Defence Studies

ISSN: 1470-2436 (Print) 1743-9698 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/fdef20

From demonstrated agency to structural integration: security-trained women and the role of assignment and competence registries in crisis preparedness and national defense

Harri Raisio, Annukka Jokipii, Juha Lindell, Tomi Niemi & Marianna Polvi

To cite this article: Harri Raisio, Annukka Jokipii, Juha Lindell, Tomi Niemi & Marianna Polvi (10 Oct 2025): From demonstrated agency to structural integration: security-trained women and the role of assignment and competence registries in crisis preparedness and national defense, Defence Studies, DOI: 10.1080/14702436.2025.2572660

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2025.2572660

Published online: 10 Oct 2025.

DEFENCE STUDIES
https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2025.2572660

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

From demonstrated agency to structural integration: security-trained women and the role of assignment and competence registries in crisis preparedness and national defense

Harri Raisio[a], Annukka Jokipii[b], Juha Lindell[a], Tomi Niemi[a] and Marianna Polvi[a]

[a]School of Management, University of Vaasa, Vaasa, Finland; [b]School of Accounting and Finance, University of Vaasa, Vaasa, Finland

ABSTRACT

This article asks whether systems such as assignment and competence registries could help bridge the gap between women's demonstrated agency in crises and war, and their systematic integration into preparedness and national defense structures. Drawing on focus group discussions with 43 women who had received security-related training through NGOs in Finland, the study identifies a dynamic interplay between motivational factors (i.e. drivers of agency), enabling conditions that mitigate barriers, and institutional mechanisms (notably, the registry itself). Study participants were motivated by a sense of responsibility, concern for both global events and their loved ones, and a desire to counter fear through action. Registry participation was seen to increase women's visibility and clarify their roles, thereby reinforcing agency. However, participants emphasized that agency is also shaped – and often constrained – by societal expectations, gendered caregiving responsibilities, and insufficient employer or policy support. Without addressing these barriers, even well-intentioned registries risk becoming hollow structures. More broadly, the registry was interpreted as a potential counter-response to global trends that marginalize women's contributions, helping to promote a more inclusive and resilient national defense model.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 19 June 2025
Accepted 6 October 2025

KEYWORDS
Women; agency; preparedness; national defence; registry; integration

Introduction

> *"Building societal resilience requires the full, equal, safe and meaningful participation of all segments of the population, including women and women's civil society organisations." (NATO 2024, 13)*

The frameworks of total defense, comprehensive defense, and comprehensive security – adopted particularly in the Nordic and Baltic countries – all represent whole-of-society approaches to national defense (Berzina 2020; Valtonen and

CONTACT Harri Raisio harri.raisio@uwasa.fi School of Management, University of Vaasa, Wolffintie 32, Vaasa FI-65200, Finland

Branders 2021). These frameworks differ from traditional military deterrence and armed defense by emphasizing the direct involvement of civil society, and their significance has become increasingly pronounced following Russia's acts of aggression[1] and rising global tensions (Wither 2020). One important segment of the population within these whole-of-society approaches is women, as aptly highlighted in the above quote from NATO's *Women, Peace and Security* (WPS) agenda.

Despite the growing rhetorical emphasis on the role of women in crises and national defense, this recognition does not always materialize in practice, and the contributions women make often remain underacknowledged or marginalized (Danielsson & Eriksson 2022; Morais, Turner, and Wright 2022; Wright 2025). This article addresses this dilemma from an applied perspective by highlighting one concrete measure: the potential of national assignment and competence registries to support the practical integration of women into crisis preparedness and national defence structures. In doing so, the article brings together perspectives from research on women's agency (e.g. Antwi-Boateng 2023; Al Oraimi & Phillips and Martsenyuk 2023; Hart 2022) and from studies focusing on volunteer-related registry systems (e.g. Hodge, Gable, and Cálves 2005; McLennan et al. 2021; Schmidt et al. 2018; Winn, Chatfield, and Govern 2021).

The context that informs the empirical dimension of this article is Finland. Finland has a conscription-based military service for men, while women may apply on a voluntary basis. Each year, approximately 21,000 conscripts receive basic military training, of whom about 4% are women (Jonsson et al. 2024). In addition, Finland employs a comprehensive security cooperation model, which represents an all-hazards, whole-of-society approach to crisis management and national defense (Valtonen and Branders 2021). However, women in Finland still encounter barriers that limit their effective participation in these domains. One such barrier relates to the utilization of security-trained women. Whereas men and women who have completed conscription have a clearly defined role, being included in the Finnish Defence Forces' conscription register, the situation is considerably more ambiguous for women who have independently received training related to security and preparedness (Hart 2022).

The need for advance registration of security-trained volunteers has been a subject of ongoing discussion in Finland (see Jalava et al. 2017). This discussion is also connected to broader international debates on how informal volunteers could be channelled into crisis management efforts through pre-registration mechanisms (McLennan et al. 2021; Schmidt et al. 2018). Most recently, the issue was addressed in Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's government programme, which states: "The coordination of third-sector associations and organisations that cooperate with national defence will be strengthened, and a register will be created of the people they have trained so that these people can be contacted, if necessary" (Finnish Government 2023, 181).

In this context, the article asks *whether systems such as the assignment and competence registries, as described herein, could help bridge the gap between women's demonstrated agency in crises and war and their systematic integration into preparedness and national defense structures*. The focus is deliberately placed on the perspective of security-trained women. The aim is not to diminish the role of men, but rather to elevate women to a position of equal recognition. The empirical data were collected through focus group discussions conducted in spring 2025 in connection with two women's emergency

preparedness training events, organized by the Women's National Emergency Preparedness Association and the National Defence Training Association of Finland. In total, ten focus groups were held, involving 43 female participants.

