FKVK23 Tutor: Jenny Lorentzen

Masculinity Beyond the Battlefield

Exploring Masculinities inside the Swedish Armed Forces and its Connection to the Private Sphere

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Preface

On the 18th of May 2022, Sweden applied for NATO membership, they did this with a broad alliance across party lines. Sweden did this due to the impending threat from Russia, which had invaded Ukraine two months earlier. This together with recent increases in the budget for the Swedish Armed Forces by all recent governments has led to an increased focus on the military from both academia and from the public. How does it affect Sweden? We know that the military needs to expand and one way it is going to expand is by recruiting more personnel. Civil personnel will become military personnel. This sparked my interest and one day mentioned this to my mom, a now-retired social worker. She told me that from her experience working in a town close to a military base, military families were tricky to deal with as a social worker. I found this interesting, what makes military personnel different from the rest of the population? Why would the men and women who were supposed to protect this country be difficult to deal with? My mother had no answers as to why but my interest in military personnel was ignited.

This together with an interest in gender and feminist studies became the idea for this thesis. To investigate how the military shapes its personnel as well as understand how society moulds both the military into men and also the men into the military, all through a feminist perspective. Through this research, I have gained a lot of respect for the men and women in the SwAF as well as questioned my preconceptions more than once. In this thesis, I will try to understand the masculine cultures inside the military through interviews with current and former personnel as well as try to understand how this may affect their civil life. This could not be considered an accurate picture of the whole of the Swedish Armed Forces, but still, it might provide a glimpse into a military sphere that otherwise is hard to examine.

I would like to say thanks to all participants of this research for granting me their time and knowledge for me to write this thesis. I would also say thank so my supervisor Jenny Lorentzen for helping me arrange my thoughts and believing in me. A special thanks go to my family and friends who supported me and inspired me to write this thesis.

Abstract

The objective of this thesis is to analyse how masculinities inside the Swedish Armed Forcses are manifested as well as how these affect the civil life of male soldiers. This is achieved by using a set of individual case studies where semi-structured interviews serve as the main data. To study masculinities I chose to use Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinities. In addition to this, I used Annika Kronsell's method of "gendered silence" to strengthen my arguments surrounding hegemonic masculinities. The thesis' essence centres on the concept that "the personal is political" meaning that structures of the personal are connected to the political. This thesis is used to connect the structures inside the military sphere to the private sphere. Through this research, I found several masculinities, among others the idolisation of toughness end grit. I also found evidence of hegemonic masculinities in relation to militarised masculinities, which states masculinities are considered inseparable from the military. The analyses also showed that soldiers embedded in this hegemonic masculinity were also more likely to ignore the structural problems of the SwAF. Finally, I make the connection between the masculinities which embed the deep comradery of the Armed Forces with the othering felt in the private sphere.

Key words: Masculinities, Hegemonic Masculinities, SwAF, Militarized

Masculinities, Civil Life

Words: 9976

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1 Introduction

Despite common-sense understandings of gendered militarism—of men as violent and women as peaceful—we need to acknowledge that men and masculinities are militarized, not inherently militaristic (Eichler 2014, p.90)

This thesis stems from an interest in the military and more specifically the men and women that are a part of it. I chose to use the feminist perspective as it is a powerful tool to analyse institutions so strongly related to the male sex. My research stems from social constructivist ideas, which means that the traits and characteristics related to manhood and masculinities are constructed by society. This also means that the connection between men and the military is as well social construct. The goal of this thesis was to investigate how men in the military relate to the concept of masculinity and try to understand how this affects them. I see myself as an outsider in relation to the military but on the other hand, I am also a man affected by norms surrounding masculinity.

1.1 Purpose and Research Questions

I choose to analyse this through semi-structured interviews with seven males who are or have been employed by the SwAF within one year of participating. The background to my research is mainly previous research surrounding masculinities and masculinities inside the Swedish Armed Forces. This is where my theory comes from, based on a literature review I decided that hegemonic masculinities, militarized masculinity and gendered silence will be the theories and concepts most useful in researching my topic. I also used classic feminist concepts such as the "personal is political" to investigate how these masculine structures might influence the participant's private life.

How do masculinities manifest inside the Swedish Armed Forcses? How do these masculinities affect the civil life of male soldiers?

1.2 List off abbreviations

SwAF - Swedish Armed Forces

2 Literature Review

This segment of the thesis will provide a background of the research subject. Firstly, there will be a short description of studies regarding masculinities and feminist research. This is only to be seen as a short introduction while more elaborate description regarding masculinities and feminist research lies in the theory chapter. I chouse to include a segment on masculinities and feminist studies in my literature review since it aids to explaining what has been done and where my thesis fit into the research field. Secondly, I will describe how the SwAF have related to gender issues historically and currently. Lastly, there will be a discussion regarding where my research fits into the studies of Peace and Conflict.

2.1 Masculinities and Feminist Studies

The goal of the sub chapter is explain how the field of feminist and masculinity research has developed and provide a background into the rest of this thesis. Feminist researchers have a history of studying the military and one of the most influential works is Cynthia Enloe's Bananas, Beaches and Bases. Enloe uses feminist analyses to look for women in international politics, and trough this gain insight into gender dimensions (Enloe 2014, preface). Further influential was Raewyn Connell who wrote the book "masculinities" where the concept of hegemonic masculinities is first introduced. It discussed how certain traits or behaviour which are idolised can be seen to uphold the gender hierarchy (Connell 2005, p.834). The concept militarised masculinities draw the connection between men, masculinities and the military. The chapter by Clair Duncanson in the "Routledge International Handbook of Masculinity Studies" (2020) highlights the relationship between masculinities and militarism. Duncanson discusses how men are shaped by society into military ideals which in a societal context links men and military interchangeably (Duncanson 2019, p.473). Ramon Hinojosa connects the ideas of militarism and hegemonic masculinity in his own research, which much like this thesis investigates the armed forces. This research is important as it shows how these concepts applicable in current masculinity research (Hinojosa 2010).

2.2 The Swedish Armed Forcses

The SwAF is an organization that has for the last couple of years adopted a gender perspective, one of the documents that came because of this is "Handbok Gender" (Handbook Gender). The document details how gender should be incorporated into the daily activities of the SwAF and the goal is to gain a deeper understanding of how gender works inside a military situation (Förvarsmakten H Gender 2016, p.5). This document also states that the reason for a gender perspective within the Armed Forces is because it will help to achieve its goal of having equal opportunity for men and women. It also illustrates how a gender perspective helps to get a more comprehensive image of the civil situation within a peacekeeping mission (Förvarsmakten H Gender 2016, p.9). This document is a sample of the work that The SwAF has done to deal with the subject of gender.

