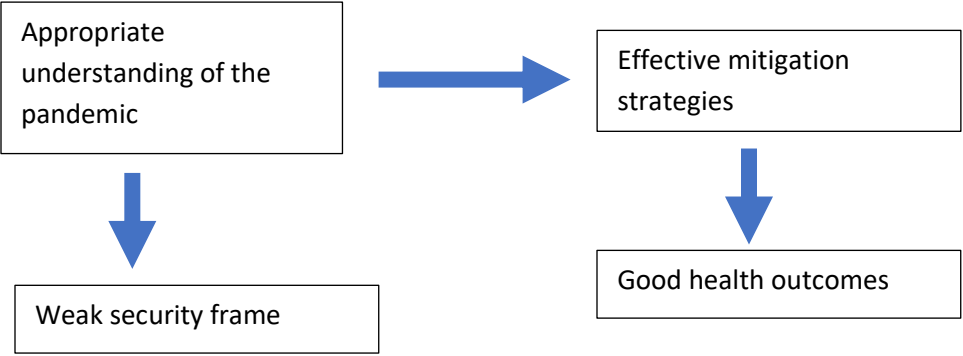
<sup>11</sup> 'Covid Performance Index'.



A simple glance at the graph lets us see a strong correlation between Covid Performance and framing index. This implies that countries that framed the crisis more in a security lens had worse health outcomes, with more deaths, more cases, and less tests. We could theorise that the relationship between framing and health outcomes is as follows:



However, there was nothing in my research that suggested that this was the case. Instead, reading numerous government documents gave me an insight not just into how governments framed the pandemic, but also into the actual measures they were taking to mitigate the pandemic, and the discussions they were having with other actors that could help in the endeavour, such as civil society and businesses. The following relationship seems more accurate:



Governments that understood the pandemic in the right terms saw that it was a socio-economic crisis and a health crisis, and took the right steps from the start to include their populations in the response and protect them from possible economic or social hardships that mitigation measures may entail. Understanding the pandemic meant that the most effective

mitigation strategies were employed, which naturally led to better health outcomes. Simultaneously, it meant that governments did not view the pandemic as a security issue and were thus likely to speak about it as it were a security issue. Understanding the pandemic also made the virus and the ordeal less scary for governments and populations, making it less important to blindly emphasise sacrifice or unity, as the governments generally understood the sort of actions it would require from its citizens, and communicate on those clearly and transparently from the beginning.

It can be concluded that while the use of a security frame is not conducive to better or worse health outcomes, the heavy use of a security frame is representative and symptomatic of a governmental misunderstanding of the health crisis, which increases the chance that the government fails to adopt the right mitigation measures. It would be very interesting to see if this trend holds true when adding more countries to the index.

## **YouGov Polls**

The measure of perception of government handling, and of perception of confidence in authorities, come from YouGov polls. The first measure is the percentage of people who think the government is handling the issue of coronavirus "very" or "somewhat well". The second measure is the percentage of people who have "a lot" or "a fair amount" of confidence in the health authorities to respond to the coronavirus. The third measure is the percentage of people who say they are "avoiding crowded places". Unlike the Covid Performance Index, these measures try to see whether there is a correlation between framing and popular understanding and actions toward the pandemic. Polls were conducted every week or so depending on the country. My analysis and data gathering for the index does not aim to provide a discussion to explain weekly fluctuations, so I averaged the poll results over the March 10 – May 21, 2020 period to get an average result that represents the general sentiment over that time period.<sup>12</sup>

I use the measure of avoiding crowded places as a proxy for compliance with health measures. I tried to also use the prevalence of wearing masks, but some countries had mandated mask wearing whilst others had not, leading to Sweden having a 10% mask wearing rate because it was not mandatory there, with France having an 80% mask wearing rate people not wearing a mask there would land people with a 135€ fine. This would have made comparisons unfair and of little use. Furthermore, this presupposes that compliance is a good thing and that governments gave the right advice to citizens. There are some examples in the first stages of the pandemic where people would have been better off not listening to their governments, such as when the French government told people that masks were not useful. However, it is generally true that all governments did move toward giving good advice and recommendations, and thus that greater

---

<sup>12</sup> 'COVID-19 Public Monitor'.

compliance is positive. Additionally, if we think about compliance from a government's perspective, compliance is desired regardless of the soundness of the advice. Analysing the link between compliance and framing thus helps us understand how effective the government was at transmitting its message and making its case to the public.

Confidence in health authorities and approval of government handling of the crisis are proxies for the connection and trust between the public and health authorities. If confidence and approval are both high, it can be assumed that the government's communication strategy is effective and that its frame touches people convincingly, thus leading to more compliance with the government's coronavirus regulations. Measuring how people view the government's performance is useful because ultimately, framing is an issue of words and perceptions. If death rate was high but the government employed a frame that was so convincing that it justified high deaths, confidence and approval in the government would be high, the government would be able to use the measures it wants with little popular opposition. This is not necessarily a desirable outcome, if the government's aims or advice are more than questionable. Still, it is a useful measure as it lets us understand the strength of the connection between the government and the population, and estimate the relevance of framing in creating and maintaining that relationship. A strong correlation between confidence and approval of the government would imply that a government's frame had an effect on people. No correlation would signal that framing is not relevant in understanding how people viewed the pandemic and responded to it.

As an example, below is the graph provided by YouGov for confidence in health authorities. For all countries there is a generally flat trend, so I ignored the first one or two data

points when they were much lower than the medium-term trend. This was true for all YouGov polls I use for my analysis. The aim was really to understand how most people were generally feeling over this 2-3 month period. This meant I could not analyse some of the other measures YouGov polled, as many poll questions had data that fluctuated too much and that did not allow me to say with relative confidence that over this time period, X% of people felt that Y.

Fig. 2

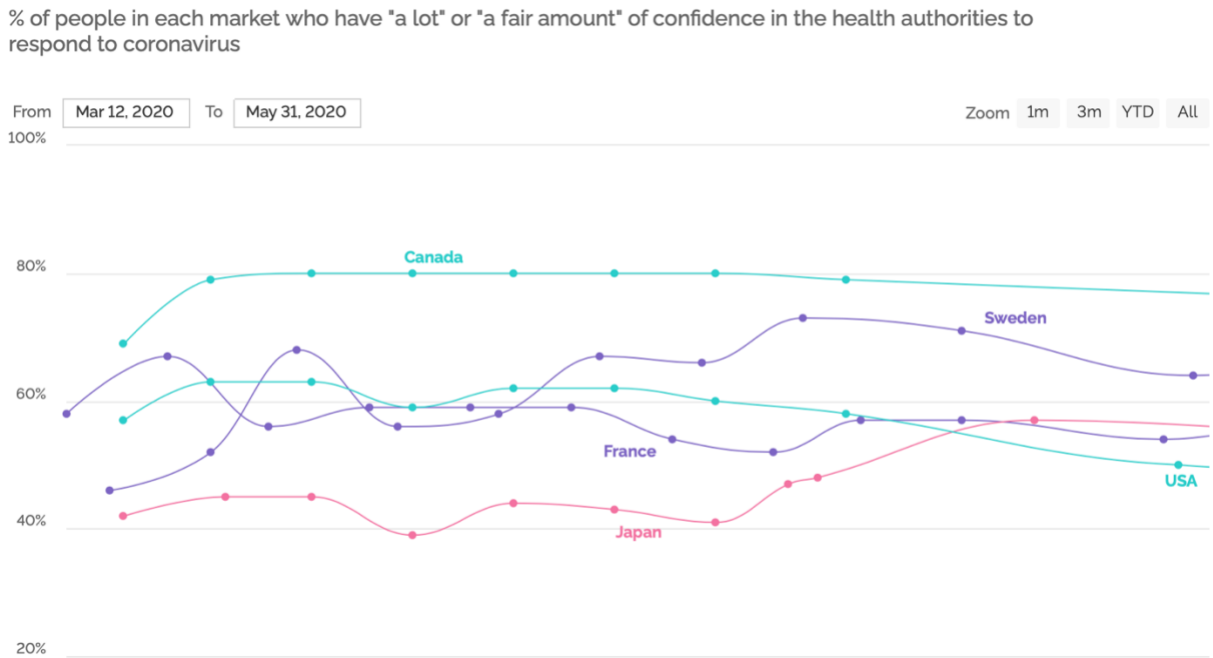


Fig 3: Avoiding Crowded Spaces

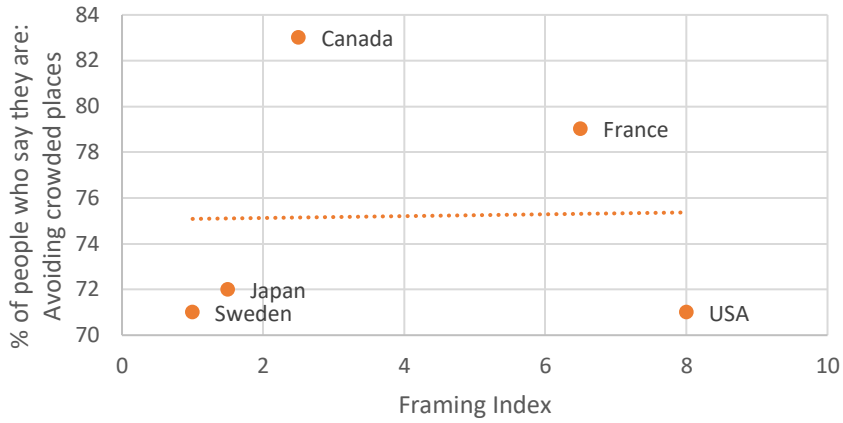


Fig 4: View of Government Handling

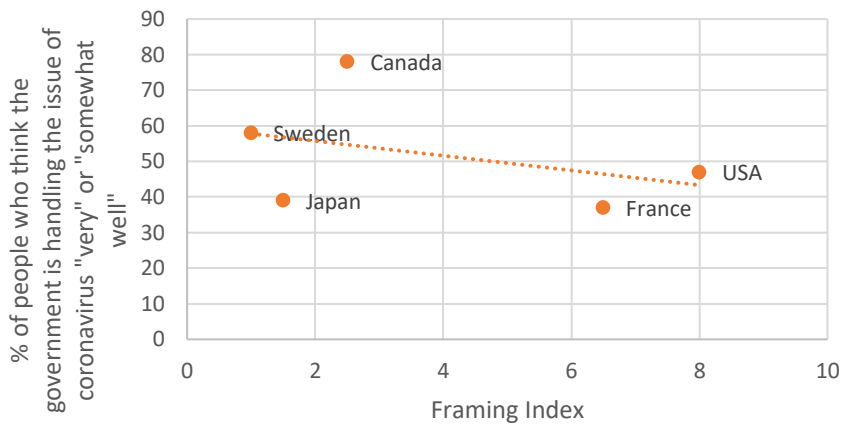
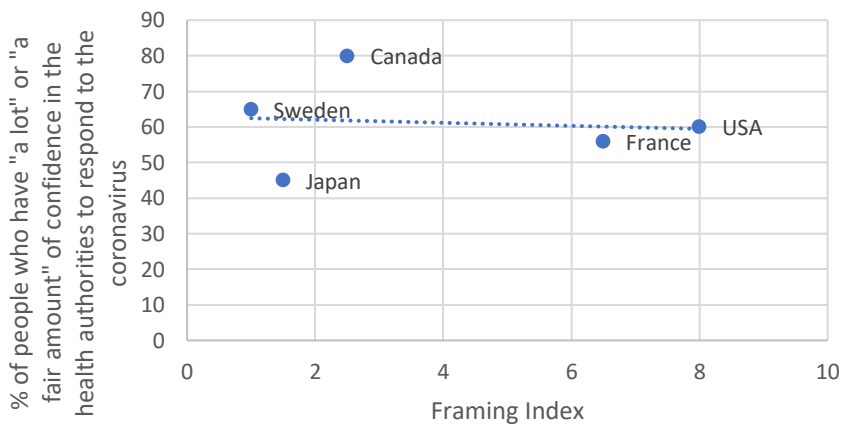


Fig 5: Confidence in Government



The three graphs show no correlation between framing and either compliance, confidence in the government, or positive views of government handling. This suggests that government framing had little impact on how people perceived the pandemic and their role in it, and thus that the government was not effective at using a particular frame to instil desired behaviours or thoughts.

As I was doing the research to fill in the index for each country, it became more obvious why it seems there is no link between government framing and the way people perceive the crisis. Other than researchers like myself, few people will read through ever speech made by the head of state and be confronted to the same amount of information I found. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, people rely on the media and on relatives to get most of their information, rather than on government speeches. The way the media talks about the virus will likely be more sensationalised than the government does, and will likely not reflect the government's stance. It would be interesting to see if this is also the case in countries where the state controls the media narrative, such as in China. The framing index is not a very useful tool in understanding how government framing affected people's understanding of the coronavirus pandemic.

Where there is value in my index is in understanding how governments viewed their own role in the pandemic. What head of state speeches reflect more accurately is the mindset of that head of state, and thus the mindset with which they will approach the pandemic and the sort of responses and policies they will enact. This is likely why the correlation between the Covid Performance Index and the framing index is so visible. Governments that viewed the pandemic as

a security issue, who believed too much in their country's ability to handle the crisis through regular pre-established protocols and resources stockpiles, are the countries that failed to understand the different nature of the virus.