The article begins with an exploration of women's roles in crises and national defense, focusing on both women's vulnerabilities and their agency. The next section shifts attention to various types of assignment and competence registries that aim to ensure the effective use of volunteers in both civilian crises and national defense scenarios. This is followed by a description of the research data and methods. The results section then presents the key findings of the study. Finally, the discussion section brings the findings into dialogue with existing scholarship, while the conclusion delineates the study's key contributions, reflects on its limitations, and proposes avenues for further inquiry.

Women's role in crises and national defense

The role of women in crises and national defense is often examined through two thematic lenses (see e.g. Al Oraimi and Antwi-Boateng 2023; González-Hidalgo and Cabana Iglesia 2025; Phillips and Martsenyuk 2023). The first centers on women's vulnerability, portraying them as victims of crises and wars and as individuals in need of protection. The second emphasizes women's agency, highlighting their roles as active participants in both crises and armed conflicts. This dichotomy – between women as passive objects and as active agents – is also reflected at the policy level. For example, NATO's WPS agenda underscores both the gendered impact of conflict and the critical roles women play in peace and security efforts (NATO 2024). Both dimensions will be explored in greater detail in the following sections, with a focus on the contexts of crisis and national defense.

Women and vulnerability

Scholarship on gender in the context of crises and war frequently highlights the inherently gendered nature of these events. For example, González-Hidalgo and Cabana Iglesia (2025) refer to *gendered wildfires*, pointing to the unequal distribution of vulnerabilities – related to physical and emotional health, as well as to economic security and livelihoods – associated with them. This connects to the ways in which, during crises, women are often disproportionately responsible for household work while simultaneously supporting men engaged in crisis response roles, thereby adding to the overall burden they face as caregivers (Danielsson & Eriksson 2022; Lee et al. 2022).

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has brought increased attention to the concept of *gendered war*, which refers, among other things, to sexual and gender-based violence in warfare, gendered disinformation campaigns, and militarized patriarchal structures (Hurley et al. 2024; Morais, Turner, and Wright 2022; Kratochvíl and O'Sullivan 2023; Wright 2022). Kratochvíl and O'Sullivan (2023, 350) emphasize that this war is not only implicitly gendered but also explicitly so, that is, it is framed and fought as a battle between the so-called traditional values promoted by Russia's political leadership and the Western conception of gender and sexual equality.

Al Oraimi and Antwi-Boateng (2023), as well as Phillips and Martsenyuk (2023), have examined the various – and often interrelated – impacts of Russia's war of aggression on Ukrainian women. *Social* impacts include, for example, sexual

violence used by Russia as an instrument of war; psychological trauma related to experiences such as becoming widowed or living under constant bombardment; internal displacement and refugee status, which is linked to human trafficking; and reductions in public services such as education and healthcare, including prenatal care. *Economic* impacts include rising unemployment among women, food insecurity, and energy-related challenges. *Political* impacts refer to women's feelings of marginalization in decision-making processes related to the war.

Women and agency

Research literature also highlights the significant roles that women play in crises and national defense, roles that often remain invisible due to the prevailing norms and ideals of masculinity associated with such contexts (Danielsson & Eriksson 2022; Kratochvíl and O'Sullivan 2023). Danielsson and Eriksson (2022), for example, highlight the significant yet often overlooked role of women in support activities and domestic work in the context of wild fires. Activities such as cooking and washing firefighters' clothing and gear are crucial for sustaining firefighting operations over time (see also Raisio, Puustinen, and Lindell 2022). Likewise, women's assumption of responsibility for domestic work allows the men in the community to continue engaging in firefighting efforts. In crises, women also take on tasks traditionally perceived as male, thereby challenging established gender norms. However, this often comes with their credibility as crisis actors being questioned on the basis of gendered assumptions about women's capabilities (Danielsson & Eriksson 2022; González-Hidalgo and Cabana Iglesia 2025).

The prominence of women's agency in wartime is a historically rooted phenomenon. Elomaa-Krapu, Kaunonen, and Åstedt-Kurki (2020), for example, have analyzed the role of medical Lottas in Finland during World War II. Medical Lottas were women – many with only limited training – who volunteered to participate in wartime nursing as part of the broader Lotta Svärd women's auxiliary military organization. They played a significant role in caring for wounded or ill soldiers, as well as in treating civilians, evacuees, children, and prisoners from forced labor camps. Lottas also contributed, for example, by working in military canteens, participating in air surveillance, and producing supplies for the military (Väyrynen 2023).

Present-day Ukraine provides a clear example of women's active role in wartime. As highlighted by Al Oraimi and Antwi-Boateng (2023) and Phillips and Martsenyuk (2023), Ukrainian women have assumed diverse responsibilities during the war, being an integral part of resistance efforts. Women have taken on roles in politics and diplomacy, as exemplified by the country's First Lady, Olena Zelenska; on the frontlines, as women who voluntarily enlisted as soldiers and served in various combat roles, as well as in medical capacities; in providing humanitarian aid to internally displaced persons; in journalism, documenting war atrocities; and in caring for their families and, for example, assuming responsibility for homeschooling. Women have also participated in the production of military supplies. One concrete example is the Spiders network, originally established in Ukraine and later activated globally, which falls within the realm of craftivism. The network is composed primarily of women and focuses on the production of camouflage nets (Boichak 2021). In contemporary warfare, women have also emerged

as war influencers, for example on TikTok, where they attract attention and sympathy from international audiences (Kalnes and Bjørge 2025).

