

Leader Normativity in Crisis Management: Tales From a School Fire

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This study examines the handling of a school fire in a rural Swedish community and the role of the normalized narratives of leaders in crisis management. The article claims that leader normativity legitimizes certain positions and actions in a crisis management narrative and marginalizes others. The study uses theories on gender, boundary work and space to illuminate this claim. To explore such processes in narratives, we use feminist theory and critical management studies. The study shows that leader normativity creates gendered differences that result in both inequalities and the marginalization of any parts of crisis management that do not apply to leader normativity. The study shows that there is a strong norm of crisis management as an individualistic perspective that focuses on heroes and higher-level management as the people managing a crisis. Support for describing crisis management as a collective achievement and caring perspectives become marginalized.

KEY WORDS: leader normativity, crisis management, gender

危机管理中的领导规范性: 一次校园火灾事故

本研究检验了瑞典一乡村社区学校火灾事故的应对情况, 以及规范化的领导叙事在危机管理中产生的作用。本文主张, 领导规范性让危机管理叙事中的部分立场和行动变得合法, 同时也忽略了其余部分。为阐明该主张, 本研究使用了有关性别、边界工作和空间的理论。为探究叙事中的这些过程, 我们使用女权主义理论和关键管理研究。本研究显示, 领导规范性催生了因性别不同而造成的差异, 这些差异导致了不平等, 忽视了危机管理中不适用于领导规范性的各个部分。本研究表明, 危机管理中存在一种极具影响力的规范, 它将危机管理作为一种个体观点, 这种观点聚焦于在危机中作出重要贡献的人和更高层次的管理层。(而那些)将危机管理描述为一种集体性成就的相关支持, 以及展现关爱的看法则被忽略。

关键词: 危机管理, 领导规范性, 性别

Normatividad de líderes en la gestión de crisis: cuentos de un incendio escolar

Este estudio examina el manejo de un incendio escolar en una comunidad rural sueca y el papel de las narraciones normalizadas de los líderes de la gestión de crisis. El artículo afirma que la normatividad

del líder legitima ciertas posiciones y acciones en una narrativa de gestión de crisis y margina a otras. El estudio utiliza teorías sobre género, trabajo de límites y espacio para iluminar esta afirmación. Para explorar tales procesos en las narrativas, utilizamos la teoría feminista y los estudios de gestión crítica. El estudio muestra que la normatividad del líder crea diferencias de género que resultan en desigualdades y marginación de cualquier parte de la gestión de crisis que no se aplique a la normatividad del líder. El estudio muestra que existe una fuerte norma de gestión de crisis como una perspectiva individualista que se centra en los héroes y la gestión de nivel superior como las personas que gestionan una crisis. El apoyo para describir la gestión de crisis como un logro colectivo y las perspectivas de cuidado se vuelven marginadas.

PALABRAS CLAVES: gestión de crisis, normatividad de los líderes, género

Introduction

There is a statement that is repeated as a mantra in most of the leadership literature: “It all comes down to the leaders” (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Burns, 1978; Hersey & Blanchard, 1979; Yukl, 1994). There is a great deal of focus on leaders, as shown in earlier literature (Bowers, Hall, & Srinivasan, 2017; Hannah, Uhl-Bien, Avolio, & Cavarretta, 2009), but there are also some criticisms of this narrow focus on leadership, as put forward by, e.g., Stern (2017). The top-down perspective of management is especially reflected in crisis management as well as in the management of unexpected events and long-term organizational changes (Danielsson, 2013; Olofsdotter & Sjöstedt Landén, 2014). The idea underlying such a statement is that nothing is accomplished if the leader does not take responsibility for managing the organizational change or leading through the unexpected crisis. In the Swedish context, feminist scholar Lena Martinsson published a study in 2006a that connected what she referred to as *leader normativity* (*sv. ledarnormativitet*) with market economics and neoliberal drivers in the manufacturing industry through the management of “diversity” (Martinsson, 2006a). The concept of leader normativity has not been subjected to any further theoretical elaboration in the Swedish literature; however, departing from the UK public policy context, O’Reilly and Reed (2011) elaborated on the concept of “leaderism” as an element of the emergent public sector modernization discourse. There has been, however, very little in the literature empirically exploring how leaderism becomes realized in managerial practices (although see Crevani, Ekman, Lindgren, & Packendorff, 2015). We argue that the concept of leader normativity provides a lens through which we can examine narratives of what “the leader” *does* in crisis management and critically examine what the normative discursive function of such narratives is. We are not interested in what leaders do per se. Instead, we examine *how the normativity of the leader affects what is perceived as* crisis management. We investigate the manner in which leader normativity materializes in narratives on crisis management during a school fire and further theorize about the concept of leader normativity as well as crisis management.

In our study, we use the concepts of gender, space, and boundary work to increase our understanding of how leader normativity can be understood, as well as questioned, in crisis management. This study contributes to the literature with an empirically rich exploration of a school fire in a rural area in Sweden, an exploration of the manner in which leader normativity materializes in narratives about this particular event in crisis management, and an exploration of the concept of leader normativity and crisis management research.

Background

A significant amount of research on the role of leaders has been performed in the broad field of organizational and management studies. For example, the concept of managerialism rests on a long tradition of research in which the focus has mainly been on the leader. Studies of leadership may also consider followers, for example, in the concept of transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994) and the importance of followership and teamwork (Baker, 2007; Crossman & Crossman, 2011; Oscarsson & Danielsson, 2018); nevertheless, the focus is still often on the leader as being “firm and strong” (Bass, 1985; Katila & Eriksson, 2013; Liu, Cutcher, & Grant, 2015). In this context of managerial research, O'Reilly and Reed (2011) argued that leaderism can be seen as an emergent discourse that lacks the discursive coherence and continuity associated with established concepts, such as managerialism and professionalism. This discourse, O'Reilly and Reed argued, identifies and advocates for a “charismatic, pro-active, and visionary conception of leadership as a generic cultural resource and process to be mobilized by and diffused through a multiplicity of stakeholder agents” (O'Reilly & Reed, 2011, p. 1090). However, leaderism brings a more dramatic twist to these concepts because it provides a “change narrative,” according to O'Reilly and Reed. This concept is particularly winning ground in public sector organizations “emphasising the possibilities of unifying a diversity of stakeholders” (Crevani et al., 2015, p. 150).