The connection between a government's speech and its actions, between the frame it presents to the public and the frame it understands the crisis through, is not evident. It takes a thorough analysis of government documents to shed light on it, as governments frequently do not speak their true opinion or manipulate information to present their options and actions in a certain way. A frame remains a way to speak about an issue, and is not a policy itself that leads to direct impacts. The direct link between the frame and health outcomes is thus likely non-existent, as a frame does not guarantee that a government will enact this or that policy. Instead, it is looking at policies that help us understand the frame used, by getting a glimpse as to how the government understood the pandemic. The way a government and the politicians that constitute this government understand the crisis can most definitely lead to a particular frame being used. Simultaneously, the way they understand the crisis leads to certain policies being used. Assuming that framing directly leads to policies ignores the way politicians in the government understand and view the pandemic.



### **3.4 – Why did countries choose the frame they did?**

This question may be hard to answer precisely because one cannot peer inside a head of state's thoughts. However, analysing enough speeches and combining that with an understanding of a country's social, historic, political and legal context can help us answer this. Understanding why a frame was chosen helps us gauge the effects the frame had, as it lets us understand how the government viewed its role in the pandemic, and thus the sort of actions it took to deal with it.

**Canada** – the prevalent theme in Trudeau's speeches was a reference to the sacrifices made in WWI by the Canadians who had gone to fight in the trenches. There was one particularly moving moment during a commemoration speech when he talked about those who had fought at Vimy Ridge in France, when "ordinary people did extraordinary things" to "defend the values that [Canadians] hold dear." He then explained how these ordinary people doing can be found again today in the doctors and nurses of Canada, and more broadly in Canadians doing the right thing to help others and limit the spread of the virus.<sup>13</sup> Canada is a relatively young nation with a young shared history. Canadian involvement in WWI, and especially at Vimy Ridge, are thus very important aspects of Canadian history and Canadian nation building, which echo and resonate with all Canadians. My verdict from having read dozens of speeches from Trudeau is that it was not his intention to frame the pandemic in a militaristic or security way, nor did he try to frame himself as a wartime leader. However, he made the connections to WWI because he knew it was an example of self-sacrifice and heroism that most Canadians would understand and connect with, and one

---

<sup>13</sup> Trudeau, 'Prime Minister's Remarks Updating Canadians on the Modelling of the COVID-19 Situation'.

that would be emotional enough to compel Canadians to act upon coronavirus recommendations. Trudeau also stood out in being the only head of state who used such comparisons between the coronavirus and a past war. Trump and Macron talked more broadly about war, which allowed them to present themselves as wartime leaders. In a particular speech in which Trudeau talked about the frontline being everywhere, he moderated his comments by saying that “this is not a war.”<sup>14</sup> Trudeau instead focussed on the historical and national unity relevance of war. Whilst Trudeau talked about WWI, he was acting in a way that showed he understood the pandemic as a socio-economic one and was taking the right steps toward that, by expanding social security nets and unreservedly supporting local governments.

**Japan** – After losing WWII, Japan adopted a constitution that forbids it from having a military. Japan instead has a self-defence force (SDF), which is heavily regulated by the Diet in what it can and cannot do. For example, the SDF is expressly allowed to be used by the government for disaster relief operations. Since there is no law that says that the SDF is allowed to be used in the case of a health crisis, the government had to frame the SDF’s response as being disaster relief to fit within the legal requirements. Japan also has a very uneasy relationship with its militaristic past, and thus comparisons made between the pandemic and WWII would have been very highly criticised by many opposition politicians, by the Japanese people, and particularly by Japan’s neighbours like South Korea and China.

The Japanese government had a rather hands-off-approach to the pandemic, without lockdowns or mask mandates. It asked people to do the right thing, rather than force them. One

---

<sup>14</sup> Trudeau, ‘Prime Minister’s Speech to the House of Commons on Canada’s Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic’.

source I found suggests that this is actually similar to what Japan did during WWII. They explain that in both cases, the government relies on the Japanese people's strong sense of duty and obedience towards the government, and the government can thus get people to do what it wants without forcing them to, but just by telling them that doing so make them a good Japanese citizen. The article concludes that the danger, which can be found both during WWII and with the coronavirus pandemic, is that it puts the burden on the Japanese people and allows the government to relieve itself of responsibilities and blame. Though the scope of my research limits my ability to comment on this argument, I would generally agree with it based on my observations of Japan's coronavirus response. What it points out is that even though the government of Japan did not publicly present the pandemic as a security issue, it may have in some sense internally viewed it as one. It would also suggest that the Japanese government viewed the pandemic as a sort of 'messy affair it would rather keep its hands out of,' which is one way modern military conflicts could be described by politicians.<sup>15</sup>

**France** – Macron's speech was very militaristic, with him making numerous comparisons between war and the pandemic, even repeating 6 times in one speech that France was at war against the virus. With Trudeau we saw that despite the security frame, his actions showed he understood the crisis in socio-economic terms. With Macron however, his use of a security frame did not immediately come with socio-economic actions. Of all countries studied, Macron was the one who had the most militaristic speech, even more so than Trump. My explanation would be that Macron saw the coronavirus pandemic as a way to frame himself as a strong leader in times of crisis, and

---

<sup>15</sup> Ota, 'Wartime Japan and COVID-19 Conformity Offer Some Parallels'.

do so by emphasising his role as commander-in-chief. Macron's presidential style is one that emphasises the role of president as a powerful leader, and is often described as being "Jupiterian". However, Macron did not have the opportunity to exercise his powers during a time of true crisis. His predecessor, Francois Hollande, had launched the war in Mali, had launched the war in Syria, and had led France through the terrorist attack wave of 2015. These were extremely salient security issues in France that gave Hollande credibility and visibility as a wartime leader, perhaps against Hollande's own intentions. Meanwhile, Macron's political endeavours had mostly presented him as a socio-economic president, focussing on administrative reforms, pension reforms and a petrol tax. Before the coronavirus pandemic, his popularity had suffered from his struggles with the gilets jaunes, in which he had used the state security apparatus against the French people, rather than in support of it. The pandemic thus presented Macron the perfect opportunity to turn things around and show himself as the leader and saviour France needed. Medals were given to healthcare workers, many foreign 'frontline' workers were awarded French citizenship as a parallel to the concept of "French by the (spilt) blood" which grants citizenship to Foreign Legion soldiers wounded when fighting for France, and healthcare workers were honoured during the military parade on Bastille Day. These are all symbolic events that cement Macron's role as commander-in-chief even though the crisis is sanitary rather than military. All of this led to Macron blurring the lines between his roleplaying and his responsibilities as head of state, and he came to understand the pandemic in similar terms to those who put their full trust in the Global Health Security Index. What it means is that Macron became overly confident that France's advanced health safety measures would be sufficient to stop the pandemic, and thus he was caught off guard when his measures failed to yield results. France was even one of the only countries that had an official policy of publicly discouraging people from wearing masks, going as far as banning mask

sales in pharmacies, so as to keep stocks filled for healthcare workers. This is a perfect example of the government's mindset of 'we do not need the people to do anything because the government's body of experts will do it, and they need all of the resources for it.' This policy, and France's general early approach to the virus, created embarrassment for the government which reduced its credibility, confusion for the people which reduced their willingness to cooperate when the government did implement more sound policies, and a sense of general mistrust towards the government. This can be seen in the 'view of government handling' and 'confidence in government' YouGov polls having low scores for France amongst the countries studied.

There are two similarities to be made between Macron and Trump, both of whom used strong security frames. They are political outsiders, newcomers in political, without a track record of successes or political leadership to rely on. They are also the heads of state and government in a presidential system. It is possible that both Macron and Trump used a security frame as a way to boost their popularity and reaffirm their position as a 'real' politician that fully deserves their place at the top of the political hierarchy. In presidential systems, particularly in France and the US, there is an expectation to have a strong, present head of state. This would have created the right conditions for a political newcomer to use a security frame to reaffirm their position as president.

France is also competing for its place as a global power. The US knows it is a global superpower and that everyone sees it as such, so it does not feel the urge to point it out every time. France however is not in that position, and will take every opportunity to remind itself and remind the world of its power. Operation Resilience, the French military operation launched to 'combat' the virus, saw the use of three amphibious helicopter carriers sent to the Mediterranean, to the Caribbean, and to the South Indian Ocean, the latter two to help with France's overseas territories. There were also air force operations in the Pacific. It is a powerful and rare communication

opportunity for the French army to plot its coronavirus operations on a map not using a map of France, but using a world map. I am confident that Macron and his chief of staff were aware of this dimension of France's militaristic coronavirus response.

**Sweden** – The Swedish approach, similarly to the Japanese one, has been very hands-off. The Swedish government actually states that its policy in times of crises is to let each ministry deal with the issues in its portfolio, thus devolving and spreading out responsibility for crisis handling. As such, it was hard for the Swedish government to employ a security frame, because the non-security ministries such as the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Finance were quick to act and take their responsibilities. The Ministry of Defence likely understood that it would have little to do in dealing with the pandemic, and instead stood by in case other ministries might need its help. The devolved response style also meant that the PM had a much smaller role. He made one speech about the pandemic on March 22, 2020, and then did not speak again about it. There was thus no centralisation of powers in the head of government, and no emphasis of his role as leader or commander-in-chief.<sup>16</sup>

What I did find interesting with Sweden is that though it did not frame or understand the virus as a security issue, its Ministry of Defence still understood the security risks that a pandemic can lead to. The Ministry of Defence often talked about the steps it was taken to limit cases amongst its ranks, to maintain readiness and trainings to balance Russia in the region. The Minister of Defence went as far as decrying that the Russian army was dealing with the pandemic much better than the Swedish army was, and that this was creating an imbalance in favour of Russia.

---

<sup>16</sup> Jonung, 'Sweden's Constitution Decides Its Exceptional Covid-19 Policy'.

The concept of keeping coronavirus cases low amongst troops to maintain readiness and allow the army to maintain its role as protector of the nation is one I found in all cases. In other countries it felt more like something a government agency might say because it has to. In Sweden it felt most genuine and most specific.

**USA** – There are many similarities between the case of the US and that of France. Thinking about Trump’s presidential style and history of statements and actions, it was little surprising that he would use the pandemic to frame himself as a wartime president and emphasise his role as commander-in-chief. I would say that the personality of Trump is the main factor for the US adopting a strong security frame. This is supported by reading press reports in which both Trump and other government officials speak, such as Vice President Pence or Secretary of Health Azar, and noticing the strong differences in speech, tone and language between Trump and the other speakers.

The US has the second highest per capita military spending in the world,<sup>17</sup> more guns than inhabitants,<sup>18</sup> and veterans make up 7% of the adult population.<sup>19</sup> The military is highly respected, and is very present and visible whether it be in public monuments or during large sporting events. Virtually everyone in the US knows someone who is or who has served. The US is thus a very militaristic society. Similarly to Canada, the US has a relatively young history in which tales of military heroism have a very strong place in the nation building exercise. This makes comparisons to war a very compelling option for a president who wants to make the ordeal relatable to the

---

<sup>17</sup> Roser and Nagdy, ‘Military Spending’.

<sup>18</sup> Horsley, ‘Guns in America, By the Numbers’.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Census Bureau Releases New Report on Veterans’.

general population, and who wants to benefit from the uniting powers of such appeals to war. The US also has a vast and diverse military apparatus which the president has relative discretionary powers over, giving the president the chance to flex his military muscle with ease. Furthermore, the military is one of the few agencies the federal government has control of with a large manpower, and so even if a president had wanted to refrain from adopting a security frame, it would likely have had no choice but to send in the army to provide the necessary manpower to help local governments.

Below is a summary of this section.

Country	Framing index score	Reason for use or non-use of security frame elements
Canada	2.5	Use of security frame as an appeal to shared history to make the coronavirus relatable, and to inspire Canadians to adopt sanitary measures, coupled with a government understanding that a response should not be a security response.
Japan	1.5	WWII historical and legal legacies make it hard or impossible for Japan to do or say anything military.
France	6.5	Macron's deliberate use of the crisis to present himself as a wartime president, and to project the power of the French state to both the world and the French people
Sweden	1	A hands-off government approach that makes each ministry responsible for its own affairs during the crisis, which decentralises powers and allows socio-economic ministries to establish their responsibilities
USA	8	Trump's deliberate use of the crisis to present himself as a wartime president, and the general militarism of American society that tends to frame every issue through a security lens.



### **3.5 – Further General Discussion**

Thinking about the use of a security rhetoric is most useful when understood in context with what else is being said, to better understand why the issue may be framed through a security lens some of the time. Focussing on the use of specific words taken out of context does not let us grasp the broader message the government tries to pass on, nor does it let us understand what sort of actions the government is actually taking. A frame could be a genuine reflection of the government's understanding of the pandemic, or it could be a strategic tool used to manipulate public opinion. By putting it into context, by looking at other speeches, at how a specific phrase fits within a broader speech, by thinking about the correspondence or dissonance between words and actions, it becomes easier to see whether the government really believes the frame they use is the appropriate one, or whether they are using that particular frame to influence the way people view and act upon the crisis.

