″WE WILL BEAT THE CORONAVIRUS AND WE WILL BEAT IT TOGETHER″
Legitimation in political discourse during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Alkuvuodesta alkanut COVID-19 pandemia sai kevään 2020 aikana useat valtiot ympäri maailman asettamaan kansalaisillensa erilaisia suosituksia ja rajoituksia tautitilanteen hillitsemiseksi. Näiden valtioiden joukossa olivat myös Uusi-Seelanti ja Iso-Britannia, jotka määräsivät asukkailleen tiukkoja liikkumis- ja kokoontumisrajoituksia. Kuten poliittiset päätökset aina, myös nämä tiukat rajoitukset tuli perustella kansalaisille. 23.maaliskuuta 2020 pidetyissä puheissa ko. maiden pääministerit, Boris Johnson ja Jacinda Ardern kertoivat kansalaisilleen voimaan tulevista rajoitteista ja perustelivat niiden ja niiden noudattamisen tarpeellisuutta monin eri tavoin.

Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli analysoida em. puheita kriittisen diskurssintutkimuksen näkökulmasta ja selvittää 1) millaisin diskursiivisin keinoin Johnson ja Ardern perustelivat eli pyrkivät *oikeuttamaan* uusia rajoituksia ja suosituksia ja 2) miten nämä keinot näkyivät puheissa. Analyysin pääasiallisena työkaluna käytettiin van Leeuwenin (2008) ja Reyesin (2011) viitekehyksien pohjalle rakentuvaa, viidestä eri oikeutuksen strategiasta (*tunteisiin vetoaminen, solidaarisuuteen vetoaminen, hypoteettisesta tulevaisuudesta puhuminen, rationaalistaminen, auktoriteettiin vetoaminen* ja *tarinallisuus*) koostuvaa viitekehystä.

Tutkimuksen perusteella voidaan todeta, että sekä Johnson että Arden käyttivät puheissaan kaikkia viittä oikeutuksen strategiaa monipuolisesti. Keinojen käyttö näkyi puheissa niin yksittäisten sanavalintojen tasolla kuin laajemmassakin diskurssissa ja puheiden kokonaisrakenteessa.

Asiasanat – Keywords discourse, political discourse, CDS, legitimation, COVID-19

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

In spring 2020, I was doing my internship in Madrid when the COVID-19 virus started to circulate and the epidemic that started in Wuhan was declared a pandemic by WHO (World Health Organization 2020). The response to the worsening situation by the Spanish government was strict: mid-March a strict lockdown was decreed, and the citizens of Spain were allowed to leave their homes only for essential reasons. Caught up in the situation and forced to do my internship from home office, i.e., my flat in Madrid, I became highly interested in the way the situation was presented in the media and especially in the televised speeches of the prime minister Pedro Sánchez. Through endless days of keeping up with the news and seeing Sánchez present the situation with a grave expression, I started to pay attention to the way the strict restrictions we all had to live with were discussed by those in charge. How did they justify keeping us all locked in in our apartments? This interest towards the discursive legitimation of the COVID-19 restrictions finally led to this thesis, where I examine the way two prime ministers, Boris Johnson of the UK and Jacinda Ardern of New Zealand justified the decisions made by their respective governments in March 2020 during the so-called first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Loseke (2009: 497-98) phrases it, "communication is a critical part of governing". In other words, in political context, text and talk are a necessary tool for doing politics (Fetzer 2013: 2, Chilton and Schäffner 2002: 3). One aspect of political discourse, i.e., said text and talk in political context, is the way decisions, actions and policies are justified by political actors and instances. Justification, or *legitimation,* is a process where one attempts to gain legitimacy for actions or decisions from their listener(s) through different discursive acts (Reyes 2011: 782, van Leeuwen 2008: 105). In the context of this study, the focus is on the examination of the justification of the new types of safety measures and restrictions that were imposed on the general public of the two countries during spring 2020. The analyzed data consists of speeches made by Boris Johnson and Jacinda Ardern, during which these restrictions were announced. As it happens, both speeches, i.e., that by Johnson and the one by Ardern, were given on the same day, March 23rd, 2020, which was the day when severe limitations to e.g.,

movement of the citizens, operations of businesses and the right to meet other people were ordered in both countries (see RNZ 23.3.2020 and BBC 23.3.2020). By that time, the situation with the pandemic was worsening in both countries and the number of positive cases was on the rise (New Zealand Ministry of Health 2020, Government of the United Kingdom 2021).

In this thesis, I discuss the phenomenon from the point of view of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) through two research questions: 1) Through which discursive legitimation strategies the two prime ministers justified the restrictions imposed on the general public during COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020? 2) How are these strategies visible in the speeches? The analytical tool used in order to answer these questions is a framework of five different legitimation strategies (*appealing to emotions, appealing to solidarity, hypothetical future, rationality, appealing to authority* and *mythopoesis)* that is based on the previous frameworks by van Leeuwen (2007, 2008) and Reyes (2011) and influenced by De Fina (1995) and Alharbi (2018) when it comes to the strategy of appealing to solidarity. The analysis is done from a qualitative point of view, with the focus on the discursive ways of producing legitimation in political context.

I begin the thesis by discussing discourse, Critical Discourse Studies, political discourse and legitimation through taking a look at earlier research on these concepts that form the theoretical basis for my work. I then continue to introduce the aims of my study, the data and the methods used in the process, before moving on to presenting the findings made during the analysis of the data in detail. I end this thesis by a brief discussion on the results and their further implications on the topic and possible future research on it.

2 DISCOURSE

In this chapter, I will discuss the nature of language and discourse from the point of view of discourse studies that make up the theoretical starting point for this study. I will also take a look at the critical research approach within the field of discourse

studies, CDS (Critical Discourse Studies) which is the overall research approach I adopt in analyzing legitimation. I end this chapter by taking a look at political discourse, i.e., the discursive context of the data of the study, and its relation to power.

2.1 Language and discourse

As Chilton (2004: 30) suggests, while language is not the only method of interaction for human beings, it is the most progressive and unique one. Through language, social relationships are built and maintained, research findings are made, and new knowledge consolidated – in addition, the use of power takes place often through language (Chilton 2004: 30). For the purposes of the present study, I define language following the functionalist point of view (see e.g. Halliday and Webster 2003, Luukka 2008). Rather than the formalistic way of seeing language as a hierarchical system that has its rules of function, i.e., grammar, and as a system which can be seen as dichotomously as language *competence* (mental knowledge of the language) and language *performance* (actual use of language) (Chomsky 2015: 2), the functionalist orientation sees language as a social phenomenon and a tool for interaction (Luukka 2008: 139). In other words, in this study, language is seen as more than grammar or vocabulary: it is a complex social, linguistic and discursive system interwoven in our social reality (Luukka 2008: 139). From the point of view of discourse studies, the relationship between language and social reality is twofold: on one hand, social reality is constructed in the instances of language use, while on the other, social reality creates language and affects the way it is used (Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak 2011: 357, Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2019: 26).

Since discourse is a part of the vocabulary of various fields of study, the concept can be understood in multiple ways. Because of this, the definition of discourse is dynamic and in part dependent on the field of study that employs it and the researcher who decides how to frame the concept and how to place it in the context of their respective field of study (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2019: 27). For the purposes of the present study, the definition of discourse employed here is rooted in the tradition of critical discourse studies and research within said field. For example, Blommaert (2004: 3)

defines discourse rather broadly as comprising "all forms of meaningful semiotic human activity seen in connection with social, cultural, and historical patterns and developments of use." Although rather all encompassing, Blommaert's definition lacks the rather useful distinction presented by Gee (see e.g. Gee 1989, 1990, 2010), according to which, discourse can be seen as either a wide, general concept (*discourse* or *discourse with a small d)* that encompasses all semiotic and lingual activity that has social consequences or that takes place within social norms, or as a more narrow, specific concept (*a discourse* or *Discourse with capital "D"*) which is used to describe the historical, established way of using language within certain contexts (Gee 2010: 34, see also Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak 2011: 357, Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2019: 34-35). For example, the concept of *political discourse,* which will be discussed further on in this study, belongs to the latter category.

Van Dijk (2011: 3-5) proposes to define discourse by its ten most prominent characteristics, gathered by previous research on the field: "1) discourse as social interaction, 2) discourse as power and abuse of power, 3) discourse as communication, 4) discourse as contextual, 5) discourse as social semiosis, 6) discourse as natural language use, 7) discourse as a complicated, stratified construct, 8) the hierarchical and serial nature of discourse, 9) discourse as abstract constructions or dynamic scenarios, and 10) discourse as different types or genres". The aforementioned characteristics highlight the complex and versatile nature of the phenomenon. Additionally, as I mentioned earlier on, the way discourse is seen and the characteristics that are stressed in a study depend on the researcher and the point of view of the study. From the point of view of the present study, the most relevant aspects of discourse as defined by van Dijk (2011:3-5) are *discourse as communication, discourse as contextual* and *discourse as power and abuse of power*. I will next briefly discuss these three aspects.

When we define discourse as communication, we describe the function of discursive action as using text and talk, among other things, for communicating different ideas and beliefs to others (van Dijk 2011: 4). Furthermore, it is actually never possible to straightforwardly transfer messages and meanings e.g., from one person to other, as

there exists a degree of interpretation in all communicative events (Fetzer 2013: 7). Thus, discourse as communication should be seen as negotiation of meaning among the participants (Fetzer 2013: 7, Chilton 2004: 201-202). Another characteristic relevant for defining discourse from the point of view of this study is its *contextual* nature. In other words, the aforementioned communication is always situated in a context, i.e. in a certain social situation that has its limits and rules of appropriate conduct in said context (van Dijk 2011: 4). These two characteristics, i.e., discourse as communication and discourse as contextual are interlinked: the meaning negotiation process of discursive communication is affected by the context (Fetzer 2013: 7). In other words, the social, cultural and situational context of discourse affect the interpretation taking place in the discursive action.

Finally, the third aspect of great relevance to the understanding of discourse in this study is that discourse can be seen as *power and abuse of power*. According to van Dijk (2011: 3-4), discourse plays a crucial role in the division of power and domination. Talk and text can be tools for producing and maintaining power, i.e., the one who controls discourse, has power over others (van Dijk 2011: 3-4). As Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak (2011: 358) remark, "discursive practices … can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic groups, through the ways in which they represent things and position people". The relationship between discourse and power and the problems within them are of interest for Critical Discourse Studies, which will be discussed in more detail in the next subsection of this chapter, as well as in relation to political discourse discussed in the last subsection of the chapter.