While the literature on crisis management conducted by emergency personnel has been vast, studies of the people subjected to the crisis (e.g., school personnel) and their collaboration with emergency personnel have been lacking, for example, how they establish boundaries among tasks, responsibilities, and mandates or how they negotiate goals and strategies (Enarson, 2016; Enarson, Fothergill, & Peek, 2006; Ericson & Mellström, 2016; Oscarsson, 2019). Studies on professional rescue workers show that when they arrive on the scene, those individuals representing the place (e.g., schoolteachers in the case of a school fire) step aside or are forced to step aside. The help and support of individuals representing the place no longer appear to be needed, except as secondary informants (Danielsson, 2016; Forsberg Kankkunen, 2014; Johansson, Danielsson, Kvarnlöf, Eriksson, & Karlsson, 2018; Kvarnlöf & Johansson, 2014; Oscarsson & Danielsson, 2018; Swedish Tsunami Commission, 2005). A prominent feature of the research evaluating the crisis management field or its development is that the focus has often been placed on leaders and leadership. The actions that should be managed and the manner in

which management should be exercised at the incident site are often emphasized and are sources of difficulty for both researchers and professionals. A top-down perspective thus controls the system, although leadership perspectives, such as transformational leadership and participative leadership, have attracted attention, as they address participation, democracy, and followers as equal partners. These perspectives still favor strong individual leaders. In her ethnographic study, Martinsson (2006a) showed that the contradictory aspects of leader normativity favor a strong leader at the same time as “diversity” is held as a strong ideal.

Additionally, in the crisis management literature, the strong leader is highlighted and traditionally viewed as a role performed by higher-level management through a top-down perspective. This view has been criticized for viewing other actors as victims who are incapable of taking appropriate measures during crises (Dynes, 1994; Kvarnlöf, 2015) and for leaving out lower-level entities in managing the crisis (Comfort, Ko, & Zagorecki, 2004; Flin, 1996; Oscarsson & Danielsson, 2018). As studies show, the actions of actors other than emergency operators will set in motion representations that conform to the perception of the crisis (Danielsson 2016; Oscarsson & Danielsson, 2018; Giritli Nygren & Olofsson, 2014; Öhman, Giritli Nygren, & Olofsson, 2016; Weick, 1988).

A distinctive trait of a crisis is that one will not know exactly when it strikes, and the time frame is unknown (Johansson et al. 2018). Additionally, crises are mostly framed as something for emergency services to handle and are described by the amount of damage caused (Lerbinger, 2012). In this study, we see crisis as perception-based. Crises change the normal rhythm of life and create degrees of social disruption. We move our rhythm from “clock and calendar time (doing what is scheduled) to event time (doing what is needed now)” when a disaster strikes (Neal, 2013). A crisis interrupts daily work, and there is a need for immediate decisions; however, the term everyday can mean different things for those involved in an event.

Oscarsson & Danielsson’s (2018, p. 234) study of refugee camps in Sweden showed how civil servants were influenced by their everyday practices when they handled the crisis, just as crisis managers are during a crisis: “they were accustomed to the same three practices: improvisation, prioritization and creating alternatives.” However, in the crisis management literature or in media reports the practices of civil servants are not mentioned. Instead, the work of rescue personnel is highlighted.

When the media report from a crisis or disaster, they often focus on injuries and the severity, casualties, damage or loss of property. Analyses of the Turkish media show that earthquake-related news mostly describe what was happening at the moment and the impact of earthquakes and response and recovery activities (Houston, Pfefferbaum, & Rosenholtz, 2012; Tekeli-Yesil, Kaya, & Tanner, 2019). The media also create narratives about heroes when picturing firefighters fighting the fire or rescuing victims (Öhman et al., 2016). The way the media report from a crisis supports the traditional view of top-down management, for example, viewing strong leaders managing the crisis and rescuing victims (which could be seen in the reporting from the bush fires in Sweden in 2014 and 2018) (Öhman, Giritli Nygren,

& Olofsson, 2016). All of these factors together contribute to leader normativity. The concept of leader normativity therefore provides a broader scope of narratives about the leader than, for example, about the concept of leaderism, which focuses on formal organizations.

Theoretical Points of Departure

One of our theoretical points of departure is that leader normativity can be understood as solidifying social relationships in specific ways: it legitimizes certain positions and actions in a crisis management narrative and marginalizes others. Feminist theory has a long tradition of exploring the intersections of, for example, gender, ethnicity, and social class. Such intersections have rarely been studied in the crisis management literature. It is clear, however, from management and organizational research that these factors create crucial power relationships for understanding the formation of leader norms and management practices (Harding, Lee, Ford, & Learmonth, 2011; Ross-Smith & Kornberger, 2004). Feminist scholars have persistently argued that “organizations are heteronormative in that everyone is required to conform to (narrowly defined) heterosexual norms, rendering “queer” anyone who cannot or refuses to so conform” (Harding et al., 2011, p. 4). Our analysis shows that, in the context of crisis management, leader normativity designates gendered differences in particular ways. Postcolonial theory has also stated that some stories become defined as central to white Western narratives and organizations (Olofsson & Rashid, 2011; Prasad & Bobby Banerjee, 2008). In the Swedish context, this definition has been expressed as a particular means of narrating inclusion in terms of diversity and gender equality (e.g., de los Reyes, Molina, & Mulinari, 2002). Critical analyses have drawn attention to the fact that this narration has tended towards becoming conditioned inclusion by emphasizing and reproducing static and essentialized gender/ethnic/class differences (de los Reyes, 2014; Mulinari & Neergaard, 2004). This critical research provides important tools for analyzing the actions of leader normativity in narratives about crisis management. Consequently, as Wood (2005, p. 1115) has written, the epistemological problem is to “explore the values associated with the internal movement of difference”.

In this paper, the concept of boundary work deepens our understanding of how crisis management and leader normativity adopt hegemonic forms. Boundary work refers to the practices that crisis managers utilize to distinguish themselves from other professionals (Gieryn, 1983) when the incident site is located at another profession’s workplace (Oscarsson, 2019), which, in this case, is a school in which teachers are usually a group of professionals who are essential to everyday activities. Gieryn’s (1983) study also showed how professionals control their professional spaces by attributing specific characteristics to their work, framing their work with rules and regulations, and defining the spaces in which their work is performed (see, e.g., Kvarnlöf & Johansson, 2014; Oscarsson, 2019). The boundary work is ongoing, and people seek to distance themselves from less advantaged positions.

According to Gieryn (2000, p. 474), “places reflect and reinforce hierarchy,” which dominates and controls people and thereby constructs relationships of power and subordination.