The coronavirus pandemic was a novel threat not just for many governments, but also for the general population. Making the crisis relatable to people was a major early struggle for governments, to instil in people the necessary sense of urgency needed to approach the crisis with a 'whole of country' approach from the get-go. A health crisis is not one that Western governments and populations have recently faced, so there was no common experience or history related to pandemics that governments and people could talk about. There was however a strong history of military and security hardships, whether it be WWI in Canada or terrorism in France. There is nothing inherently wrong with employing a security frame to talk about a health issue or a socio-economic issue. If militarism is prevalent in the society or if a large part of a country's nation

building is done through tales of military heroism, then using a security frame can be positive. It makes the socio-economic event relatable by presenting it in familiar terms to the general public, and it allows for a government to make appeals for unity, sacrifice and duty toward the nation and others, which are all positive social traits to foster when tackling a pandemic. This is what Trudeau did in Canada, and is an example of where a security frame has been used positively. Looking at the broader context makes it clear that he understood the issue as a socio-economic one and acted upon it accordingly, but that on occasions he framed it as a security one because he felt that would touch the Canadian's hearts and minds most effectively. Trudeau talked about values and behaviours necessary in war, such as duty, selflessness and reaching out to neighbours, to imply that they were also necessary for the pandemic. Many Eastern countries however had faced health crises in recent times, particular SARS in the early 2000s. They had developed not just a pandemic playbook, but also a pandemic wordbook to incorporate the right lexicon, values and behaviours inside their societies. They did not need to use false parallels between war and pandemics, because they already knew how to talk about health crises.<sup>20</sup>

A positive aspect of the security frame is that it emboldened many countries to pass titanic economic and social reforms which would not have passed during regular times. The socio-economic changes that occurred during WWII were significant contributors to improving women's rights and social protections for vulnerable populations. In Canada for example, it became easier for the government and public to talk about and agree on topics like universal basic income, mortgage reduction or eviction suspensions.<sup>21</sup> In Sweden, the PM presented the pandemic as an

---

<sup>20</sup> Thompson, 'What's Behind South Korea's COVID-19 Exceptionalism?'

<sup>21</sup> Gerster, 'Trudeau Says "the Front Line Is Everywhere," but Should We Compare Coronavirus to War?'

“opportunity to simultaneously create jobs and address societal challenges.”<sup>22</sup> If the many social protections and societal changes enacted throughout the world in response to the pandemic can last, this period could be a transformational one similar to WWII. It is too early to say for sure, but revisiting this point in a decade would lead to interesting discussions.

Responding to a crisis appropriately requires understanding what causes that crisis and who is best equipped to deal with it. Military history gives us many examples of that. Military and political leaders often overestimate their state’s strength and power projection, and assume that this is enough to crush the crisis. We can use the silly example of the Australian ‘Emu War’ when leaders thought that the best way to deal with an emu infestation in the 1930s was by applying WWI tactics and use heavy machineguns against the birds. Naturally, the successes were very limited, and it was not until a bio-conservation mindset was applied that the problem was controlled. A more saddening example is the US’ never-ending wars in the Middle East. American leaders thought that a heavy intervention by the world’s most advanced and powerful army would leave the enemy no chance. However, when it came to dealing with occupied populations and rebuilding a country’s political, economic and social life, the US army found itself helpless because it had failed to consider the human and long-term implications of its invasion. The Emu War, the War on Terror, and similarly the US or France’s war on the coronavirus, were all near-guaranteed to fail from the start, because the leaders misunderstood the problem and thus applied the wrong solution. Looking at framing as I do in this paper allows us to grasp how leaders understand problems, by seeing how they talk about it across numerous speeches and statements.

---

<sup>22</sup> Löfven, ‘Statement of Government Policy, 08 September 2020’.

There were a lot of discussions when the coronavirus first started spreading around the world, with experts and heads of state, Donald Trump including, referring to the Global Health Security Index. The GHS is an index built by John Hopkins University, with the data assembled in part by the Economist Intelligence Unit, and works similarly in terms of methodology the Democracy Index. The GHS views health crises in a narrow scope, putting a heavy weight on the presence of high-tech biolabs, of dedicated biohazard response teams, or of detailed government response plans. The GHS itself understands pandemics through a security frame, viewing health crises as narrow and small events that are solved through a targeted, resource intensive and expert government response. This would have been a great predictor of success to a pandemic if the health crisis had been similar to Ebola or MERS, with a hard hitting, very obvious and debilitating virus, or with a bio-terrorist attack. The problem for many Western nations like France and the US is that their previous pandemic response had been dealing with Ebola or other scary diseases that in the end had had very little effect in the West due to good monitoring and response mechanisms. This emboldened these nations and showed them that a security response to a health crisis is an efficient one. Though government officials may not have directly relied on their experiences with Ebola to act against the coronavirus, the early attitude to the coronavirus was thus in many ways similar to that of with Ebola, with an assumption that only less wealthy countries without the same access to monitoring or expert healthcare systems would be heavily impacted. Both Macron and Trump expressed their lack of worries thanks to having the “best doctors” and the “best monitoring system” at their disposal. For a disease with heavy symptoms, that would have been the case. For a disease like the coronavirus, which often leads to patients being asymptomatic, governments could not ‘attack’ the virus or ‘attack’ the patients by quarantining symptomatic patients.

Governments that were successful understood from the outset that it would require a whole-of-country approach that puts individuals in the centre as actors against the virus.

Coupled with this came the belief by many that the coronavirus pandemic would be narrow in its time frame, that it was a time-specific event that would come, be dealt with, and leave. This can be seen in Trump's emphasis of cases going down from a dozen to a handful in the first days, as if getting back down to zero cases would be the end of it. Macron also emphasised his belief that it would all blow over after some weeks. The assumption by those leaders was that the pandemic could be 'defeated' with a strong narrow government response in the first weeks, similarly to how the US or France had kept Ebola out just a few years prior. The security frame also came with the belief that the pandemic could actually be 'won', and determined success in terms of a binary winning or losing. This emphasised the focus on the short term and on the assumption that the government's response and resources would be sufficient.

For both Macron and Trump, the use of a security frame helped justify their actions and their use of the military. When Macron repeated that France was at war against the virus, it normalised the militaristic response that followed. People were less likely to question the presence of the army in the country's coronavirus response, because the president had implied its seeming necessity by stating that the country was at war. It made the use of the military seem proportional, and thus few people questioned the potential overreach of the state and the military.

An aspect of the security frame not included in the index but that I nevertheless frequently came across and thought about was the hero-ification of healthcare workers and the comparison made between them and frontline soldiers. It was frequently mentioned in government speeches, it was epitomised by Macron awarding medals to healthcare workers, but perhaps more importantly, it was repeated by the media, by local governments, by businesses, and by practically all actors of society. We may not remember our head of government describing the virus as an invisible enemy, but we surely all remember clapping or banging pots at 7pm to celebrate the ‘heroes’ keeping us safe. Recognising the hardships faced by healthcare workers and the selflessness they exhibited was surely warranted, and governments pushed for that narrative as it was a crucial element of building national unity and framing the crisis in relatable terms. The problem however was in the way the sacrifice of healthcare workers was presented as somewhat unavoidable, and thus worthy of hero-ification. If I place my glass bottles in the glass recycling receptacle at the street corner, no one considers this special. However, if I travel 10 miles to go recycle my glass because that is where the nearest centre is, I will get praised for my dedication and be made an example of a good citizen. However, no one questions why I have to go through this much just to do a normal action. The same happened with healthcare workers. Emphasising their status of heroes distracted from the questions that should have popped up to ask why their sacrifice was needed in the first place. Healthcare workers come at the end of the chain, when governments failed to keep the virus at bay, and when individuals failed to engage in risk-reducing behaviour. In a sense, healthcare workers clean up the mess left by the government by taking care of those who have fallen ill. A proper response to a pandemic should not emphasise healthcare workers to treat ill patients, but should instead ensure patients do not get ill in the first place. This was the winning strategy in Taiwan, South Korea, Vietnam or New Zealand. The hero-ification of workers displaces the

burden of responsibility away from the government and onto ordinary citizens who are now expected to do extraordinary feats to handle the pandemic, and normalises government inaction by implying that healthcare workers

If you were to metaphorically ask the US government why it has troops in the Middle East, it would tell you not to think about it and instead to focus on the heroism of the troops there fighting for your freedom. Similarly if you were to ask the US government why healthcare workers were using trash bags as medical gowns, why they lacked ventilators, why hospitals are understaffed, or why they had to face an uncontrollable influx of COVID-19 patients, the government would tell you to instead focus on their heroism and go clap for them at nightfall.

## **4. US Case Study**

I use an extensive case study of the US to explore in depth how the government there framed the coronavirus. This helps understand more specifically the impacts the frame had on popular compliance, the reasons for the government picking a specific frame, the effectiveness of the frame in shaping people's perceptions of the pandemic, and the intermediary steps that connect government frame to popular actions or inactions. It also helps understand what a security frame means in real life by putting it into context for the reader with a real-life example most people will be familiar with. The US is also a clear outlier in how heavy its framing was securitised.

### **4.1 – Trump's preoccupation with remaining in command and in control**

The first part of the US government's security framing was President Trump's insistence that everything was under control, that there was nothing to worry about, and that the threat was minimal. It also involved deflecting blame onto foreign entities, such as China, the European Union, and the World Health Organisation.

One may have expected Trump to declare a state of emergency and over-emphasise the danger of the treat from the very beginning, so as to increase his powers and position himself as the necessary solution to the crisis. However, this would not have fit with the traditional expectation to have a president and Commander-in-Chief that remains unfazed in the face of any threat. Panicking from the get-go would have shown weakness and a form of admitting defeat before the battle ever really began. Downplaying the threat by comparison allowed him to present the required solution as a narrow government response, one that did not need to ask people and



communities to get involved. Downplaying the threat also fits with the traditional need for a Commander-in-Chief to maintain the appearance that the government is run like a tight ship, and that the professionalism and strict hierarchy found in the military is also present in the government. As such, the professionalism and hierarchy ensure that there is no need to worry, and that no threat is too big for the government to handle. If a conflict erupted tomorrow between the US and China, an American president panicking would signal a lack of confidence in the country and army's ability to deal with the threat. Keeping cool however signals strong belief in the country's power and resource capabilities.

In a security crisis, the head of state traditionally takes on the role of leader of the unified government response, reassures his citizens that the threat will not reach them thanks to the government's response, and leaves little room for his subordinates to publicly dissent. The dual role of the head of state, as leader of both the political world and of the military world, is particular to the security apparatus. It is expected from government leaders to be in charge of security questions, the same as it is generally expected for many socio-economic issues to be delegated to specialist ministers.

Trump's first years in office had already shown how he cared about appearing to have "tremendous control" over a situation,<sup>23</sup> and had demonstrated his appreciation for public displays that reinforced his position as Commander-in-Chief and leader of the security apparatus. When it came to the pandemic, Trump did delegate a lot of actual responsibilities to states. However, he still did not admit failure or loss of control, and the image he tried to transmit was one of a leader on top of the crisis. He also made it a point to show that he knew what he was doing with regard to the pandemic response, and that health experts like Dr. Fauci remained his subordinates, with

---

<sup>23</sup> Qiu, Marsh, and Huang, 'The President vs. the Experts'.

Trump creating the appearance that he was alone in leading the federal response. In fact, the decentralisation to the states helps us see how Trump likely struggled with understanding the pandemic. His words were about staying in control, but his actions and policies made it so that actual decision-making became someone else's problem. As we have seen before, security framing generally stems from a misunderstanding of the nature of the pandemic.

### **Staying in Control**

A major impact this had was him lying to the public about the state of COVID, to minimize the danger and minimize the extent of the government's struggles. Naturally, this did little to instill in people the feeling that the situation was an emergency that warranted strong individual actions like mask wearing or self-isolating.

What is particular in Trump's case was his use of misinformation before COVID had even reached the US, before it had become a threat, and before it had infected any American citizens. It made some sense to lie about the extent of the pandemic when it had become uncontrollable, as this allowed him to hide the government's malfunctions. Lying and minimizing the threat from the beginning is more peculiar, and is one of the main differences between countries that successfully handled the first wave of COVID, and those who did not. Whilst Trump was downplaying the virus in the US, Angela Merkel in Germany was preparing the public to the idea that "60 to 70 percent of the [German] population will be infected." Whereas Trump was not acknowledging the virus, Merkel was presenting Germany with the worst-case scenario.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Bennhold and Eddy, 'Merkel Gives Germans a Hard Truth About the Coronavirus'.

Trump's stance in January and February thus helps understand how he wanted to frame the pandemic from the start. Rather than warn about the threat of the coronavirus, which he and the administration knew would be coming, Trump spent the first months downplaying it, claiming how it was just "one person coming in from China" and that everything was "totally under control."<sup>25</sup> This dialogue purposefully ignored the socio-economic and medical aspects of the virus. Instead, the focus was on the foreignness of the virus, and on the federal government's ability to handle it without having to implicate or worry the general public.

A key part of Trump's response was portraying himself as fully and personally in charge, not taking orders or needing advice from others. Trump is the Commander-in-Chief and as such is expected to know everything warfare and implementing a militaristic response. However, the role of president does not require public health knowledge. It was thus challenging for Trump, as leader of the country and the executive, to admit that he knew little about the pandemic or the science to tackle it. He often praised himself for "understanding it" and being able to take decisions on his own, without the help of medical experts. He credited "himself with instinctive understanding of the science."<sup>26</sup> On many occasions he mocked Alex Azar, the Secretary of HHS, and Dr Anthony Fauci of the COVID taskforce.<sup>27, 28</sup> This fits with the idealized image of the general, who gives orders and takes none, who is a natural born leader. Admitting the threat of the coronavirus would have required Trump to give increased powers to the CDC, the Department of HHS, and other

---

<sup>25</sup> Rogers, 'Trump Now Claims He Always Knew the Coronavirus Would Be a Pandemic'.