The motivations behind women's agency in war preparedness and during wartime are equally diverse. Robert, Lummaa, and Loehr (2019), for example, have shown that women with family members at risk in combat roles are more likely to volunteer in war efforts. Mattila and Malinen (2024) demonstrate that women volunteering in support roles for the military, such as in mess and canteen services, tend to hold strong pro-defense attitudes, patriotism, and security-related values. Hart (2022) likewise highlights the importance of patriotism, which is reflected in the perception that participation in defense-oriented voluntary work is a way of honoring the sacrifices of previous generations during wartime. In the context of preparedness training, motivation is also tied to the ability to take care of oneself and one's family, as well as to the ethos that national defense is a shared responsibility (Hart 2022).

While women's agency appears strong at the practical level, its advancement at the policy level has remained limited in the context of Ukrainian resistance. This refers in particular to the insufficient promotion of NATO's WPS agenda following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. For example, Morais, Turner, and Wright (2022) write of "gendered silences" within NATO and among its allies in response to Russia's aggression. Wright (2025), in turn, refers to NATO's WPS agenda as a "hollow concept," arguing that its full potential has not been realized and that it has not become an integral part of NATO. Instead, military power remains primary, while the WPS agenda is treated as secondary, even though, as demonstrated above, gender has become an integral part of the war itself.

These challenges to the WPS agenda are not confined to the context of the war in Ukraine but have also emerged in the United States, where recent developments have posed significant setbacks. For example, Armstrong (2025) describes how, during the second Trump administration, issues related to equality/equity, diversity, and inclusion have faced increasing backlash, including the WPS agenda within the Pentagon. Manifestations of this backlash include the firings of high-ranking female military leaders, renewed debates over women's eligibility for combat roles, and orders to service academies to remove from their libraries books addressing related topics. Armstrong (2025) notes that such developments may strain alliances and that similar measures could spread from the United States to its allies.

The demonstrated agency of women in crises and national defense raises the question of how such agency could be more systematically integrated into existing preparedness and national defense structures. The following section explores this issue by outlining the ongoing discussion surrounding assignment and competence registries.

Assignment and competence registries in crises and national defence

The Disaster Research Center (DRC) typology of organized behavior (Dynes 1970; Quarantelli and Dynes 1977) provides a useful framework for analyzing and structuring insights related to assignment and competence registries. This typology has been particularly applied in disaster volunteering research to classify different forms of action (e.g. Raisio, Puustinen, and Lindell 2022; Strandh 2019; Strandh and Eklund 2018). The typology distinguishes four types of organized response to disasters, based on whether

the tasks are regular or non-regular and whether the structures are pre-existing or newly formed.

Established organizations (Type I) are characterized by performing regular tasks within pre-existing structures. Examples include traditional response agencies such as the police and fire and rescue services. These represent well-established modes of operation that undergo little change during a crisis (Quarantelli and Dynes 1977).

Expanding organizations (Type II) are also engaged in regular tasks, but they adopt new structures to scale up their operations. A frequently cited example is the Red Cross, which can mobilize a large number of volunteers in the event of a disaster. In such cases, they activate a latent disaster response function, whereby permanent staff are supplemented by a reserve of volunteers (Quarantelli and Dynes 1977; Strandh and Eklund 2018).

Extending organizations (Type III) are characterized by undertaking new tasks while retaining pre-existing organizational structures. These actors often have little or no prior experience with disaster response, but they apply their existing expertise to new situations while largely maintaining their pre-disaster organizational affiliations. Examples include private sector organizations that volunteer to assist in disaster situations, for instance, farmers who deploy agricultural equipment to fight forest fires or construction companies that help clear debris during search and rescue operations (Quarantelli and Dynes 1977; Raisio, Puustinen, and Lindell 2022).

Emergent organizations (Type IV) are characterized by undertaking new tasks while adopting entirely new structures. What makes these groups emergent is that they lack any pre-existing organizational framework or predefined roles and objectives. Instead, they form spontaneously and temporarily in response to the unfolding situation. Examples include ad hoc search and rescue teams formed by local residents, or spontaneous groups that begin collecting and distributing food and clothing to disaster victims (Stallings and Quarantelli 1985; Twigg and Mosel 2017).

The following section positions the types of the DRC typology in relation to various assignment and competence registries.

Type I registry

From a registry perspective, Type I established organizations are exemplified by the Finnish Defence Forces and their conscription register, which maintains structured information, in particular on those who have completed or are undergoing military service. In accordance with the Finnish Conscription Act (332/2019), the register includes data relevant to determining fitness for service, assigning individuals to military duties, and preparing for placement in specific roles during war conditions. The reason why the conscription register is classified here as a Type I established organization (rather than Type II) lies in the structured and institutionalized nature of the Finnish system. Reservists are essentially part of the official defense system – not volunteers – with clearly designated wartime roles, especially within wartime units, and regular training that maintains their operational readiness. Thus, both the tasks and the organizational structures remain largely consistent, even when transitioning from peacetime to war conditions (e.g. Raisio et al. 2025).