Similarly, to most militaries, the SwAF has long been dominated by men. Women were considered weak and not fit for military life while the role of men was considered innate (Sundevall 2011, p. 206). The role of women in the Armed Forces increased during the 20th century and in 1989 all military positions were available to women (Sundevall 2011, p.210). The gender differences partly remained until 2010 when general conscription became available to men and women alike (Sundevall 2011, p.212). Even if equal opportunity is given, the gender ratio in the military is not 50/50. In 2021 18% of mandatory conscription were women and 11% of the full-time employees were women (not including civil employees) (försvarsmakten 2022)

The greater participation of women has also surfaced problems inside the SwAF. In 2017, 1768 women inside the SwAF signed a petition saying that they have been the victim of harassment during their employment. This was the result of the Me-Too movement which brought to light sexual harassment from all parts of society. The women of this movement called it "Givakt och bit ihop" which translates to; attention and grit your teeth. The women of this movement bring to light the power relations and the culture of silence of the Swedish Defence Force (DN 2017). This article's importance should not be understated, this shows there is a problem within the Armed Forces and that a large part of women has been affected in some way.

I will highlight a few student papers which contributed to the literature regarding masculinity and the SwAF. The first one is the paper "Givakt och bit ihop" (2018) by Johanna Söderfjäll. This paper analyses the Swedish Defence Force's problem with sexual harassment, assaults and violations during the me-too movement. This is done by both an ethnographic study and group interviews (Söderfjäll 2018, p.8). Further is the paper by Sofia Bjersér "I have not achieved a feeling of being masculine" (2021). Her paper analyses masculinities with a focus on military personnel who have been on peacekeeping missions. This paper discusses very interesting subjects regarding masculine norms inside the SwAF and ways of interpreting the data recovered from interviews. Bjersér also provided useful information through the interview material regarding how military personal views themselves in the military. Both the papers by Bjersér and Söderfjäll have provided background on how interviews and interview questions should be constructed.

2.3 Contribution

The previous segment has established what has been both in a macro perspective regarding military and masculinities as well as in a more localised environment regarding The SwAF. What has not been found in the research on the SwAF is how the existing masculine norms affect male soldiers in their civil life. This research aims to investigate how male soldiers see themselves affected by these norms, how this might affect their civil life and how they reflect on these norms. The research of this thesis stems from the male experience of these norms inside the SwAF which I argue is a research gap that has not been explored enough. I also argue that I as a man might have greater access since my interviewees share the same sex, which might lead them to be more open regarding these subjects. I do not seek to discredit men or the SwAF, I only seek to understand how the experiences of the SwAF shape men and their behaviour. As Clair Duncanson writes, the military can be seen as a reflection of society and a reflection of the masculinities of society. Investigating these masculinities could provide us with a perspective into what the rest of society looks like (Duncanson 2020, p.473).

3 Theory

In this section, I will present the relevant theory that will be used in my analysis. The first subchapter discusses militarism and militarised masculinities and how these are used in the analysis of gender structures. The second subchapter describes hegemonic masculinity as well relevant analytical frameworks within the concept; Dominant, Dominating and Positive masculinities in addition to explaining the concept gendered silence. The third subchapter describes militarism, militarized masculinities and relevant discussions regarding the concepts. The final segment discussed feminist research and how this extends the analyses by dissecting the private and the public. This segment are then concluded in a theoretical framework.

3.1 Militarism and Militarised Masculinities

Militarism is a complex concept and cannot be described with I single description. Instead, it could be explained as a group of ideas perpetuated by a society which legitimises the existence of the military. Cynthia Enloe provides an example of ideas that are embedded in the concept:

The belief is that men are natural protectors and that women should be grateful for manly protection.

The belief is that soldiers deserve special praise for the contributions to their countries.

The belief that hierarchies of a command are natural part of society.

The belief that in human affairs is natural to have enemies.

(Enloe 2007, p.11)

Militarism and men are socially connected since the majority of the world's military is dominated by men. Feminist scholars argue that this is not because of any biological connection, rather it is and has been one way to prove the manliness of a man. Society fosters men into the military and therefore also fosters men into militarism. (Duncanson 2019, p. 467). The way men have to be rewarded for military services and simultaneously punished for disobedience

shows according to Duncanson that there is little natural with men in the military (Duncanson 2019. p. 468). "War makes men and men make war" simplistically explains the relations between men and militarism. It should however again be affirmed that this relationship is simply a social construction and is only used to explain the relationship between men and the military in today's society (Duncanson 2019. p. 469-470).

Militarism and masculinities connect through the concept of militarized masculinities. The basics of militarized masculinities assert that characteristics and traits connected with masculinity can be achieved through the service of the military or military actions. This is then also used by states in efforts to attract men into the military which is done by displaying violence to appeal to masculine identity (Eichler 2014, p.81). This is not only directed to men, since as explained in the previous section, masculine traits are seen as superior and valued higher than those attributed to females, therefore militarised masculinities are also relevant to women (Eichler 2014, p.82). Militarized masculinity much like hegemonic masculinity is often constructed in relation to the feminine. Maya Eichler exemplifies the masculine "just warrior" compared with the feminine "beautiful souls" (Eichler 2014, p.82-83). Eichler uses militarised masculinities when analysing a female Canadian soldier's death in Afghanistan. Eichler describes how the media is describing the soldier as equal to all soldiers but as well as having certain skills there were related to her femininity. Eichler explains this with the rigid connection between militarism and masculinity (Eichler 2014, p.87).

This concept is complex and to successfully use this as a theoretical tool we must look at more diverse examples of militarised masculinities. Regina F. Tituni describes how a simple explanation of militarised traits only as being strong aggressive and bloodlust is not adequate. A wider array of traits is today necessary such as teamwork, obedience and self-sacrifice, which could be considered more feminine traits (Titunik 2007, p.147). This means that militarised masculinities could not be described as one thing, it is not simple. Rebecca Tapscott rather describes it as the tension between unrestraint violence and discipline order (Tapscott 2020, p.1596). By viewing this as a tension between sides there is a possibility to explain contradictory behaviour (Tapscott 2020, p.1570).