<sup>26</sup> Baker, 'For Trump, Coronavirus Proves to Be an Enemy He Can't Tweet Away'.

<sup>27</sup> Rogers, 'Trump Now Claims He Always Knew the Coronavirus Would Be a Pandemic'.

<sup>28</sup> Bennhold and Eddy, 'Merkel Gives Germans a Hard Truth About the Coronavirus'.

public health agencies. Instead, he focussed the government's response through military agencies like the Department of Defence or the Department of Veteran Affairs.

His exaggerated self-portrayal created a gap between his advice and that of public health experts, and did not help build popular confidence towards public health experts. It also had the effect of making many people have to choose between following presidential advice, which is generally considered trustworthy, or following the advice of relatively unknown health experts. Unfortunately due to the strong partisanship present in the US at the time, many of Trump's strongest supporters chose to trust him, and thus began to refuse following health guidelines.

It was also important for Trump to maintain a "business-as-usual approach to the rest of his schedule,"<sup>29</sup> and that he would not let the virus stop him from being the President he wants to be. He remained unconcerned of the threat of the pandemic reaching the White House,<sup>30</sup> reflecting his view of the US and the government as unreachable and untouchable, with the means to keep the danger away. He often presented the pandemic was a hoax created by his political opponents as way to embarrass him. When Trump did fall ill with COVID-19, even then refused to let that stop him from carrying on working from the Oval Office whilst sick.<sup>31</sup>

This created a false sense of normalcy that encouraged regular people to believe that their situation was also normal, and that they too should carry on as usual. It also reinforced the feeling of invincibility that many people experienced, which helped people self-justify their unsanitary behaviour as low-risk.

---

<sup>29</sup> Baker, 'For Trump, Coronavirus Proves to Be an Enemy He Can't Tweet Away'.

<sup>30</sup> Baker.

<sup>31</sup> Haberman and Thomas, 'Trump Calls His Illness "a Blessing From God"'.

There were signs from the beginning that the US would approach the pandemic through a security lens. On a broader and historic level, the US has frequently used security crises for the purpose of nation building. Many of the US' greatest shared hardships relate to recent wars or terrorist attacks, with security from foreign threats being a generally unifying theme in American politics.

Thinking about the Vietnam War, an issue that did require a strong security frame and a security-minded response, part of the US' failure was its inability to also consider the necessity for a socio-economic frame, both in Vietnam and in the US. The US government did not think about the need to communicate about the war with its own population. This led to high domestic opposition, making it hard for the government to effectively implement its military decisions. For the first significant time in the US' military history, the flow of information from the centre of the crisis to the mainstream public was no longer fully controlled by the government. Independent journalists and leaked government files allowed the public to get information that went against the government's narrative. The government had expected to get away with lying, and when it could not, it created a mistrust and a disconnect between the government and the public. It created resentment against the government's actions, and increased non-compliance such as draft dodging.

In 2020, the government knew it could not control the media narrative and the information that the general public had of the virus. Yet, it tried to and insisted that its narrative was the factual one. Claims were often "overstated or inaccurate,"<sup>32</sup> or information was simply withheld and hidden from the public. This is similar to war time information strategies that emphasize victories and gloss over difficulties and losses by controlling information. However, the US government did not realize that with war against the coronavirus being on the home front, both the mainstream

---

<sup>32</sup> Baker, 'For Trump, Coronavirus Proves to Be an Enemy He Can't Tweet Away'.

media and the general public could report on what they were seeing and experiencing. The government's failure in having its frame be the dominant one is reminiscent of its communication failure during the Vietnam War. Trump's government did not hesitate lying to create a narrative suitable to its needs, whilst forgetting about the ability of civil society to present the truth. It emphasized only a security frame, and ignored that people would realize that a socio-economic was also eventually needed.

### **Closing borders**

Another crucial aspect of President Trump's particular response that indicated a strong desire to use a security frame, was his deflection of blame onto foreign entities, and his urge to close off the country from foreign threats. This may be seen as simple xenophobia, of which there surely was some. However, anti-immigration and xenophobic language is often rooted in security issues. Immigrants coming in are presented as rapists and criminals, as terrorists from ISIS or drug cartels members. The link between xenophobia and security framing cannot be ignored, and it lets us explore less obvious elements of a security frame that do not directly relate to militarism.

Though experience with the coronavirus has shown that travel restrictions can be an extremely effective tool in limiting the virus' spread, as Taiwan, New Zealand and Vietnam exemplify, this was not the pre-pandemic consensus. "Experts have long recommended against restricting travel during outbreaks, arguing that it is often ineffective and can stymie the response by limiting the movements of doctors and other health professionals trying to contain the

disease.”<sup>33</sup> WHO guidelines pre-pandemic reflected this and recommended against travel restrictions, arguing that “they would hamper global travel and trade” and do little to stop the global spread of a pandemic.<sup>34</sup> US experts added that worried “a ban would anger China, [...] ending any hope of cooperation with American medical teams.”<sup>35</sup> This is the stance most EU countries had in the early stages of the pandemic.

Thus, it can be argued that travel restrictions imposed in January, February, and March, were not motivated wholly by scientific evidence. The US’ actions and Trump’s rhetoric help demonstrate this. In January, Trump described the pandemic as “one person coming in from China.”<sup>36</sup> His response was thus to target Chinese travellers, and on February 2, 2020, Trump claimed that the travel ban on China had stopped the spread of the virus, adding that they “pretty much shut it down coming in from China.”<sup>37</sup> At this stage, there was no talk about how the US would domestically respond to the virus if it did begin spreading domestically. It could have been a time to begin focusing on the socio-economic solutions to the pandemic, by educating the public on staying safe and beginning to build stockpiles of medical resources. Instead, the emphasis remained on the foreignness of the threat, and the ability to keep the threat away by keeping foreigners away and closing borders. As the situation slowly worsened in the US, Trump went as far as suggesting in early March that the border wall with Mexico was needed “more than ever” to protect the US.<sup>38</sup>

When Trump issued travel restrictions against the EU in mid-March, he talked of a “foreign virus” and blamed the EU for not restricting travel from China, like the US had done. He also

---

<sup>33</sup> Haberman and Weiland, ‘Inside the Coronavirus Response’.

<sup>34</sup> Mateus et al., ‘Effectiveness of Travel Restrictions in the Rapid Containment of Human Influenza’.

<sup>35</sup> Haberman and Weiland, ‘Inside the Coronavirus Response’.

<sup>36</sup> Qiu, ‘Analyzing the Patterns in Trump’s Falsehoods About Coronavirus’.

<sup>37</sup> Qiu, Marsh, and Huang, ‘The President vs. the Experts’.

<sup>38</sup> Qiu, Marsh, and Huang.

blamed the rise in cases in the US on travellers coming from the EU,<sup>39</sup> despite increasing community spread within the US and no proof to support his hypothesis. Trump's attitude at the time was still that the virus could be stopped by blocking it at the border, the same way foreign terrorists may be stopped from entering the US. Putting responsibility on foreign entities allowed Trump to justify a lack of domestic response. Why place domestic restrictions or ramp up domestic testing, when closing borders allows to stop the virus from entering the US? When criticized for his lack of response, Trump replied that the government had a "perfectly coordinated and fine tuned plan" that relied on closing borders with China, Iran, and South Korea.<sup>40</sup>

The security approach of closing borders could have worked if coupled with a socio-economic approach. Other countries that restricted incoming travel also took the steps to address domestic spread and to monitor arrivals for contaminated patients, which meant that any case that managed to get into the country was effectively stemmed. The US took no such actions, focusing only on a security frame, which allowed the situation to worsen domestically whilst the government pretended the threat remained far abroad.

A lot can also be inferred from the list of territories that faced travel restrictions to the US. For all 2020 the only places targeted were China, Iran, and the EU.<sup>41</sup> Whilst there was a scientific rationale for choosing these three territories at the beginning of the pandemic, as all three were the hardest hit in early 2020, it is also strange that no other territories were added in 2020 despite a globally worsening situation, and that China, Iran and the EU were not dropped from the list as their situations improved. It is well known that Trump has strong feeling of animosity towards

---

<sup>39</sup> Onishi, 'Chaos in Europe, and Anger, Over U.S. Travel Ban to Curb Coronavirus'.

<sup>40</sup> Baker, 'For Trump, Coronavirus Proves to Be an Enemy He Can't Tweet Away'.

<sup>41</sup> CDC, 'COVID-19 and Your Health'.



China and Iran, and he views both of these countries as significant security threats for the US, particularly Iran in terms of terrorism and the US' Middle East strategy, and China as a threat to the US' Asia strategy. Trump frequently criticized the EU, particularly for not paying its fair share of the NATO budget. It is thus hard to believe that the US issued and maintained travel restrictions purely for health reasons.

Though these travel restrictions were intended to protect the US public's health, the security considerations added onto them by the US government reduced their efficacy and turned them into a diplomatic and political tool more than a domestic health tool. Dr. Osterholm, an epidemiologist and director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota, pointed to the fact that by the time travel restrictions were placed on China, the virus was already in the US, and that “at this point, sharply curtailing air travel to and from China is more of an emotional or political reaction.”<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Corkery and Karni, 'Trump Administration Restricts Entry Into U.S. From China'.

## **4.2 – Focusing on the physical/material aspect of the response**

The US is quite special in that it does not quite have a federal civilian body it can rely on intervene in large scale emergencies. Unlike in many other countries, there is no national health or firefighter service that the US can make use of. As a result, it is common to see the military intervene when FEMA needs manpower to help with floods, fires, or hurricanes. Thus, the US population is used to seeing the military handle large non-military issues in the name of the federal government. It perhaps also contributed to making the use of a security frame in the US inevitable, as there was no significant socio-economic tools or agencies the government could call up. Given the successes and professionalism of the military when it intervenes for natural emergencies, the US public is also used to effective responses from the military. If the military is called in, it means that the issue has gotten significant, but it also means that the issue will be soon solved.

The announcement in the early stages of the pandemic that the military would be intervening thus sent a strong message to the public, one of worry mixed with hope. It came with the expectation that the military's intervention would be impactful and meaningful. When it became apparent that the intervention was a failure, it created a significant morale hit in the early stages of the pandemic, when high spirits were most needed. This did little to help fill the leadership vacuum that existed at the federal level.<sup>43</sup> Finally, the over-reliance and under-delivery of the military helped spread doubt and confusion, as it made it harder for average people to conceptualize what sort of threat the pandemic posed if it was able to completely overpower the military, when the US military was generally perceived as an unbeatable force.

---

<sup>43</sup> Stolberg et al., 'The Surging Coronavirus Finds a Federal Leadership Vacuum'.

Looking at how the US has organized its public health apparatus at the federal executive level sheds light on how much public health is framed through a security lens, even before the coronavirus became a concern.

Prior to 2018, the executive branch's dedicated pandemic team was under the umbrella of the National Security Council (NSC).<sup>44</sup> The NSC is "the President's principal forum for considering national security and foreign policy matters."<sup>45</sup> Before Trump shut it down, it was run by a military man Rear Adm. R. Timothy Ziemer, and were it still active now it would be in charge of leading the country's pandemic response.<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, within the Department of HHS, the Assistant Secretary for Health (ASH) is the person in charge of public health and of the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, a uniformed service of the federal government, as are the Army, Navy, or Air Force. The ASH is thus a soldier with the rank of four-star admiral.<sup>47</sup>

Both these examples show how much the US government at its core views public health through a military lens, and helps understand why the military was expected to provide a solid response to the virus.

### **Expectation for the military to provide a miracle solution**

From the very first days of the pandemic, the military took on an active role in the response. The passengers of the first repatriation flight in January 2020 from Wuhan to the US were sent to

---

<sup>44</sup> Haberman and Weiland, 'Inside the Coronavirus Response'.

<sup>45</sup> 'National Security Council'.

<sup>46</sup> Baker, 'For Trump, Coronavirus Proves to Be an Enemy He Can't Tweet Away'.

<sup>47</sup> Digital Communications Division, 'HHS Organizational Chart'.

a mandatory quarantine on a military base. The justification was an unprecedented “health threat”, with the government promising to take more “aggressive action to protect the public.” This was the first time since the 1960s that the federal government used its power to impose a quarantine.<sup>48</sup>

In mid-March, local officials were beginning to wonder where the federal help was. The Army Corps of Engineers was ready to help build new hospitals and the Department of Veteran Affairs had spare capacity in their hospitals. For many local officials, federal help on the ground meant help from the army.<sup>49</sup> The military had shown during the Ebola pandemic in 2014 that it could handle pandemics, as it had sent 3000 US to Liberia to help build hospitals, and the Department of Defense set up a command centre in Monrovia to coordinate the international response.<sup>50</sup>

However, the military did not take a prominent role until April, by which time the pandemic was hitting some parts of the US with full swing. One of the interventions most covered by the media was the sending in the first week of April of the military hospital ship USNS Comfort to New York City, at the time the global epicentre of the virus, and its sister ship USNS Mercy to Los Angeles.<sup>51</sup> It seemed that the move was an appropriate one, as the Comfort had “responded to the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, [and] came to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005. It [had] even been to New York before, when, in the days after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the Comfort provided aid and medical help largely for emergency medical workers.”<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Grady and Rabin, ‘195 Quarantined in California After Fleeing Coronavirus Epicenter’.