When actors “do” crisis management, they construct power relationships, such as when professionals from male-dominated rescue organizations “take charge over” a place to “do” crisis management at another profession’s workplace (Giritli Nygren & Olofsson, 2014; Giritli Nygren, Öhman, & Olofsson, 2017). The locatedness of leader norms in space, time, and professional contexts is therefore important to consider (Oscarsson, 2019). New ways of imagining leader normative positions in terms of, for example, “leaderism” include the challenge of “facing up to, and addressing, gender inequality” (Macfarlane, 2014:2). The masculine privilege of being able to embody the position of the leader has prevailed (see, e.g., Crevani et al., 2015, Ericson & Mellström, 2016). Forsberg Kankkunen (2009, 2014) acknowledged how male managers maintain networks among men that, in turn, are utilized for acquiring the resources that they regard as needed for “managing.” In her study, Forsberg Kankkunen compared technical occupations with caring occupations in Swedish municipalities and showed that male-dominated technical work is considered more important to communicate upwards in organizations compared to care work, which is -labeled feminine. This result indicates that caring duties are not seen as advanced or something about which higher management levels must know (cf. Ariyabandu, 2009; Oscarsson & Danielsson, 2018). Forsberg Kankkunen also noted that it is the occupation that provides access to the network, not gender in itself, because practices and professions become labeled “masculine” or “feminine.”

In the context of crisis management, we identify attachments to what Fotaki and Harding (2012) and Harding et al. (2012, p. 15) described as “the fantasy of possessing the power of the phalluses” in the narratives of leading in crises. Several studies of rescue personnel show a strong masculine connotation with firefighting (cf. Ericson, 2011; Olofsson, 2012). This finding does not mean that individuals who identify by gender identities other than male cannot occupy this profession but non-men have often struggled in these workplaces.¹ Simultaneously, we also want to write a “politics of recognition” (Harding, Ford, & Fotaki, 2012, p. 57ff) of the people who are resourceful, engaged, and active managers, although they are not recognized as such within leader normativity discourses. We thus study the erecting of leader norms as a type of boundary work in itself. The focus in studies of crises has often been on rescue operations conducted by professionals from emergency rescue organizations. Our view focuses on the boundary work that occurs during a crisis when crisis management is established and the manner in which such boundaries become gendered. Writing a politics of recognition “challenges dominant interpretations of management and leadership and provides another critical lens through which the subtleties that make working lives so fraught are entrenched in modernity’s presumptions of how to do work” (Harding et al., 2012, p. 58) and thereby how to perform crisis management.

What we experience is that issues in crisis management are surprisingly seldomly linked to local actors acting in the affected organizations. These issues are more representative of unilateral categorizations in media and research. A study

by Tierney, Bevc and Kuligowski (2006) showed that the mass media play a significant role in promulgating erroneous beliefs about disaster behavior. In following the media reports from Hurricane Katrina, the response of disaster victims was framed in ways that greatly exaggerated the incidence and severity of looting and lawlessness. Olofsson's (2011) study showed how media reporting of the earthquake in the Indian Ocean and following tsunami in 2004 was framed as a Swedish disaster because of all the holiday makers residing there and how the mediated frames of the catastrophe were influenced by stereotypes and nationalistic values. Öhman et al. (2016) showed, in their study on an (with Swedish measures) extensive bushfire in 2014, how power structures were manifested in news stories. However, de los Reyes and Mulinari (2005, p. 93) believed that a counter-story could be a way of recovering from distorted subjectivity. This could be a story by those who experienced a crisis and started to act in response to the crisis, although not as professional emergency managers.

This study also adopts the concepts of field frames from Creed, Langstraat, Jeffery, and Scully, Maureen (2002) to widen our understanding of how the definition of crisis affects who is perceived as legitimate actors and their roles in a crisis. By analyzing how the crisis is framed by different actors, we can provide a deeper understanding of the power and the interests of those responsible for creating the framework (Creed et al. 2002). Creed et al. used elements to accentuate a given frame. Using their model will also reveal what frames are important to retell.

Elements from Creed et al. are used to represent the situation and to anchor the actors' views regarding the events, that is, who is sponsoring the specific frame, who is challenging it, and who is interpreting it. In this way, frame analysis is linked to field frames and discourses that are often taken for granted. Frames also show what interpretations are missing since a frame is not a true image but is composed of many images. Creed et al. pointed to the importance of considering different frames when capturing a situation and identifying the core actors. Therefore, how a crisis is defined determines not only which actors will play a critical role during the crisis but also the role they will play (Creed et al., 2002).

Narrative Analysis. The narratives that we analyze contribute to descriptions of how the normativity of leaders unfolds in a concrete crisis context and insights into the manner in which the changing characteristics of a place can be interpreted and retold. By examining the narratives that become legitimized, stabilized, and repeated in retrospect, we explore how leader normativity influences the construction of crisis management in terms of what is emphasized and what is marginalized and silenced. We therefore see narrative analysis as a methodology for observing expressed and silenced elements (Malhotra & Rowe, 2013). Therefore, the analysis considers narratives from representatives of different groups of actors. Our study focuses on rescue personnel (primarily firefighters) and the staff at a primary school where the fire occurred. Both the firefighters and the school personnel participated in crisis management during and after the fire. This study focuses on how the perception of management affects both those actions that are seen as sufficient in crisis management and those that are valued as important elements of

the crisis. This perception is shown by emphasizing the arrangements and rules that govern the space marked by crisis and the interactions and the manner in which the situation is understood by professional actors. It is therefore interesting to compare different narratives because some narratives exclude certain elements that other narratives emphasize as being more central to crisis management.

How the crisis was framed in the media is also a part of the analysis, primarily using the local newspaper and Swedish government funded local radio P4, which is the official channel for communicating with the public in the event of a crisis.

Gathering Narratives of Crisis Management

The empirical data in this study are collected in a project that focused on cross-sectorial collaboration during a crisis: a fire in a local primary school in a small village in a rural area of Sweden. The fire occurred late on a Saturday night. Fire brigades from the area and the neighboring county were involved in the rescue efforts. The fire took almost 24 hours to extinguish.

The school hosted approximately 250 schoolchildren and 14 teachers. The teachers were responsible for the nursery school and grades one through six in the primary school, which included music, gym, and handicraft classes as well as normal academic subjects.