Type II registry

Type II expanding organizations are exemplified by the Voluntary Oil Spill Response Troops of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Finland and the Finnish Voluntary Rescue Service network (Vapepa), both of which operate on a scalable basis by mobilizing pre-registered volunteers through established registries and coordination mechanisms in response to specific emergencies. For instance, Vapepa utilizes a dedicated mobile alert system that automatically sends text messages to registered volunteers when emergencies arise (Nahkur et al. 2022). From a registry perspective, these organizations primarily engage affiliated, pre-trained volunteers. Participation, however, remains voluntary, and individuals retain the right to decline deployment when contacted (Rantavuo et al. 2021). Registries in this context enable the organization to adopt temporary or augmented structures in order to scale up their operations while continuing to carry out their core, predefined tasks.

Type III registry

A Type III extending organization, viewed through the lens of registry-based coordination, is exemplified by the U.S. ESAR-VHP model (Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals), a nationally coordinated network of state-based systems designed to register volunteer healthcare professionals in order to supplement surge capacity during emergencies (Merchant, Leigh, and Lurie 2010; Winn, Chatfield, and Govern 2021). The development of the registry responds to a recurring challenge in emergency response: large numbers of healthcare professionals may become spontaneously active outside their day-to-day work arrangements – while still operating within their existing professional and institutional frameworks – and arrive at crisis sites without prior coordination. Advance registration offers a mechanism to address this by ensuring that volunteers are pre-screened and credentialed (Hodge, Gable, and Cálves 2005). The system incentivizes healthcare professionals to enroll through a single registry platform, thereby enhancing the accuracy of resource assessments by reducing redundancy across registration systems (Peterson 2006). This context aligns with the notion of specialized skills-based volunteering (McLennan, Whittaker, and Handmer 2016), in which existing professional competencies, such as those in healthcare, are applied to new roles, such as voluntarily supporting large-scale emergency response operations. Although the tasks may differ from those performed in everyday professional settings, the underlying structures, such as professional identity, training, qualifications, and organizational affiliation, largely remain intact.

Type IV registry

A Type IV emergent organization, along with its associated registry mechanisms, can be explored through the lens of the Australian EV CREW model (Emergency Volunteering – Community Response to Extreme Weather) and the Dutch Ready2Help platform. McLennan et al. (2016) describe the EV CREW model as resembling the business model of a recruitment agency, where the coordinating organization (Volunteering Queensland) registers willing volunteers and matches

them with the needs of emergency response agencies during disasters. In this sense, the organization acts as a broker between previously unaffiliated volunteers and authorized response organizations (McLennan et al. 2016). It provides these volunteers with a temporary affiliation and a form of legitimacy, rather than encouraging them to become spontaneously active and uncoordinated (McLennan et al. 2021). The Ready2Help platform follows a similar logic, although in this case, the Dutch Red Cross directly manages and utilizes the registry to scale up its own operations, thereby also exhibiting more explicit features of a Type II expanding organization. Individuals can register their interest through an online portal and may then be contacted in the event of a crisis, where they are deployed alongside or in support of regular, trained volunteers (Boersma et al. 2019; Schmidt et al. 2018).

The four registry types outlined above are positioned in Figure 1 according to the logic of the DRC typology. It is important to acknowledge that the boundaries between these types are fluid, and the examples provided should not be interpreted as strictly categorical or unambiguous. In the context of women's agency in crises and national defense, however, the typology helps to illuminate different models through which women from diverse backgrounds – such as those who have completed military service, received training through NGOs, possess relevant professional expertise, or are unaffiliated and more spontaneously mobilized – could be systematically connected in advance to preparedness and national defense structures.

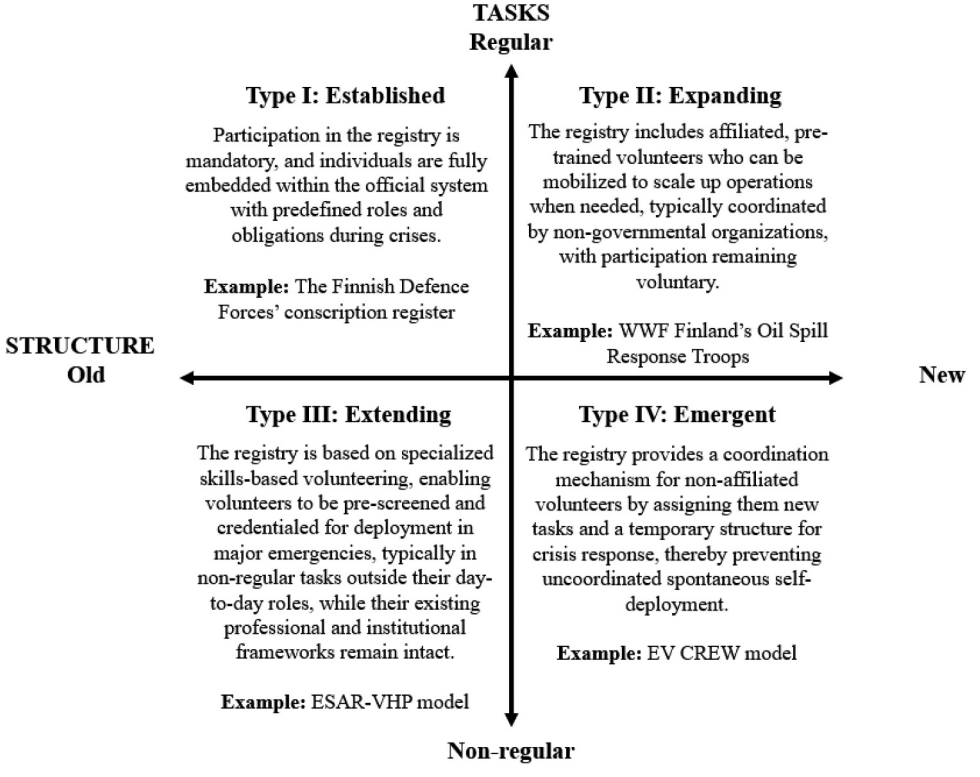

Figure 1. Registry types mapped onto the DRC typology.