<sup>49</sup> Lipton, Kanno-Youngs, and Cooper, ‘Trump Slowly Enlisting More Agencies in “Whole of Government” Response to Virus’.

<sup>50</sup> Lipton, Kanno-Youngs, and Cooper.

<sup>51</sup> Schwirtz, ‘The 1,000-Bed Comfort Was Supposed to Aid New York. It Has 20 Patients.’

<sup>52</sup> Cooper and Gibbons-Neff, ‘Navy Hospital Ship Reaches New York. But It’s Not Made to Contain Coronavirus.’

President Trump “showed up to send off the Comfort in a show of national unity in a crisis,”<sup>53</sup> and to maintain his image as in charge and in control.

However, the move soon turned into a fiasco, as it became apparent that the ships had been sent more as a publicity stunt, than as part of a thought-out strategy. The ship sent to help with the pandemic was at first not allowed to take in COVID-19 patients, only took accepting non-COVID-19 patients to alleviate the stress put by regular patients on New York hospitals. However, as the health situation worsened in New York, the Comfort eventually began taking COVID-19 patients too.<sup>54</sup> However, within its first week, its 1200 staff and 1000 beds only had 20 patients, and the crew had already been infected with the virus despite all efforts against that.<sup>55</sup>

Meanwhile, the Javits Convention Center, also in New York City, was turned into a field hospital and a sorting centre, also run by the military. A patient sent to the Center talked about the fear of getting tangled up in military bureaucracy, and the uncertainty of being treated by doctors that were not his family doctor or the local hospital he knew well. He acknowledged that “we are at war in a way.”<sup>56</sup> The Department of Defense also sent army medics to integrate regular civilian public hospitals in the New York area and bolster their ranks.<sup>57</sup> Additionally, it provided 5 million N95 masks to the state of New York, whilst the New York National Guard helped hand out 350,000 meals.<sup>58</sup> These were all actions that could have been performed by the traditional civilian social security apparatus. The government however both chose to use the military because of the military’s positive track record in non-security crisis handling, and was forced to choose the

---

<sup>53</sup> Cooper and Gibbons-Neff.

<sup>54</sup> Lopez, ‘Comfort, Javits Center Open Care to COVID-19 Patients’.

<sup>55</sup> Schwirtz, ‘The 1,000-Bed Comfort Was Supposed to Aid New York. It Has 20 Patients.’

<sup>56</sup> Person, ‘I Was Sent to Be Treated for Covid-19 at the Javits Center. Here’s What It’s like.’

<sup>57</sup> Lopez, ‘Comfort, Javits Center Open Care to COVID-19 Patients’.

<sup>58</sup> Lopez.

military because of a lack of alternative civilian agencies large enough to provide the necessary expertise, supplies, and manpower.

The military's actions in New York were not repeated elsewhere, remained quite simplistic and peripheral to the heart of the problem of tackling the pandemic. They did not have the intended effect of instilling hope in the population, of showing effective military leadership in the pandemic response, or even of reducing coronavirus spread and fatalities in New York or in the US. As mentioned previously, many people viewed the military as near-invincible. Not only could the military not beat the virus, but the virus was beating the military. That it could be defeated by an invisible enemy made it harder to conceptualize what the disease was, making it easier for fake news, rumours, and lies to prosper.

It also removed the military from the broader coronavirus response, as we have not seen the army take on an active role since April. This highlighted the disconnect between how the government wanted to frame the military's role, versus how the military viewed its own role. The military categorically defined itself as providing an "emergency" response, outlining how the Department of Defense did not view itself as part of the main strategy, but more as a stop gap measure.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Lopez.

## Trump's preoccupation with a 'miracle' cure

Another aspect of President Trump's security framing was his over-reliance on a 'miracle' cure and his attempts at solving the pandemic solely through material supplies and resources. Trump's pandemic approach fits that of the Pasteurian paradigm, which is the belief that a disease is caused by a specific virus, and as such that the solution to the disease is to target the virus, which can be done through vaccination or medication. The Pasteurian paradigm, and Trump's talks of a miracle cure, fit right into a security frame, with a single threat addressed through a narrow, intense and expert-led response, where 'throwing' science, money, and resources at the problem can solve it. However, this approach to public health has been generally pushed aside, as experts increasingly recognize that diseases and disease spread are more complex than that, and that effectively reducing the spread of a disease also involves considering human behaviour, socio-economic conditions like education or wealth, and environmental factors.

Trump frequently talked about finding a miracle cure for COVID-19, such as hydroxychloroquine.<sup>60</sup> On February 27, 2020, Trump said of the coronavirus that "one day – it's like a miracle – it will disappear."<sup>61</sup> He spent the rest of the year focusing the US' response on finding that miracle. On March 2, 2020, Trump said that pharmaceutical companies would have vaccines "relatively soon."<sup>62</sup> Only nine months later did vaccines start to become available. When Trump was quizzed during a pre-election townhall about his government's pandemic response, his reply pointed "to efforts by the administration to provide medical equipment like ventilators and

---

<sup>60</sup> Haberman and Thomas, 'Trump Calls His Illness "a Blessing From God"'.

<sup>61</sup> Qiu, Marsh, and Huang, 'The President vs. the Experts'.

<sup>62</sup> Qiu, Marsh, and Huang.

to develop treatments and a vaccine.”<sup>63</sup> The ventilators had been produced in part thanks to the use of the Defense Production Act, a war-time act that Trump had talked a lot about, and which helped him reinforce the security frame of the pandemic. Ventilators, vaccines, and treatments are also measures that the government can do on its own or with business partners, which requires no effort or involvement from regular people. This fit with Trump’s broader narrative that the government would take care of the issue and that people need not worry.

The conversation was often about the availability of supplies, and the testing capacity, emphasizing the logistical and material aspect of the response.<sup>64</sup> However, masks and tests are not enough if there is not a robust public health education program behind to mobilize people to wear masks, go get tested, and avoid meeting up with others. There was talk of more ventilators, but no talk of more qualified healthcare workers needed to operate them. The material-focused rhetoric let him ignore the broader socio-economic front that includes social distancing, economic relief, and an effective communication strategy. The more his message spread, the more people believed it and also embraced a Pasteurian perspective. This made it harder to convince people that waiting for a vaccine is not a viable approach, and that even with a vaccine, personal efforts will be necessary.

---

<sup>63</sup> Baker, ‘Trump, in Philadelphia, Says He “Up-Played” the Virus, Then Downplays It’.

<sup>64</sup> Qiu, ‘Analyzing the Patterns in Trump’s Falsehoods About Coronavirus’.



## **Lack of socio-economic considerations, and reliance on Pasteurian paradigm**

As detailed above, Trump's approach to the pandemic through a Pasteurian paradigm likely allowed him to put aside the broader socio-economic considerations of the pandemic. This is important when considering the more obvious and direct aspects of the pandemic response that can be considered social, such as convincing people to wear masks or to avoid going to work when sick. However, it is crucial to consider the role the government has in giving people the resources needed to wear masks or stay at home when sick. No matter how much you convince someone of the necessity to stay home, if they live pay check to pay check, need to go work to afford to survive, and cannot rely on social security as a safety net, then they will go work. This situation was responsible for the spread of the virus in many minority communities, where despite best intentions and a will to comply, people were often left with no choice, having to choose between putting themselves at risk of the virus or having no income to bring back home.

The US' lack of universal health coverage or social security nets was a clue as to the US' strong usage of a security framing. There was little socio-economic apparatus that the government could talk about or make use to tackle the pandemic. Countries that from the start recognized that they would have to economically support people and adopt a wide socio-economic response were those that best handled the early stages of the pandemic. When in China the government closes down a city, it ensures that food is still delivered and that people keep receiving some income to keep paying bills. In the EU, bankruptcies for small businesses have gone down compared to last year despite long and intense lockdowns. In the US, lockdowns were met with strong opposition because small business owners knew they would receive no financial help. The security frame

completely failed to consider this, and the general popular consensus for a \$2000 stimulus check shows how people soon realized that the government was failing to consider the socio-economic part of the pandemic. The over-reliance on the military, and the over-securitization of the issue, lead to a disconnect between leaders and regular people, which was not conducive to creating the necessary sentiments of unity to get regular people on board. A limited intervention from the military, or directed narrow parallels to wars, could have been effective. However, there was too much security talk, and it was poorly focussed.

There is a link between a reliance on militarization to seem ready to handle problems, and the ability to actually solve a problem when it arises. The US scored excellently on the Global Health Security Index for pandemic preparedness, in part due to its high wealth and high technology. This can result in leaders “having overconfidence in existing health systems, leading to collective complacency and politicisation of necessary public health responses during crises.”<sup>65</sup> This became apparent when it came to doing the real thing, with the obvious flaws in the system vividly appearing, chief of which was a lack of universal health care and a lack of a social approach to healthcare.<sup>66</sup>

The same was the case for many of the US’ recent military interventions, from the Vietnam War to the War on Terror. Each time it thought it could handle the issue through force, playing a numbers game to demonstrate it had better and more resources than the enemy. However, when it came to considering the realities of implementation, human and social aspects were ignored, and the US was unable to win the war of hearts and minds. The same was also true for the US’ approach to the War on Drugs. The government thought that throwing resources would help stop drug

---

<sup>65</sup> Lal et al., ‘Fragmented Health Systems in COVID-19’.

<sup>66</sup> Lal et al.

consumption in the US, by criminalizing and militarizing the response. It failed to consider the socio-economic reasons behind drug use, and as a result the War on Drugs was only effective in wasting taxpayer dollars and jailing countless petty criminals or drug victims that would have been better served by rehabilitation and re-education programs.

### **4.3 – Freedom and Individual Liberties**

The third part of the analysis of the US government's framing of the pandemic through a security lens looks at the approach the government had on the question of freedom, liberty, and individual sacrifices. Wars usually lead to greater restrictions on freedoms at home, but wars are also fought to protect these same freedoms and rights. Many security issues are presented as issues of freedom: "we fight now, we may restrict some rights now, but we do it so that in the long term your rights remain protected from malicious forces." Wars are fought to protect our freedom, or to give freedom to oppressed people abroad. One of the most famous constitutionally protected right in the US is the right to bear arms. In contrast, socio-economic issues are often linked to greater government oversight and intervention, particularly in the US where it is not uncommon to hear politicians compare universal health care to communism, the enemy of the free people of America. There is also a partisan element, with the Republican party in the US generally being a champion of both security and freedom issues, and tying those in together when possible. As with the topic of xenophobia previously explored, the discourse around rights and the pandemic does not directly relate to militarism. Still, thinking about the way freedoms and individual liberties were talked about helps us understand the broader context of the security frame, and the parallels between the use of a security frame for the coronavirus versus a security frame for a war.

Responding to a pandemic effectively is very politically challenging for a government whose population is not used to it, as it requires asking people to limit their freedoms, and for people to make the greatest effort and sacrifice. In countries that effectively deal with the pandemic from the onset, the success was in great part due to individuals wearing masks and avoiding

gatherings out of their own will, without the government needing to take strong measures to enforce these rules.

Furthermore, the ideal solution to a problem framed through a security lens should not require the common people to make efforts. The distinction between those in your population that have the tools to fight the threat, and those who do not, can quite easily be made in a security crisis. The War on Drugs and the War on Terror were conducted by elite forces within the military and federal security agents, not by average citizens. This allows for narrow responses, which as mentioned before require high financial and technological investments, but not large public efforts. In a pandemic, the distinction disappears, and everyone become a combatant against the virus. This requires increasing public awareness and educating people on their individual roles, which is more akin to a socio-economic frame.

Though Trump knew that the virus was “deadly stuff,” he chose to downplay it as he did not “want to create a panic” and “scare everybody.”<sup>67</sup> In his view, there was no need for popular efforts to tackle the virus, and rather the solution would come from the government. This is similar to how a government might react whilst losing a war, as the government would likely not ask regular people to take up weapons, but instead would reassure the population that all is well whilst the enemy slowly rolls in. It also reflects his lack of trust in the people’s ability to be part of the response against the virus, as if telling them the truth would only make everyone panic and become a hinderance. It shows how much he wanted to keep the public out of the issue and address it directly with a narrow government response rather than with a broad public one. Countries that were more successful in tackling the pandemic did the opposite, trusting and implicating from the start the general public, and ensuring that everyone was doing their part.

---

<sup>67</sup> Haberman, ‘Trump Admits Downplaying the Virus Knowing It Was “Deadly Stuff”’.

A specific example where people in the US were not asked to make an effort was with masks, with Trump and his supporters often framing mask wearing as a liberty issue. Trump views mask wearing as a “personal choice,” which has led to people following this mantra even in places where the law requires a mask.<sup>68</sup> People who refuse to wear masks have often cited civil disobedience and the right to stand against restrictive or authoritarian rules, with protestors in Texas equating masks to “medical tyranny.”<sup>69</sup>

“A lot of people take their liberty quite seriously — they prefer to have education and make informed decisions, as opposed to a mandate,” said Mike Kuckelman, the chairman of the Kansas Republican Party. “This just seems heavy-handed and unnecessary for large portions of our state.”<sup>70</sup>

Furthermore, attacks against mask wearers often had connotations that mask wearing is unmanly or a show of weakness. In an American context, there is little more manly than guns and the military. Even for the few Republican leaders that decided to go against their President’s anti-mask narrative, they did so by talking about masks through a security frame. For example, Doug Ducey, the Republican governor of Arizona, asked for people to “arm [themselves] with a mask.”<sup>71</sup> When Liz Cheney, Republican Representative of Wyoming, urged people to wear a mask, she tweeted a photo of her dad in cowboy attire, captioned with #realmenwearmasks.<sup>72</sup> Brien Kemp,

---

<sup>68</sup> Bosman, ‘Amid Virus Surge, Republicans Abruptly Urge Masks Despite Trump’s Resistance’.

