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Militarisation, masculinisation and organisational exclusion in the crisis preparedness sector

Aida Alvinius[a] ⓘ, Edward Deverell[b] and Susanne Hede[a]

[a]Department of Security, Strategy and Leadership, Swedish Defence University, Karlstad and Stockholm, Sweden; [b]Department of Security, Strategy and Leadership, Swedish Defence University, Stockholm, Sweden

ABSTRACT

This study aims to deepen the understanding of processes that affect collaboration between professions and organisations in the crisis preparedness domain from a gender perspective. A total of twenty-three Swedish duty officers participated in the study. The analysis of the interviews show that collaboration can be understood as (a) the militarisation of civil crisis management actors, which means that many of the work processes and cultures that originate in military organisations can now be found in the security and crisis management sector; (b) the masculinisation, which means that when male dominance appears to prevail, active strategies are used against women, civilian personnel and also inexperienced colleagues and (c) organisational exclusion which emerges particularly in situations where collaboration between female-dominated and male-dominated organisations are required. The findings are important for crisis preparedness research and practice and should work in favour of evening out asymmetries in collaborative crisis management.

Introduction

The worldwide outbreak of the Corona virus and the Covid-19 pandemic has rocked societies and institutions around the world to its foundation. This protracted and geographically widespread societal crisis has led to unprecedented consequences in public health, economy, and geopolitics. As such, the pandemic is the most recent reminder of the need to make sure that public authorities, private companies, non-governmental organizations and the general public can put differences aside and work together in crisis preparedness and crisis management. Research on crisis management and collaboration has also shown that cross-sector collaboration between various societal actors under more or less stressful circumstances is a prerequisite for local, as well as regional and national crisis preparedness (Ansell, Boin, and Keller 2010; Deverell, Alvinius and Hede 2019; Kapucu and Garayev 2011; Hede 2018). Lately a multi-disciplinary research agenda has increased scholarly knowledge on crisis preparedness, crisis management and collaboration. For example, researchers have studied crisis preparedness from a leadership perspective (Alvinius 2013; Alvinius, Danielsson, and Larsson 2010a, 2010b), from the viewpoint of organisations (Carmeli and Schaubroeck 2008) and institutions (Boin and Lodge 2016) based on the general public's views (Nilsson, Alvinius, and Enander 2016), crisis communication

(Coombs 2007; Johansen, Aggerholm, and Frandsen 2012), risk (Breakwell 2014; Comfort 2017) and not least from a gender perspective (Mano-Negrin and Sheaffer 2004). Regarding the latter, it has been shown how crisis management work is characterised by male norms, masculinity and perceptions of who can or should lead (Jansson and Linghag 2015). Furthermore, most previous research into leadership and collaboration is "gender blind," which according to Jansson and Linghag (2015) leads to recurring problems in the organisation of the crisis management work. For example crisis managers, may engage in unequal gender practices during crisis management if the organisation does not respect its female staff members and turns a blind eye to gender-based discrimination. Ineffective use of human resources is but one example of potential drawbacks of a continued neglecting of gendered orders in organizations and working life (Alvesson and Billings 2009).

In this study, we highlight processes that create and maintain this gender coding (Bradley 1989) among crisis management actors, by scrutinising whether crisis preparedness and management is coordinated in an equal way. To this end, the starting point of the study is to illuminate the area inductively and exploratively from a gender perspective. Some key roles in the crisis management field and intersector collaboration are played by the public agencies' own "spiders in the web," namely the duty officers. In this regard, we have identified an empirical and a theoretical knowledge gap concerning crisis preparedness work from the perspective of duty officers. Our ambition is also to apply a gender perspective to the study, which will be presented next.

Gender has long been an important perspective in studies of the exercise of public authority (Bredström 2008; Enander, Holmberg, and Lindgren 2013; Puar 2007), but specific knowledge of how a gender perspective can contribute to the development of crisis management and response systems is still lacking. Research that describes the gender division in the institutions responsible for risk management and crisis preparedness does, however, show that the sectors that work operatively and preventively, such as the rescue services (Engström, Jakobsen, and Krekula 2012; Ericson 2011) and the police (Andersson 2003; Miller 1999) are male-dominated, while institutions that handle the consequences of accidents within medical care are female-dominated (Lindgren 1999). Research therefore shows how a gendered system—a systematic pattern of practices that construct differing understandings of, and power relationships between the genders (Connell 1995), is reflected in differences between sectors that are required to collaborate in crisis management. On the other hand, research has not yet shown what consequences this entails for the collaboration within and between organisations. As crisis preparedness work occurs in collaboration between organisations and on the initiative of duty officers, we describe this societal function in the text below.