The narratives of the school fire presented below are based on interviews drawn from a study that included a total of 43 interviews conducted with personnel from the fire service, the police, schools and elder care organizations that had faced a crisis either in their organization or when handling the same situation as an emergency organization. The aim of the project was to study cross-sectorial collaboration during crises and, more specifically, how the interactions among these organizations were affected by their cultures, responsibilities, and previous experiences with crisis management (Danielsson, submitted; Sparf, 2014). The interviewees were specifically chosen because they participated in different types of crisis management events. These crises included floods, fires, and search and rescue missions, and they included personnel at different management levels, including chiefs, supervisors, and operational personnel. When analyzing the 43 interviews, a similar pattern is seen in how the informants talk about the crisis; the crisis situation is interpreted as an issue for the official rescue workers, such as firefighters or police. Other professionals are not mentioned in the narratives of the crisis.

Of the 43 interviews conducted, ten were related to the school fire, and four were included in this study. The interviewees were responsible for the work performed at the incident site or the work of the school: an incident commander, the school principal, the crisis preparedness officer at the municipality and two teachers. The incident commander was responsible for fire and rescue, the principle was in charge of the school setting, and the schoolteachers handled the education. The crisis preparedness officer was responsible for the crisis plan for the municipality. The informants were all, in different ways, highly involved in the rescue

operation and had valuable information, knowledge, and experience in managing the different stages of the crisis (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000; Yin, 2017).

The interviews lasted between 100 and 130 minutes and were conducted by author 1 at the respondents' workplaces, that is, the school and the fire station involved in the situation. The interview guide was semi-structured, and it covered the following themes: collaboration, tasks and roles, priorities and decisions, the exchange of expertise, and the resources shared with other organizations.

The first step in the analysis was to identify meaningful elements from the informants' statements regarding their thoughts and actions during the situation. Building on Creed et al. (2002), statements were organized according to elements accentuating a given frame, such as metaphors, exemplars, roots, visual images, consequences and appeals to principle. Second, underlying ideologies were explored, such as identifying what the problem is, who is responsible, and what actions should be taken. In this analysis, it was important to consider who is sponsoring the specific frame, who is challenging it (Creed et al., 2002, p. 43), and who is interpreting it.

Both authors conducted this iterative process until all the interviews were reviewed and an idea of what held the frames together was identified. This process of checking back and forth between interviews and elements continued throughout the data compilation process. Three narratives were discovered that describe the event: a school fire in a rural region in Sweden.

In the narratives, we concentrated our analysis on the following aspects of crisis management: (i) what was seen as prioritized action, (ii) who were described as the core or peripheral actors, and (iii) what were seen as the core values for managing the crisis and what was omitted. We also analyzed how the changed conditions of the space (professional as well as local) affected the actors' perceptions of the related power relationships.

Data were also obtained from the media, especially the local media, from the days following the fire. The local media reporters were known in the county, and they knew many of the people who were affected by the fire. News reports from newspapers and radio published on the Internet in the weeks following the fire were analyzed.

Analysis: Three Crisis Management Narratives

The case described in this study is a major school fire in which the school was totally destroyed except for the gym and a preschool. The fire began early on Sunday immediately after midnight. The rescue personnel had the fire under control by Sunday afternoon.

The fire broke out towards the end of the semester and therefore affected the upcoming school year while a new school was built. The burned building housed a primary school with pupils mostly living in nearby villages, and their. It was apparent from the interviews that the school was seen as an important part of the community, and the school personnel and the parents were engaged in the school

and the school's activities. In the analysis, different perspectives of the crisis appear. The school fire was a crisis for the community, which was in danger of losing its school. It was also a crisis for the schoolteachers who lost all their pedagogical materials. When the computers were lost in the fire, the school reports and grades that were kept in the computers were lost. The teachers also lost their workplace. Additionally, this was a crisis for the school children and their parents when the children were forced to change the location of their education.

A crisis plan was in place prior to the crisis, addressing the routines of the higher management but not those of the schoolteachers. The crisis preparedness manager at the municipality was responsible for developing the crisis plan. In this process, he worked with, e.g., the police, coast guard and other government agencies.

Within the organization we have, that is to say, I bring out the plan; then, I share it continuously with the policy and the regional director who is the one who approves it. How we are going to work with our crisis management, we have a discussion with our collaboration partners, but they are not part of the actual writing of the details, but the principles with whom we vet the plan include the police, the coast guard, the armed forces and the county administrative board. The details of how we develop the plan and the functions we want to include we write ourselves (Crisis preparedness manager at the municipality).

This plan was directed toward the network of high position leaders in the community who were responsible for handling crises and strategic issues in the community. Several of these individuals had personal experience with fire and rescue. Lower-level civil servants were not involved in this network.

A crisis plan was also kept at the school; however, it was destroyed in the fire. The plan did not cover what to do in case of a school fire and did not support the personnel at the school. It was the principal and the director of school administration at the municipality who had to make ad hoc decisions to handle the situation, and the teachers had to do their best to handle the educational issues.

The Narrative of the Incident Commander. The incident commander was the second commanding fire officer to arrive at the scene of the fire at approximately 2 o'clock on Sunday morning. He was directly appointed as incident commander and led the rescue operation for approximately 6 hours. The narrative of the incident commander discusses the immediate management of the crisis and consists of three themes: the heroes fighting the fire, the separation of emotions and facts, and the commander and "his men."

The Heroes. When the incident commander arrived, the first force concluded that no lives were in danger at the incident site. The incident commander wanted to retell the story of the fire chronologically, communicating the order of the tasks that an incident commander is expected to perform in such situations.

The first thing I do when I arrive is meet up with the officer on the site, and we walk together through the incident site. We do a collective orientation, and I look at the construction of the building, I look at the colours of the gas from the fire, I look a little bit at the surroundings. Where do I have wells and such [...], obtaining a bigger picture.

As the rescue work continued, the incident commander decided that the crew should focus on saving part of the school, initially the part where the fire started, so that the police would be able to recover leads for their investigation. Later, the incident commander decided that he could only manage to save the gym. In this difficult situation, a core action was to hang on—to cope and persevere for hours.

Generally, we do four hours of hard work per fireman and six hours for the incident commander, and then, we change. [...]; but, I understood that fatigue was starting to come. I came across [a fireman who was with him from start] sitting on a chair, and I asked ... "what's the matter?" "Just recovering my breath a little, I'll be on it again soon" [he said]. This is a real Duracell Bunny. Incredibly well performing as a fireman and a human. I realized from seeing him there that four and a half hours had passed.

The fireman is given significant credit for the effort he was expending in fighting the fire; his efforts are included in the narrative with this heroic story of how he was catching his breath but then returned to work while the fire continued.