<sup>69</sup> Bosman.

<sup>70</sup> Bosman.

<sup>71</sup> Bosman.

<sup>72</sup> Bosman.

Republican governor of Georgia, told people to wear masks by posting a selfie “wearing a mask decorated with the University of Georgia’s bulldog mascot,”<sup>73</sup> with school sport mascots being another sign of masculinity and virility.

Framing does not have to be partisan, and I endeavoured to keep my analysis apolitical. However, in the context of strong partisanship in the US, it must be acknowledged that the Republican party has historically been pro-military, and has used security frames to present its solutions as the most appropriate. There is nothing inherently wrong with a security frame, whether in general or specifically when talking about the coronavirus. Still, with the pandemic, partisanship had a strong impact on the sort of frames politicians at all levels used, and on how people perceived these frames.

---

<sup>73</sup> Bosman.

## 5. Conclusion

Early framing is critical, with Dr. Robert Redfield, president of the CDC, paraphrasing Aristotle to explain that “when you put a message on a blank slate, that first message is critical. When you want to rechannel a message, it’s always a problem.”<sup>74</sup> Framing in the US was critical because it did not just determine how regular people viewed the situation, but it also had a tremendous impact on how the administration itself viewed the crisis and its role to play. It could have been fine if the government tried to downplay it publicly, whilst assembling a capable task force and building a resilient stockpile behind the scenes. Instead, the Trump’s administration framing was a good indication and reflection of the administration’s tangible actions.

It is of little surprise that the pandemic in the US was framed through a security lens. There were elements of the way American society and politics function that oriented the US toward a security frame, such as the need to use the army for manpower as there is no other large federal agency that would have been up to the task, the lack of social security in the US, and the militarism already prevalent in the US. It was also visible in the way news outlets compared coronavirus deaths to war deaths. The New York Times wrote that the coronavirus “killed close to twice as many Americans as the wars in Vietnam, Korea, Iraq and Afghanistan combined,”<sup>75</sup> and countless outlets pointed out that crossing the mark of 3000 daily deaths amounted to one 9-11 a day.

---

<sup>74</sup> Bosman.

<sup>75</sup> Baker, ‘Trump, in Philadelphia, Says He “Up-Played” the Virus, Then Downplays It’.



There were also elements specific to the Trump presidency, that were dependent on Trump's personality and leadership style. I think any president would have used the Defense Production Act, would have sent the US Navy hospital ships, and would have deployed the National Guard to build and staff field hospitals in hard hit areas. Any US president would also likely have made comparisons in speeches between the pandemic and wars. However, other presidents may have staffed their pandemic response leadership team differently and included more health experts, or would not have placed blame as much on foreign entities. As has been mentioned numerous times in this paper, framing is both a reflection of personal understanding of a crisis, and a strategic choice to promote a particular agenda. Pinpointing how much framing is the result of a country's political scene versus the result of a specific politician is a challenging task, and there is no general answer for it. An in-depth analysis of each case helps shed light on that, which in our case has shown that for countries like the US and France, framing was heavily dependent on the individual in charge.

A socio-economic framing and response are critical, as tackling the coronavirus and other pandemics requires not just a medical response, but also a broader social and economic response. There is no use asking people to stop going to work if they are not given an alternative source of income to keep on buying groceries and paying bills. There is no use issuing mask mandates if the government does not also educate people on the reasoning and science behind wearing masks, or if people are not given the financial help to buy enough masks. There is no use in closing down schools if parents are not given the support to care for their children who now must stay home, and if school systems and families are not given the support to continue education online.

The people most likely to fight against coronavirus-related measures are those who have the most to lose from them. The person who wants schools to re-open despite the risks will be the working parent who cannot take a day off work to care for their children, or the parent who cannot afford internet for their children to access online school. The person who wants stores to re-open will be the one who needs that pay-check to make it till the following month. This was true whether applied to retail workers in the US or farmers in India.

The government cannot just ask for people to follow the rules. People need to be given incentives or good reasons to do so. Otherwise, relations between people and the government breakdown. It is a well-known mantra in public health that the best way to get people to adopt healthy behaviour is not to impose it or even attempt to regulate it, but to simply make that behaviour the easiest and cheapest behaviour. Doing this however requires a population-centric approach, one that considers community involvement and does not assume that the government can take care of things on its own with its near-unlimited resources.

People also need to see how their efforts pay out, and the government needs to keep updating the people on the successes of their policies, so that people can see that their efforts are not in vain. Unrests against lockdowns are a result of a communication and accountability failure. Most people were willing to commit to early lockdowns, but after months of no improvement of the sanitary condition, it becomes harder to justify more efforts if the results are not there.

A socio-economic frame may not guarantee success for a socio-economic issue, but a security frame is much more likely to lead to poor outcomes, as the security frame signals that the government misunderstood the core of the issue. It remains important for civil society to scrutinise

politicians' words not just to criticise them, but more crucially to peer inside that politician's mind to understand and predict the policies that will follow. Holding the media accountable to not overdramatise issues and apply security frames to secure greater viewership will also ensure that security frames are not wrongly applied.

Arriving at a situation where no government in the world even considers solely adopting a security frame for a pandemic will take time. Even the director-general of the World Health Organisation talked about being “at war” against the coronavirus and encouraged countries to “fight, fight hard, fight like hell.”<sup>76</sup> It is promising however that many countries did not opt for a security frame, and instead understood that tackling the pandemic would require a population-centric approach. Issues of framing and of corresponding policies are becoming very prevalent in other topics, such as general policing, drug policies, homelessness, immigration, and even insecurity abroad. Security frames have their rightful place for many topics, including in pandemics when they are needed to make the crisis relatable to the broader public. However, the evidence is increasingly pointing out that many socio-economic issues previously framed as security issues would have been better served had they been framed and treated as socio-economic issues from the start, this pandemic included.

“When the story is finally written, we’ll come to understand that tens of thousands of lives were placed at risk because of a political decision” – Dr. Jonathan S. Reiner, prominent cardiologist.<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> Adhanom, ‘WHO Director General’s Remarks at the G20 Extraordinary Leaders’ Summit on COVID-19’.

<sup>77</sup> Baker, ‘For Trump, Coronavirus Proves to Be an Enemy He Can’t Tweet Away’.

## 6. Bibliography

### Bibliography for the thesis

Note: These are only the citations for the written part of the thesis, for this document.

- Adhanom, Tedros. 'WHO Director General's Remarks at the G20 Extraordinary Leaders' Summit on COVID-19'. World Health Organization, 26 March 2020. <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-remarks-at-the-g20-extraordinary-leaders-summit-on-covid-19---26-march-2020>.
- Baker, Peter. 'For Trump, Coronavirus Proves to Be an Enemy He Can't Tweet Away'. *The New York Times*, 8 March 2020, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/08/us/politics/trump-coronavirus.html>.
- . 'Trump, in Philadelphia, Says He "Up-Played" the Virus, Then Downplays It'. *The New York Times*, 16 September 2020, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/15/us/politics/trump-town-hall.html>.
- Bennhold, Katrin, and Melissa Eddy. 'Merkel Gives Germans a Hard Truth About the Coronavirus'. *The New York Times*, 11 March 2020, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/11/world/europe/coronavirus-merkel-germany.html>.
- Bosman, Julie. 'Amid Virus Surge, Republicans Abruptly Urge Masks Despite Trump's Resistance'. *The New York Times*, 1 July 2020, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/01/us/coronavirus-masks.html>.
- CDC. 'COVID-19 and Your Health'. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 11 February 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/from-other-countries.html>.
- United States Census Bureau. 'Census Bureau Releases New Report on Veterans', 2 June 2020. <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2020/veterans-report.html>.

Center for Systems Science and Engineering. 'COVID-19 Map'. Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center. Accessed 19 November 2020. <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>.

Cooper, Helene, and Thomas Gibbons-Neff. 'Navy Hospital Ship Reaches New York. But It's Not Made to Contain Coronavirus.' *The New York Times*, 30 March 2020, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/us/politics/coronavirus-comfort-hospital-ship-new-york.html>.

Corkery, Michael, and Annie Karni. 'Trump Administration Restricts Entry Into U.S. From China'. *The New York Times*, 31 January 2020, sec. Business. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/31/business/china-travel-coronavirus.html>.

Lowy Institute. 'Covid Performance Index', 9 January 2021. <https://interactives.lowyinstitute.org/features/covid-performance/#region>.

YouGov. 'COVID-19 Public Monitor', 9 January 2021. <https://yougov.co.uk/covid-19>.

Digital Communications Division. 'HHS Organizational Chart'. Text. HHS.gov, 24 October 2008. <https://www.hhs.gov/about/agencies/orgchart/index.html>.

Entman, Robert M. 'Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm'. *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (1993): 51–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>.

Gerster, Jane. 'Trudeau Says "the Front Line Is Everywhere," but Should We Compare Coronavirus to War?' Global News, 17 April 2020. <https://globalnews.ca/news/6793794/coronavirus-pandemic-war/>.

Grady, Denise, and Roni Caryn Rabin. '195 Quarantined in California After Fleeing Coronavirus Epicenter'. *The New York Times*, 31 January 2020, sec. Health. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/31/health/quarantine-coronavirus.html>.

Haberman, Maggie. 'Trump Admits Downplaying the Virus Knowing It Was "Deadly Stuff"'. *The New York Times*, 9 September 2020, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/09/us/politics/woodward-trump-book-virus.html>.

Haberman, Maggie, and Katie Thomas. ‘Trump Calls His Illness “a Blessing From God”’. *The New York Times*, 8 October 2020, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/07/us/politics/trump-coronavirus-blessing.html>.

Haberman, Maggie, and Noah Weiland. ‘Inside the Coronavirus Response: A Case Study in the White House Under Trump’. *The New York Times*, 16 March 2020, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/16/us/politics/kushner-trump-coronavirus.html>.

Horsley, Scott. ‘Guns in America, By the Numbers’. NPR, 5 January 2016. <https://www.npr.org/2016/01/05/462017461/guns-in-america-by-the-numbers?t=1617278521975>.

Jonung, Lars. ‘Sweden’s Constitution Decides Its Exceptional Covid-19 Policy’. Vox EU, 18 June 2020. <https://voxeu.org/article/sweden-s-constitution-decides-its-exceptional-covid-19-policy>.

Lal, Arush, Ngozi A Erundu, David L Heymann, Githinji Gitahi, and Robert Yates. ‘Fragmented Health Systems in COVID-19: Rectifying the Misalignment between Global Health Security and Universal Health Coverage’. *The Lancet* 397, no. 10268 (January 2021): 61–67. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)32228-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)32228-5).

Lecheler, Sophie. ‘Framing Effects in Political Communication’. In *Political Science*, by Sophie Lecheler. Oxford University Press, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780199756223-0269>.

Lipton, Eric, Zolan Kanno-Youngs, and Helene Cooper. ‘Trump Slowly Enlisting More Agencies in “Whole of Government” Response to Virus’. *The New York Times*, 17 March 2020, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/us/politics/coronavirus-government-army-corps.html>.

Löfven, Stefan. ‘Statement of Government Policy, 08 September 2020’. Government Offices of Sweden, 8 September 2020. <https://www.government.se/speeches/2020/09/statement-of-government-policy/>.

Lopez, C. Todd. ‘Comfort, Javits Center Open Care to COVID-19 Patients’. U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, 7 April 2020. <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2140535/comfort-javits-center-open-care-to-covid-19-patients/>.

Mateus, Ana LP, Harmony E Otete, Charles R Beck, Gayle P Dolan, and Jonathan S Nguyen-Van-Tam.

‘Effectiveness of Travel Restrictions in the Rapid Containment of Human Influenza: A Systematic Review’. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 92, no. 12 (1 December 2014): 868-880D. <https://doi.org/10.2471/BLT.14.135590>.

The White House. ‘National Security Council’, 21 January 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/>.

Onishi, Norimitsu. ‘Chaos in Europe, and Anger, Over U.S. Travel Ban to Curb Coronavirus’. *The New York Times*, 12 March 2020, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/12/world/europe/europe-coronavirus-travel-ban.html>.

Ota, Hiroyuki. ‘Wartime Japan and COVID-19 Conformity Offer Some Parallels’. *The Asahi Shimbun*, 11 August 2020. <http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/13626292>.

Person, Vox First. ‘I Was Sent to Be Treated for Covid-19 at the Javits Center. Here’s What It’s like.’ *Vox*, 13 April 2020. <https://www.vox.com/first-person/2020/4/13/21218982/coronavirus-covid-19-new-york-javits-center-hospital>.

Qiu, Linda. ‘Analyzing the Patterns in Trump’s Falsehoods About Coronavirus’. *The New York Times*, 28 March 2020, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/27/us/politics/trump-coronavirus-factcheck.html>.

Qiu, Linda, Bill Marsh, and Jon Huang. ‘The President vs. the Experts: How Trump Played Down the Coronavirus’. *The New York Times*, 18 March 2020, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/03/18/us/trump-coronavirus-statements-timeline.html>.