2.1.1 Critical Discourse Studies (CDS)

Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), previously widely known as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (for discussion on the name, see e.g., van Dijk 2013), is a problem-oriented, interdisciplinary research approach that has its roots in critical linguistics (van Dijk 1995: 17, Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak 2011: 357). Despite being at times referred to as a 'school', CDS is not generally thought of as its own academic discipline

with certain established methods or tools for analysis (van Dijk 1995: 17, Blommaert 2004: 21). Instead, CDS should be seen more as a dynamic research movement encompassing various disciplines, within which different research models and methods are used (Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak 2011: 357-359, Machin and Mayr 2012: 4). In other words, instead of seeing CDS as an academic discipline with clearly defined boundaries and methodologies, it can be seen as an approach adopted by researchers from various fields, united by the critical point of view towards discourse and its relation to society.

One of the starting points for CDS is its critical approach to text and talk within the society (van Dijk 1995: 17-18, Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak 2011: 357). As already pointed out above while discussing the various features of discourse by van Dijk (2011), one of the aspects of discourse is its function as an instrument of power and domination (van Dijk 2011: 3-4). For this, one of the main focuses for CDS is to study and to point out the issues related to discourse, especially in relation to abuse of power, domination, racism and other societal problems where discourse is at play (see e.g. van Dijk 1995: 17, Blommaert 2004: 21, Fairclough 2013: 10). As the aforementioned use of power in language and discourse is usually rather invisible - an underlying issue that is often hard to detect, the mission of CDS is not to merely study these issues, but to make them visible and bring them forward for everyone to see them (Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak 2011: 358). Furthermore, instead of taking a neutral stance on its subjects of study, researchers who choose CDS are active agents who aim to change power relations and problematic power structures, thus choosing to take the side of the powerless (Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak 2011: 358).

In the present study CDS takes the role of the general approach towards discourse, political discourse and legitimation within said discourse. As will be discussed further on in the following subsection on political discourse as well as in chapter three on legitimation, both of these (i.e., political discourse and legitimation) are intertwined with power and thus, the potential abuse of said power (e.g., Wodak 2013: 527, Tiainen 2017). For this, CDS is a relevant point of view for this study.

2.2 Political discourse and power

In order to examine political discourse, it is necessary to first briefly define politics itself. According to Chilton (2004: 17), the definition of politics can be roughly divided into two main branches. Firstly, politics can be seen as a fight for power between those wanting to confront power and those wanting to preserve it. Secondly, politics can be defined as the collaborative institutions and systems that were created in order to solve conflicting interests related to e.g., wealth, liberty or power in a society (see also Chilton and Schäffner 2002). In addition to this, Chilton (2004: 17-18) makes a distinction between the micro and macro levels of politics, i.e., between the politics between individual people or groups of people, and politics on an institutional level, e.g., politics of a state. In other words, politics and political activity should not be defined solely as something relating to political institutions or the people we call politicians, but as a wider field of opinions and action by various participants on all the levels of society (van Dijk 1997: 13). From the point of view of this study, regarding the definitions of politics discussed above, the view of politics as an institutional level phenomenon is more useful, as the focus of the analysis is on the political discourse and legitimation of people executing political action(s) in an institutional setting, i.e., prime ministers giving speeches. Next, I will discuss political discourse in more detail.

Broadly defined, political discourse is discourse that takes place in political context (van Dijk 1997: 14). In other words, political discourse is text and talk that are produced in situations that can be defined as political (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012: 18), as discussed in the previous paragraph. Although these contexts include far more than just the institutional political context, e.g. everyday instances of discourse that can be seen as political in a "non-institutionalized sense" (Chilton and Schäffner 2002: 16-17), for the purposes of the present study, the focus from now on is precisely on the institutional context of political discourse. Van Dijk (1997: 18) also defines political discourse as "a prominent way of 'doing politics'". Thus, it could be said that political discourse is the main tool for realizing political decisions and action: political action *requires* language in order to function (Fetzer 2013: 2, Chilton and Schäffner 2002: 3).

Indeed, language and political action can be seen as intertwined in a way that it is rather impossible to even separate them, i.e., political discourse *is* a mode of political action (van Dijk 1997: 20). In addition to this, an important aspect of political discourse is the way meanings are negotiated and interpretations made in said context. The basis for these interpretations is a shared base of values and cultural knowledge (Chilton & Schäffner 2002: 2, Fetzer 2013: 6). As Chilton and Schäffner (2002: 2) put it:

> "It is shared perceptions of values that defines political associations. And human endowment for language has the function of 'indicating' – signifying, communicating – what is deemed according to such shared perceptions to be advantageous or not, by implication to the group, and what is deemed right and wrong within that group."

Thus, these shared values and cultural knowledge affect the way political discourse is interpreted. This is linked to the concept of legitimation as well, which I will discuss in the next chapter. Before that, however, let us consider the functions of political discourse and the relationship of political discourse and power. As discussed in relation to the functionalist view of language and discourse (see e.g. Luukka 2008), since language and discourse are seen as always having a function in social interaction, the same applies in the context of political discourse as well. In other words, political discourse too always serves a purpose and has a function or several functions (see e.g. van Dijk 1997, Chilton and Schäffner 2002). One of these functions relates to the connection between political discourse and power.

As pointed out earlier on in this chapter, discourse and power are always necessarily intertwined: a point that applies to political discourse as well (Wodak 2013: 527). In the institutional context of politics, the often inequal power relations between participants of discourse can be seen for example in what Fetzer (2013: 9-10) calls "politics from above", i.e., political discourse operated by politicians who have power and are in a dominant position. This political discourse from a dominant position is also related to the context: the discourse is often performed in a professional political environment, e.g., parliament meetings or televised speeches (Fetzer 2013: 9-10). Following this, in the context of the present study, the inequal power relations between the political actors (i.e., the Prime Ministers) giving televised public speeches and their

public can be seen from two points of view. First, due to their office, the Prime Ministers possess more power to start with than the average citizen. Secondly, the context of the speeches, i.e., the speeches being televised monologues presented to the public in a unidirectionally (as opposed to, for example, a dialogical conversation with opportunities for multidirectional communication) puts the audience in a position of less power (Fetzer 2013: 10). However, despite of the power inequalities present in these types of instances of political discourse, the relationship between the political actor and the audience is not simply constructed of a politician stating something in a monologue and the audience accepting the statement. Political actors often need to justify their decisions and actions to the public, who then has the power to accept or to reject the justifications (see e.g. Reyes 2011, Chilton 2004: 199-200), thus revealing the audiences' potential for something van Dijk (1997: 11) calls *counter-power*. Next, let us move on to discuss the concept of legitimation, i.e., the aforementioned process of justifying decisions and actions through discursive action.

3 LEGITIMATION

In this chapter I discuss the main analytical concept of the present study, i.e., *legitimation*. I begin by discussing the theoretical background of legitimation in general, before moving on to considering some of the theoretical frameworks of legitimation from the field of discourse studies that work as the basis for the analytical framework used in the analysis of this study.

3.1 Legitimation and power

Legitimation as a phenomenon is something familiar to all of us from the everyday life. For example, when a child asks their mother for something and is refused, the offspring probably wants to know the reasons behind the refusal. The way the mother justifies the denial, i.e., how she argues for her decision is a discursive action called *legitimation*. In other words, the mother *legitimizes* her decision. Following Reyes (2011), who uses the concepts of legitimation and justification interchangeably in his study, the two are treated as synonymous in the present study as well (for similar use of terms see also Chilton 2004, Tiainen 2017). According to van Leeuwen (2008: 105),

legitimation could be defined as the answers to the out loud or quietly in one's mind uttered questions "Why should this be done?" and/or "Why should this be done in this way?". Taking into consideration the example with which the paragraph was begun, these questions can also be the opposite: "Why this should not be done?" and/or "Why this should not be done in this way?". In addition to the aforementioned, legitimation has been defined as an action through which legitimacy, i.e., "the right to be obeyed" is created (Chilton and Schäffner 2011: 312, Cap 2008: 22). According to Reyes, the answers to van Leeuwen's questions are provided through discursive action:

> "The process of legitimization is enacted by argumentation, that is, by providing arguments that explain our social actions, ideas, thoughts, declarations, etc. In addition, the act of legitimizing or justifying is related to a goal, which, in most cases, seeks our interlocutor's support and approval". (Reyes 2011: 782)

In other words, legitimation is a dynamic, ongoing process (Lamphere and East 2017: 85) of seeking validation for one's views and decisions from the others. Additionally, legitimation can be seen as a sociopolitical performance that is produced in discourse often through persuasive or even manipulative language acts (Martín Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 528). Choosing what to say and how to say it, as well as choosing to leave something unsaid are "subtle textual strategies that particular interests and voices are reproduced and others silenced" (Vaara and Tienari 2008: 991). Legitimation discourse cannot happen in a vacuum (van Leeuwen 2007: 92), but always takes place in a certain discursive environment and context (Alfonso Antón and Escalona 2004: xi-xii). One of these contexts of legitimation is political context, the focus of the present study. Similar to political discourse in general and its intertwined nature with power, legitimation too has a close connection to power and counter-power: one of the goals of legitimation can be a quest for both getting power and maintaining it (Alfonso Antón and Escalona 2004: xi-xii, Reyes 2011: 782). In other words, requesting validation for one's decisions and actions and justifying them can be an act of seeking power or trying to keep it. Additionally, legitimation in political context is an important topic of research, since it is through this discursive action that political actors attempt to validate their plans,

which in their turn affect the nation as a whole and potentially other nations as well (Reyes 2011: 783).

As mentioned earlier on in chapter two of this study, the interpretation of political discourse is affected by shared values and cultural knowledge of the society (Chilton and Schäffner 2002: 2), which applies to the way legitimation is received and interpreted as well. Furthermore, an important aspect of legitimation is the way it is either accepted or denied: legitimation is only successful when the audience believes it to be justified and true (Martín Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 527-528). In other words, through successful legitimation, the one justifying decisions or actions manages to persuade, sometimes through manipulation (Martín Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 528), their audience of the appropriateness and validity of their cause.

3.2 Frameworks of legitimation strategies

One of the tools for legitimation analysis is the use of different frameworks of legitimation strategies, where the different discursive strategies for justifying one's views and actions have been classified and organized into different categories. In this section I discuss two of these frameworks in more detail. The first one, and based on its frequent use as the starting point for analyzing legitimation, one of the most prominent frameworks of legitimation strategies, is the framework by van Leeuwen (2007, 2008), which has been used as the basis of analysis in various studies (see e.g. Vaara and Tienari 2008, Vaara 2014, Sandaran and De Rycker 2014, Tiainen 2017). Van Leeuwen's framework consists of four main strategic devices for legitimation: *authorization, moral evaluation*, *rationalization* and *mythopoesis* (van Leeuwen 2008: 105-106). The second framework discussed in this section is that by Reyes (2011). Reyes's framework uses as its basis the aforementioned framework by van Leeuwen, but although the two frameworks have categories in common, such as appealing to voices of expertise, they do deviate from each other in some other categories. As strategies from different categories of both of the frameworks could be found in the data analyzed in the current study, and as the framework of legitimation strategies used as the tool of analysis of this study is largely based on the frameworks of van Leeuwen

and Reyes, I find it important to discuss both of these here, before moving on to presenting my own framework in the following chapter.