Another key story in this narrative occurs at a point when the fire was becoming extremely difficult to control, and it depicts how the incident commander determined how to proceed. For example, the commander thought about the local community: if the entire school burned to the ground, it might not be rebuilt in this village.

That's going to be the long-term consequence. At least one has a challenge there, if that's not a motivation to see that we sort this out. So, I stood there thinking. I actually had a cup of coffee and turned around and saw that the sun was starting to rise. Then, I looked down towards a farm from where I'm standing and see an excavator. Then, I think that I'm going to dig through this building instead [of letting it all burn down] because this is never going to work. Because I have no more people, I'm encountering bigger problems; the roof is starting to fall in on the guys. [...] I see the exhaustion coming. I realize it's not worth it. If I'm going to make it, I need to find something completely different, and then, I see the excavator down there.

The narrator proceeded by saying that he ordered the excavator to be there within the hour, and they came and dug a tunnel through the school so carefully "that the clock on a wall was still hanging," showing respect for the work of the entrepreneur. As the sun started to rise higher in the Sunday morning sky, the

incident commander was replaced and left the site, and he handed over the responsibility “with a warm hand” to the next commander in charge.

Separation of Facts and Emotions. In follow-up questions about collaboration at the site, the incident commander discussed what happened after the actual firefighting was over. The narrative now turns from firefighting to supporting the community with facts and information.

We were asked to come to the school together with the police and talk about the night between Saturday and Sunday. Facts, basically. However, it became very intense, you could say, both for us and for them [pupils and relatives].

The village hall in a nearby village was full. Schoolchildren, their relatives, and school personnel had come to listen and obtain information. The incident commander said that he recognized some of the people there. His wife was from the area, and they knew local people and their children. Despite this context, the incident commander distanced himself from emotional aspects of the crisis.

That’s tough, but something that you have to do in this kind of situation. [...] You keep to facts, technical details, argue why we dug through the building.

The commander separated emotions from facts at the time when facts were considered more important, drawing boundaries between personal and professional lives but also between the firefighters (managing the crisis) and those seen as the victims, such as the pupils and teachers.

There are two things. Emotions can be handled by others, while the facts most often are handled by us.

Facts usually provide a clearer picture of the crisis, he continued, and they are the responsibility of the fire services. However, sometimes automatically, fire services become involved in issues that are both emotional and factual. Facts become something defined by the fire service and the incident commander.

The incident commander is the one who sees the big picture, who understands the crisis, and who conveys the facts to others (cf. Harrison, 2015). The incident commander emphasized his responsibility relative to that of others on a higher management level and said that emotional feelings are not useful during a rescue operation: although the children and their parents might feel upset, these feelings must be managed separately.

The Commander’s Men. The next theme is about the men that the commander gathered around him whom he refers to as important actors in managing the fire and its effects. The incident commander strongly prioritizes those with whom he

interacts. At this site, the incident commander appreciated a firefighter who he considered knowledgeable because he trusted him to discuss the construction of the building.

Another actor seen as central to the commander's narrative is someone who "represents the owner" of the property where the fire occurred. The narrator's first choice would have been to have the principal at the site. Because the principal was not available at the start of the situation, the search for a proper representative went further up the managerial hierarchy, and the incident commander decided to call the manager of the schools in the municipality.

One could say a representative of the owner, that's who we're after. Where are the valuables? Maybe there are some irreplaceable items that must be rescued.

This part of the narrative sets a boundary between those empowered by managerial positions and those who are not, and it silences alternative ways of thinking about managing the fighting of the fire. For example, this part of the narrative shows that there were valuables in the space, and it would have been most relevant to ask the teachers about them (such as teaching materials and grading records). Although it was likely that teachers currently working at the school could have provided the very precise information in which the incident commander was interested, he instead wanted to contact a higher ranking manager in the municipality whom he knew previously: "I worked with him in the military," he said, referring to a masculine structure and its hierarchical network (cf. Forsberg Kankkunen, 2014). The fantasy of possessing the power of the phallus (Harding et al., 2012) was thus intrinsic to the organization of the management of the crisis. In the incident commander's narrative, the role of the teachers is afforded little significance, while the male leader who is seen as "closest in rank" becomes a core actor. When asked about the teachers, the incident commander says,

When I had the principal in place, that's natural. It's a bit like in the military. You ask the one closest in rank. [...] I talked to the principal. He was my contact for the school world at this point. [...] It worked well with the principal.

At this point in the narrative, we observe that the "ranking officers" in the municipality start to form a strong network of male managers. When the commander refers to the people he must contact, he refers to his network of other men in higher-level positions.

Support Staff. The incident commander also refers to others to help him in different situations, freeing him to make important decisions, as discussed in Forsberg Kankkunen's (2014) study as well.

I demand support. When doing so, I gain two things; first, I don't need to do things myself, e.g., what to order. They do it for me.

Another support that the incident commander appreciated was the presence of some residents, such as the owners of a nearby store who offered to provide food and coffee for the firefighters. The incident commander states that there were quite a number of people helping with various tasks in the area but that he did not need to be involved in these activities.

It felt like that was handled very well by our little old coffee grannies. They handled all that [...] That was great. They prepared sandwiches and coffee and something to drink. [...] It was like a picnic.

In this extract, the commander discusses the work of the "little old coffee grannies" as something completely different from his own work. It is seen as something pleasant and safe in contrast to the unsafe and dangerous work of the firefighters (cf. Gieryn, 2000, de los Reyes & Mulinari, 2005). The gender labeling of the work becomes clear in the naming of "coffee grannies," which also constructs a difference in status in which the work of the fire rescue (the commander and "his men") is narrated as a core activity and the coffee making as a peripheral one, which can be compared to the findings in Ariyabandu's (2009) and de los Reyes and Mulinari's (2005) studies. Caring duties are not seen as advanced; rather, they signal something less important and distinctly different from firefighting. The incident commander also notes that the firemen often have wives or relatives who participate in emergencies "because the people all know each other". Here, they came to serve food *and so on*. This strongly highlights the normative function of heterosexuality in the management of the crisis.

Leader normativity as masculinity is strongly manifested in the story by the incident commander. It is emphasized in his narrative that he is the one managing the crisis, that is, the fire; the narrative also includes the promise to save not only the school but also the whole community. It is implicit that the incident commander perceives himself to be a strong and capable leader, making critical decisions and issuing commands, that is, framing what is typically male work. In doing so, the commander reduces the value of others' work (such as that of the teachers, volunteers, and the police).

The Narrative of the Principal.