Rathje, Steve. ‘The Power of Framing: It’s Not What You Say, It’s How You Say It’. *the Guardian*, 20 July 2017. <http://www.theguardian.com/science/head-quarters/2017/jul/20/the-power-of-framing-its-not-what-you-say-its-how-you-say-it>.

Rogers, Katie. ‘Trump Now Claims He Always Knew the Coronavirus Would Be a Pandemic’. *The New York Times*, 17 March 2020, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/us/politics/trump-coronavirus.html>.

Roser, Max, and Mohamed Nagdy. 'Military Spending'. Our World in Data, 2013.

<https://ourworldindata.org/military-spending>.

Scheufele, Dietram. 'Framing as a Theory of Media Effects'. *Journal of Communication*, no. Winter 1999 (1999).

Schwartz, Michael. 'The 1,000-Bed Comfort Was Supposed to Aid New York. It Has 20 Patients.' *The New York Times*, 2 April 2020, sec. New York.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/02/nyregion/ny-coronavirus-usns-comfort.html>.

Stolberg, Sheryl Gay, Andrew Jacobs, Noah Weil, and Sharon LaFraniere. 'The Surging Coronavirus Finds a Federal Leadership Vacuum', 10 January 2021.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/11/us/politics/coronavirus-surge-trump.html?>

Thompson, Derek. 'What's Behind South Korea's COVID-19 Exceptionalism?' *The Atlantic*, 6 May 2020. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/05/whats-south-koreas-secret/611215/>.

Trudeau, Justin. 'Prime Minister's Remarks Updating Canadians on the Modelling of the COVID-19 Situation'. Prime Minister of Canada, 4 September 2020.

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2020/04/09/prime-ministers-remarks-updating-canadians-modelling-covid-19-situation>.

———. 'Prime Minister's Speech to the House of Commons on Canada's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic'. Prime Minister of Canada, 11 April 2020.

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2020/04/11/prime-ministers-speech-house-commons-canadas-response-covid-19-pandemic>.

World Health Organization. 'Timeline of WHO's Response to COVID-19'. WHO. Accessed 19 November 2020. <https://www.who.int/news/item/29-06-2020-covidtimeline>.



## US Index

Note: these are the citations for the index, which can be found in the Excel file

Time. ‘As Coronavirus Spreads, Trump Refashions Himself as a Wartime President’. Accessed 18 February 2021. <https://time.com/5806657/donald-trump-coronavirus-war-china/>.

Government of the United States. ‘Remarks by President Trump and Members of the Coronavirus Task Force in Meeting with Pharmaceutical Companies’. White House, 2 March 2020. <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-members-coronavirus-task-force-meeting-pharmaceutical-companies/>.

———. ‘Remarks by President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Members of the Coronavirus Task Force in Press Briefing’, 15 March 2020. <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-vice-president-pence-members-coronavirus-task-force-press-briefing-2/>.

———. ‘Remarks by President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Members of the Coronavirus Task Force in Press Conference’. White House. Accessed 14 March 2021. <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-vice-president-pence-members-coronavirus-task-force-press-conference/>.

Pence, Mike. ‘We Need the American People’s Help to Fight Coronavirus Now’. USA TODAY, 18 March 2020. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/03/18/coronavirus-mike-pence-how-to-fight-covid-19-2-weeks-column/5070209002/>.

‘Remarks by President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Members of the Coronavirus Task Force in Press Briefing – The White House’. Accessed 14 March 2021.

<https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-vice-president-pence-members-coronavirus-task-force-press-briefing-5/>.

Washington Post. 'These Quotes Show How Trump's Response to the Coronavirus Has Changed over Time'. Accessed 18 February 2021.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/politics/trump-coronavirus-statements/>.

Trump, Donald. 'President Trump's Letter to World Health Organization'. The White House, 18 May 2020. <https://permanent.fdlp.gov/gpo138150/Tedros-Letter.pdf>.

———. 'Remarks by President Trump in a Press Briefing on COVID-19 Testing'. White House, 27 February 2020. <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-press-briefing-covid-19-testing/>.

———. 'Remarks by President Trump in a Press Briefing on COVID-19 Testing', White House. <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-press-briefing-covid-19-testing/>.

'Trump Says Coronavirus Worse "attack" than Pearl Harbor'. *BBC News*, 7 May 2020, sec. US & Canada. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52568405>.

'Who's on the U.S. Coronavirus Task Force'. *The New York Times*, 29 February 2020, sec. Health. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/29/health/Trump-coronavirus-taskforce.html>.

## **Japan Index**

Abe, Shinzo. ‘[COVID-19] Press Conference by the Prime Minister’. Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 14 March 2020.

[https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98\\_abe/statement/202003/\\_00001.html](https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98_abe/statement/202003/_00001.html).

———. ‘[COVID-19] Press Conference by the Prime Minister’. Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 28 March 2020.

[https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98\\_abe/statement/202003/\\_00002.html](https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98_abe/statement/202003/_00002.html).

———. ‘[COVID-19] Press Conference by the Prime Minister Regarding the Novel Coronavirus’, 14 May 2020.

[https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98\\_abe/statement/202005/\\_00002.html](https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98_abe/statement/202005/_00002.html).

———. ‘[COVID-19] Press Conference by the Prime Minister Regarding the Novel Coronavirus’. Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 25 May 2020.

[https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98\\_abe/statement/202005/\\_00003.html](https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98_abe/statement/202005/_00003.html).

———. ‘Headquarters for Healthcare Policy’. Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 27 March 2020. [https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98\\_abe/actions/202003/\\_00044.html](https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98_abe/actions/202003/_00044.html).

———. ‘Press Conference Regarding the Declaration of a State of Emergency’. Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 6 April 2020.

[https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98\\_abe/actions/202004/\\_00005.html](https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98_abe/actions/202004/_00005.html).

———. ‘Second Meeting of the Novel Coronavirus Response Headquarters’. Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 31 January 2020.

[https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98\\_abe/actions/202001/\\_00037.html](https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98_abe/actions/202001/_00037.html).

———. ‘Second Meeting with Companies Contributing to the Increased Production of Personal Protective Equipment and Other Supplies’. Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 16 April 2020. [https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98\\_abe/actions/202004/\\_00023.html](https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98_abe/actions/202004/_00023.html).

ANI. ‘Japan Confirms 2,431 New Covid-19 Cases as More SDF Personnel Deployed to Help Combat Surge’. ANI, 15 December 2020. <https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/japan-confirms-2431-new-covid-19-cases-as-more-sdf-personnel-deployed-to-help-combat-surge20201215224144/>.

Cabinet Secretariat. ‘COVID-19 Information and Resources’. COVID-19 Information and Resources. Accessed 20 February 2021. <https://corona.go.jp/en/>.

Denyer, Simon. ‘Japan Sets aside \$22 Million to Buff Government’s Global Image amid Pandemic Struggles’. The Washington Post, 15 April 2020. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/japan-coronavirus-image-abe/2020/04/15/73bf1dee-7f00-11ea-84c2-0792d8591911\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/japan-coronavirus-image-abe/2020/04/15/73bf1dee-7f00-11ea-84c2-0792d8591911_story.html).

Government of Japan. ‘Basic Policies for Novel Coronavirus Disease Control by the Government of Japan’. COVID-19 Information and Resources, 25 May 2020. [https://corona.go.jp/en/news/pdf/basic\\_policy\\_20200531.pdf](https://corona.go.jp/en/news/pdf/basic_policy_20200531.pdf).

———. ‘Expert Meeting on the Novel Coronavirus Disease Control: Analysis of the Response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Recommendations’. COVID-19 Information and Resources, 4 May 2020. [https://corona.go.jp/en/toppage/pdf/analysis\\_and\\_recommendations\\_20200509.pdf](https://corona.go.jp/en/toppage/pdf/analysis_and_recommendations_20200509.pdf).

———. ‘新型コロナウイルス感染症対策専門家会議の開催について’, 14 February 2020.

[https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/novel\\_coronavirus/senmonkakaigi/konkyo.pdf](https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/novel_coronavirus/senmonkakaigi/konkyo.pdf).

———. ‘新型コロナウイルス感染症対策本部幹事会の構成員の官職の指定について’, 30

January 2020. [https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/novel\\_coronavirus/kanjikai/konkyo.pdf](https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/novel_coronavirus/kanjikai/konkyo.pdf).

Johnston, Eric. ‘Legal Revisions Would Add Weight to Japan’s COVID-19 Response’. The

Japan Times, 6 January 2021.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/01/06/national/japan-coronavirus-response/>.

Kato, Hisashi. ‘The Self Defense Forces and Japan’s COVID-19 Response’. *Tokyo Review*

(blog), 21 April 2020. <https://www.tokyoreview.net/2020/04/self-defense-forces-japan-covid-19/>.

Kyodo News. ‘82% Say Gov’t Should Compensate for Business Suspension: Kyodo Poll’.

Kyodo News, 13 April 2020. <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/04/eea437e79b17-urgent-public-dissatisfied-with-abes-response-to-virus-outbreak-kyodo-poll.html>.

Ministry of Defense of Japan. ‘Japan Self-Defense Forces Engagement in Response to COVID-

19’, 10 April 2020. [https://www.mod.go.jp/e/d\\_act/exc/area/docs/2020/20200417\\_j-fra\\_gaiyo-1en.pdf](https://www.mod.go.jp/e/d_act/exc/area/docs/2020/20200417_j-fra_gaiyo-1en.pdf).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. ‘Novel Coronavirus Infection: Offer of the Stockpiled

ASEF Equipment to Asian Countries’. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 14 February 2020. [https://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/ep/page4e\\_001178.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/ep/page4e_001178.html).

Nishimura, Yasutoshi. ‘How Japan Beat Coronavirus Without Lockdowns’. *Wall Street Journal*.

7 July 2020. [https://corona.go.jp/en/toppage/pdf/wsj\\_opinion\\_20200707.pdf](https://corona.go.jp/en/toppage/pdf/wsj_opinion_20200707.pdf).

NHK. 'Report from the Front Line to Prevent the Spread of New Coronavirus Infection', 15 April 2020. <https://www.nhk.or.jp/special/plus/articles/20200414/index.html>.

Sasaki, Fumiko. 'Japan's Fight against Covid-19 Hinges on Old "System of Irresponsibility"'. Text. The Straits Times, 30 June 2020. <https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/japans-fight-against-covid-19-hinges-on-old-system-of-irresponsibility>.

Suga, Yoshihide. '[COVID-19] Declaration of a State of Emergency in Response to the Novel Coronavirus Disease'. Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 7 January 2021. [https://japan.kantei.go.jp/ongoingtopics/\\_00038.html](https://japan.kantei.go.jp/ongoingtopics/_00038.html).

Yuko, Aizawa. 'Did the State of Emergency Declaration Come Too Late?' NHK World, 15 April 2020. <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/backstories/1029/>.

## **Canada Index**

AFP. 'War-Hardened General to Lead Canada's Covid-19 Vaccination Effort'. France 24, 27

November 2020. <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20201127-war-hardened-general-to-lead-canada-s-covid-19-vaccination-effort>.

Department of Justice of Canada. 'Government of Canada's Response to COVID-19', 27 March

2020. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/covid.html>.

Gerster, Jane. 'Trudeau Says "the Front Line Is Everywhere," but Should We Compare

Coronavirus to War?' Global News, 17 April 2020.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/6793794/coronavirus-pandemic-war/>.

Goldenberg, Adam, Meghan Hillstrom, Carolyn Lee, Lauren Soubolsky, and Laurence Landry-

Plouffe. 'COVID-19: Emergency Measures Tracker'. McCarthy Tétrault, 5 March 2021.

<https://www.mccarthy.ca/en/insights/articles/covid-19-emergency-measures-tracker>.

Government of Canada. 'Military Response to COVID-19'. aem, 6 October 2020.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/campaigns/covid-19-military-response.html>.

Office of the Prime Minister of Canada. 'Prime Minister Creates Committee on COVID-19'.

Prime Minister of Canada, 4 March 2020. <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/03/04/prime-minister-creates-committee-covid-19>.

Trudeau, Justin. 'Prime Minister's Remarks Announcing Canada's Plan to Mobilize Industry to

Fight COVID-19'. Prime Minister of Canada, 20 March 2020.

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2020/03/20/prime-ministers-remarks-announcing-canadas-plan-mobilize-industry-fight>.

———. ‘Prime Minister’s Remarks Announcing the COVID-19 Economic Response Plan’.

Prime Minister of Canada, 18 March 2020.

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2020/03/18/prime-ministers-remarks-announcing-covid-19-economic-response-plan>.

———. ‘Prime Minister’s Remarks on Additional Support for Small Businesses during COVID-19’. Prime Minister of Canada, 16 April 2020.

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2020/04/16/prime-ministers-remarks-additional-support-small-businesses-during-covid>.

———. ‘Prime Minister’s Remarks on Canada’s Response to COVID-19’. Prime Minister of Canada, 3 November 2020. <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2020/03/11/prime-ministers-remarks-canadas-response-covid-19>.

———. ‘Prime Minister’s Remarks on New Support for COVID-19 Medical Research and Vaccine Development’. Prime Minister of Canada, 23 April 2020.

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2020/04/23/prime-ministers-remarks-new-support-covid-19-medical-research-and-vaccine>.

———. ‘Prime Minister’s Remarks on Support for Indigenous Businesses’. Prime Minister of Canada, 18 April 2020. <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2020/04/18/prime-ministers-remarks-support-indigenous-businesses>.