3.2.1 Framework by van Leeuwen

As pointed out above, the framework of van Leeuwen (2008: 105-119) consist of the categories of *authorization* (appealing to authority), *moral evaluation* (justification by referring to value systems), *rationalization* (legitimation by referring to either the goals, uses and consequences of the practices, or to the natural order of things) and *mythopoesis* (legitimation through the use of narratives that imply positive outcomes for sought-after behavior and negative outcomes for the opposite). The first category by van Leeuwen (2008:106), authorization, is divided into six subcategories, the first of which is *personal authority*, i.e. when a person has the authority to justify on account of their rank, who they are in relation to the other(s) or because of their role in an institution (van Leeuwen 2008: 106 The second subcategory for authorization is *expert authority*, where justification is provided through appealing to the expertise of a person or an institution (van Leeuwen 2008: 107). Through the third subcategory, *role model authority,* something is legitimized in peoples' minds as a consequence of a role model or an opinion leader adopting certain behaviors or ways of thinking and making it known that they accept them (van Leeuwen 2008: 107-108). The fourth, the fifth and the sixth subcategory have in common the fact that none of them refers to a certain person and their authority. These subcategories are, as van Leeuwen names them, *impersonal authority, the authority of tradition* and *the authority of conformity* (van Leeuwen 2008: 108-109). As can be deduced from its name, the first of these three, impersonal authority that is, refers to the usage of an entity that is not personal as the authority for legitimation, i.e., laws, regulations, rules and so on (van Leeuwen 2008: 108). The next one, the authority of tradition, similarly, is a strategy that encompasses appealing to tradition, customs or habits as the source of legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008: 108). Justifying decisions by arguments such as "it has always been done like this and thus we should keep doing it this way" are examples of this category. The final of the subcategories of authorization, the authority of conformity, refers to the usage of arguments such as "everybody does that" or "it's what the majority of people do", i.e.

appealing to a faceless mass of peers or for example a statistical majority in order to justify a thought or an action (van Leeuwen 2008: 109).

The second main category of van Leeuwen's framework, moral evaluation, refers to the discursive strategy of grounding the legitimation in a system of values instead of a certain person or institution that holds authority (van Leeuwen 2008: 109-110). The category consists of three subcategories: *evaluation*, *abstraction* and *analogies* (van Leeuwen 2008: 109-112). The first subcategory, evaluation, consists of the usage of evaluative words, i.e. adjectives, in the process of justifying something (van Leeuwen 2008: 110-111). Another form of the strategy could be called *naturalization,* which refers to actions as being a part of "the natural order" (van Leeuwen 2008: 111). The second subcategory, i.e. abstraction is at function when, as van Leeuwen (2008: 111) phrases it, we are "referring to practices (or to one or more of their component actions or reactions) in abstract ways that "moralize" them by distilling from them a quality that links them to discourses of moral values". The final subcategory for moral evaluation is the strategy of using analogies for legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008: 111-112). In other words, when an action is associated with another action that has either positive or negative value, legitimation by using analogies is employed (van Leeuwen 2008: 112).

The third main category of van Leeuwen's framework, rationalization, is divided into two subcategories: *instrumental rationalization* and *theoretical rationalization* (van Leeuwen 2008: 113). In short, instrumental rationalization legitimates actions by referring to their objectives, usage and outcomes (van Leeuwen 2008: 113) — in other words, the instrumental usefulness of the said action. By contrast, theoretical rationalization is not used by referring to the effect an action has but is instead more related to the earlier mentioned strategy of naturalization (van Leeuwen 2008: 111, 115). However, when naturalization presents the "natural order" of things as a means of legitimation, theoretical rationalization provides *definitions, explanations* and *predictions* of the way things are or could be (van Leeuwen 2008: 116). Finally, the fourth and last of the categories of van Leeuwen's framework, mythopoesis (i.e. storytelling), has two subcategories: *moral tales* and *cautionary tales* (2008: 117-119). In

the former types of stories, persons are being rewarded for legitimate actions, whereas in the latter, paint the picture of the (dire) consequences of not following the appropriate codes of conduct (van Leeuwen 2008: 117-118).

3.2.2 Framework by Reyes

Following van Leeuwen's framework and modifying it according to the needs of his research, Reyes (2011: 785-787) presents the following five possible strategies of legitimation: justification through *emotions,* justification by presenting visions of *a hypothetical future*, appealing to *rationality,* appealing to *voices of expertise* and presenting the desired outcome as *altruistic*. The first category, justification through emotions, refers to aiming to arouse different emotions in others in order to legitimize one's view through them (Reyes 2011: 785-786). Although emotions are commonly seen as something that only interferes with the rational decisions making process, thus affecting it negatively (Pfister and Böhm 2008: 8), Reyes (2008: 788) and Loseke (2009: 499-501) point out that emotions do affect the way we think and the way we act. Thus, by appealing to emotions, one can attempt to change the others' opinions and attitudes towards the wanted direction and to present an emotive reason for accepting one's opinions or actions.

The second category by Reyes (2011: 786) relates to creating visions of different hypothetical futures. By describing different, often negative potential outcomes for the present situation, one attempts to justify decisions or actions taken in the present (Reyes 2011: 793). Especially in the political field, this type of justification takes often the form of presenting a cause-consequence relationship between present actions and future outcomes (Reyes 2011: 794): if [something is done / is not done] then [something will happen]. Thus, one attempts to legitimize the decisions of the present as the tool for either preventing a negative hypothetical future or for advancing a positive hypothetical future. The third category by Reyes (2011: 786), appealing to rationality, draws on the similarly named category of authorization by van Leeuwen (2008: 113). However, instead of dividing the category into further subcategories as van Leeuwen does, Reyes simply defines this strategic tool as the attempt "to present the action-

taking process as a process where decisions have been made after a heeded, evaluated and thoughtful procedure" (Reyes 2011: 797). In other words, one suggests that the decisions or actions that are being justified are reasonable, rational and logical – or "make sense", as Reyes (2011: 797-798) puts it.

The following category, i.e. appealing to voices of expertise, also draws from the work of van Leeuwen (2008) and to be more exact, from the subcategory of expert authority of the strategy of authorization (van Leeuwen 2008: 107). Here, according to Reyes (2011: 800), legitimation is attempted through referring to persons or institutions of authority and/or expertise as the source of the legitimacy of the decisions or actions that are being justified. For example, referring to a health care professional's views or statements when legitimating actions related to the medical field is legitimation via appeals to voices of expertise. Lastly, the final category of the framework by Reyes, appealing to altruism, refers to the presenting decisions or actions as being good for the others, i.e., altruistic (Reyes 2011: 801). By employing this strategy in order to justify something, one attempts to present their case as selfless and themselves as without any ulterior motives regarding the actions and seeks to divert the listeners' attention to the common good (Reyes 2011: 801-802).

4 THE PRESENT STUDY

The present chapter introduces the setting for my study. Here, I first discuss the aims of the study and the research questions, thus introducing the point of view this study takes on the issue at hand. Next, I will describe the data used for the analysis in the following chapter and discuss the context of the data. Finally, I end this chapter with a description of the methods used in the study, including a discussion on the main tool of analysis, i.e., my framework of legitimation strategies.

4.1 The aims of the study and the research questions

The objective of this study is to examine the different strategies of legitimation employed by Boris Johnson and Jacinda Ardern in their respective speeches during

the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020. The analysis is centered around the following research questions:

1) Through which discursive legitimation strategies the two prime ministers justified the restrictions imposed on the general public during COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020?
2) How are these strategies visible in the speeches?

The aim is discuss these questions from the point of view of discourse studies in general, and to be more specific, from the point of view of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), thus taking into account the element of power and its use in relation to political discourse and legitimation within said context.

4.2 Data

The data used in the present study consists of public speeches given by the prime ministers of the United Kingdom and New Zealand, Boris Johnson and Jacinda Ardern respectively, during the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020. Restricted by the scope of the present study, the data is limited to one speech by each prime minister, both of which were given on the same day, March 23rd, when major restrictions, e.g., limitations to movement outside home were imposed on the general public in both countries. The reason for choosing these speeches as the subjects of analysis was twofold. Firstly, it was of interest to choose speeches given in similar circumstances, i.e., at a point during the pandemic when similar restrictions were set in both the UK and New Zealand. The choosing of speeches that were given in similar situations allows for analytical comparison between them. Secondly, as pointed out above, the rather narrow scope of the study and its qualitative, instead of quantitative approach limit the amount of data that can be analyzed within the research. For this, the data was limited to two speeches. Additionally, as the study is a thesis written within the

subject of English, choosing speeches from English-speaking heads of state was rather natural.

The speech by Ardern was delivered during a press conference and Q&A session (RNZ 23.3.2020), while Johnson's speech was a televised ministerial broadcast from Downing Street, the prime minister's office (BBC 23.3.2020). At the time of the speeches, the number of positive COVID-19 cases was rising in the UK as well as in New Zealand (Government of the United Kingdom 2021, New Zealand Ministry of Health 2021), which then prompted the respective governments to impose strict restrictions on the general public. The restrictions announced in the speeches were similar in both countries, including limitations to free movement, i.e., the so-called lockdowns, only allowing leaving home for essential reasons such as buying food or medicine, or transportation to work in the cases of working from home being impossible (see Appendices 1 and 2).

It should be noted that although both of the statements chosen for analysis were originally delivered orally, i.e., as videoed speeches (see RNZ 23.3.2020 and BBC 23.3.2020), the concrete material that was used as the object of the analysis consists of the written transcriptions of the aforementioned speeches. As the focus of the analysis is on the categories of legitimation executed through e.g., the choices of words and phrases, I found the use of the original, oral material in the analysis not necessary for a successful analysis of the data. In addition, it was not necessary for me to transcribe the speeches from audio to text as full transcriptions of them already existed on the websites of the respective governments. Hence, these transcriptions (see Appendices 1 and 2) were used as the material for the analysis.

4.3 Methods

The point of view from which the current study is conducted is Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). As the legitimation found in the data is inherently linked to the prime ministers' use of power over the public, i.e., the restrictions imposed on the citizens, choosing CDS as the overall approach for the study was a natural choice. Having CDS

as the general point of view for the study provides a critical angle for analyzing legitimation and its relation to the use of power from a critical standpoint. Thus, the analysis takes a critical position towards legitimation and aims to make the power structures and the discursive use of power in the data visible. Additionally, I would like to point out that the nature of the approach taken in the analysis in the present study is qualitative, thus making a deeper, vertical dive into the data a priority over an analysis regarding quantities of different instances of legitimation or a numerical comparison between them.