3.2 Masculinities and Hegemonic Masculinities

Raewyn Connell wrote the book "masculinities" where the concept of hegemonic masculinities is first introduced. This concept constitutes that investigating men, and the most prized behaviour within a group of men is important, because it helps understand how gender dynamics and patriarchy are being upheld (Connell 2005, p.834). The concept of hegemonic masculinities refers to the idea that there as certain traits within a community, nation or group that are considered desirable and are seen as superior to others. Hegemonic masculinity theory is used to understand the continuum of male dominance in the gender hierarchy. This idea builds upon that what is seen as good in society is also what is masculine and to the contrary feminine characteristics are seen as less valuable. It is not one set of things that could be considered hegemonic, but these characteristics are ever-changing. (Connell 2005, p.830). Even if the traits or characteristics involved with hegemonic masculinities are changing, there are always traits that are preferred and these traits and the men who uphold the are seen as the epitome of society (Connell 2005, p.834). These traits are not to be seen as positive traits or negative traits, only traits that can be attributed to the ideal of a man. It is however important to consider that hegemonic masculinity is seen as an upholder of the gender structures and therefore to some extent can be seen as negative or toxic (Connell 2005, p.840). Since the traits of hegemonic masculinities are based on the solidification and structuring of the gender hierarchy, the masculinities which is considered lesser are therefore linked to femininity.

Hegemonic masculinities as described above are relational and appear differently in different settings (Connell 2005, p.848). Connell also explains that within the society it may exist simultaneously hegemonic masculinities. hegemonic masculinities are influenced by things such as actors, politicians and professional athletes. Hegemonic masculinities are exemplified by Connell in a study of an Australian high school. The study showed that playing rugby was linked to a specific hegemonic masculine form (Connell 2005, p.849). This categorization is used to use to describe the hegemonic stance more accurately in the researched area. Further categorization is needed, and this is through a separation of Dominant, Dominating, and Positive Masculinities.

3.2.1 Dominant, Dominating and Positive Masculinities

Dominant, Dominating and Positive Masculinities are used to separate different types of hegemonic masculine behaviours. *Dominant* behaviour is to be seen as the behaviour that is most common and mostly celebrated at the local, regional, or global but is not necessarily legitimising the gender structure itself (Messerschmidt & Messner 2018, p.41). This is different to *Dominating* which is behaviour that is dominating, controlling, or commanding, which to a greater extent reaffirms gender dynamics (Messerschmidt & Messner 2018, p.42). As a counterpart, there are *positive masculinities* which are masculinities that do not contribute to a furthered gender structure but instead act as opposite (Messerschmidt & Messner 2018, p.43). These categories of *Dominant, Dominating* and *Positive masculinities* provide a further understanding of the concept of hegemonic masculinities.

3.2.2 Gendered Silences

An interesting feminist concept is discussed by Annika Kronsell in chapter six of the book "Feminist Methodologies in international relations" (2006) by B. Ackerly, M. Stern, & J. True (Eds.). In this chapter Kronsell studies hegemonic masculinities inside the SwAF by using, what she calls gendered silence. This means that to study gender one must look at what is not said, for what is not said is considered normal. She explains that looking into what is normal and simply not discussed inside the SwAF it is possible find out what is considered hegemonic (Kronsell 2006, p.108). For my research, this means that I will look at what is opinions or perceptions of the participants and analyse what they consider to be normal. Which could lead to an interesting insight into how these soldiers relate to gender.

3.3 The Military versus the Private

Feminist research is about discovering how gender plays a part in why things happen in the way that they do. It tries to elevate research beyond states and elites to understand what dynamics lie below. For example, by using gender, but also through looking at factors such as age or

class. Feminist research is based on the search for power relations and using new and innovative methodologies to find these power relations (Björkdahl & Selimovic 2021, p.41).

Cynthia Enloe describes that masculinities could be understood as the idea that society sees certain behaviour as typically masculine. This also includes that men are expected to behave and have the characteristic of these masculinities (Enloe 2007, p.4). Enloe uses examples such as doing contact sports or being a soldier. One important aspect of this is the hierarchy of these. What is bound to these concepts is not the same for all societies, this change and transform continuously which much be part of the analyses.

"The personal is political" is what could be regarded as a steppingstone in feminist research. This concept asserts that the private social interaction of daily life is influenced by power relations. These power relations do not come from nowhere, they are shaped by politics and maintained by society (Enloe 2014, p348). The concept is used to challenge the divide between these two spheres the public and the private, to understand how they may affect each other (Man Ling Lee 2007, p.164). This concept also works backwards, just as the political shapes the personal, the personal also shapes the political. Hierarchies and relations in one's personal contribution to the moulding of society and the political structures (Enloe 2014, p348). Cynthia Enloe exemplifies this with how gender hierarchy in the family effect to is not only directly connected to the political decisions made by the ones in charge (Enloe 2014, p348). To understand why things are as they are by only looking at one level is not enough.

3.4 Summery of Theoretical Framework

I will use the concept: the personal is political. More specifically the idea that happened in the public is affect the private. This will be used to highlight how structures and values inside the SwAF might generate tension in the private sphere (Man Ling Lee 2007, p.164). Further, the concept of "gendered silence" as described by Annika Kronsell will be used to look at what sort of topics and themes are missing from the interviews and from there analyse why and how this might be, in order to highlight examine hegemonic masculinity (Kronsell 2006, p.108). Likewise, I will use the levels of analyses presented by Connell *Dominate, dominating* and *positive masculinities* to get a more complex analysis (Connell 2005, p.849). The concepts of Militarism and militarised masculinities will be used by analysing how traits related to

and masculinities.

4 Methodology

4.1 Research design

This thesis is a set of individual case studies where semi-structured interviews are used as the primary data (Robson & McCartan 2016, p.153). Previous research as well as the theory is used as contextualisation and will act as secondary data. The goal is to learn more about the specific case, which in this thesis is the SwAF. Interviews are used to gain insight into how men experience norms and structures inside the SwAF, and how these norms affect the soldiers in their civil life. This is a qualitative study in the social constructivist research tradition (Robson & McCartan 2016, p.24-25). This means that the goals are to understand the SwAF through the experiences of individual soldiers. Interviews are useful for this purpose since it provides direct information from the individuals and is not filtered through an organisation (Creswell & Creswell 2018, p. 189). The feminist methodology is ubiquitous throughout this thesis and also exists as my methodical framework. Feminist methodology means to understand and explain why things are as they are through the idea of gender as a social construct, combined with the idea of a socially constructed gendered hierarchy of power (Sjoberg & Via 2010, p.9).