It was in the middle of the night at 2 o'clock. I remember because there was a national sports association meeting, and I was at a dinner and was awarded a medal by the association that night. I had just fallen asleep when the [the manager of schools in the municipality] called—he had been the principal of this school before—and said that the school was on fire.

I arrived in the morning at 8 o'clock. I was in contact with the incident commander and was informed of what had been done. [...] they had saved some parts, but there wasn't much left of the school at that point.

The Short-Term Restoration of Everyday Life—Business as Usual. After contacting the incident commander and obtaining the necessary information, the principal started to communicate information and make decisions about the next activities.

I made a decision early on that we'd go [to hold classes] on Monday at other places. That was the first thing I did. We called all the personnel in, and they gathered in the afternoon.

Children, parents, and personnel gathered in a village hall in a nearby village on Monday morning. It was decided that the school buses should run as usual but go to the new location in a nearby village, where another school provided housing, as well as a golf course and conference center. The principal argued that it was very important for the children and families to "go back to everyday life as soon as possible" [...] "so that the children could feel safe". The principal rented barracks for the canteen, the arts and crafts classes, space for the personnel and classrooms: "we were in this temporary housing for two years".

When discussing the teachers, the principal described them as sad and broken compared to the calm and sturdy leader. The principal arranged counseling for the teachers, and he required them to attend counseling at least once.

An event like this triggers a lot of trauma that remains from other contexts. The teachers felt a lot of anxiety because all their files with all the planning [were gone].

However, the principal also praised the teachers for acting professionally and not showing their emotions in front of the children.

But, they [the teachers] were very professional when facing the children. They never showed any emotions in front of them but supported the children the whole time. But, when they were alone, the sorrow came over them.

The principal assumed that the teachers were emotionally unstable but able to control themselves.

When asked about the loss of materials for teachers and lessons learned from the incident, the principal indicated that other actors would be more competent to respond, and he discussed where the solution to the problem could be sought, primarily in economics and facts.

I'm sure that the teachers might respond better to this, when it comes to their own materials, not having all the materials at school [...] I was also

very impressed by the insurance company. By Monday, they had put 1.5 million [SEK] in the account to use. There was never any fuss.

In this narrative, boundaries are created between emotions and facts, as was also the case in the incident commander's frame. The narrator defined the problem and the solution, placing the work of the teachers outside the definition of leadership actions. The material that was destroyed—including grades, plans, and other teaching materials that the teachers had prepared for the classes—was a problem for the teachers to solve. The principal recalled that the neighboring communities had offered support by donating pencils, books and whatever they could find at the neighboring school because “there was nothing”—everything had burned, but still it did not seem to be his concern. The education had to continue, although all the teaching materials were gone.

The narrative addresses decisions aimed at restoring everyday life for the children and the community and returning to normal activities for the school-children. What this would mean for the everyday lives of the teachers was not elaborated on by the principal. Instead, the narrative centered on the teachers' assumed trauma and anxiety, although they were still doing a fantastic job.

The Long-Term Restoration of Everyday Life: the Rebuilding of the School. A core part of the narrative of the principal concerned the rebuilding of the school. There was a political discussion in the municipality regarding whether it was better to close the school than to rebuild it, but according to the principal, the local engagement was so strong that there was “not a chance that the politicians could suggest that the school shouldn't be rebuilt”. As part of this story, the digging of the school building with an excavator at the end of the rescue work was lauded—and thereby repeated—as a heroic achievement, which was a repetition of the story told by the commander.

The narrative continues with the long-term consequences of rebuilding the school; it is described as a difficult time, especially from the municipality's perspective relative to the management of the rebuilding. This period involved a significant amount of dialogue, many meetings and a different department than usual.

We sat in on meetings, me and representatives from the personnel. We were allowed to have opinions about how we wanted the school to be, and that was not easy because we were not to affect the contracting process.

Many things had to be redone, which required significant time and money.

This was important work, e.g., managing contacts and the construction plan and addressing the conflicts between the various municipal administrations. The principal described in detail how he fought to have the school rebuilt and how he succeeded and thereby identified himself as the person who solved the problem that he defined as saving the school, performing important work using his position and his network. In this way, the principal positioned himself in a high power position, referring to his (masculine) hierarchical network (building proprietor, architects, head of administration at the municipality, personnel from the electricity company,

water supply, and ventilation); such a position was also described by Forsberg Kankkunen (2014).

Leader normativity is manifested in how the principal constantly emphasized his own work, as well as that of the rescue services and police, in both the long- and short-term restoration. The principal talked about himself as an inspiration for the entire local community. He did not describe the work of the teachers except in subordinate clauses, saying that they did a good job, but it appeared in his story that he himself ensured that the teachers were able to do their work and that the school was saved, thus emphasizing leading and managing as individual achievements. This manner of positioning the leader was quite consonant with what O'Reilly and Reed (2011) described as "leaderistic" characteristics, such as networking, co-producing and looking to the future of the community and the common good. However, examining the narratives of the commander and the principal together shows that the "diversity" of networking activities is very narrow and small: it builds on a culture of male bonding motivated and mediated by hierarchical military organizational structures. What O'Reilly and Reed (2011, p. 1096) identified as the potential of leaderism, including "new forms of engagement on the part of key stakeholder groups—such as public service professionals" (e.g., teachers in our case), which could represent "creative and innovative modes of action" thereby become unexplored in the above narratives. Instead, these narratives create a strong leader and his followers as if they are natural forces (Martinsson, 2006a).

The Narrative of the Teachers. The teachers' narrative starts with the recollection that they were called on Sunday morning with the news that the school had burned down during the night. A meeting was arranged, and they came together to discuss how to work and face the children and parents when the school opened on Monday. The teachers decided collectively not to examine the school before they discussed how to handle the situation. The school, as the place that earlier defined their profession as teachers (Gieryn, 2000), was now gone, and their materials and facilities were gone. The teachers needed to find a new space where they could establish their work, which meant that they had to start from scratch to rebuild their professional work with routines, tools, and practices. They did not have only themselves to think about; they also needed to rebuild a safe space for the children.

On Monday morning, the teachers were expected to be at work, to meet the children, to provide a meaningful school day and to create a safe place for the children to be. There were slightly different opinions in the interview group regarding how the teachers reacted to this responsibility.

I felt it was obvious that we needed to meet with the children and parents and talk about what happened. [...] Then, I thought it felt tough to be up and working so quickly afterwards; there were so many emotions.

We thought on Sunday that they required a little bit too much of us. At eight o'clock the next morning, we were supposed to be fresh and receive

the children and implement a full school of day at a new location in a hastily prepared schoolroom.