The main analytical tool for the present study is the framework of different discursive strategies of legitimation, based on the frameworks by van Leeuwen (2008) and Reyes (2011), with influences from Alharbi (2018) and De Fina (1995) on the strategy of appealing to solidarity. My framework includes the following five strategies of legitimation: *appealing to emotions, appealing to solidarity, hypothetical future, rationality, appealing to authority* and *mythopoesis.* These strategies will be discussed in more detail in the following subchapter. I first started the analysis by examining all the instances of possible legitimation found in the data. After this, all these instances were further studied and then roughly divided into different strategies of legitimation. At this point, the need for developing a new category of strategy came up, as there where instances that could be clearly interpreted as being legitimation but could not be placed in any previously existing category of either the framework by van Leeuwen (2008) or the one by Reyes (2011). Hence, I created the new category of appealing to solidarity. Additionally, it is important to notice that in the data, the division between different categories is not always clear and a certain amount of overlapping of different legitimation strategies exist. For example, when discussing the strategies of appealing to emotion and hypothetical future, a degree of overlapping can be seen in the way the possible negative futures are described in a fear-inducing way (for further discussion see chapters 5.1 and 5.3). When overlapping was found to be present in the data, choosing the appropriate category took place according to which one of the strategies was deemed more dominant in said instance. These type of occurrences as made

visible and discussed in further detail in the following chapter where the results are presented.

4.4 Legitimation strategies framework of the present study

As established earlier on, the framework for the analysis of different strategies of legitimation used in this thesis is a set of categories created by myself based on the frameworks by van Leeuwen (2008) and Reyes (2011), with influences from Kampf (2016) on the concept of solidarity. The need for a new kind of compilation of legitimation strategies arose during the preliminary analysis of the data, when none of the previously mentioned frameworks (e.g., van Leeuwen 2008, Reyes 2011, Vaara and Tienari 2008) alone seemed to suffice as a tool for analysis of this particular data. What was particularly lacking in the already existing frameworks was the category for analyzing instances of legitimation, where action or decisions were justified through appealing to a sense of community or solidarity. For this, influenced by the work of Kampf (2016) and the abovementioned category of altruism presented by Reyes (2011: 787), a new category called *appealing to solidarity* was added into the compilation. The purpose of this subchapter is to introduce my framework and to discuss the reasoning behind the inclusion of the particular categories into the framework. Next, the following five categories that make up the framework will be examined in more detail.

4.4.1 Appealing to emotions

Contemporary research seems to suggest that emotions and thoughts cannot even be completely seen as separate phenomena, since they both have an effect on each other (Loseke 2009: 499). In other words, the way we think makes us feel certain emotions and the other way round: feelings create thoughts. Knowing this, it is not a surprise that appealing to emotions in others is widely used among us human beings in order to influence them, to evoke certain reactions – or to legitimize our thoughts, decisions or actions (Reyes 2008: 788). An arena where appeals to emotions are often used in order to achieve certain goals, one of them being legitimizing political action or decisions, is the world of politics (Reyes 2008: 789, Loseke 2009: 498).

In the context of this framework, following Reyes (2011: 785-786, 788-792), appealing to emotions as a strategy of legitimation is seen as *the discursive action of attempting to provoke certain feelings in the others* and through them, *to justify the decisions and/or actions at hand*. The feelings that are often stimulated for justification purposes are some rather primitive emotions, such as "fear, anger, sense of security, protectiveness and loyalty" (Chilton 2004: 117). In addition to this, I argue that the feeling of hope should be added to the aforementioned list of emotions, as appeals to hope could be frequently seen in the data of this study. The stimulation of emotions is often achieved through linguistic indexicality (Silverstein 1992) or the "deployment of symbolic and emotion codes" (Loseke 2009: 516). For example, fear can be induced through referring to past events that were frightening or by the employment of words and phrases that are generally thought as indexing frightening things, such as "war" or "death".

4.4.2 Appealing to solidarity

Appealing to solidarity, a concept defined by Karakayali (2017: 10) as a situation where "a number of otherwise unconnected individuals have something in common, and feel that they belong together or should form a collective", can be used as a tool for legitimation as well. Solidarity is a multifaceted concept that has been studied, for example, from the point of view of in-group solidarity within a support group (e.g., Baxter 2018), solidarity towards refugees (e.g., Karakayali 2017) and the pragmatics of a political speech signaling solidarity (e.g., Alharbi 2018, De Fina 1995, Kampf 2016), the latter being the most relevant from the point of view of the present study. Alharbi (2018: 3) proposes to define the discursive production of solidarity, i.e., what Alharbi calls *solidarity discourse* as a "performative discourse that involves a number of acts", these acts being the following: commissive (giving a promise of a future action in order to support the other party), identifying (encountering things in common with the listeners in order to identify with them), regrouping (discursively forming in-groups and out-groups, e.g., "us" and "them"), assertive/representative (stating something that is considered to represent the reality) and persuasive (persuading the listeners to feel solidarity) (Alharbi 2018: 4-6). Thus, producing solidarity in discourse is an action where the speaker persuasively intends to establish a type of oneness with the

audience, thus identifying with them (as opposed to some other group of people). It should be noted that these acts do not necessarily occur simultaneously (Alharbi 2018: 9-12).

Solidarity can be produced linguistically in different ways. One of the common ways to establish solidarity is the use of the pronouns "we" and "us" (De Fina 1995). By employing these pronouns, the speaker discursively creates an in-group, which she/he indicates both she/he and the audience are a part of. This group cohesion and togetherness can also be produced linguistically through direct references to the group via the use of words such as "together" (see chapter 5.2 for further discussion). Additionally, solidarity can be performed through referencing to shared values or interests and other such things in common between the speaker and the audience (Alharbi 2018: 9).

4.4.3 Hypothetical future

Following Reyes (2011: 793-797), this discursive strategy of legitimation includes the instances where justification is attempted through *referrals to scenarios of different possible futures*. When different and often fear inducing, negative hypothetical futures are discussed in political discourse, the public is often presented with a cause-consequence scenario: if [something is done / is not done] then [something happens] (Reyes 2011: 793-794). Thus, the decisions and actions taken in the present moment are suggested as having a direct consequence on the way the future unfolds. Additionally, as Reyes (2011: 794) phrases it, "by the time the decision needs to be made, this hypothetical association of cause–consequence has been exploited in the discourse so that the decision stands as natural, necessary and, often, the only way to proceed".

As pointed out earlier on, it is important to note here, that the strategy of referring to hypothetical futures can often be seen as linked to the strategy of appealing to emotions (see chapters 5.1 and 5.3 for analysis), thus including a degree of overlapping of these strategies.

4.4.4 Rationalization

The strategy of rationalization used as the part of the framework of this study is based on both the strategies of rationalization by van Leeuwen (2008: 113) and legitimization through rationality by Reyes (2011: 786). When employed, one attempts to legitimize decisions or actions by making them appear rational, carefully considered and the result of a thorough discussion (Reyes 2011: 797). As Reyes (2011: 797) points out, "rationality is employed here as a social construct within a cultural group, that is, something that 'makes sense' for the community and constitutes the 'right' thing to do". In other words, decision and actions are presented as the rational and suitable thing in the context of the community and its values (Reyes 2011: 797-798). Linguistically this type of rationalization is often performed through the use of verbs such as "agree", "think" or "discuss", or through explicitly describing the decision as the result of careful consideration (for examples, see chapter 5.4).

Additionally, following van Leeuwen (2008: 113-117), rationalization can be seen as referencing the decisions and actions as the means to achieve a goal (means orientation) or through referencing the goal itself (goal orientation). For example, in the context of the topic of this study, decisions taken in order to deal with the pandemic can be portrayed as the means for a better situation through linguistically describing them e.g., as a "tool" or "the way" for achieving the goal. When rationalization is executed through referencing the goal, it is often performed linguistically through the use of the preposition 'to' as a marker of a purpose clause (van Leeuwen 2008: 114). Phrases like "we do this to stop the pandemic" are examples of this type of rationalization. Thus, there are three different types of rationalization present in this framework: *instrumental rationalization (means orientation), instrumental rationalization (goal orientation) and rationalization based on careful consideration*.

4.4.5 Appealing to authority

This category draws from the categories of authorization by van Leeuwen (2008: 106-109) and legitimation through voices of expertise by Reyes (2011: 800-801). Here, appealing to authority is used to describe the types of discursive action where

legitimation is performed through *referrals to the authority or the expertise of an instance*, be it a person or an institution. In other words, one invokes the authority or expertise of him- or herself, another person or an institution, thus intending to validate the claim that has been made or an action that has been taken (van Leeuwen 2008: 106-109): "According to Dr. X, this is the best way to proceed".

Based on the data and the needs of this study, the strategy is here divided into three subcategories that are based on the works of van Leeuwen (2008) and Reyes (2011): *personal authority* (referring to someone's person as the source of the authority), *institutional authority* (referring to an institution that possesses authority) and *expert authority* (referring to someone's expertise and knowledge on the issue as the source of authority). Of these three, institutional authority as a term in this context is coined by myself based on the notions of van Leeuwen (2008: 106). Additionally, as can be seen in chapter 5.5, there are some instances present in the data where the authority that is being referred to could be interpreted as being impersonal (van Leeuwen 2008: 108). However, I argue that the instances in question are actually occurrences of institutional authority. The three categories of appealing to authority are performed linguistically in similar ways through the use of verbal clauses, i.e., "clauses of saying" (Halliday and Matthiessen 2013: 302-307) or through the use of mental process clauses (Halliday and Matthiessen 2013: 248-255), i.e., clauses of thinking. For example, clauses such as "Mr. President says", "The Government states" or "Dr. X believes" are instances of such linguistic forms of legitimation via appealing to authority.

4.4.6 Mythopoesis

The final strategy of the framework used in this study draws from the work of van Leeuwen (2008: 117-119). According to him (van Leeuwen 2008: 117), one discursive strategy for attempting to legitimize one's decisions or actions is through telling stories. As discussed in chapter 3.2.1, van Leeuwen divides the strategy of mythopoesis, i.e., said storytelling into two subcategories: moral tales and cautionary tales (2008: 117-118). However, in the context of this study, despite calling this strategy

"mythopoesis", as does van Leeuwen (2008: 117), the definition here is somewhat more restricted. Following the preliminary analysis, it became clear that all the instances of mythopoesis found in the data took the form of the already mentioned cautionary tales (van Leeuwen (2008: 118), which led to choosing to seeing this strategy here mainly from the perspective of said cautionary tales.