4.2 Participants

The goal of the thesis was to investigate the experiences of male soldiers inside the SwAF; hence my participants were male. I choose to limit the scope of my interviews to people who had been a part of the SwAF not less the two years before the interviews were conducted. This means that I had a broad scope of people who were still a part of the SwAF and those who had recently left. Limitations were also made regarding the military rank of the participants, where I choose to have the participants to be below the rank of officer. I made this delimitation on the

basis that the further into the organisation the more institutionalized the person would be, which might affect the answers to be more in line with the official stance of the SwAF.

The participants of this study were gathered through my connections. I reached out towards people who had people in their surroundings which I knew had potential participants in their surroundings. Five out of seven participants were found this way, the rest were found through referral by previous candidates. Seven candidates were considered enough since it gave me enough data to analyse, and little new information arose in the seventh interview, which could be an indication that my research was saturated (Creswell & Creswell 2018, p. 189).

Concerning the anonymity of the participants no names, ages or ranks will appear in this paper. The only notes regarding the individuals will be regarding their specific involvement inside the SwAF. Since all participants have been a part of the SwAF in different ways, a few being part of the general conscription, some currently doing military studies and others that have done lengthy peacekeeping missions. Since these experiences are diverse, they will not be quantified, instead, they will be discussed fluently in the text. The participants are displayed below with their number, interview date, and how the interview was conducted.

Interview	Interview date:	Face To face/Videocall
number:		
1	21/04-23	Face To Face
2	23/04-23	Videocall
3	25/04-23	Videocall
4	24/04-23	Face To Face
5	25/04-23	Videocall
6	26/04-23	Videocall
7	9/05-23	Videocall

Table 1: Interview number/Interview date/Face to face-Video call

4.3 Interviews

The interviews took place either via video call or in person. In cases where the interview took place in person, I encouraged the setting of their own home, though I always gave them an option for another place so that they were able to choose. The settings are important as it is vital that the participant feels comfortable when talking. A more comfortable setting is also helpful when doing semi-structured interviews as this is more similar to a conversation than a structured interview, which can be aided by a more relaxed setting (Brounéus 2011, p.136). Doing the interviews face-to-face and on Zoom was preferred since it allowed me to read subtle changes in tone which is important as it might give clues when to further explain the question or change them to get a more comprehensive answer. Probes were also used, probes are questions that are not a part of the original interview guide but are asked when a subject interesting to the research emerges (Halperin & Heath 2020, p.313, 315; Brounéus 2011, p.138; Robson & McCartan 2016, p289).

4.3.1 Interview Guide and Consent Form

The interview guide was structured based on an introduction, a main theme and an outro. (Halperin & Heath 2020, p.317-318). I also choose to include an ending which contained two very broad questions which were meant to spark thought and retouch some of the topics mentioned earlier in the interview. The themes of the segment in the interview guide are *Introduction* (introduction), *Uppvärmning* (warm-up), *Försvarsmakten* (SwAF), *Civila livet* (Civil life), *Maskulintet* (Masculinity) and *Avslutning* (Finishing).

These themes were formulated out of the research question and represent the main topics of this thesis (SwAF, Civil life and Masculinity). The questions were devised out of the theory. In writing the questions I tried to keep a balance between asking questions which could be considered open-ended while still keeping within the selected themes. I also devised the questions to show as little bias as possible which could have made the result faulty (Halperin & Heath 2020, p.318). For example, I asked big broad questions such as "What is masculinity" as well as "Tell me about a role model you had during your time in the Swedish Defence Force". Because of this, I could get a mix of thought-through answers about masculinity, as well as answers which required more analysing, both useful for answering the research question.

The goal was that my body language throughout the interview should project encouragement, which meant I used smiles and nods to let the interviewee know that I was listening and wanted them to keep talking. Specifically, this was to prevent bias by signalling interest in all questions and encouraging longer answers (Halperin & Heath 2020, p.317). For this reason, I decided not to take notes during the interview, as I thought that this might distract or give away information on which kinds of answers, I found interesting. The interview guide changed slightly during the course of the interviews, this was because it was noticed that some questions were hard to understand, and some unnecessary. See appendix 1 for full interview guide

Before all interviews, a consent form was sent to the interviewees. This consent form included a brief description of the research combined with 5 points regarding informed consent. Informed consent means that the participants not only agree to the study but are also adequately informed about the research and only then can informed consent be reached (Robson & McCartan 2016, p.212). Participants were instructed to read the consent form before the interview and then consented by participants at the start of the interview. The template for the consent form was from "Real World Research" (2016) by Colin Robson and Kieran McCartan (p.213). This was then modified to fit my thesis. See appendix 2 for the consent form

4.4 Data Analyses

When the interviews were completed, they were transcribed. This was done with the help of three different tools. Firstly, I used an Adobe sound enhancer, which removed backroad noise and enhanced the vocals. This was then transferred to the "word transcription program" which produces the interviews as one fluent text. The text was then entered express scribe transcription program. I then went through the interviews correcting mistakes and adding speakers and punctuation. During this process, I took notes of certain things that I found interesting that related to my research question. These were mainly overarching themes which could be discussed in the analyse. I then entered the transcripts into the program NVivo. I used thematic coding which means that I had a few core codes before analysing the transcripts (Robson & McCarthy. During the coding process, I also constructed subcodes to these, as well as new core codes. The text and codes were analysed and combined with notes from the transcription, the

result of this is displayed in the analysis chapter below. All codes are displayed in the appendix 3. All quotes were translated before being used in the analysis chapter.

4.5 Methodology Discussion

In this segment, I will discuss some of the challenges with doing qualitative research and specifically in doing interviews. This is based on the experiences I had conducting the interviews and the role of me myself doing the research.

4.5.1 Positionality

In qualitative research, the role of the researcher is considerably larger compared to quantitative research. The part the researcher plays in qualitative research is highlighted in this segment. Knowing my role in this research help reduce bias, but bias will exist trough out all research and the researcher's role is to be transparent and open about them. Creswell & Creswell describes this as reflexive thinking (Creswell & Creswell 2018, p.184). I choose this topic of research because of my interest in feminist research and masculinity in relation to the SwAF. This means that I came into this thesis with preconceived ideas about both the participants and the masculine structures within the SwAF. Therefore, the analysis and the interviews were affected by me as the researcher. To counter this, I did my best to construct interviews in such a way that bias would not affect the interview. To a certain extent, this was successful but, in some cases, I noticed a "defensive" stance regarding a few of the questions, which I attribute to the fact that they saw me as an outsider who come to "discredit" the SwAF. To combat this, I reformulated a few questions and throughout the processes paid a great deal of attention to my body language and tried to incorporate reflexive thinking.