The lectures were held at different locations in neighboring villages. The youngest schoolchildren were sent to other schools in the area; older children were housed in meeting halls and conference rooms. The fire had destroyed all of the materials that the teachers had kept at school, and the server and all of the computers were gone. All of the grading was gone, as were the class plans and all of the prepared lectures and exercises. There were hardly any pens or paper for the children: "It was tough".

Then, we tried to be out and away from indoor teaching. But it was like we barely were able to do anything when we met on Monday morning, and then, we had Monday afternoon, and we sat for quite a while and tried to organize something [...]

No digital documentation of the students' work and progress, planning documents, grades, or any of the materials that the teachers needed for their classes remained, and no backups had been made. The teachers managed to hold classes without becoming too distressed, but they would need "a little more help later on to organize," as they said.

Everyday Life in a Long-Term Setting. The fire occurred in mid-May, and it was a challenge to continue through the spring semester knowing that the situation would be similar in the fall when they moved into temporary classrooms in barracks. While the school was being rebuilt, the teachers borrowed furniture to use in the classrooms.

... it was our choice. We would get a certain amount of money to build a new school, and then, we said that, during these two years, we did not need to buy new furniture in the barracks we rented because we did not know what the new school would look like.

But, it was still very much our job, when we were in the midst of it all, to order textbooks and such things because there was nothing left from the fire.

This decision was made to save resources for the municipality. One concern that the teachers expressed was that the fire would be used as an excuse to save money on their school.

The decision-making process the teachers adopted had the goal of considering a larger context than decisions made only to manage their own planning. The teachers preferred to buy new furniture when the new school was finished rather than buying new furniture for the barracks.

The teachers also participated in the process of building the new school. However, their suggestions were not considered, in part because the construction was handled by technical managers, who had hired a private company that did not allow for different viewpoints.

We put a lot of work into the plans to make them good. We saw the opportunity to get really good classrooms that were well thought out. And, we worked on the drawing—thought about the details of where the door would be and so on. Then, we got a drawing in which all our ideas were eliminated. Why did we even participate?

The whole situation that they describe above was managed but not seen as a part of the crisis management during or after the fire. Teachers' efforts to normalize and adapt to the situation, which is often seen as a core part of a resilient society (MSB, 2013), were never mentioned as such by themselves or others. In the narrative, the teachers placed the normalization of everyday life into the larger perspective of identifying the benefits of waiting for new furniture until the new school was rebuilt, but they did not relate this strategy to crisis management, as the principal did; it was only something "that they did." Many additional tasks were discussed as things that disrupted the teachers' own planning when they were attempting to normalize and recreate their professional spaces in everyday life.

Normalizing their Own Day. The teachers portrayed parents and other teachers as the strongest support in their everyday work after the fire, aside from the church.

We received a lot of feedback from the parents. They were very grateful.

The church should really be given emphasis here: it took care of us, both materially and to talk to. It helped us with everything.

The children also helped them move forward, and as they said, "it was just to move with the children". However, little attention was paid to the teachers' extensive efforts or to their proposals for the new construction, nor did they receive any praise for keeping the classes functioning during the restoration of the new school. Their professional work was not recognized.

The school director [the director of school administration at the municipality] sent some cakes and cared for a while. He sent small greetings. He was out here once too. Well, we got some feedback, but we did not get anything extra. We did not get much feedback; it was more like a cake and thanks for a good job.

One "crisis management thing" (as they called it) was that the teachers were all ordered by the principal and the school welfare officer to attend psychological

treatment at least once; continued participation was voluntary. Treatment was not something that the teachers had been asked to engage in earlier, and some teachers hesitated to do it, but the treatment was used by some of the teachers. However, the teachers organized themselves into a type of debriefing group to discuss and address various problems, as they believed that this was a much better way to handle the situation. Additionally, the teachers' narratives note that they needed to remain calm. Afterwards, the teachers reflected that they all had been so "amazingly talented" in not asking for help but instead attempted to do everything by themselves. However, it was a difficult time.

Then, we are pretty strong in that way—in any case, together.

In the teachers' narratives, leader normativity is manifested by how the teachers talked about themselves as "emergency objects" that were hit by the crisis. Implicit in their narrative is that they do not perceive themselves to be crisis managers; crisis management is performed on a "higher level". When asked whether they needed their crisis handbook, which was also destroyed in the fire, the teachers said:

I did not think of it whatsoever. But it **was not we who came first in this crisis**. This was **a higher-level issue**; it was the school that had burned down. So, in that way, it was nothing that I needed to take care of. [It was the principal] who had to take care of this, together with the most senior managers from the municipality. It was they who had the main responsibility. [...] We never needed to address these issues. **But, we were those who needed help**. Then, we helped each other, and we helped the children. But, we did not need the crisis handbook in this case, I believe [our emphasis].

The teacher continued to say that "we were the ones to be helped," meaning that the teachers were the victims, the ones affected by the fire. In this narrative, the teachers positioned themselves as victims and the ultimate followers, which made the crisis management successful in a particular fashion.

The teachers emphasized their collective effort in becoming strong together, but this effort was not recognized as a core part of managing the crisis. Their efforts did not fit with a leader normative discourse of crisis management. Instead, the teachers "were subject to the crisis" and were seen as being led by others, although the teachers managed to handle the entire situation with the children, parents, facilities, planning, and grading, though they had no materials left. This situation was not perceived as crisis management by the teachers or others.

The Crisis Framed in the Media. As studies have shown, the focus in media reports on crises is often on emergency services and illustrates firefighters fighting fires. This focus was also observed during the school fire described in this study.

In the weeks after the fire, when the media showed pictures of the school fire, they were mostly firefighters or police at the incident scene or pictures of children standing in front of the completely burned school with smoke still coming from the remains of the fire. The media reports focused on the incident commander and personnel from rescue organizations, and the focus of the interviews with the rescue personnel was on facts about the fire and the ongoing rescue efforts.

We will look at the fire process and try to find out how the fire started; then, the police will be able to dismiss or confirm the suspicions that the fire was set, says an emergency manager (Radio P4).

Interviews with the principal focused on how the school will manage without facilities such as classrooms and resources such as schoolbooks, paper and other school materials. In the interviews with the schoolchildren and their parents, the focus was on their emotions and how they felt about losing all their schoolbooks in the fire.

The media presented the crisis as a school fire, using such headings as "School destroyed by the fire". The crisis is, in the majority of the articles, about the fire, although there is some information about the work that must be done to allow the children to continue their education.