Duty officers: a critical crisis management function

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (aka MSB) is mandated to propose which public agencies should have *a duty officer*, tasked to "initiate and coordinate the initial operational work to detect, verify, alert and inform during serious crises" (The Swedish Parliament 2006). Since 2014, a number of additional public agencies have been tasked to appoint a duty officer according to a Government decision (Fö2014/1195/SSK). In addition, the general regulations of the Board of Health and Welfare states that there should be duty officers also on the regional level (The Government Decision 2014: 22). These decisions indicate increased societal demands for better and more effective crisis preparedness at local, regional and national level. The duty officer is thus a relatively new function for many organisations, which in practice means that the position is filled is various ways, and that the tasks differ, depending on the organisation's ordinary activities and focus. The common and specific factor of this function is that those who are appointed must act quickly and under uncertain conditions, where the requirement to make initial critical assessments makes the duty officer role particularly exposed.

Previous research on duty officers

When a serious contingency arises, duty officers must be able to react and act, with the aim of identifying events and tendencies that may lead to serious accidents, crises or catastrophes. They must be able to perceive and disseminate an often insufficient assessment of the situation, and to initiate collaboration with other actors. Research has shown that this primary task for duty officers is difficult to master (Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld 2008).

Making sense of ambiguous signals before actors collectively agree upon that there is a crisis at hand is one of the main challenges when crises are at hand (Boin and Lodge 2016). An earlier study investigated how initial collaboration between crisis management authorities, including duty officers, was affected by the access to an up-to-date shared situation assessment (Danielsson, Alvinius, and Larsson 2014). One challenge that has been identified concerns difficulties for the different actors to collectively make sense of and thus gain a similar understanding of the situation (Danielsson, Alvinius, and Larsson 2014). This means that the actors involved in the field and at management level, act based on the operating pictures and the situation assessments that are passed on. While joint operating pictures appear to consist of a technically informative perception of the accident, the understanding of the situation is functional, profession-specific and thus associated with profession-related areas of responsibility. The conclusion was that despite having the "same operating picture," it was not possible to achieve the "same understanding" of the situation. This, in turn, led to conflicts and failures while managing crises at hand. Different collaborating actors have differing interpretation priorities and more or less room for action, which can obstruct the initial work of the duty officer. The common and specific factor of this function is that those who fill it must act quickly and under uncertain conditions. The role thus entails a requirement to make complex decisions initially in a course of events, using unclear starting points, which may have major consequences for the crisis management. As mentioned above, the requirement to make initial critical assessments makes the duty officer's role particularly exposed. In addition to initial challenges during crisis management, the function of a duty officer has one further dimension it must master, namely being able to manage collaboration between organisations that have differing gender codings, i.e. whether their task is considered to be coded as "male" or "female." Health and medical care, for example, is coded as "female," while crisis management with "blue light" rescue service agencies as central actors is deemed to be coded as "male" (Ericson 2017).

The purpose of this study is to gain deeper understanding of processes that affect the collaboration between organisations in the crisis preparedness field, as perceived from the perspective of duty officers. Gender aspects are particularly emphasised in the study, with the ambition of contributing to an underdeveloped area of theory.

Method

Selection of informants

In accordance with the guidelines for qualitative data collection by Bryman (2012) and Alvesson and Sköldeberg (1994), the selection of informants was carried out with the aim of gathering the greatest possible variety of experiences. We tried to find interviewees from three different organisations represented throughout the country, including both men and women with a variety of experiences of crisis management. Such a selection may be described as a convenience sample, as we sent information letters to three organisations and selected the informants who were willing to be interviewed (Esaiasson et al. 2007; Morse 2007). The empirical material consists of 21 in-depth interviews. On two occasions we interviewed two informants simultaneously, which makes a total of twenty-three informants. Fourteen of the informants were women and nine

were men. All the informants have the job title of Duty Officer. The informants' ages varied from 30 to 65 years at the time the interviews were conducted.

Selection of organisations

The public agencies included in the study were: (1) The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, (2) regional councils (thirteen informants) and (3) county administrative boards (four informants).