Research methods and data

The data collection was facilitated by embedding the research process into two women's emergency preparedness training events jointly organized by the Women's National Emergency Preparedness Association (WNEPA) and the National Defence Training Association of Finland (NDTA). WNEPA unites 10 women's volunteer organisations dedicated to national defence and comprehensive security efforts. Its mission is to promote women's training in security and emergency preparedness, while also strengthening societal resilience through a comprehensive security approach. NDTA is a public law association and a strategic partner of the Finnish Defence Forces. It provides both civilian preparedness and voluntary military training to help citizens cope with everyday hazards as well as crisis and wartime situations (see Hart 2022; Jalava et al. 2017).

The first of the two training events, during which the data were collected, was a smaller, two-day course held in February 2025, with a focus on leadership skills. All participants involved in the data collection had prior experience with preparedness training, as the course served as a preparatory session for a larger training event later that spring, for which they were partly responsible for planning and implementation. The data collection took place during the latter part of the first day, and participation in the study was voluntary, through sign-up during the training. In total, 24 women participated in the data collection and were randomly assigned to five small groups.

The second dataset was collected prior to the start of the official programme on the first day of the broader, three-day training event held in May 2025, as referenced above. Participants were invited to sign up in advance; 26 women registered and were all accepted into the study. Ultimately, 19 attended and took part. They were randomly divided into five small groups. Both rounds of data collection took place either on the premises of, or in close proximity to, a military garrison. The typical participant was a highly educated woman over the age of 35, with more than one year of experience in security and preparedness training. Most were members of a voluntary national defense or comprehensive security NGO and had not completed voluntary military service. Western Finland was overrepresented among participants, reflecting the location of the training events. A summary of the participant characteristics is presented in Table 1.

The data were collected through focus group discussions. Morgan (1996, 130) defines focus groups as "a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher." This method was considered a cost-effective way to collect data in connection with the training events, ideally yielding rich qualitative material generated through facilitated interaction among participants (see Parker and Tritter 2006). Each focus group session was allocated two hours. Both rounds of data collection began with a joint briefing, during which the researchers provided participants with background information concerning the purpose and process of the data collection, and introduced the main themes of the study. Following this, the participants were divided into small groups for the focus group discussions.

The authors of this article served as facilitators for the focus groups. Each focus group discussion centered around two main themes: (1) the national registry of security-trained volunteers – its significance, opportunities, and challenges; and (2) the role of NATO's WPS agenda in the Finnish context. This article draws primarily on the discussions related to the first theme. The duration of the actual focus group discussions ranged from

Table 1. Summary of participant characteristics.

Participant characteristics	n (%)	Participant characteristics	n (%)
Age	0 (0%)	***Experience with Security and Preparedness Training***	7
18–24 years	3 (7%)	First-time participant	(16%)
25–34 years	12 (28%)	Less than 1 year	4 (9%)
35–44 years	13 (30%)	1–4 years	17
45–54 years	10 (23%)	5–8 years	(40%)
55–64 years	5 (12%)	9–12 years	4 (9%)
65–74 years	0 (0%)	13–16 years	9
75 years or older		17–20 years	(21%)
		More than 20 years	1 (2%)
			1 (2%)
			0 (0%)
Education	0 (0%)	***Voluntary military service***	1 (2%)
Basic education	8 (19%)	*Yes*	42
Upper secondary education	3 (7%)	*No*	(98%)
Post-secondary non-tertiary	14 (33%)		
education	18 (42%)		
Polytechnic degree	0 (0%)		
University degree			
Doctoral degree or other			
postgraduate degree			
Region of Residence	7 (16%)	***Membership in a Voluntary National Defense or Comprehensive***	33
Uusimaa	6 (14%)	***Security NGO***	(77%)
Southern Finland	19 (44%)	*Yes*	10
Western Finland	3 (7%)	*No*	(23%)
Eastern Finland	8 (19%)		
Northern Finland	0 (0%)		
Åland Islands			

71 to 89 minutes. All discussions were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim, resulting in a total of 242 pages of text (Times New Roman, 12 pt, single-spaced).

We confirm that all participants in this study provided informed consent. The focus group participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights as research subjects, and consent for participation in the data collection was obtained at the time of registration. The focus group data were collected by researchers from the University of Vaasa, where formal approval from a research ethics committee is not required for non-sensitive research involving human participants, as long as informed consent has been obtained. Both WNEPA and NDTA granted permission to carry out data collection in connection with the training events.

Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) was conducted to address the research aim of exploring how security-trained women perceive the potential of assignment and competence registries to help bridge the gap between women's demonstrated agency in crises and war and their systematic integration into preparedness and national defense structures. The goal of the thematic analysis was, as described by Neuendorf (2019, 213), to "develop a story from the texts of interest." The analysis process followed the six phases outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), applying a theory-driven thematic analysis focused on semantic themes.