The School NN welcome students after the fire. /.../ There will be some quick solutions, but it will work. We have fantastic staff; they have done a great job (County Council, referring to the principal of the temporary school where the children were to be hosted).

The news article focused on the work of the personnel at the receiving school, for example, the school dining personnel had an increased workload, but they managed and performed the work well. However, the main issue in the article was about the aftermath of the fire.

The teachers from the completely burned school were not mentioned in the news articles, nor were they interviewed, which supports the view that the crisis is that of a school fire and that the issue is the restoration of the school, for example, the work of the firefighters and the principal.

Later, the articles concerned the reconstruction of the school, stating that "the school which was destroyed in a fire in mid-May, will be rebuilt" (Radio P4).

In the aftermath of the fire (years after), news articles focused on insurance and financial issues and on blame. Several articles focused on the boys that were prosecuted for causing the fire.

Discussion

We have mapped the narratives of the core professional actors in the process of managing the crisis occasioned by a school fire in a Swedish rural community.

Viewing the different manners in which the narrative of the crisis was retold, it appears that crisis management is something that only seems to concern strategic leaders. It is, however, quite interesting to reflect that the teachers are not seen as leaders, although they are always expected to teach, which is the core activity of a school. Here, we find similarities to Kosny and MacEachens' (2010) study of invisible non-profit organizations and how these workers facilitate background and emotional work and are taken for granted and undervalued.

The gender labeling of different professions shifts over space, time, and other contexts. However, in Sweden today, rescue services are strongly dominated by men, and they also have a reputation for being marked by a macho-man culture (Ericson, 2011; Ericson & Mellström, 2016; Katila & Eriksson, 2013). Public sector work that concerns childcare and education is mostly seen as a feminine arena. Approximately 30 percent of the teachers employed in Swedish primary schools are men, and the younger the children are, the more female staff there tends to be (statistics from The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2019). Principals have often been recruited from the teaching staff, and 75 percent of the principals in primary schools are women (Statistics Sweden, 2018).

The narrative of the principal in this particular case is very clearly marked by masculine ideals, which also enabled the construction of a strong network of men who saw themselves as the natural managers of the crisis. The narratives of the incident commander and the principal both placed the positions of other men at the center of events, and other work that was crucial for managing the situation was seen as peripheral, such as the work of teachers or volunteers, which in many of the cases here was performed by women (cf. Gieryn, 2000; Johansson & Lundgren, 2015). The firefighters in the narratives were identified as men in heterosexual relationships, so the spouses were commonly wives known for performing volunteer work in the village, that is, invisible background work to facilitate and support the visible work of men (Kosny & MacEachen, 2010). This dichotomy creates a clearly gendered pattern of the type of work that is seen as core or peripheral for crisis management, and consequently, women are generally not seen as partners in discussions about how to manage the crisis or as part of the higher ranking group that manages the crisis, which also genders leader normativity as masculine. The different narratives presented here strengthen the image of the current standard for crisis management, which is seen in the incident commander and the principal cross-referencing and supporting each other through their hierarchical networks as well as in their view of the situation being supported by the teachers.

Why the teachers were not included in crisis management norms might be due to how the incident was framed. The definition of the crisis as a fire includes professions such as firefighters and police and duties such as making decisions. To hurry, to work on immediate crises, to make decisions during stressful events and to calm victims are part of the crisis management norm, and normalizing everyday functioning for schoolchildren and their parents over a long period of time is not. From this perspective, crisis management can be seen as a traditional gendered division of work.

As our study shows, leader normativity reinforces gendered differences, as was also shown in Martinsson's studies. Leader normativity becomes the masters' discourse, and the teachers are literally seen as emotional and "hysterical women" in need of psychological support; they must all "keep calm" to manage a crisis properly. de los Reyes & Mulinari (2005) and Martinsson (2006a, 2006b) argued that the construction of meaning is not an unambiguous process but is constructed in contrast to, or interwoven with, other parallel processes of interpreting an event or a series of events. Through this construction, the idea of the leader "has become an object of a series of processes" of how society should appear (Martinsson, 2006b, p. 28), but it also becomes clear that battles over who should have the power to represent the dominant interpretation of a certain event are occurring (Ariyabandu, 2009; de los Reyes & Mulinari, 2005).

The teachers' narrative both contrasts with and supports the narrative of teachers as objects for crisis management. Although the teachers initially saw themselves as capable and strong, they were seen as emotional and in need of counseling, which is not in line with crisis management. We therefore must recognize the "fallacy of misplaced leadership" (e.g., Wood 2005) that occurred here. Feminist methodologies of narrative research "seek to eliminate hierarchies of knowledge construction" (Presser, 2005, p. 2067).

We argue that leader normativity, framed by the boundaries of a crisis, defines the role of crisis management. The work performed by the schoolteachers was not recognized as crisis management by the informants; it fell outside the definition of leader normativity in a crisis, that is, firefighting and the construction of a new school. Our ambition with writing from the standpoint of recognition is that "monological" conceptions (illustrated here by the narratives of the commander and the principal) should be replaced "with dialogical conceptions of the subject" (Harding et al. 2012, p. 57). The concept of recognition therefore emphasizes the embodied, practical and cooperative character of the self, situated in cultural and social contexts and generated through embodied practice, which is particularly pertinent to organizational analysis for exploring the effects of divisions into dominant/subordinate relationships, such as leader/follower, manager/managed, professional/unskilled, and knowledgeable/manual worker (Harding et al., 2012).

In conclusion, leader normativity ignores any parts of crisis management that do not apply to it. The function of leader normativity was to hide and disparage work of for example teachers, "coffee grannies" and "wives" as something peripheral instead of a core activity of the rescue operation of the school and the community. Leader normativity legitimizes the refusal to recognize, that which is essential to the management of the crisis, for example, the feminized work. Martinsson (2006a, p. 188) argues that the discourse extolling leadership as important and meaningful makes it accepted at face value, that is, uncontested; it also becomes related to other categorizations and ways of naming work. In our case, the traditional division of labor between men and women and who among them ought to lead the crisis management process gave legitimacy to hierarchies of crisis management work. Leader normativity contributes to legitimizing orders of power where the discourse of the all-important leader positions everybody else as

“the other” (Martinsson 2006a, p. 189). Here, leader normativity worked to restore the strong male leader as the given center of the event regardless of whether this matched his significance in the context of doing crisis management.

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Note

1. 5 percent of Swedish full time firefighters are women (The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, 2018).

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