1. The *Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency* is a central government agency, tasked with developing society's ability to prevent and manage accidents and crises. MSB is located in six different places, three locations in Sweden where operations are managed and planned, and a further three locations where training is carried out. A total of six informants from this agency from two different locations were interviewed. As the risk of recognition is high, no further details of the informants are provided.
2. Sweden's *regional councils* are regional self-governing units, which were introduced in 1862 as part of the local government reform. The regional councils are responsible for societal tasks such as health and medical care, local public transport, and regional planning. Sweden has twenty-one regional councils, and six of these are represented in this study via thirteen duty officers interviewed.
3. A *county administrative board* in Sweden is the Government's representative in a county. There are a total of twenty-one county administrative boards in Sweden, and five of these are represented in this study, with the same number of informants. Their most important task is to balance the goals set by the Riksdag, Sweden's parliament, and the Government within a number of different policy areas with the county's own goals and prerequisites. The county administrative boards are central government agencies, as opposed to the regional councils, which are a form of local government, secondary local authorities, with an assembly elected by the inhabitants.

Data collection

The interviews were conducted between January and May 2018. Twelve of them were conducted at the informants' workplaces and eleven were conducted by telephone. The reasons that some of the interviews were conducted by telephone were the geographical distance and hectic work situation of the informants. The interviews lasted 45–90 minutes. All interviews were conducted and analysed by the same research team, consisting of three researchers, in order to achieve interrater reliability (Bryman and Bell 2015). The methodological approach was qualitative and inductive, leading to theoretical conclusions formulated towards the end of the research and as a result of data analysis. The interviews conducted for this study adhere to an interview guide consisting of open-ended questions, followed up with individually tailored questions such as "Tell me more … ," "In what way?," and "Can you give me an example?," etc. The themes chosen were as follows:

Background

- Age, position and workplace
- Years in the profession, years as duty officers
- Describe how your organisation's duty officer works/is organised

Experience as duty officer

- Education/training, in action
- Describe a successful duty officer intervention, a less successful duty officer intervention

- What do you think is the reason for the result? (Ask informant to expand a bit if they mention themselves, another individual, organisation, structure, role, what it felt like.)

Demands and expectations of the position as duty officer

- What demands and expectations are there of duty officers?
- What consequences may arise if the expectations are not met?
- How do you as duty officer know that the event you are facing may be a crisis?
- How are issues of responsibility handled?
- Describe the challenges you have encountered?
- How can the tasks of the duty officer be changed to improve?
- What support/resources/technology/expertise do you have today?
- Selection for duty officer—how was it done?
- Women and men in the role as duty officer? Similarities and differences? Challenges?
- Professional status, importance of age and experience?
- Uncomfortable decisions

Collaboration with other actors in the role as duty officer

- Interorganisational collaboration and collaboration with other actors? Challenges and opportunities?
- Positive and negative experience of collaboration?
- Discuss interpretation priorities in the role as duty officer in relation to others

Data analysis and presentation

The data were analysed inductively according to classical Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). The ambition of this approach is to construct theory through the analysis of data. The first step is known as open coding, where interview data were examined line by line in order to identify special patterns of thoughts, actions and feelings of every informant. An example of a quotation is given below:

> I can discern some difficulty if you go out as duty officer to take part in a collaboration meeting with someone wearing a uniform. It's probably not at easy to be a woman as it is to be a man.

This quotation is coded as "Trust in uniform and military personnel in a crisis preparedness context." Step two in this qualitative analysis is consisted of sorting identified codes into different categories. The above-mentioned code, "Trust in uniform and military personnel in a crisis preparedness context," was sorted under the category named "Process militarisation." This category was further sorted into the overarching category "Disabling empowerment in crisis preparedness." A final step involved comparison of codes, categories and the overarching category to find the main concern of this study. The analysis resulted in a description of what disabling empowerment means in relation to masculinisation, militarisation and exclusion in crisis preparedness settings.

Following this methodological description, the results are presented introducing the core variable and its description, a grounded theory. Then the categories are introduced along with the codes, and exemplified with chosen quotations. The result emphasise empiricism in order to fulfil guidelines of classic Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967).