In Phase 1, the first and second authors immersed themselves in the data by reading the full set of transcripts repeatedly, making reflective notes throughout to support analytic sensitivity. In Phase 2, initial codes were generated by the first author, capturing salient features of the data in relation to the research question. Phase 3 involved an interpretive process in which these codes were reviewed, refined, and clustered into candidate themes

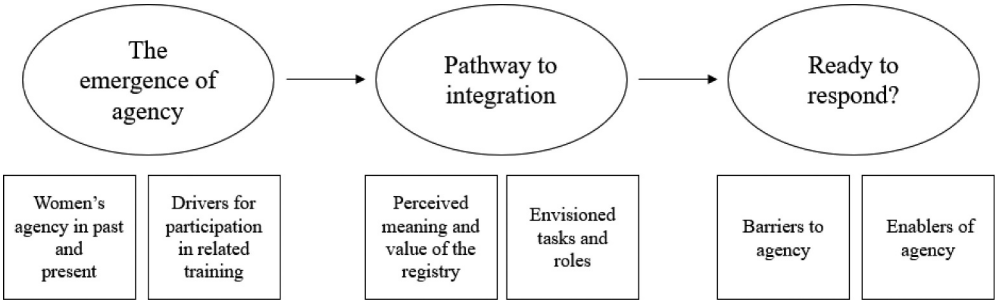

Figure 2. Thematic structure: identified themes and sub-themes.

and subthemes, while non-relevant codes were set aside. In Phase 4, the first and second authors collaboratively examined and revised the thematic structure, resulting in a thematic map that captured patterns of meaning across the data. In Phase 5, themes were defined and named through iterative discussion, ensuring analytic clarity and coherence; these finalized themes are illustrated in Figure 2. As illustrated, the themes form a three-part narrative that follows a temporal progression, addressing the questions of *why*, *how*, and *what if*. Phase 6 entailed the analytical writing, in which carefully selected excerpts – identified by the training event, focus group, and participant number (e.g. 2/4/1) – were integrated to support transparency and trustworthiness in the reporting of findings.

Results

The emergence of agency

The first theme examined the reasons behind the emergence of women's agency, situating it at the intersection of wider contextual developments, both historical and contemporary, and participants' personal motivations for pursuing emergency preparedness training. As the focus groups discussed women's role in crises and national defense, participants placed particular emphasis on women's agency during Finland's past wars. The historical significance of the Lottas was highlighted, along with the critical role women played on the home front during wartime. The dialogue between past and present was captured in one participant's reflection on this legacy, offered with some hesitation, expressing both a hope that such wartime roles would no longer be needed and a desire for the tradition to continue in the form of a new generation: "*That we would take from [the work of the Lottas] the history, their significance, and bring it into the present – so that we would be modern-day Lottas. Can I even say that?*" (2/4/1)

Reflections on the emergence of women's agency were also linked to current global tensions, both in relation to armed conflicts and in response to ongoing challenges concerning women's roles in society and within security structures. Participants in the focus groups most often drew on examples of women's active roles from Ukraine and Israel. In terms of challenges, the United States was mentioned, with one participant noting – in a somewhat stark formulation – that "*women's position is rapidly regressing to something prehistoric*," and warning that other countries should instead emphasize the importance of women's roles and "*not follow this madness*" (1/4/5).

Understanding the emergence of agency becomes more concrete when looking at the personal motivations that participants described for engaging in emergency preparedness training. One of these motivations, closely linked to the broader context described above, was a sense of concern regarding the current state of the world. This was particularly tied to Russia's war of aggression launched in 2022, which participants described as profoundly impactful: "*A strong wake-up call came when the war in Ukraine broke out [. . .] It felt, in a way, so close that I thought if a similar unexpected situation were to happen in Finland, I probably couldn't bear not knowing how to contribute to national defense*" (2/4/3). Such concern over not having a role or knowing how to act was a recurring theme in the focus groups. Enrolling in the emergency preparedness training marked a shift, positioning women as active agents rather than passive bystanders. As one participant put it: "*For me at least, it was empowering and helped me somehow move beyond the fear [of war in Finland]*" (2/5/3).

In addition to the global situation, participants' personal situations also played a key role in shaping the emergence of agency. Agency began to form, for instance, as participants found themselves at a life stage where their children were old enough to allow time for personal development, such as taking part in emergency preparedness training. The role of family also emerged through the lens of Finland's conscription system. Although only one focus group participant had completed voluntary military service, many had close family members who would be called up in the event of war. This proximity fostered a sense of shared responsibility. As one participant explained, this sense of responsibility meant she had not considered an exit plan, even though people in her social circle had discussed the idea: "*[I]f something happens here, my child will be at war, my spouse will be at war, my future son-in-law will be there too. I am definitely not going anywhere.*" (1/3/5)

The focus groups also included reflections on the decision not to complete voluntary military service earlier in life. For some, participation in emergency preparedness training served as a kind of "*substitute experience*" (1/3/3). Upbringing and values also emerged as an important dimension influencing the development of agency. This was evident in participants' accounts highlighting how values learned at home – such as patriotism – continued to hold strong significance in their lives today. Agency was also shaped by the opportunity to build networks through training and shared interest in security and national defense. Meeting like-minded women fostered a sense of collective agency, as action and commitment were reinforced through community. One participant captured this sentiment: "*I longed for a spirited group of women, the kind that does not complain but rolls up their sleeves and gets things done*" (1/5/4).

Pathway to integration

The second theme explored the potential integration of women's agency into preparedness and national defense structures. Participants reflected on the relevance of an assignment and competence registry and articulated their expectations regarding the kinds of contributions they would be willing and able to make. A shared perception of the necessity of such a registry emerged across the focus groups. This view was primarily justified by three arguments.