Cautionary tales are defined in the context of the present study as instances where past events, or present events that take place in other places, are referred to as a type of cautionary examples. For example, when discussing the topic of this study, comparing other countries' worsened situation regarding the pandemic to the one at hand in the UK or New Zealand is an example of this type of legitimation. Here too, a degree of overlapping with the strategy of referring to a hypothetical future (see chapter 4.4.3) is present. Some of the instances of cautionary tales found in the data could be interpreted as being examples of referring to hypothetical, negative future: "this happened in country X and it could happen here as well", and thus, additionally, as examples of appealing to fear as well. However, I argue that despite of the overlapping of these strategies, the instances where other countries and the negative occurrences in them are referred to are mainly examples of cautionary tales, as per the definition by van Leeuwen (2008: 118): "Cautionary tales, on the other hand, convey what will happen if you do not conform to the norms of social practices. Their protagonists engage in deviant activities that lead to unhappy endings".

5 ANALYSIS

This chapter introduces the findings made during the analysis of the data of this study and links them to earlier research. The results are divided into subchapters according to the different strategies of legitimation of the framework used as the analytical tool, as pointed out in the previous chapter.

5.1. Appealing to the emotions of fear and hope

Both Ardern and Johnson use appealing to emotions as a way of legitimation. This was rather expected, since appealing to emotions in others in order to achieve some goals

is not only a rather common phenomenon among humans generally, but also a quite frequently used tool within the political sphere (Reyes 2011: 789, Loseke 2009: 498). Here, I will concentrate on discussing the appeals to two particular emotions, *fear* and *hope*, as those were the two emotions appealed to by both Ardern and Johnson and the two emotions most frequently appealed to. As discussed earlier on, there are some instances in the speeches where the appeals to solidarity could possibly be categorized as appeals to emotions, which traces back to the nature of the definition of solidarity itself (see e.g. Karakayali 2017, Alharbi 2018). However, as pointed out, for the sake of clarity, these instances of legitimation are discussed in the next section, "Appealing to solidarity". Next, however, I will discuss in more depth the instances of appealing to fear and then appealing to hope as the strategies of legitimation.

1. The coronavirus is **the biggest threat** this country has faced for decades – and this country is not alone. All over the world we are seeing **the devastating impact** of this **invisible killer**. And so tonight I want to update you on the latest steps we are taking to **fight the disease** and what you can do to help. (Boris Johnson)

Here, Johnson begins his speech by evoking emotions of fear in the listeners. As fear is one of the most powerful human emotions that affect the way people behave, beginning the speech by evoking this feeling in the audience is an effective tool for helping to legitimize the measures taken in order to cope with the pandemic (Reyes 2011: 790). In this instance, the effect is achieved through a type of war speech, i.e., using expressions that are often used in discourse of war (see e.g. Cap 2006, Sandaran and De Rycker 2014) . Using terms such as 'threat' and 'invisible killer' and 'fight', Johnson lays the basis for justifying the restrictions announced later on in the speech by creating an image of an enemy that has to be fought. Thus, by the subsequent announcement of the measures taken in order to do this, i.e., the restrictions imposed on the public, Johnson provides the listeners with a tool for fighting this enemy. The expression 'the devastating impact' can be interpreted here as related to war speech, e.g., as in 'the bomb went off on impact', and to the speech of contagious disease, which will be discussed further on. Similar linguistic strategy is used by Ardern as well, as can be seen in the excerpt (2).

2. The Cabinet met this morning to discuss our next actions in **the fight against** COVID-19. Like the rest of the world, we are facing the potential for **devastating impacts** from this virus. (Jacinda Ardern)

As was the case with the excerpt (1), which was the opening sequence of Johnson's speech, the quote above presents us with the beginning of Ardern's speech. It can be clearly seen here that Ardern too opens her speech by appealing to fear by using similar war speech by the employment of the expressions 'the fight against' and 'devastating impacts'. As I pointed out earlier on, in addition to war discourse, the expression 'devastating impacts' can be interpreted as contagious disease speech as well (Abeysinghe and White 2011). Using expressions that, in the minds of the listeners, generate a sense of threat of an infectious and a potentially lethal illness helps works as a tool for eliciting fear, which then in its turn is used as a basis for justifying the strict COVID-19 restrictions. This type of legitimatizing can be seen in the excerpts (3) and (4) by Boris Johnson and excerpt (5) by Jacinda Ardern.

3. Because the critical thing we must do is stop **the disease spreading** between households. (Boris Johnson)

4. The way ahead is hard, and it is still true **that many lives will sadly be lost**. And yet it is also true that there is a clear way through. (Boris Johnson)

5. New medical modelling considered by the Cabinet today suggests that without the measures I have just announced **up to tens of thousands of New Zealanders could die from COVID-19**. (Jacinda Ardern)

Here the focus of Johnson and Ardern's discourse is on creating a sense of fear of an illness in the listeners. The mental image Johnson constructs of the 'disease spreading between households' in excerpt (3) gets an even more serious tone when he later on, in excerpt (4) states that 'it is still true that many lives will sadly be lost'. Ardern too applies the fear instilling idea of many possible deaths in the excerpt (5) as a tool for justification. As was with the war speech, referring to a great deal of people dying because of the virus is a strong linguistic devise for creating a sense of dread in the listeners and thus laying basis for the legitimation of the restrictive measures taken in order to 'stop the disease spreading', as Johnson puts it. Similar discourse of war and

of disease can be seen in the instances where, instead of fear, the emotion appealed to in order to justify the restrictions is hope.

6. And we will **come through it stronger than ever**. **We will beat the coronavirus and we will beat it together**. (Boris Johnson)

7. I would rather make this decision now, and **save those lives**, and be in lockdown for a shorter period, than delay, and see New Zealanders **lose loved ones and their contact with each other for an even longer period**. I hope you are all with me on that. Together we have **an opportunity to contain the spread and prevent the worst**. (Jacinda Ardern)

As seen in the excerpts (6) and (7), both of the Prime Ministers use appeals to hope as a way of legitimation. Hope, that could be defined as the counterpart of fear (Robinson 2008: 155), is produced here through expressions such as 'we will come through it', 'we will beat the coronavirus', 'save those live' and 'prevent the worst'. The usage of the two counterpart feelings, i.e. the continuum of appeals from fear to hope is clearly visible in both of the speeches. This can be seen for example in excerpt (4), where Boris Johnson not only employs the fear-inducing discourse, e.g. 'many lives will be sadly lost', but continues immediately to arouse hope of surviving the difficult situation: 'there is a clear way through'. Similarly, in excerpt (6) Jacinda Ardern employs both fear and hope as a means of legitimation when she expresses her willingness to 'rather make this decision now, and save those lives -- than -- lose loved ones'. This type of continuity of first eliciting fear to then arousing hope is visible in both speeches in a larger scale as well, as, throughout the speeches, both Johnson and Ardern keep on first referring to the frightening aspects of the pandemic and the possible negative outcomes of the situation, only to follow this type of discourse with a more hopeful note: 'we will beat the coronavirus'.

5.2. Appealing to solidarity

One of the most prominent linguistic devices for appealing to solidarity used by both Johnson and Ardern is the use of the pronoun 'we', which can be seen below in excerpts (8) and (9).

8. Together**, we** must stop that happening, and **we** can. Right now **we** have a window of opportunity to break the chain of community transmission – to contain the virus – to stop it multiplying and **to protect New Zealanders** from the worst. **Our** plan is simple. **We** can stop the spread by staying at home and reducing contact. (Jacinda Ardern)

9. But in this fight **we** can be in no doubt that **each and every one of us** is directly enlisted. **Each and every one of us** is now obliged to **join together**. -- And **we** will come through it stronger than ever. **We** will beat the coronavirus and **we** will beat it **together**. And therefore I urge you at this moment of national emergency to stay at home, protect **our NHS** and save lives. (Boris Johnson)

In both of the excerpts above, the prime ministers employ the pronoun 'we' in order to both identify with the listeners and to create an in-group consisting of themselves and their audience (see Alharbi 2018). In excerpt (8), the use of the determiner 'our' and the reference to New Zealanders by Ardern have the same function: to establish a type of we-ness with the listeners and to increase the feeling of solidarity in them. The same linguistic strategy is used by Johnson in excerpt (9), when he uses the phrases 'each and every one of us', 'join together' and 'our NHS'. Using this type of discourse, the prime ministers attempt to create solidarity in the audience in order to legitimize the restrictions: the political decisions that have been made are referred to as something that is good for *everyone* within the society and the restrictions are the way for bettering the situation *together*, as an in-group – 'us'. Appealing to solidarity in this way as a legitimation strategy can be clearly seen in the following excerpt as well.

10. **Everything you will all give up** for the next few weeks, all of the lost contact with others, all of the isolation, and difficult time entertaining children – **it will literally save lives. Thousands of lives**. **-- I hope you are all with me on that. Together we** have an opportunity to contain the spread and prevent the worst. (Jacinda Ardern)

In excerpt (10), Ardern uses the pronoun 'we', the adverb 'together' and the phrase 'I hope you are all with me' as a marker of appealing to solidarity for legitimation purposes. Additionally, she employs a different kind of linguistic strategy to achieve the same effect: she refers to 'everything you will all give up', i.e., to the life with restrictions and suggests that the sacrifice will ultimately lead to a great compensation, i.e., saving lives. In other words, Ardern presents here a scenario where the restrictions and living according to them is an act of solidarity towards everyone in the society – thus making the restrictions seem legitimate. The last excerpt of this section, excerpt

(11), presents similar type of legitimation. However, in this excerpt, the discourse of solidarity is presented in an even more explicit way.

11. I cannot stress enough the need for **every New Zealander** to follow the advice I have laid out today. The Government will do all it can to protect you. **Now I'm asking you to do everything you can to protect us all. None of us can do this alone. Your actions will be critical to our collective ability to stop the spread of COVID-19. Failure to play your part in the coming days will put the lives of others at risk**. -- **We're in this together and must unite against COVID-19.** (Jacinda Ardern)

In this excerpt, Ardern interestingly uses both "in-grouping" and "out-grouping" pronouns and determiners, i.e., ones that mark belonging and togetherness between the speaker and the audience (e.g., 'us', 'we', 'our') and ones that distance the audience from the speaker (e.g., 'you', 'your'). However, the overall message of the excerpt is, as Ardern phrases it at the end of the excerpt, that "we're in this together and must unite". Thus, the excerpt can be seen as an attempt at creating a feeling of solidarity among the audience and the instances who have made the decisions regarding the restrictions, in order to provide legitimacy for said restrictions. In addition to the above-mentioned pronouns and determiners, appealing to solidarity can be seen here in the use of phrases such as 'none of us can do this alone', 'to protects us all', 'the need for every New Zealander to follow the advice".