4.5.2 Delimitations

My method of finding participants was by using people in my social sphere whom I knew had potential candidates. I choose this method for three reasons. Firstly, it made it possible to interview persons from a broad spectrum of backgrounds. Secondly, I did not need to use gatekeepers which provided access (Robson & McCartan 2016, p.489). Thirdly, I was able to interview persons that might not have volunteered if no personal connection was there. For example, if I had called the local military regiment, described my subject and from their people had volunteered. You could argue that these people were interested in the subject and therefore volunteered. In the case of this thesis, I had the opportunity to interview persons who did not have any direct interest in the research. I would argue that this was beneficial since it provided less tough thorough answers.

On the other hand, this gave me social closeness to the participants, which meant that some of the interviewees had preconceived ideas of what the interview was going to discuss, based on that the person had knowledge about me or my views before the interview. I noticed this especially when one of the participants said, "I guess that was not the answer you were looking for". Which implied that I was searching for specific answers, based on what views they assume I have. I acknowledge that this may to some degree affect my results, but as explained previously qualitative research is always based on the researcher and there will always be a certain degree of influence. I argue that the interviews are still highly usable. The positives and negatives of using my contact grid for interviews have been discussed and through the transparency of the research bias is reduced (Brounéus 2011, p.135)

5 Analyses

This section will present the findings of my research. I have divided the analysis based on the results of the thematic coding and in relation to my theory. The first part will discuss masculinities inside the SwAF based on the division of dominant, dominating and positive masculinities. Secondly, I discuss hegemonic masculinities in relation the militarism and militarised masculinities. Thirdly, I will use the concept of gendered silence to further develop the analyst. This will provide a base for a final discussion regarding these masculinises in the civil life.

5.1 Masculinities

This chapter is discussed traits and characteristics that the interviews saw as being the most common as well as the ones the most desirable. I will be doing this by using the concept of masculinities (Messerschmidt & Messner 2018, p.41-43)¹. It is here important to highlight the difference between masculinities and hegemonic masculinities. This thesis describes masculinities as traits that are seen as valued and idolised. While hegemonic masculinities are traits that not only are idolised but also reaffirm the "gender unequal relationship between men and women, masculinity and femininity, and among masculinities" (Messerschmidt & Messner 2018, p.41).

¹ The separation of dominant, dominating and positive masculinities is described in the section: 3.2 hegemonic masculinities

5.1.1 Dominant and Dominating Masculinities

Toughness and grit were traits that were recurringly cherished by all interviewed. People who had been through "tough" training or done things considered "tough" was seen as more valuable and were considered higher up on the hierarchy (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, p.832). In the quote below the interviewee was asked if he had any role models during their time in the military and why this person was a role model. The quote below is a sample of where physical toughness is idolised.

(...) I didn't have a real role model, but then I had a deputy platoon leader who was really tough. He had done really tough training in the military and was smaller than me in height then, but strong as a maniac, (Interview 1. 04/21-23)

While in the other cases, it was the mental toughness and grit to deal with tasks that were not very fulfilling but completing them, nevertheless. As described below, a valuable trait is a person who seeks tasks and completes them without complaining.

And sometimes grit and it doesn't have to be linked to it being tough and you carry tough stuff, but sometimes as we usually call... Yes, in any case, a boring task, which happens sometimes you can't just sigh, but just seek it out and do the task, because it's a task that has to be done, it can be anything like you might need to clean the toilet. (Interview 4. 04/24-23)

Other characteristics were also celebrated which were labelled during the analyses as emphatic, openness and understanding. These were seen equally or more important as physical toughness or grit. These were seen as fundamental and highly idolised and were often described as referring to how a "good" soldier should be or behave. For example, one of the interviewees said that many of his officers "first yelled and then thought" (Interview 7. 05/09-23). He then gives an example of another officer who on the other hand had empathy when mistakes were made and did not use excessive punishment.

(...) And kind of explained the whole situation like this. I thought you had the barracks ban and lalala and maybe that's what elevated him more because he took it with me directly. And then took it further and explained how he would proceed (Interview 7 05/09-23).

This is also displayed when asked what characteristics a typical soldier has, and what is important for a soldier to have. The interviewees described traits related to emphatic, openness and understanding.

Yes, but humility is the biggest thing, and I think it goes a long way in the armed forces (Interview 4 04/24-23).

It's really a big thing to have as a soldier. Understanding and openness. Yes, understanding the task, being open to it, and being calm and having an open mind to it can be a bigger thing (Interview 4 04/24-23).

Good qualities of a good soldier? Well, first of all, I would say that. But there are many different types of positions and therefore different good qualities. But generally speaking, a good quality is that you are a good team player. You like to help others. It's good to be able to be unpretentious (Interview 5 04/25-23).

I would argue these traits of toughness, grit, emphatic, openness and understanding could be seen as dominant masculinities since they are the most celebrated within that local community and are seen are revered according to the participants (Messerschmidt & Messner 2018, p.41). One could on the other hand argue that toughness and grit could be put in the category of dominating since they are more closely related to how Messerschmidt & Messner describes dominating masculinities as "commanding and controlling particular interactions, exercising power and control over people and events" (Messerschmidt & Messner 2018, p.42). This means that the traits of toughness and grit are more related to masculinities in power positions as officers while emphatic, openness and understanding are more closely related to common masculinities which are merely considered desirable. Nevertheless, is apparent that certain tensions exist between different masculinities (Tapscott 2020, p.1570).

5.1.2 Positive Masculinities

Forms of positive masculinities which is described as masculinities which promote a more egalitarian relationship between genders and other masculinities. Was present in my interviews while these were not idolised to the same extent as the precious described trait, they apricated and worked outside of typical masculinities. This was described by one of the interviewees who said the greatly apricated to work that was being done in his pluton to combat sexual harassment.

When we did, we had many lectures and many meetings where we talked about, well, talked about sexual harassment, talked about, Men and women, we talk about discrimination. We

talked about everything current and having to treat everyone equally, and I thought it was very good that we talked about it, because it's easy to just hide it, or choose not to talk about it. (Interview 6 26/04-23).

This stands in contrast to certain remarks that only discussed the need to treat women the same as men. Which I argue cannot be considered positive masculinities since it does not address gender issues directly. It instead assumes that women and men are treated equally and continues that tradition. This is exemplified by the term "A green uniform is a green uniform" which was said during one of the interviews. This was then picked up and used as an interview question to find common ground with the interviewees.

It's a green uniform, that's what we see. The uniform is the uniform, regardless of their gender, their background, their religious beliefs or, yes, their sexual orientation, and so the green uniform is the uniform of a colleague (Interview 4 24/4-23).