The first argument concerned the visibility of women's role – not only for those who would register, but also for others, including potential adversaries. For those women who would register, the registry would help affirm their own sense of contribution, thereby reinforcing their individual motivation. On a broader scale, the idea was that by establishing an official registry, women would be taken more seriously, serving as a countermovement to global developments that, in effect, deliberately undermine women's agency. As one participant observed, "*Finland could serve as a role model by creating such a registry and more strongly promoting women's active roles*" (2/4/3). From the perspective of potential adversaries, it was noted – with a touch of self-irony – that the visible role of women in national defence could also serve as a deterrent, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

> "*Didn't [former president] Niinistö once say that the best threat to a neighboring state is that we are truly prepared? It is not just about having more weapons and such, but that we as a society are comprehensively ready. That way, no external actor is really interested in us.*"(2/2/2)

> "*Yeah, even the women are ready!*" [laughter] (2/2/4)

> "*Who would want to mess with that.*" (2/2/1)

Another key argument that surfaced was the potential of the registry to provide clarity regarding women's roles during wartime. Compared to those who have completed military service, focus group participants expressed a particular sense of uncertainty about what their specific role would be in the event of war. Questions arose about whether one should continue in their regular job (e.g. as a nurse or lawyer) or commit, through the registry, to a designated voluntary task (e.g. someone with culinary experience could take on responsibilities related to food provision). A central dilemma concerned how to prioritize between potential responsibilities. As one participant explained: "*It is really difficult for me, I have thought about what kind of task I would commit to [. . .] Which one would be seen as more important. That is where I see my own problem. Who would help me decide where I am most valuable to you – to society?*" (2/3/1) The registry was viewed as one tool that could help address and clarify such uncertainties.[2]

A third argument that emerged was that the registry could enhance the coordination of volunteer efforts. Participants noted, for example, that without coordination, the activation of volunteers could easily turn into confusion and disorganization. In contrast, the registry would enable authorities to quickly and systematically mobilize volunteers when needed. This was also viewed as beneficial in giving the Finnish Defence Forces and other authorities a more accurate picture of the truly committed volunteer reserve – as opposed to the "*fourth sector's*[3] *maybe-participants*" (1/1/2) – for preparedness planning.

Focus group participants envisioned a range of concrete tasks and roles that the assignment and competence registry could encompass. Among the many roles envisioned, participants mentioned tasks such as evacuation support, food provision, care for children and the elderly, and psychological assistance. At the same time, participants also emphasized that it should be possible to commit to the registry in a more general sense, without specifying a particular task in advance. As one participant put it: "*Because if*

something happens, every helping hand is needed. Every single one." (2/1/1) It was also noted that being listed in the registry should not exclude individuals from acting spontaneously in their local surroundings, in fact, participants felt that such local initiative should be actively encouraged.

One central shared narrative concerned the idea that women's key role lies in ensuring the continuity of societal functioning. While it was considered a positive development that an increasing number of women are completing voluntary military service, maintaining the home front while men are on the battlefield was also seen as a vital contribution. One participant reflected on this in relation to NATO's WPS agenda, stating: "*I think it is great that women also fight and that they are needed as soldiers, but in my opinion, women being part of NATO does not mean that we all have to become soldiers*" (2/1/2). The following longer exchange provides a concrete illustration of this narrative.

> "*The tough ones . . . They just get more attention in public. They are hyped more. If you are a fighter pilot.*"(1/2/2)
>
> "*You are a real tough guy*." (1/2/4)
>
> "*Yeah*." (1/2/2)
>
> "*And it is important too*." (1/2/5)
>
> "*Of course it is. But if the rest of the country does not function, then it does not matter.*"(1/2/4)
> "*Exactly*." (1/2/1)
>
> "*Even if that person is tough out there . . .* " (1/2/4)
>
> "*They still need their pea soup*." (1/2/2)
>
> "*Yes*." (1/2/4)
>
> "*And someone has to take care of their children too*." (1/2/1)

Ready to respond?

The third theme highlights multiple factors that either support or hinder women's agency in preparing for and responding to real emergencies and national defence situations. One of the key barriers was the responsibility of caring for young children. This concern was particularly relevant for participants whose children were still very young or who lacked support networks such as grandparents to help with childcare. In one focus group, participants discussed the extent to which traditional gender roles continue to influence these responsibilities. A clear distinction was made between how the situation was perceived before and after having children, as reflected in the following participant's account:

> "*I would have answered the same way as you did before having children. I was also raised to believe that you can do anything boys can do, whether it is becoming a firefighter or whatever. But once I had a child, that changed the situation, especially when it comes to commitment. Who takes care of the child? Because either A, my husband is at work, or B, he is in the military. I am left in second place, unfortunately, just like I am in everything else at the moment. So despite everything I am and everything I have done, I am still the one who carries that responsibility*." (2/3/1)

Employers were identified as playing a dual role, both enabling and hindering the ability of those registered to prepare for and respond to real emergencies or crisis situations. Participants described having diverse experiences with how their employers perceive their voluntary engagement. In the context of the registry, it was noted that it would first be important to have a discussion with one's employer to determine whether the employee could realistically commit to such a voluntary role, that is, whether they could leave their job when needed without risking employment. This issue was seen to intersect with gender equality, particularly in how the situation differs markedly for men who have completed conscription, including their participation in refresher exercises and potential mobilization. However, participants also expressed the hope that this matter would be addressed at the political level: "*It would perhaps be desirable that not everyone has to fight their own battle [with the employer] individually, but if such a registry were to be established, the discussion would instead take place at decision-making levels, with key policymakers clarifying what the protocol would be*." (1/1/1)