Results

The analysis of the interviews shows that the main concern of the interviewed duty officers can be understood as a process of disabling empowerment in crisis preparedness. This disabling

prevents effective collaboration between individuals and between agencies. The analysis resulted in the identification of three parallel processes, which in turn appear to impact on collaboration at different levels, but also the feeling of maintaining one's own power and influence. The first process concerns the militarisation of civil crisis management actors, which means that many of the work processes and cultures that originate in military organisations can now be found within the security and crisis management sector. The second process, or organisational characteristic, namely masculinisation, concerns male dominance within the civil crisis management system. When male dominance appears to prevail, active strategies are used against women, civilian personnel and also inexperienced colleagues, both women and men. The third process, or rather the outcome that occurs both as a consequence of the other two processes and as a stand-alone ongoing process that is gaining ground in collaboration issues between public agencies, is known as organisational exclusion. This outcome is emerging particularly clearly in situations where collaboration between female-dominated and male-dominated organisations is required. In this case, gender is insignificant, as both female and male informants experience and describe the same tendencies. It is organisational structures that discriminate and are discriminated against.

The presentation below illustrates each category with underlying codes and quotations to provide a detailed picture of the theoretical model (see Table 1).

Militarization

Militarization is a process that originated at the time of budget cuts and downsizing of the Swedish Armed Forces (cf. Alvinius, Holmberg, and Larsson 2018). Military personnel who could no longer continue their employment turned to the civil labour market for work, and many ended up in the security and crisis management sector and more often than not in leadership positions. They became culture-bearers for the military culture, cohesion and symbols, which spread to other public agencies in the form of status, language use, similar organisation processes, etc. The culture spreads to the civil public agencies. The category of militarisation is characterised by the following codes: (a) military personnel are recruited from the defence forces to civil agencies, (b) the use of resources characterised by military symbols (communications system, NATO-adaptation, staff work, language use), (c) threat production, with civil agencies as protected objects, (d) trust in uniform and in military personnel in crisis management contexts.

Military personnel are recruited from the defence forces to civil agencies

The perception of a number of interviewees, both women and men from regional councils, county administrative boards and MSB is that there is a surplus of men in the crisis management sector. This is at times portrayed in a more negative sense. Below follows a quotation from a male respondent:

> My quick reflection is probably more that they are old military types who happen to occupy civilian posts and are playing, I don't know what they are playing./…/It feels like there may be some old culture among those who have after all worked as militaries before, and that the leadership is different. I have also worked in another position in another municipality, and there were lots of old superannuated militaries who had become administration managers and politicians.

Use of resources characterised by military symbols (communications system, NATO-adaptation, staff work, language use)

The use of military resources appears to be common, and is perceived as both positive and effective. In one or two cases, it appeared more negative, as the personnel did not have the same technical skill advantages compared to those who had a military background. Quotations

that illuminate the more effective side of the use of military-characterised resources are presented below.

> We have actually adopted the NATO system to enable us to be adaptive to other operations. And not invented our own; there is no reason when there is a system that works well. And then there is a preparedness manager then, who is responsible for this system and appoints a staff manager, and things like that.

> The county administrative board has just started using RAKEL a bit more now. So that when you have these collaboration conferences regionally, then RAKEL is used these days. And then the actors out in the counties also have to do that. And even if you haven't heard that there is any crisis out in the county, then it is still a bit of a test for RAKEL quite simply, to check the sound quality and so on. So that actually feels positive, after all.

Threat production, civil agencies as protection objects

This code concerns a feeling among informants that the various decisions to designate buildings and public agencies as protection objects actually indicate a threat production. According to one informant, this change from a "normal" state to an increased grey zone between war and peace appears to lead to reduced trust between the general public and public agencies. This is a tendency that indicates increased militarisation of the civil public sphere.

> And if you look at national crisis management, then you are expected to read about everything from nuclear events to telephone network disruptions,/…/and in addition we have got a dimension in civil defence in all this too, with the war that might come and that is something we must understand and educate about, understand this context.

> … The operation does itself a disservice by disseminating, which means others think it is becoming more laughable than beneficial with things. And the latest thing, now I'm sticking my neck out again, we found out that they had applied for the county administrative board to become a protected object again, because it hasn't been that for a few years. And then these funny, interesting, yellow signs have been put up, which shine in people's faces when they come into the county administrative board, which after all is meant to be open and people-friendly, and we are fed from the management that we shall be open and friendly towards visitors. And then they are met by, you know, these signs saying protection object, and then it says you mustn't take photos and you are not allowed to be in places where you have no permission. It is so wrong. It gives off contradictory signals.