5.3. Hypothetical future

When it comes to legitimating COVID-19 policies and restrictions, the strategy involving speech of different hypothetical futures was a frequently used device by Ardern. Johnson, however, employed this strategy a great deal less in his speech – a point to which I will come back later on in the discussion section. Most of the legitimation that falls under this category depicts possible futures where things have gone wrong, and the virus has caused more damage to the nation, although there are some instances where the possibility of a better possible future is brought up as well.

As I have already pointed out, it should be kept in mind that when it comes to data, the division between the different categories of legitimation is not always clear and a significant amount of overlapping of the different strategies can be found. Hence,

when analyzing the following instances where the possible 'worst case scenario' futures – as Ardern puts it in excerpt (14) – are used for justification, it should be noted that there exists some appealing to fear as well. This seems to be a rather innate part of the discussion of these negative future scenarios, as the discussion of the possible bad outcomes of the present situation necessarily includes discussion of frightening things, such as death in excerpt (12). The same can be noted when a hypothetical better future is discussed: the element of hope, and thus appealing to hope exists there as well, as can be seen for example in excerpt (17). But first, I will discuss legitimation through the aforementioned worst-case scenario speech.

12. **If** community transmission takes off in New **Zealand the number of cases will double every five days. If that happens unchecked, our health system will be inundated, and tens of thousands of New Zealanders will die**. (Jacinda Ardern)

In excerpt (12), Ardern alludes to a hypothetical future where the virus has spread uncontrollably, lead to the overloading of New Zealand's health care system and thus caused the death of 'tens of thousands of New Zealanders'. The hypothetical nature of this scenario of the future is marked linguistically by the usage of the first conditional, e.g., '*If* community transmission takes off -- the number of cases *will* double'. This creates a sense of causality in the listeners: the actions that are taken or that are not taken right then and there have consequences when it comes to shaping the near future. The aforementioned linguistic strategy of presenting the present as the moment when immediate actions in order to shape the future must be taken is a common occurrence in political discourse (Reyes 2011: 793). The strategy is used by Boris Johnson as well:

13. Without a huge national effort to halt the growth of this virus**, there will come a moment when no health service in the world could possibly cope;** because there won't be enough ventilators, enough intensive care beds, enough doctors and nurses. -- To put it simply, **if too many people become seriously unwell at one time, the NHS will be unable to handle it - meaning more people are likely to die, not just from Coronavirus but from other illnesses as well**. (Boris Johson)

The possible future discussed by Johnson in excerpt (13) is similar to the one depicted by Ardern in the previous excerpt, i.e., a future where the nation's health care system

would not be able to cope with the pandemic. Johnson, however, proceeds into considering the scenario in more detail: 'because there won't be enough ventilators, enough intensive care beds, enough doctors and nurses'. As Ardern did in excerpt (12), Johnson as well ends the hypothetical string of events in the worst-case scenario, where many are most probably going to die. Adding even more to the things one should be afraid of in this scenario, Johnson points out that in the aforementioned possible future not only COVID-19 would cause the deaths, but other illnesses as well.

14. **The worst case scenario is simply intolerable. It would represent the greatest loss of New Zealanders' lives in our country's history**. I will not take that chance. I would rather make this decision now, and save those lives, and be in lockdown for a shorter period**, than delay, and see New Zealanders lose loved ones and their contact with each other for an even longer period.** (Jacinda Ardern)

Another linguistic strategy used by Ardern in order to convey the seriousness of the so-called worst-case scenario is to connect the possible future 'loss' to the historical continuum of the country, which, too, is a common strategy in political discourse (Reyes 2011: 793). Conditionality exists here as well, as Ardern implies that the future is not set in stone and that by acting now, the worst-case scenario can be avoided: 'I would rather make this decision now, and save those lives'. In addition to the negative versions of the future that we have been discussing so far, a glance at a more positive view can be seen in excerpt (14), as Ardern juxtaposes the different scenarios of the future with each other. This is achieved by linking the different options of taking action in the present with their possible outcomes, i.e., making 'this decision now' equals saving lives, while the other option 'delay', equals losing lives and risking a lengthened period of separation between families and friends. It is important to note here, that the first option, that is, making the decision now, results 'being in lockdown', which is a strict limitation on the free movement of the citizens. Hence, the need for justifying the decision by the linguistic strategy of juxtaposing the different hypothetical futures.

Another aspect of legitimation through discussing hypothetical futures is the always present perspective of uncertainty. As no human being can accurately predict the

future, all the scenarios regarding it are necessarily only suppositions of what is to come. Although at some points these possible future scenarios are presented in a linguistic form that makes them look certain, e.g., in excerpt (12) when Ardern uses the earlier discussed form "if [something happens] then [something] *will* [happen]". However, although this choice of linguistic structure can make the consequences of action or inaction look certain, some level of uncertainty does exist in these scenarios too. For example, later on in her speech Ardern chooses to depict the hypothetical futures in a less certain way, as can be seen in the following excerpts.

15. We are fortunate to still be some way behind the majority of overseas countries in terms of cases, but **the trajectory is clear**. Act now, **or risk the virus taking hold as it has elsewhere.** (Jacinda Ardern)

16. That's why sticking to the rules matters. **If** we don't **– if** you hang out with that friend at a park or see that family member for lunch, you **risk spreading COVID -19 and extending everyone's time in Level 4.** (Jacinda Ardern)

Here, Ardern's choice of the verb *to risk* is a linguistic strategy for presenting the future scenario as not a certain, albeit a somewhat likely consequence of the present action or inaction: 'act now, or risk the virus taking hold', 'if you hang out -- you risk spreading COVID-19'. The same "if [something] then [something]" structure is employed here as well, but the difference between some of the other passages we have discussed is precisely the verb risk and the incertitude it brings with it. Next, I shall close this chapter by discussing the rarer occurrence of legitimation through hypothetical future talk: the allusion to a possible future where things have taken a turn for better, i.e., a positive hypothetical future.

17. Right now we have a window of opportunity **to break the chain of community transmission – to contain the virus – to stop it multiplying and to protect New Zealanders from the worst**. (Jacinda Ardern)

Here, in excerpt (17), the reference to a possible future is not linguistically structured in a similar way with most of the earlier discussed examples of hypothetical futures. As seen in the excerpt, the commonly used structure of conditionality (Reyes 2011: 786) is missing, but the allusion to a hypothetical future is nevertheless present. Instead, the

image of a better future is implied in the way Ardern presents all the effects of the actions taken now, i.e., breaking the chain of transmission, containing the virus, stopping it multiplying – and finally implies these to be the way of protecting 'New Zealanders from the worst'. Thus, the possibility of a better future, where the citizens are protected from the bad consequences of the pandemic is implied and accordingly used as a tool for justifying the restrictions.

5.4. Rationalization

Both Ardern and Johnson use appeals to rationality in their legitimating discourse, although like the previous one, appealing to a hypothetical future, this strategy is more frequently used by Ardern than Johnson. As discussed earlier on, there are different ways of using rationalization for justifying one's decisions or actions (van Leeuwen 2008: 113-117, Reyes 2011: 797-800), many of which can be seen in the present data as well. The different rationalization strategies present in the data are the following: instrumental rationalization (means orientation), instrumental rationalization (goal orientation) and rationalization based on careful consideration. First, let us discuss then means orientation of instrumental rationalization through the following examples.

18. So it's vital to slow the spread of the disease. Because **that is the way we reduce the number of people needing hospital treatment at any one time**, so we can protect the NHS's ability to cope - and save more lives. (Boris Johnson)

19. Staying at home is essential. **It's a simple but highly effective way to constrain the virus** – it denies it places to go, and will help give our healthcare system a fighting chance. (Jacinda Ardern)

Here, in excerpt (18), Boris Johnson presents slowing the spread of the disease as being the way of reducing hospital patients and ultimately, as a way of saving lives. As, when taking into consideration the speech as a whole, it is clear that the proposed way of slowing the spread is to abide by the restrictions set by the government, excerpt (18) is discovered to be an instance of legitimation through rationalization. The restrictions, here referred to by the use of the determiner 'that', are presented as the outcome of a process of thinking: the restrictions slow the spread of the disease and thus reduce the

amount of people needing hospital care, which in its turn protects the National Health Service's capacity and through that saves lives.

As was pointed out earlier on, the subcategory of rationalization here is the means orientation, i.e., the restrictions are presented here not as the ultimate goal but as the medium for achieving the goal – saving lives. The means orientation can be seen here in the linguistic choice of the phrase 'that is the way', which points to the restrictions as being the mode for achieving the ultimate goal. Similarly, in excerpt (19), Ardern realizes the means orientation of instrumental rationalization through referring to the restrictions as the 'a way' for managing the situation. The presentation of the reasoning behind this statement is presented here as well: abiding by the restrictions, i.e., 'staying at home' constrains the virus, which then enables the health care system to function as needed and thus saves lives. The means orientation can be produced through other linguistic strategies as well, as can be seen in the following excerpt.

20. **With the time you buy** - by simply staying at home - we are increasing our stocks of equipment. We are accelerating our search for treatments. We are pioneering work on a vaccine. And we are buying millions of testing kits that will enable us **to turn the tide on this invisible killer**. (Boris Johnson)

In excerpt (20), Johnson uses linguistically marks the means orientation by using the preposition 'with', followed by a reference to the restrictions in the form of 'the time you buy'. In other words, through the measures that can be taken as a consequence of the time the listeners 'buy', i.e., buying more supplies and advancing research efforts, the ultimate goal of turning 'the tide on this invisible killer' is achieved. It is implied here that the aforementioned action of buying time is accomplished through the new restrictions, which points to the fact that legitimation is taking place in the excerpt. It should be noted that at the end of the excerpt, another orientation of instrumental rationalization can be seen: the goal orientation. Next, this orientation will be discussed in more detail.

21. Each and every one of us is now obliged **to join together. To halt the spread of this disease. To protect our NHS** and **to save many many thousands of lives**. (Boris Johnson)

As opposed to the previous excerpts, here Johnson produces legitimation through stressing the goals instead of the means. This is achieved linguistically through the use of the preposition 'to' as a marker of a purpose clause (van Leeuwen 2008: 114). In other words, by doing this, Johnson justifies the decisions taken by the government through explicitly stating the goals of the said decisions, which are the same as in the earlier examples: to stop the virus from spreading and through that to protect the health care system and to save lives. Thus, the stress in excerpt (21) is on these goals instead of the means. The same structure, where the orientated rationalization was produced by a purpose clause was seen earlier on at the end of the excerpt (20), as I previously pointed out. To finish with this subchapter, I will next discuss the third manner of producing legitimation through rationalization found in the data, i.e., presenting the restrictions as the product of careful consideration.