I do not argue that this is explicitly problematic I only argue that this could be seen as an ignorance of gender structures compared to the previous quotation which indicates a clearer insight into gender issues. This is interesting as explained in "Handbook Gender" The recruitment of the SwAF should adopt positive discrimination. This means that gender should be part of the analyses and minorities should be prioritised if other qualifications are equivalent (Försvarsmakten Handbok Gender, p34). I would argue that one area where applicants had different opinions and in some cases conflicting opinions.

One could argue that this is a matter of generation, that the older generations have an outdated view on gender, while the younger generation is more "progressive". I do not agree that it is this simplistic, I would rather say that most of the men showed a complex attitude towards gender discourse and were often contradictory. Therefore, I would argue that positive masculinities exist from the basis of my interviews but are nevertheless complicated and complex. This complexity is interesting as it relates to the tension discussed by Tapscott. She discusses these as "mutually constitutive" which means that these masculinities reaffirm each other (Tapscott 2020, p.1569). These different masculinities exist parallel to each other, and one could also argue that they are somewhat dependent the existence of another.

5.2 Hegemonic and Militarised Masculinities

For a masculinity to be considered hegemonic there it must in some way reaffirm the unequal relationship between genders, masculinity versus femininity, and among different masculinities. No such thing was evident merely in what the participants said or expressed during the interviews. However certain connections were made that I argue could constitute a hegemonic relationship. Some of the participants when asked the reasons behind the SwAF being a majority of men. Gave responses which imply that men are most common because of their upbringing and because the military has been male historically. For example, the quote below is an answer to the question, of whether there is anything natural with men in the military.

Yes, I'd say so. It feels like it has always been a bit more like that. That, yes, but wars and such have always been male-dominated. So yes, I would say that it is natural that there are more men involved (Interview 2 04/23-23).

The use of the word "natural" here as be discarded since that was the way that the question was asked. Regardless this implies that there are men are made for the military. Further exemplified with following quote which stems from a conversation about the difference in the male/female ratio between different military units.

(...) Well, it feels like. Guys are perhaps more attracted to this messy stuff like in arms (a reference to his specific part in the military) swimming in water. Like this, going in a combat boat and so on. And messing around in the mud and stuff like that. It feels more like guys are attracted to the tough stuff KSP 90 (Machine Gun 90) (Interview 2 04/23-23).

You could argue that this reference makes the case more men are fit for military service because of the way men are brought up. While women who are not brought up with some ideals are therefore a lesser fit for the military. The military is as described limited to men who "fit in" This is so implied by the following quote, which describes how men have always been a part of the military, which is good since it limits the terrors of war to only men.

I think it's good. It's a bit difficult to justify the answer, but it's precisely because we talked about the fact that war is like that, that's what's terrible, so why do we want to attract? Now in society, if you divide it into men and women, men tend to seek OK. Why do we want to include all the others and expose them to this terrible thing? (Interview 3 25/04-23).

I would argue that this fits a good idea of militarism and men. It produces the idea that men are made to be in the military (Enloe 2007, p.11). However, this is not the case for all men. Throughout the interviews there was evident there were certain men or women who did not live

up to the standards of the military. This was most evident when the interviews discussed how the current military "pr-trick" is to say that everybody is welcome in the army or that everybody has a place in the army. Some of the interviewees did not agree with this idea. They did this by emphasizing how motivation and the self-sacrifices needed for the military were not for everyone.

I don't know, I think I like to look more at personality. This gender thing feels like a real PR trick to me, that you just try to equalise things because it's supposed to be equal. But the defence forces are a very specific profession. We need as many people as possible, but they must also be the right people. (Interview 7 09/05-23)

This emphasises that the SwAF is a special profession and should not be for everyone. The following quote comes from a conversation about how new conscription soldiers had a bad experience and cried on the train back home on leave.

And it's not their fault. And it's not the Armed Forces' fault, it's the fault of the recruitment authority, which is a different organisation. (...) What does this have to do with masculinity or men and women? I don't know, but it tends to be men who want to do this. (Interview 3 25/04-23)

I argue that this constitutes and hegemonic relationship between those who are right fit for the SwAF and those who should be excluded. This builds the relationship between those hegemonic men at the top of the hierarchy and those who are considered to be further down the ladder. One could argue that by stating that the military is for the men, it also implies that military should be seen as the epidemy of masculinity. This further links the action of participating in the military as way of achieving these masculinities.

Even though the previous quote does not explicitly mention gender and I do not think gender is the only variable; men who also lack motivation and are considered weak by the group are seen as lesser. Exemplified by the quote below which comes from a question about the importance of comradery.

But there are probably many who do not have it. And there's a reason for that, which is quite, it sounds awful, but it's that there's someone weak, who doesn't measure up and who has now got a job for some reason. Then you have six months to get rid of this individual (Interview 3 25/04-23).

The importance of comradery in the military is greatly studied, as often stands as one of the greatest reasons for participating in the military (Duncanson, 2011, p.105-106). It is When connecting this to the perceived idea that men fit into the military the connection becomes evident. The hegemonic masculinity then becomes connected to the traits of men who are seen as fitting, which excludes the others who do fit into the perception of the ideal man. This might come as contradictory to what is described in the above chapter on positive masculinities, but my point is to higligt that these types of masculinities and hegemonic masculinities exist side by side and tension exists between them, which is described by Rebecca Talbott. Like Talbott, I do not agree that these have to be combined which would create a sort of reconciled masculinity which consists of many different parts. I instead argue that this tension between masculinities brings about problems discussing certain subjects which highlights the ambiguity which will be discussed in the following subchapter.

This subchapter has explored how different traits are related to hegemonic masculinity which contributes to the gender hierarchy. I have also shown how these masculinities are directly related to the military service. I here conclude that the hegemonic masculinities described by the interviews are interchangeable with the militarised masculinities, this will be further explored in the next subchapter in relation to soldiers' civil life.

5.2.1 Hegemonic Masculinity and Gendered Silences

In this segment, I wish to discuss a certain theme which was labelled "Gendered Silence" during my thematic analysis. This category was named after the concept by Annika Kronsell which argues that to find hegemonic masculinities in a military context it is possible to analyse what is not being said (Kronsell 2006, p.108). I found this very useful since it made it possible to discuss certain aspects which were not explicitly said but rather unintentionally avoided.

I found evidence of this when asking how the participants views the recent accounts of female soldiers being treated badly. Here the responses all but one never mentioned any structural problems inside the SwAF. The participants instead argued that these problems were because of individuals who did not represent the SwAF.