- . ‘Prime Minister’s Remarks Thanking Workers and All Canadians for Helping Their Communities during the COVID-19 Situation’. Prime Minister of Canada, 4 May 2020. <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2020/04/05/prime-ministers-remarks-thanking-workers-and-all-canadians-helping-their>.
- . ‘Prime Minister’s Remarks to Workers and Business Owners Facing Challenges Due to COVID-19’. Prime Minister of Canada, 30 March 2020. <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2020/03/30/prime-ministers-remarks-workers-and-business-owners-facing-challenges-due>.
- . ‘Prime Minister’s Remarks Updating Canadians and Thanking Them for Helping Fight COVID-19’. Prime Minister of Canada, 22 March 2020. <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2020/03/22/prime-ministers-remarks-updating-canadians-and-thanking-them-helping-fight>.
- . ‘Prime Minister’s Remarks Updating Canadians on Supplies and Support for Shelters’. Prime Minister of Canada, 4 April 2020. <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2020/04/04/prime-ministers-remarks-updating-canadians-supplies-and-support-shelters>.
- . ‘Prime Minister’s Remarks Updating Canadians on the COVID-19 Situation’. Prime Minister of Canada, 26 March 2020. <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2020/03/26/prime-ministers-remarks-updating-canadians-covid-19-situation>.
- . ‘Prime Minister’s Remarks Updating Canadians on the Modelling of the COVID-19 Situation’. Prime Minister of Canada, 4 September 2020.

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2020/04/09/prime-ministers-remarks-updating-canadians-modelling-covid-19-situation>.

———. ‘Prime Minister’s Remarks Updating Canadians on the Rollout of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit’. Prime Minister of Canada, 4 January 2020.

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2020/04/01/prime-ministers-remarks-updating-canadians-rollout-canada-emergency>.

———. ‘Prime Minister’s Speech to the House of Commons on Canada’s Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic’. Prime Minister of Canada, 11 April 2020.

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2020/04/11/prime-ministers-speech-house-commons-canadas-response-covid-19-pandemic>.

## **Sweden Index**

Carlson, Johan. 'The Swedish Strategy about COVID-19'. Public Health Agency of Sweden, 3

July 2020. <http://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/the-public-health-agency-of-sweden/communicable-disease-control/covid-19/covid-19--the-swedish-strategy/>.

Government of Sweden. 'Key Acts and Ordinances Entering into Force in Mid-2020 -

Government.Se'. Government Offices of Sweden, 2 July 2020.

<https://www.government.se/information-material/2020/07/key-acts-and-ordinances-entering-into-force-in-mid-2020/>.

Hultqvist, Peter. 'Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist's Speech at UK NATO Heads of Mission's

Forum'. Government Offices of Sweden, 15 June 2020.

<https://www.government.se/speeches/2020/06/defence-minister-peter-hultqvists-speech-at-uk-nato-heads-of-missions-forum-monday-15-june-2020/>.

Jansson, Lasse. 'Corona-Infected Patients Can Now Be Transported by Military Helicopter'.

Swedish Armed Forces, 20 April 2020.

<https://www.forsvarsmakten.se/en/news/2020/04/corona-infected-patients-can-now-be-transported-by-military-helicopter/>.

Löfven, Stefan. 'Prime Minister's Address to the Nation, 22 March 2020'. Government Offices

of Sweden, 23 March 2020. <https://www.government.se/speeches/2020/03/prime-ministers-address-to-the-nation-22-march-2020/>.

———. ‘Statement of Government Policy, 08 September 2020’. Government Offices of Sweden, 8 September 2020. <https://www.government.se/speeches/2020/09/statement-of-government-policy/>.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. ‘The Government’s Statement of Foreign Policy 2020’. Text. Government Offices of Sweden. Regeringen och Regeringskansliet, 2 December 2020. <https://www.government.se/speeches/2020/02/2020-statement-of-foreign-policy/>.

Ministry of Defence of Sweden. ‘Speech by Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist at Video Conference of Foreign Affairs Ministers (Defence)’. Government Offices of Sweden, 6 April 2020. <https://www.government.se/speeches/2020/04/speech-by-minister-for-defence-peter-hultqvist-at-video-conference-of-foreign-affairs-ministers-defence/>.

Ministry of Employment of Sweden. ‘Eva Nordmark Takes Part in EU Meeting on Measures for Employment and Businesses in Light of COVID-19’. Government Offices of Sweden, 20 March 2020. <https://www.government.se/press-releases/2020/03/eva-nordmark-takes-part-in-eu-meeting-on-measures-for-employment-and-businesses-in-light-of-covid-19/>.

Ministry of Finance of Sweden. ‘Additional Amending Budget Due to the Coronavirus’. Government Offices of Sweden, 11 March 2020. <https://www.government.se/press-releases/2020/03/additional-amending-budget-due-to-the-coronavirus/>.

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs of Sweden. ‘COVID-19 Act Allows Stronger Communicable Disease Control Measures - Government.Se’. Government Offices of Sweden, 18 January 2021. <https://www.government.se/articles/2021/01/covid-19-act-allows-stronger-communicable-disease-control-measures/>.

———. ‘Work in the Areas of Public Health, Medical Care, Social Care and Social Insurance with Regard to the COVID-19 Virus - Government.Se’. Government Offices of Sweden, 20 March 2020. <https://www.government.se/articles/2020/03/s-work-in-the-areas-of-public-health-medical-care-social-care-and-social-insurance-with-regard-to-the-covid-19-virus/>.

Ministry of Justice of Sweden. ‘Ordinance on a Prohibition against Holding Public Gatherings and Events’. Government Offices of Sweden, 13 March 2020. <https://www.government.se/articles/2020/03/ordinance-on-a-prohibition-against-holding-public-gatherings-and-events/>.

Prime Minister’s Office of Sweden. ‘Joint Statement – Rule of Law in the Context of the Covid-19 Crisis - Government.Se’. Government Offices of Sweden, 8 April 2020. <https://www.government.se/articles/2020/04/joint-statement--rule-of-law-in-the-context-of-the-covid-19-crisis/>.

———. ‘Strategy in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic’. Government Offices of Sweden, 6 April 2020. <https://www.government.se/articles/2020/04/strategy-in-response-to-the-covid-19-pandemic/>.

Public Health Agency of Sweden. ‘The Public Health Agency of Sweden’s Work with COVID-19’. Public Health Agency of Sweden, 9 November 2020. <http://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/the-public-health-agency-of-sweden/communicable-disease-control/covid-19/the-public-health-agency-of-swedens-work-with-covid-19/>.

Wirenhed, Karen, and Keith Foster. ‘Swedish Military Helps Combat Coronavirus - Radio Sweden’. Sveriges Radio, 21 March 2020. <https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/7435161>.

## **France Index**

elysee.fr. 'Caractère vital de la recherche scientifique et nécessité d'investir massivement pour le long terme : + 5 milliards d'euros pour notre effort de recherche.', 19 March 2020.

<https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/03/19/caractere-vital-de-la-recherche-scientifique-et-necessite-dinvestir-massivement-pour-le-long-terme-5-milliards-deuros-pour-notre-effort-de-recherche>.

'Communiqué\_ Le Ministère Des Armées Soutient et Finance Le Projet de Test de Dépistage Du Covid-19 Porté Par Une PME Bretonne'. Accessed 12 March 2021.

[https://www.defense.gouv.fr/salle-de-presse/communiqués/communiqué\\_le-ministère-des-armées-soutient-et-finance-le-projet-de-test-de-dépistage-du-covid-19-porté-par-une-pme-bretonne](https://www.defense.gouv.fr/salle-de-presse/communiqués/communiqué_le-ministère-des-armées-soutient-et-finance-le-projet-de-test-de-dépistage-du-covid-19-porté-par-une-pme-bretonne).

elysee.fr. 'Conseil de défense et Conseil des ministres du 4 mars 2020', 4 March 2020.

<https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/03/04/conseil-de-defense-et-conseil-des-ministres-du-4-mars-2020>.

elysee.fr. 'Conseil de défense et Conseil des ministres du 29 février 2020 consacrés au coronavirus COVID-19.', 29 February 2020. [https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-](https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/02/29/conseil-de-defense-et-conseil-des-ministres-du-29-fevrier-2020-consacres-au-coronavirus-covid-19)

[macron/2020/02/29/conseil-de-defense-et-conseil-des-ministres-du-29-fevrier-2020-consacres-au-coronavirus-covid-19](https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/02/29/conseil-de-defense-et-conseil-des-ministres-du-29-fevrier-2020-consacres-au-coronavirus-covid-19).

elysee.fr. 'Coronavirus COVID-19 : visite du Président Emmanuel Macron au centre de crise du ministère des Solidarités et de la Santé.', 3 March 2020. [https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-](https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/03/03/coronavirus-covid-19-visite-du-president-emmanuel-macron-au-centre-de-crise-du-ministere-des-solidarites-et-de-la-sante)

[macron/2020/03/03/coronavirus-covid-19-visite-du-president-emmanuel-macron-au-centre-de-crise-du-ministere-des-solidarites-et-de-la-sante](https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/03/03/coronavirus-covid-19-visite-du-president-emmanuel-macron-au-centre-de-crise-du-ministere-des-solidarites-et-de-la-sante).

elysee.fr. ‘Coronavirus : déclaration des chefs d’État et de gouvernement du G7.’, 16 March 2020. <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/03/16/coronavirus-declaration-des-chefs-detat-et-de-gouvernement-du-g7>.

Vie publique.fr. ‘Covid-19 : les textes publiés au Journal officiel’, 12 March 2021. <https://www.vie-publique.fr/covid-19-les-textes-publies-au-journal-officiel>.

elysee.fr. ‘Découvrez Les Visages de La France Unie Face à La Crise’, 24 April 2020. <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/04/24/decouvrez-les-visages-de-la-france-unie-face-a-la-crise>.

elysee.fr. ‘Face au Coronavirus, mobilisés pour protéger les Français. Regardez la vidéo.’, 6 March 2020. <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/03/06/face-au-coronavirus-mobilises-pour-protoger-les-francais-regardez-la-video>.

elysee.fr. ‘Initiative franco-allemande pour la relance européenne face à la crise du coronavirus’, 18 May 2020. <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/05/18/initiative-franco-allemande-pour-la-relance-europeenne-face-a-la-crise-du-coronavirus>.

Macron, Emmanuel. ‘À Mulhouse, aux côtés des femmes et des hommes mobilisés en première ligne pour protéger les Français du COVID-19.’ elysee.fr, 25 March 2020. <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/03/25/a-mulhouse-aux-cotes-des-femmes-et-des-hommes-mobilises-en-premiere-ligne-pour-protoger-les-francais-du-covid-19>.

———. ‘Adresse aux Français’. elysee.fr, 28 October 2020. <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/10/28/adresse-aux-francais-28-octobre>.

- . ‘Adresse aux Français, 12 mars 2020’. elysee.fr, 12 March 2020.  
<https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/03/12/adresse-aux-francais>.
- . ‘Adresse aux Français, 13 avril 2020’. elysee.fr, 13 April 2020.  
<https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/04/13/adresse-aux-francais-13-avril-2020>.
- . ‘Adresse aux Français, 16 mars 2020’. elysee.fr, 16 March 2020.  
<https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/03/16/adresse-aux-francais-covid19>.
- . ‘Grâce au travail, célébré en ce 1er mai, la Nation tient.’ elysee.fr, 1 May 2020.  
<https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/05/01/grace-au-travail-celebre-en-ce-1er-mai-la-nation-tient-ecoutez-le-message-du-president-emmanuel-macron>.
- . ‘Santé : investir dans notre souveraineté.’ elysee.fr, 16 June 2016.  
<https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/06/16/sante-investir-dans-notre-souverainete-visite-sanofi-pasteur>.
- Ministry of Armed Forces of France. ‘Le Ministère Des Armées Soutient et Finance Le Projet de Test de Dépistage Du Covid-19 Porté Par Une PME Bretonne’, Winter 2020.  
[https://www.defense.gouv.fr/salle-de-presse/communiqués/communiqué\\_le-ministere-des-armees-soutient-et-finance-le-projet-de-test-de-depistage-du-covid-19-porte-par-une-pme-bretonne](https://www.defense.gouv.fr/salle-de-presse/communiqués/communiqué_le-ministere-des-armees-soutient-et-finance-le-projet-de-test-de-depistage-du-covid-19-porte-par-une-pme-bretonne).
- . ‘Opération Résilience’, 27 April 2020.  
<https://www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/operations/operation-resilience>.
- elysee.fr. ‘Pour protéger les Français du COVID-19, unité et réactivité. Réunion au Centre interministériel de crise.’, 20 March 2020. <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel->



[macron/2020/03/20/pour-proteger-les-francais-du-covid-19-unite-et-reactivite-reunion-au-centre-interministeriel-de-crise](https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/03/20/pour-proteger-les-francais-du-covid-19-unite-et-reactivite-reunion-au-centre-interministeriel-de-crise).

Vie publique.fr. 'Qu'est-ce que l'état d'urgence sanitaire ?', 16 February 2021. <https://www.vie-publique.fr/fiches/273947-quest-ce-que-letat-durgence-sanitaire>.

elysee.fr. 'Réunion de la « Task force Économie » face au COVID-19.', 19 March 2020.

<https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/03/19/reunion-de-la-task-force-economie-face-au-covid-19>.