Trust in uniform and military personnel in a crisis preparedness context

A symbolic sign of increased militarisation is the prevalence of uniforms. According to a number of informants, wearers of uniforms appear to have a higher status, more speaking time, attributed ability to make decisions faster, etc. Below we present a number of quotations from both female and male respondents specifically on the prevalence of increased trust in uniformed personnel. This becomes particularly evident when uniformed personnel set the agenda, and some collaboration partners are prioritised before others. The quotation below, from a female duty officer, is about who sets the agenda at a societal level:

> I think like … There is a lot of trust placed in the rescue services having ability and knowledge. The defence forces have ability and knowledge. Just get a military person in here, and things will be solved with staff and management. He doesn't know a thing. I mean like, bloody simply, we haven't been at war for 200 years. It's so easy to train people that "now the battalion will go that way, and that way", and everybody does as they're told. It doesn't work that way here. And they don't have enough medical care in the defence forces. So now it's like … The defence forces' support of society they said before. And not it's become society's support of the Armed Forces.

A male informant from another county bears witness of similar tendencies in terms of collaboration, and that uniforms take priority, at the expense of other agencies' part in the collaboration. The informants question not just whether military personnel set the agenda, but also whether they are right on all issues.

> We are never a serious discussion partner in an operation, instead it is always uniforms first. And it's the same with the Armed Forces, when they talk about counties then they talk about ambulances, not about the health care chain, they don't talk about public transport. If we talk with the County Administrative Board, then it is public transport they are interested in, they aren't particularly interested in health and medical care really./ … /This is fairly tendentious, like a lot of the rest I have said today, but I think it's a problem with the police and the Armed Forces and the rescue services. There is some kind of uniform fetishism about it that … where it is taken for granted that these are skilled guys, making quick, good decisions, and that they know what they are doing and they sound so credible. But what I… it … well, you have good grounds for perhaps asking whether it is like that.

> Although they work with civilian issues, they have a really great interest in military things. And there it is sometimes good to act as a counterweight. Sometimes this military interest can overrun a bit, and look at things that perhaps are not in focus for the civilian agency at that time, even if it is absolutely a good idea to keep an eye on them.

Masculinisation

Masculinisation is about the security and crisis management sector having been dominated by men historically. The majority of men with some experience are perceived as having more gravitas and interpretation priority. Masculinisation therefore constitutes a norm for how the work should be done, and the risk appears obvious that non-conformists cannot make their voices heard. Once again, it is not only a question of gender as, both women and men perceive that the masculine dominance hinders both female colleagues and also younger men and men who work within female-dominated operations. The category of masculinisation consists of the following codes: (a) male-dominated organisation/sector, (b) men with experience and seniority are perceived as having greater gravitas and interpretation priority, (c) active criticism against women's ways of working and making decisions, (d) face-to-face interaction maintains masculine cohesion.

Male-dominated organisation/sector
The security and crisis management sector has traditionally attracted more men to the profession. This is the case today as well. A number of respondents bore witness to male dominance, which is presented briefly in the three following quotations:

> There is a high proportion of men.

> If you look at this collaboration team, then there is a surplus of men.

> We come from a female-dominated operation and work an enormous amount with the rescue service, which is incredibly male-dominated.

Men with experience and seniority are perceived as having more gravitas and interpretation priority
Awareness of male dominance and seniority appears to be perceived as negative for women's space to both express themselves and to make decisions. Below follows a quotation from a female respondent:

> A tall, big man with greying temples and a slightly deeper voice has more gravitas than a woman, of course, irrespective of where we are.

Active criticism against women's working ways and decision making
Both women and men perceived that women were criticised to a greater extent than men. Women were accused of not being able to make decisions quickly enough. This was witnessed by a male respondent, who defended a female colleague, who according to him was doing an

excellent job. In the first quotation, a female informant gives evidence of an event and in the second, a male informant who had to defend a female colleague's work input.

> But well, there they used a bit of muscle flexing, and 'you shouldn't come here, sweetheart, telling me what to do'.

> There were those domination techniques that NN (a women) experienced, I'll tell you about it … She did a brilliant job … nobody saw that apart from me and the director general, and all others just picked away, because 'well, we're men, and this is how it should be done, and these are fires and we know everything about putting out fires'.

Face-to-face interaction maintains masculine cohesion

One aspect that has not been considered so far is whether collaboration occurs face-to-face or remotely with teleconferencing software. Some female informants considered that closeness enabled unfavourable structures to be maintained, as this permits informal conversations, where uniformed personnel are given more space to speak and set an agenda for what applies at the meeting. One informant considered that this is avoided through remote collaboration, as you then avoid the informal structures and keep collaboration meetings short and concise.