Interviewer: There have been some cases where women have been treated badly in the military, there have been some recent articles and so on. What do you think this is due to?

Participant: It depends on what? Are we talking about sexual assault or harassment or are we talking?

Interviewer: Yes, but maybe both.

Participant: The first one is, like, some asshole who has behaved like that (Interview 3 25/04-23).

Furthermore, the following example serves as additional evidence for this assertion. This participant says the individuals are stuck in an older structure. This asserts that there have been structures which might have been harmful to women but these no longer exist, only individuals.

I think it depends on individuals who are, who are somehow stuck in an older structure. Individuals who may not have developed at the same pace as the defence forces have developed in their values. There will always be individuals who have opinions, regardless of what kind of organisation it is, and so, it is such individuals that I believe are the case (Interview 5 25/04-23).

There is no lack of research which indicates that women are at risk inside the military for example Harman, who says "A woman who signs up to protect her country is more likely to be raped by a fellow soldier than killed by enemy fire" this also evident by the paper by Johanna Söderfjäll which portrays the problems of sexual harassment inside the SwAF (Harman 2008; Söderfjäll 2018). I would argue that the hegemonic masculinities that exist inside the SwAF also could limit the soldiers from making the connection to a larger structural problem.

On the other hand, there was one participant in particular who made a comment that suggested that there might have been gender hierarchies that were the issue.

So it is a bit like this that there is some kind of ... men as a group are better that there's some kind of prejudice that says that women are not as good as us and then there's a perception of that and yes, and that, then you treat them worse and then maybe yes, simply just discriminate against them in different ways and it's that you're just mean or if you actually yes physically are mean to them or discriminate. And, yes, I would say what it was that is most, perhaps (Interview 6 26/04-23).

This is interesting as this shows a more nuanced picture of the masculinises inside the Armed Forces. I would also argue that the background is important in this case. This participant was one of the few that had experienced abuse from a female college during their time in the Armed Forces. He describes that this led to more conversations regarding gender and the treatment of

women during his time in the SwAF. This could have led to a more complex analysis of how masculinities work inside the SwAF compared to the soldiers that did not have the same experiences.

5.3 Civil life

Civil life was used as a theme in my interview to understand if the soldiers believed that their time in the SwAF had influenced their private life. I used the term civil life to create a clear definitive line between their two spheres. This section of the thesis will highlight certain aspects of their responses and make connections to the previous segment surrounding masculinities, hegemonic masculinity and militarised masculinities. This will be done in order to understand the effects of masculinities inside the SwAF.

When analysing my transcript one of the recurrent topics was the idea of transformation that occurred when these men entered the Armed Forces. The quote below exemplifies how the soldiers view their "transformation".

But it's also very hard at the beginning - the first three months are designed to mould the person to become their best self in the armed forces (Interview 7 26/04-26).

This person talks about how one is moulded into being the best person possible in the Armed Forces. This also implies that person has become "better" by being inside the Armed Forces. This is further exemplified by a quote from the same person which relates to how he was young and stupid before.

Yes, but you were a bit young and stupid before. But now you've had all these stress tests and training courses, and you hold fast to the values of the Defence Forces. So, I think there are a lot of factors that affect how you act in civilian life as well (Interview 7 26/04-26).

Another interviewee responded when asked if his family had changed opinions regarding the SwAF since he joined. He explains by saying that they knew me before and have since then seen a positive transformation in many ways.

(...) before I was. I was thin, did things and was funny. Now I have become stronger, calm and thus understand better all the others or yes, logically linked, problem-solving, so you have a better understanding of things and so they have seen a positive development in me. Since I started in the defence forces. Everything from the physical and the mental (interview 4 24/04-23).

I would argue this quote brings a lot of insight. First of all, he believes that the armed forces have made it into a "better" person, not only within the local situation of the military but as well as outside. This confirms both theories regarding militarism where he argues that these militaristic traits are desirable, as well as confirming that the military is a way of achieving these masculinities, which he considers admirable (Enloe 2007, p.11-12 Duncanson 2019, p. 467).

I would also argue that the idea of this transformation to some extent distances them from the rest of the society. This coincides well with previous research which shows that soldiers separate themselves as being based on having a greater discipline (Hinojosa 2010, p.183). This concurs with my results; exemplified with the following quotes both as answers to what has changed since the participation of the SwAF.

Yes, but you might be willing to work a little harder because you know how hard you can work (...) you can take on hard tasks and instead of complaining that something is hard, just do it. So that's what you're used to (Interview 2 23/04-23).

Yes, but you can start that discipline when you feel you want to. and then also kind of yes, but just that you become a little more persistent, so you finish things if I start something now, I finish it. Before, I would probably say, but I'll wait a bit, I'll do the rest later (...) (Interview 1 21/04-23)

I argue that this not only constructs hegemonic masculinity, but it also constructs "othering" against people who are not inside or have been inside the "military bubble" and have not shared the same experiences. This feeling of "othering" was visible in some of the interviews when asked about the comradery inside SwAF. The interviewee here describes how the comradery in the Armed Forces is so great because of all of the things you have been through as well as you learn to think the same way.

This camaraderie that you get into, it is. It's unbelievable because a team in the armed forces has to work together actively, to get to know each other, for example during conscription, we work together, we sleep together, we eat together. You get to know all the weak points and strong points and so on. And in that way, you can also work very effectively. So I think that

camaraderie is probably the most important thing in the defence forces and the best thing about it (Interview 5 25/04-23).

With these quotes I argue that the masculinities inside the Armed Forces do not only create a strong bond with those whom these are shared with, it also creates a dissonance with those who do not share them. I argue that this is clearly explained by the following discussion regarding traits that do not fit in civil life.

Everyone is different, from all different backgrounds, and everyone may also think differently, but everyone understands the structure of the armed forces, how we do things there and how we plan, and it may be a little difficult if you leave the armed forces (...) They don't think like that if you're the only one who only thinks like that and then only there is here. We do this because it's logical "No, I want to do this" And then there is a clash, I imagine? (Interview 3 25/04-23)

It is interesting how the interviewee refers to logical thinking as something inherent to a militarised person while a civilian person may lack this. From the perspective of my interviews, I see the pattern of otherness from civil life based on the strong hegemony inside the SwAF. I find this interesting as it highlights how masculinities not only affect those who are considered lower on the hierarchy but also affect the soldiers who inhabit many of these traits.