22. That's why Cabinet met today **and agreed that,** effective immediately, we will move to Alert Level 3 nationwide. (Jacinda Ardern)

23. The Cabinet met this morning **to discuss** our next actions in the fight against COVID-19. (Jacinda Ardern)

In these excerpts there can be seen two different linguistic strategies for producing rationalization through presenting the restrictions as carefully considered decisions. In excerpt (22), Ardern presents moving to Alert Level 3, i.e., the restrictions, as something the Cabinet has 'agreed' should be done. By using the verb *agree* in the meaning of making a decision together or sharing an opinion, Ardern rationalizes the measures taken by the government. In other words, she justifies the restrictions through presenting them as something that have been discussed through and jointly decided upon following a rational conversation. This can be seen in excerpt (23) in the choice of the verb 'discuss', the use of which conveys legitimation precisely through the presentation of the restrictions as the rational choice.

24. These decisions will place the most significant restriction on New Zealanders' movements in modern history. **This is not a decision taken lightly.** But this is our best chance to slow the virus and to save lives. (Jacinda Ardern)

Similar discourse can be seen in excerpt (24), where Ardern states that the decision is not 'taken lightly'. A degree of gravity is present here: the situation at hand is serious and the actions taken in order to stop the virus are not taken on a whim but are instead decided upon after careful consideration. Thus, the restrictions are presented as the rational, logical step to take at the time (Reyes 2011: 797).

5.5. Appealing to authority

There are three types of authorities appealed to in the data: personal authority, institutional authority and expert authority. It could be argued that there are some instances of appealing to impersonal authority as well, for instance in excerpt (27) where Johnson uses the phrase 'the Government's instruction', which could be interpreted as appealing to the impersonal 'instructions' (van Leeuwen 2008: 108). However, I argue that in these types of linguistic choices the stress is not on the instructions, but on the institution that has provided these instructions, i.e., the government, thus making them examples of institutional authority. Additionally, it should be noted that as mentioned in the discussion of the methods of this study, the division between personal and institutional authority is somewhat artificial, the reason for which is the following: Although authority is produced in the instances of personal authority as something that the individual possesses, in the case of these speeches, the authority is provided to the individuals by the institutions. For example, a Prime Minister is presented as a person of authority, but the authority (s)he has is actually provided by the office and not the person her/himself. Thus, an amount of overlapping of the two types of authority necessarily exists in the context of this data. I do argue, however, that making this distinction is important, as from the point of view of the audience of the speeches, the authority of the Prime Ministers can be seen as something connected to the persons themselves and the connection to the office as the source of authority may remain thin in the minds of the listeners.

The aforementioned arguments regarding the overlapping of the different types of authorities appealed to in the data apply to expert authority as well. As can be seen in excerpt (25), in addition to the use of the first-person singular 'I' and thus the reference

to personal authority, Ardern explicitly mentions the Director General of Health. Although this could be seen as an instance of appealing to either personal authority of said person, or the institutional authority of the office, I argue that the main type of authority appealed to here is expert authority. Since the Director General of Health, Dr Ashley Bloomfield (see bibliography for New Zealand Ministry of Health), is and for the requirements of the office is expected to be an expert in the field of health care, the type of authority that carries the most weight when referring to him in dealing with the pandemic is exactly that: the authority of an expert.

25. -- **I can also confirm, as did the Director General of Health**, that we have 2 cases where public health officials have been unable to find how they came in contact with COVID-19. (Jacinda Ardern)

26. And therefore **I urge you** at this moment of national emergency to stay at home, protect our NHS and save lives. (Boris Johnson)

As discussed above regarding excerpt (25), in excerpt (26) Johnson too can be seen to employ the first person singular 'I' in order to provide personal authority and thus, to legitimize the restrictions.

27. To ensure compliance with **the Government's instruction** to stay at home --. (Boris Johnson)

In excerpt (27), Johnson justifies the restrictions by appealing to the authority of the Government of the UK, which is an institution with a great deal of power and thus authority. Thus, by choosing to mention that the instructions to stay at home, i.e., the measures taken in order to 'beat the virus', as Johnson phrases it in excerpt (6), are from the part of the government, Johnson refers to institutional authority in order to justify the restrictions in the minds of the listeners. Similar use of appealing to institutional authority can be seen in earlier excerpts (2), (5), (22) and (23), where Jacinda Ardern invokes the authority of the Cabinet of New Zealand as a part of the wider discourse of justification.

5.6. Mythopoesis

As pointed out in the previous chapter, all the instances of mythopoesis encountered in the speeches are so-called cautionary tales, i.e., examples of things having progressed in an unwelcome manner in in the past and, in the case of this data, in locations other than New Zealand and the UK.

28. **And as we have seen elsewhere, in other countries that also have fantastic health care systems**, that is the moment of real danger. (Boris Johnson)

29. There is no easy way to say that – **but it is the reality we have seen overseas** – and the possibility we must now face here. (Jacinda Ardern)

Here, both Johnson and Ardern refer to other countries where the state of things regarding the pandemic have taken a turn for the worse. In excerpt (28), Johnson points out that these here unnamed countries he refers to have equally good health care systems and thus are comparable to the UK. In other words, he constructs a cautionary tale: the situation has worsened in these countries that are similar to the UK and that could happen here as well. In excerpt (29), Ardern refers to the 'reality we have seen overseas', i.e., the risen number of COVID-19 cases and deaths related to them as well as the overloading of the health care system, in order to achieve the same effect as Johnson did in excerpt (28). Through these cautionary tales, both prime ministers not only set an example of what could happen in their countries as well, which in itself could be interpreted as being an instance of legitimation through discussing a hypothetical future (see chapter 4.4.6), but additionally, they necessarily elicit fear in their audiences (see chapter 4.4.1). This can be seen in the following excerpt as well.

30. We currently have 102 cases. **But so did Italy once. Now the virus has overwhelmed their health system and hundreds of people are dying every day.** (Jacinda Ardern)

Here Ardern compares the current situation in New Zealand with the one Italy has now, indicating that without out actions taken in the present moment, New Zealand could be headed the same direction as well. First of all, the excerpt is a clear example of a cautionary tale: it presents an example of something that is not desired ('the virus has overwhelmed their health system and hundreds of people are dying') and that has taken place in another place in the past, while implicitly letting the audience understand that the same thing could happen here as well – if something is not done

in order to prevent it. Thus, this usage of cautionary tale discourse includes an attempt to present the decisions that have been taken, i.e., the restrictions imposed on the public as the necessary, legitimate thing to do in order to prevent the unwanted thing from happening. Additionally, the element of appealing to emotions is rather strongly present in excerpt (30) as well, which can be seen in the linguistic choice of the phrase 'hundreds of people are dying every day'.

6 DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to examine the March 23, 2020 speeches by Johnson and Ardern and to find out, how the two prime ministers legitimated the new, stricter restrictions imposed on the public during the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020. The data was analyzed from the point of view of Critical Discourse Studies and by using a framework of five different linguistic legitimation strategies of legitimation as the main tool of analysis. Although largely based on earlier frameworks of legitimation (see van Leeuwen 2008 and Reyes 2011), as pointed out in chapter four, the framework itself was partly formed during the analysis itself according to the needs of the analysis of said particular data. Thus, the framework itself partly reflects the data and the findings made during the analysis: these five legitimation strategies (i.e., appealing to emotions, appealing to solidarity, hypothetical future, rationality, appealing to authority and mythopoesis) were the ones that could be found in the data.

The analysis of the speeches revealed that both prime ministers used all of the abovementioned legitimation strategies in order to justify the restrictions made by their respective governments. These different legitimation strategies could be seen both at the level of choices of words and phrases as well as in the wider discourse of the speeches. This could be seen, for example, in the way the strategy of appealing to emotions was employed at both lexical level (e.g., the use of words such as 'death' or 'killer') and in the way the pandemic was discussed in general sense throughout the speeches as being something to be afraid of. As discussed in chapters 5.1, 5.3 and 5.6, the strategy of appealing to emotions, was not present only in the instances that were classified as straightforward examples of said strategy (see chapter 5.1) but

additionally intertwined with other justification strategies as well (see chapters 5.3 and 5.6). This, I argue, is in line with the way appealing to emotions in general is used in political argumentation and especially in relation to a crisis of this scale (see e.g. Abeysinghe and White 2011, see also chapters 3.3.2 and 4.4.1). Furthermore, as pointed out earlier on when discussing the legitimation framework of the present study, it is rather expected and natural for this type of overlapping of different strategies to take place in legitimation discourse. In future research, it would be interesting to study this overlapping, and especially the role of appealing to emotions within the other legitimation strategies in further detail.

The chosen method of analysis, i.e., the framework of legitimation strategies proved to be fruitful in analyzing the data of this study, as it allowed for an extensive analysis on the different linguistic ways of justification. However, as I will point out when discussing my proposals for further research on the topic in the next paragraph, the type of study as the present one is does not, I argue, allow for a complete analysis of legitimation in this type of context, as it leaves out an important part of the process of legitimation: the response of the audience and whether it accepts or refuses the justification. Nonetheless, taking into consideration the scope and the nature of the present study, i.e., a thesis, I consider the focus on the speeches by Johnson and Ardern adequate.

In future research, it would be both interesting and fruitful to focus on the other side of legitimation in this type of context: the way the audiences interpret the instances of legitimation in political speeches. As discussed in chapter 3, legitimation is a process where the legitimation is *attempted*. In other words, the reception of the audience affects the effectiveness and the success of legitimation: legitimation can be accepted or denied (Martín Rojo and van Dijk 1997: 527-528). In relation to the context and the data of the present study, it would be relevant to analyze the reactions of the public for these speeches, trying to thus determine, whether the instances of legitimation executed by Johnson and Ardern was accepted or denied by the audiences of the speeches. Following this, an interesting topic for research would be to examine the

further implications of the acceptance or unacceptance of the legitimation of the COVID-19 restrictions: discussion on the way the reception of these speeches and the justification attempted in them has affected the wider discourse surrounding the pandemic would be beneficial in furthering understanding on the effect of this type of legitimation in both political and health context.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Speech by Boris Johnson on March 23, 2020

Retrieved from **https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-address-to-the-nation-on-coronavirus-23-march-2020.** (September 15, 2020)

Good Evening,

The coronavirus is the biggest threat this country has faced for decades – and this country is not alone.

All over the world we are seeing the devastating impact of this invisible killer.

And so tonight I want to update you on the latest steps we are taking to fight the disease and what you can do to help.

And I want to begin by reminding you why the UK has been taking the approach that we have.

Without a huge national effort to halt the growth of this virus, there will come a moment when no health service in the world could possibly cope; because there won't be enough ventilators, enough intensive care beds, enough doctors and nurses.