> Telephone conferences are after all much easier to hold than to meet physically. Because it is after all physical specifically, then the blue light organisations get more speaking time quite simply, so that is just … / … /It isn't all that easy to shut some people up. So, it's easier to limit the speaking time when you are talking via RAKEL or telephone, because then you have to be brief and you can't go on as long as you please. It's more difficult when you meet physically, because then there is body language, you look at each other, you nod, you confirm. So, the rules of the game are a bit different then.

Organisational exclusion as outcome

Organizational exclusion is an outcome highlighted in this study, and it results from militarisation and masculinisation processes and characteristics. This means that the female-dominated institution—the regional council, with female-coded work tasks that consists of the healthcare chain—appears to be excluded from collaboration with other crisis management actors. All informants from the regional councils and a number from other public agencies bear witness to the perception that the regional councils are not allowed to be part and have a view, despite their importance to society. Organisational exclusion as outcome consists of the following codes: (a) withholding information, (b) isolation, not allowed to take part, forgotten and made invisible, and (c) belittled in collaboration, not taken seriously as a legitimate actor.

Withholding information

A number of informants from various public agencies described situations characterized by the withholding of information. In the collaboration between different crisis management actors, a certain transparency is expected in terms of information exchange, but informants from regional councils, but also county administrative boards and to some extent MSB perceive that the rescue services do not share all the information that may be of relevance for decision-making. The following quotation is just one of those describing this phenomenon:

> Problems at individual level within the rescue service, they hold on hard to their things.

Isolated, not allowed to participate, forgotten, excluded and made invisible

This category concerns systematic exclusion of one public agency or representatives of this agency, which is tasked to collaborate. A male respondent who works as duty officer at one of Sweden's regional councils expressed his frustration in the following way:

During [exercise] Aurora, then the police exercised with the Armed Forces in … and with the home guard, but medical care was never included. And then this friend of order wondered, how have you planned to deliver these patients to medical care? And how are they to be taken care of, or will you take care of them yourselves? Do you have any medical care of your own that you are setting up somewhere? So then you understand, the system thinking is that we are never properly included. And even in MSB terms, then … to then state this criticism, is that we are not counted either, because we have no geographic area responsibility. And then there is no reason to talk about duty officers in the regional councils, despite us being an enormous administrative organisation, almost equal to the county administrative boards in some ways. And this is reflected all the time, even in the question of civil defence and so on, that we are always considered last, despite being a gigantic organisation that turns over 350 billion per year it's like we don't exist in the crisis preparedness system.

Belittled in collaboration, not taken seriously as a legitimate actor

This category also has a negative tone in terms of the view of equivalent collaboration between crisis management actors. Once again, the regional council personnel perceive that they are made invisible, their importance is belittled and despite their size and importance to society, they are not considered as legitimate actors. A number of informants, both female and male, summarise this in the following statements:

The regional council receives the alarm with some delay.

The regional council wasn't allowed to be part of the main staff, but ended up in some subsidiary staff.

They don't understand the seriousness if medical care doesn't work, there is a lot of trust placed in the rescue services having ability and knowledge.

Discussion

The *aim* of this study has been to deepen the understanding of processes that affect collaboration between professions and organisations in the crisis preparedness domain from a gender perspective. The main conclusion is that collaboration is characterised by *disabling empowerment in crisis preparedness.* This leads to collaboration between different crisis management actors being perceived as unequal and asymmetric. Three processes, characteristics and outcomes appear to be behind the above-mentioned perception. The militarisation process, characteristics of masculinisation of collaboration and outcomes of these two that entail organisational exclusion in the collaboration have been identified. This is the study's most important contribution to theory. Hereafter, these processes, characteristics and outcomes are commented on, theoretically and practically.