In two of the interviews, there were also examples of situations where more concrete clashes of civil life were apparent. I find these very interesting and provide further insight into how militarised masculinities functions outside of the military sphere. Both of these examples show self-awareness regarding these traits and how these affect their civil life. The first one discusses how the straightforwardness of the armed forces does not work in civil life.

(...) I've sometimes been like that, that I'm a bit too straightforward, but I don't think that's always appropriate if I say like this. "Yes, that's wrong" in a harsh way, as you do in the military service. "What are you doing? That's wrong! do it again!" that wouldn't have worked, but I can see when I'm doing something wrong (Interview 1 21/04-23).

The second one refers to arguments that may arise when one has spent time abroad and comes home to a normal life.

(...) Then there have been little things, little fights, which can happen six months later when you come home. And then? Then we haven't realised where it comes from. Very annoyed with her for not putting the butter knife in the dishwasher there. "Why do you put them there? They should be there!" and so small details we haven't really understood, what are we arguing about? (...) (Interview 3 25/04-23)

In both these cases the interviewees have identified something that is seen as a desirable trait in the military while also identifying how this must be managed while in a civil sphere. This shows that there are masculinities in this case discipline which is seen as something that is highly glorified, that does not work in the private sphere.

6 Conclusion and Final Reflections

The goal of this thesis was to understand how masculinities are manifested inside the SwAF and how they affect male soldiers. My analysis is based on the interview of seven former or current male soldiers. The analysis is based on their experiences and how they discuss certain themes. I divided my analysis into four segments: Masculinities, Hegemonic Masculinities and Militarized masculinities, Gendered Silence and finally Civil life. The first one established the existence of masculinities which are not considered hegemonic. This being traits such as toughness, grit empathy and openness, these are then organised according to the categories, dominant, dominating and positive. The second one argues that masculinities and/or groups of masculinities could be considered hegemonic, which means they uphold the hierarchy of gender or between masculinities. Gendered silence further explores how hegemonic masculinities are used to understand the ignorance of gender structures inside the SwAF. The final theme discusses how these masculinities affect the civil life of the soldiers. Here I make the case that masculinities not only grow the comradery inside the Armed Forces but also create distance between them and the rest of society. I fully understand that my findings are relational and are only valid in relation to myself as a researcher and the participants that I have interviewed. I do still argue that the analysis I have made is useful and can provide insight into how the military sphere functions and relates to the private sphere.

7 Further research

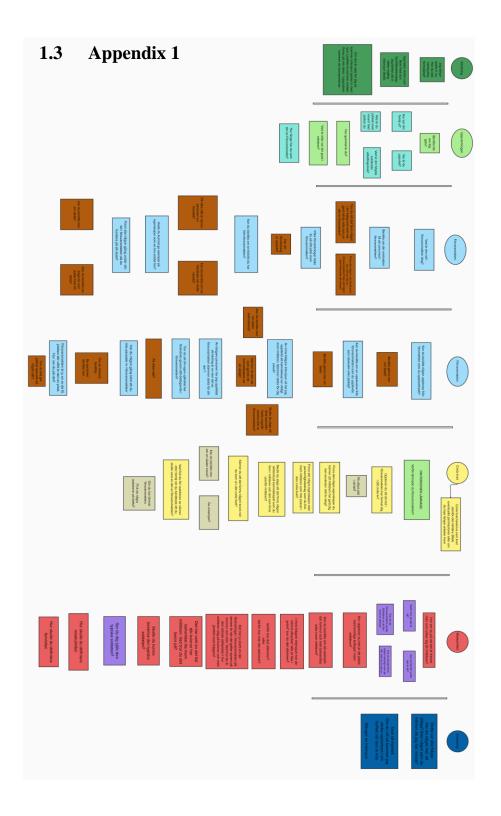
There are many areas yet to be explored regarding the military and hegemonic masculinities in relation to the private sphere. One possibility is to use the themes discussed in this thesis and conduct new deep interviews with military personnel. These would create interesting results as would let the participants reflect on the issues and problems as well as to which extent this might apply to the whole of the SwAF. Another way would be to research military families instead of the soldiers themselves. This might provide an insight which is not accessible by interviewing soldiers. In light of my preface, it could also be interesting to look at how social workers or similar professions have different views on the structures of the military.

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9 Appendices



1.2 Appendix 2



En studie om mäns erfarenheter från Försvarsmakten och hur dessa influerar det civila livet

Jag driver denna forskning som en del av min kandidat-uppsats där syftet är få reda på mer information kring hur män som är eller har varit del av Försvarsmakten påverkas av normer och strukturer. Svaren från intervjuerna kommer analyseras genom att leta efter gemsamma teman i intervjuerna, detta kommer sedan redovisas i en analys. Bakgrunden till detta projekt ligger i den pågående expansionen av försmaken. Forskning kring detta område blir då allt viktigare och jag anser denna typ av forskning kan ligga till gagn för både Försvarsmakten och dess anställda.

Ett projekt av Anton Janzén

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Informerat samtyckesformulär:

- 1. Jag har läst och förstått den ovanstående stycket med information om följande projektet.
- 2. Jag har haft möjlighet att ställa frågor till studenten om projektet och min medverkan i det, och förstå min roll i projektet.
- 3. Mitt beslut att ge mitt samtycke är helt frivilligt och jag förstår att det står mig fritt att dra mig tillbaka när som helst utan att ange någon anledning.
- 4. Jag förstår att uppgifter som samlas in i detta projekt kan utgöra grunden för en rapport eller annan form av publikation eller presentation.
- 5. Jag förstår att mitt namn inte kommer att användas i någon rapport, publikation eller presentation, och att alla ansträngningar kommer att göras för att skydda min identitet.

1.1 Appendix 3

Name	Files	References
(Hegemonic) masculinties	0	0
Alienation	2	7
Maculinties	0	0
Appreciated traits	5	7
Emotional support	2	2
Empathy	4	6
Flexible	1	1
Motivation	5	7
Unselfish	3	4
Masculine behavoiur	4	11
Men=Military	5	10
Boyishness	3	7
Callenging	5	7
Commitment	1	3
Discomfort	3	4
Discomfort (2)	1	1
Distacning	6	11
Equality	2	3
Experiance as a rolemodel	1	1
Extreme situations call for extreme responses	1	1
Feminie behaviour and traits	6	19
Making a diffrence	1	2
Structural issues (Gender)	1	1
Structure (Positive)	4	5
Theme 3 Private life	0	0
Comradery	7	21
Diciplin	5	11
First world problems	2	2
Gendered silence	4	4
Negative affects on civil life	3	4
Otherhood	4	8
Promblem solving	3	7
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