And as we have seen elsewhere, in other countries that also have fantastic health care systems, that is the moment of real danger.

To put it simply, if too many people become seriously unwell at one time, the NHS will be unable to handle it - meaning more people are likely to die, not just from Coronavirus but from other illnesses as well.

So it's vital to slow the spread of the disease.

Because that is the way we reduce the number of people needing hospital treatment at any one time, so we can protect the NHS's ability to cope - and save more lives.

And that's why we have been asking people to stay at home during this pandemic.

And though huge numbers are complying - and I thank you all - the time has now come for us all to do more.

From this evening I must give the British people a very simple instruction - you must stay at home.

Because the critical thing we must do is stop the disease spreading between households.

That is why people will only be allowed to leave their home for the following very limited purposes:

- shopping for basic necessities, as infrequently as possible
- one form of exercise a day - for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household;
- any medical need, to provide care or to help a vulnerable person; and
- travelling to and from work, but only where this is absolutely necessary and cannot be done from home.

That's all - these are the only reasons you should leave your home.

You should not be meeting friends. If your friends ask you to meet, you should say No.

You should not be meeting family members who do not live in your home.

You should not be going shopping except for essentials like food and medicine - and you should do this as little as you can. And use food delivery services where you can.

If you don't follow the rules the police will have the powers to enforce them, including through fines and dispersing gatherings.

To ensure compliance with the Government's instruction to stay at home, we will immediately:

- close all shops selling non-essential goods, including clothing and electronic stores and other premises including libraries, playgrounds and outdoor gyms, and places of worship;
- we will stop all gatherings of more than two people in public – excluding people you live with;

- and we'll stop all social events, including weddings, baptisms and other ceremonies, but excluding funerals.

Parks will remain open for exercise but gatherings will be dispersed.

No Prime Minister wants to enact measures like this.

I know the damage that this disruption is doing and will do to people's lives, to their businesses and to their jobs.

And that's why we have produced a huge and unprecedented programme of support both for workers and for business.

And I can assure you that we will keep these restrictions under constant review. We will look again in three weeks, and relax them if the evidence shows we are able to.

But at present there are just no easy options. The way ahead is hard, and it is still true that many lives will sadly be lost.

And yet it is also true that there is a clear way through.

Day by day we are strengthening our amazing NHS with 7500 former clinicians now coming back to the service.

With the time you buy - by simply staying at home - we are increasing our stocks of equipment.

We are accelerating our search for treatments.

We are pioneering work on a vaccine.

And we are buying millions of testing kits that will enable us to turn the tide on this invisible killer.

I want to thank everyone who is working flat out to beat the virus.

Everyone from the supermarket staff to the transport workers to the carers to the nurses and doctors on the frontline.

But in this fight we can be in no doubt that each and every one of us is directly enlisted.

Each and every one of us is now obliged to join together.

To halt the spread of this disease.

To protect our NHS and to save many many thousands of lives.

And I know that as they have in the past so many times.

The people of this country will rise to that challenge.

And we will come through it stronger than ever.

We will beat the coronavirus and we will beat it together.

And therefore I urge you at this moment of national emergency to stay at home, protect our NHS and save lives.

Thank you.

Appendix 2: Speech by Jacinda Ardern on March 23, 2020

Retrieved from **https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/prime-minister-covid-19-alert-level-increased**. (September 15, 2020).

Good afternoon

The Cabinet met this morning to discuss our next actions in the fight against COVID-19.

Like the rest of the world, we are facing the potential for devastating impacts from this virus. But, through decisive action, and through working together, we have a small window to get ahead of it.

On Saturday I announced a COVID-19 alert level system and placed New Zealand at Alert Level 2.

I also said we should all be prepared to move quickly. Now is the time to put our plans into action.

We are fortunate to still be some way behind the majority of overseas countries in terms of cases, but the trajectory is clear. Act now, or risk the virus taking hold as it has elsewhere.

We currently have 102 cases. But so did Italy once. Now the virus has overwhelmed their health system and hundreds of people are dying every day.

The situation here is moving at pace, and so must we.

We have always said we would act early. Today 36 new cases were announced. While the majority of these cases continue to be linked to overseas travel in some way, I can also confirm, as did the Director General of Health, that we have 2 cases where public health officials have been unable to find how they came in contact with COVID-19. On that basis, we now consider that there is transmission within our communities.

If community transmission takes off in New Zealand the number of cases will double every five days. If that happens unchecked, our health system will be inundated, and tens of thousands of New Zealanders will die.

There is no easy way to say that – but it is the reality we have seen overseas – and the possibility we must now face here.

Together, we must stop that happening, and we can.

Right now we have a window of opportunity to break the chain of community transmission – to contain the virus – to stop it multiplying and to protect New Zealanders from the worst.

Our plan is simple. We can stop the spread by staying at home and reducing contact.

Now is the time to act.

That's why Cabinet met today and agreed that, effective immediately, we will move to Alert Level 3 nationwide.

After 48 hours, the time required to ensure essential services are in place, we will move to Level 4.

These decisions will place the most significant restriction on New Zealanders' movements in modern history. This is not a decision taken lightly. But this is our best chance to slow the virus and to save lives.

Let me set out what these changes will mean for everyone.

Supermarkets, doctors, pharmacies, service stations, access to essential banking services, will all be available throughout New Zealand at every alert level. If you do not have immediate needs, do not go to the supermarket. It will be there for you today, tomorrow, and the day after that. We must give time for supermarkets to restock their shelves, there will be enough for everyone if we shop normally.

In the meantime, we will be working through practices like those used overseas to make sure that social distancing is maintained at supermarkets when people are undertaking essential shops.

Non-essential businesses in New Zealand must now close. All bars, restaurants, cafes, gyms, cinemas, pools, museums, libraries, playgrounds and any other place where the public congregate must close their face-to-face function.

Over the next 48 hours as we move to Level 4, takeaway services must move to close their operations.

All indoor and outdoor events cannot proceed.

In short: we are all now preparing to go into self isolation as a nation. Just as you've seen with other countries.

Staying at home is essential. It's a simple but highly effective way to constrain the virus – it denies it places to go, and will help give our healthcare system a fighting chance.

So over the next 48 hours every workplace must implement alternative ways of working, people must work from home so that interactions with others are limited.

Essential services will need to put in place alternative ways of working that ensure physical distancing of staff of 2 metres, or utilise appropriate Personal Protective Equipment.

Schools will be closed from tomorrow, except to the children of essential workers such as our doctors, nurses, ambulance drivers and police – this will give them time to plan. This will be temporary, and schools will close entirely from midnight Wednesday.

The school term break will be brought forward. For the remainder of this week and through the term break schools will establish ways to deliver teaching online and remotely. All students across the country are currently being given information on this decision for their parents, including the list of who is considered an essential service. This will be communicated directly to parents.

To be absolutely clear we are now asking all New Zealanders who are outside essential services to stay at home, and to stop all interactions with others outside of those in your household.

I understand that self isolation is a daunting prospect. So we are being practical. You can leave your home for fresh air, a walk, exercise. To take your children outside. But remember the simple principle. It must be solitary. We are asking that you only spend time with those you are in self isolation with. And if you are outside, keep your distance from others. That means 2 metres at all times. This is the single most important thing we can do right now to stop further community transmission.

Travel around New Zealand will also change.

Over the next 48 hours, people will need to get home, be it locally or throughout the country. We have asked all air transport providers to ensure social distancing for that period. After 48 hours we will be moving to air travel only applying to the transport of people undertaking essential services and the transport of freight.

Public transport will also begin to transition over the next 48 hours and will only be available for those working in essential services, for medical reasons, and to move essential goods – including ferry services between the North and South Island.

Further details on the transition we are all now making will be made publicly available on the COVID-19 website.

Now I want to share with you what will happen while we are all in Alert Level 4 to get ahead of COVID-19.

We will continue to vigorously contact trace every single case. Testing will continue at pace to help us understand the current number of cases in New Zealand and where they are based. If we flush out the cases we already have and see transmission slow, we will potentially be able to move areas out of Level 4 over time.

But for the next wee while, things will look worse before they look better. In the short term the number of cases will likely rise because the virus is already in our community. But these new measures can slow the virus down and prevent our health system from being overwhelmed and ultimately save lives.

To be successful though, to stop community transmission which has a lag time, these measures will need to be in place for 4 weeks. Again, I want to reiterate, you will be able to make regular visits to essential services in that time.

If we after those 4 weeks we have been successful, we hope we will be able to ease up on restrictions. If we haven't, we'll find ourselves living with them for longer. That's why sticking to the rules matters. If we don't – if you hang out with that friend at a park or see that family member for lunch, you risk spreading COVID -19 and extending everyone's time in Level 4.

Our low number of cases compared to the rest of the world gives us a chance, but does not mean we have escaped. I do not underestimate what I am asking New Zealanders to do. It's huge. And I know it will feel daunting. But I wanted to share with you the stark choice we face.

New medical modelling considered by the Cabinet today suggests that without the measures I have just announced up to tens of thousands of New Zealanders could die from COVID-19.

Everything you will all give up for the next few weeks, all of the lost contact with others, all of the isolation, and difficult time entertaining children – it will literally save lives. Thousands of lives.

The worst case scenario is simply intolerable. It would represent the greatest loss of New Zealanders' lives in our country's history. I will not take that chance.

I would rather make this decision now, and save those lives, and be in lockdown for a shorter period, than delay, and see New Zealanders lose loved ones and their contact with each other for an even longer period. I hope you are all with me on that.

Together we have an opportunity to contain the spread and prevent the worst.

I cannot stress enough the need for every New Zealander to follow the advice I have laid out today.

The Government will do all it can to protect you .Now I'm asking you to do everything you can to protect us all. None of us can do this alone.

Your actions will be critical to our collective ability to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Failure to play your part in the coming days will put the lives of others at risk. There will be no tolerance for that and we will not hesitate in using enforcement powers if needed.

We're in this together and must unite against COVID-19.

I am in no doubt that the measures I have announced today will cause unprecedented economic and social disruption. But they are necessary.

I have one final message. Be kind. I know people will want to act as enforcers. And I understand that, people are afraid and anxious. We will play that role for you. What we need from you, is to support one another. Go home tonight and check in on your neighbours. Start a phone tree with your street. Plan how you'll keep in touch with one another. We will get through this together, but only if we stick together. Be strong and be kind.

I am now going to hand over to the Finance Minister to set out the additional support measures agreed by Cabinet today to provide income guarantees to those whose livelihood is disrupted by the virus.

Straight after that Minister Hipkins will talk through some of the specific decisions as they relate to education.

Following that we are making available Commissioner of Police, Mike Bush, who has been playing a key role in the operational side, and John Ombler the Controller of the All of Government response to speak with you and answer additional questions.