Militarisation entails a process of change that has occurred in several stages, through a transfer of resources, attitudes in reception and the trust capital that uniformed professions appear to have. When the state and the Armed Forces went through a demilitarisation process (Kirk 2018) and resource reduction in the 1990s (Alvinius, Holmberg, and Larsson 2018), military personnel were recruited to the civil crisis management sector. This has had an impact on work processes, organisation culture and the use of military symbols, such as adapted language use and symbols, means of communication, etc. The borders between security, risk and the crisis sector on the one hand and the Armed Forces on the other hand are increasingly being erased. With this change, the trust in uniformed personnel grew, which has resulted in an increased interpretation priority and space for this specific professional group, at the expense of civilian officers. We have thus found that societal changes and new security threats challenge the civil crisis management system, with increased demands for the introduction of military structures and work processes, and valuing of masculine norms. This can be explained in terms of social dominance, hierarchisation of groups and repression between them (see for example Sidanius and Pratto 2001) in an entirely new context. This process, moreover, was reinforced during the Covid-19 pandemic as

Table 1. Results of data analysis.

Disabling empowerment in crisis preparedness		
Process: Militarisation	Characteristics: Masculinisation	Outcome: Organisational exclusion as outcome
• Military personnel are recruited from the defence forces to civil agencies	• Male-dominated organisation/sector	• Withholding information
• Use of resources characterised by military symbols (the communications systems, NATO-adaptation, staff work, language use)	• Men with experience and seniority are perceived as having more gravitas and interpretation priority	• Isolated, not allowed to participate, forgotten, excluded and made invisible
• Threat production, civil agencies as protection objects	• Active criticism against women's way of working and making decisions	• Belittled in collaboration, not taken seriously as a legitimate actor
• Trust in uniform and military personnel in a crisis preparedness context	• Face-to-face interaction maintains masculine cohesion	

civil authorities turned to the Armed Forces for support in structuring their staff work and crisis response (Bolling and Stenersen 2020).

Masculinisation has been identified in the study as a sign of asymmetric collaboration, as one collaboration party, often women or men from female-dominated operations, are made subject to male-dominated positions or organisations. Research within the field of crisis management emphasise in particular that female and male coded roles are reinforced in emergency situations, and that crisis management tends to be seen mostly from a male perspective (Caprioli and Boyer 2001; Ericson 2011). Later studies (Amundsdotter et al. 2015) show, for example, that pro-active work within crisis preparedness tends to reward traditionally male-dominated operations in terms of resources, which may explain the results of the study. The traditionally female-dominated operations, which include medical care, are not seen as legitimate collaboration actors. Further, these professional groups are often excluded in various ways from collaboration situations, for instance by not being allocated adequate resources (see also Danielsson 2016).

Another reason why female-dominated professional groups are not seen as active crisis management actors is that they are made passive, gendered and subordinated in the concept of protection value, meaning that they are seen as worthy and in need of protection and defence. The legitimacy for being crisis management actors then falls to the male-coded professional groups, such as rescue services and police (Ericson 2014, 2017). This might explain why *organisational exclusion* occurs between representatives of regional councils in collaboration with rescue services. The care chain is feminised and ends up last in the prioritisation, while rescue services get to carry the hero symbol and initiate the crisis management process, which therefore gives them greater interpretative prerogative priority. The Covid-19 pandemic has been another costly example of risks that emerge when the health care sector and the crisis and emergency preparedness sector are not sufficiently integrated in functional collaboration (Larsson 2020).

In summary, our findings should inform the crisis management domain on a scholarly level and in practice. With more awareness of the circumstances outlined above professionals could work more strategically for evening out asymmetries in collaboration between crisis management actors. Even if individuals have been interviewed, they are culture bearers, and in this study we have also illuminated the structures that apparently were not made visible at first glance.

We consider that the greatest merit of the study lies in the detailed account of the identified challenges that arise in collaboration. The detailed description can therefore hopefully be used for educational purposes, and contribute to improved preparation and foresight. The study's weakness is the lack of representativity. When we formulated our model, we were reduced to using interview data from a limited number of informants. The study is therefore based to a large extent on self-reported data, which may be imprecise. A wider spectrum of data would

therefore have been desirable. Continued research is therefore needed in order to evaluate the generalisability of this study.

On a final note, it is likely that most future research in the field of crisis management will in one way or another to relate to the Covid-19 pandemic. It may be too soon to argue with certainty on the effects of the pandemic. Nonetheless, there should be potential for the massive consequences of this health crisis to become a signal for increased cross-sectoral collaboration. Further, and in relation to one of the findings of this study, face-to-face interaction was found to maintain masculine cohesion. As the pandemic catapulted the world into increased usage of teleconferencing software, it would be an intriguing issue for further studies to examine the increased use of such tools and its potential effects on the masculinisation of crisis management work.

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ORCID

Aida Alvinius ⓘ http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5070-4979

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