The same issue of gender equality also emerged in discussions about compensation. Participants compared the daily allowances received during military refresher training with the absence of financial compensation for those who would be participating in registry-related activities. This was also seen as a matter of recognition and appreciation. As one participant put it: "*[A]s volunteers, we would be ready to go immediately, but we would not receive any compensation if we had to leave our jobs. It makes you wonder a bit about the level of appreciation for the help we are offering*." (2/2/2)

The issue of compensation became particularly salient when considered alongside one of the key enabling factors identified in the focus groups – the importance of training and exercises. Participants emphasized that such opportunities help maintain readiness and develop relevant skills during the time one is part of the registry, thereby encouraging continued commitment. It was also suggested that those in the registry should be required to participate in training at regular intervals, with non-participation potentially leading to removal. Some participants further proposed that individuals in the registry should be involved in preparedness exercises as real contributors rather than merely simulated victims. One participant reflected on a previous experience in an exercise: "*We volunteers were just extras. We played along [. . .] But it felt a bit strange; we were just acting as patients and miserable people who had witnessed a tragic event. [. . .] None of our actual skills were used in the exercise*." (1/2/1)

In addition to training and participation in exercises, the focus group discussions highlighted the importance of maintaining regular contact with those registered and ensuring clarity about the nature of their commitment. Communication could be two-way: those in the registry would receive updates related to their assigned roles, while they in turn could periodically reconfirm or update their commitment – e.g. every few years – thus keeping the registry current and reliable. Clarity regarding commitment was seen as essential. Participants emphasized the need to fully understand what they are signing up for and what such commitment would entail in practice. For instance, it was noted that changes in one's family situation might affect one's ability or willingness to fulfil their role if the registry were activated in a real situation.

Participants noted that prevailing societal attitudes shaped women's agency, particularly how their interest in national defense was perceived by others. Some highlighted that such patriotic engagement might, in the public imagination, be associated with far-

right ideologies or militaristic zeal. As a result, several participants reported choosing to remain discreet about their involvement: "*At least I do not really make any noise about coming here. Because I live in a kind of bubble where I do not want to be labelled as some war freak*. [laughter]" (2/4/3) They also reflected on how engaging in national defense activities could challenge traditional gender expectations and, at times, hinder participation, for instance, depending on how one's partner responds to such involvement. In particular, some expressed concern that women engaging in such roles might be perceived as less feminine: "*That a woman somehow becomes like a guy. And I find it really sad that this is still the case . . .* " (1/5/1)

Another concern raised in the focus groups was the potential vulnerability of the registry to security threats. Participants expressed fears that the registry could be hacked or infiltrated, potentially putting those who had signed up at risk. As one participant explained: "*An adversary state could, of course, hack it and see, oh, these are national defense people, and then cause trouble for them*." (1/1/1) To mitigate such risks, participants emphasized the importance of conducting security clearances for those who register. They also stressed that the entity responsible for maintaining the registry must be highly trustworthy. The Finnish Defence Forces – or actors closely affiliated with them – were most commonly mentioned as appropriate and credible authorities to oversee the registry.

Discussion

This study examined how women's agency might be more systematically integrated into preparedness and national defense structures, with a particular focus on the role of assignment and competence registries in enabling this integration. The analysis identified three central themes: the emergence of women's agency, the registry as a pathway to integration, and readiness to respond. Taken together, these themes offer a coherent response to the research question posed by the study.

This study reinforces previous findings on the emergence of women's agency in the context of national defense and crisis preparedness. Participants drew on both historical legacies – such as the role of the Lottas (e.g. Elomaa-Krapu, Kaunonen, and Åstedt-Kurki 2020; Väyrynen 2023) – and contemporary examples of women's engagement in current conflicts, particularly in Ukraine (e.g. Al Oraimi, Antwi-Boateng, and Nabunya 2023; Phillips and Martsenyuk 2023). Consistent with prior research (Hart 2022; Mattila and Malinen 2024; Robert, Lummaa, and Loehr 2019), key motivators included a sense of patriotic duty, concern for loved ones who might be mobilized in a crisis, and a strong desire to contribute meaningfully during times of upheaval, in other words, to counter fear through action.

This motivational foundation was clearly reflected in participants' reflections on the meaning and value of the assignment and competence registry. Registration was seen to further strengthen women's agency, particularly by increasing the visibility of their contributions and clarifying the roles they could assume during crises or within national defense structures. To some extent, the registry could be interpreted as a counter-response to broader global trends that constrain or marginalize women's agency (see also Morais, Turner, and Wright 2022; Wright 2025). As Kratochvíl and O'Sullivan (2023) argue, gender is not a separate issue in warfare but an explicit and integral part

of it. The registry could thus assert a Western conception of gender and equality, standing in contrast to, for example, the Russian political leadership's promotion of so-called traditional values, in which men fight and protect, while women are cast as victims and those in need of protection. At best, by making women's role in national defense more visible, the registry could even serve as a form of deterrence, though this idea was voiced with a degree of self-irony in the focus group discussions.

Notably, the registry envisioned by the participants appears to constitute a hybrid model when mapped onto the DRC typology of organized behavior (Dynes 1970; Quarantelli and Dynes 1977) (see Figure 1). The involvement of the Finnish Defence Forces or affiliated institutions as administrators, combined with the partial predefinition of tasks, reflects features of a Type 1 (established) registry. Simultaneously, the voluntary nature of registration and the registrants' likely frequent linkage to NGOs and prior training in emergency preparedness, align with characteristics of a Type 2 (expanding) registry. Features of a Type 3 (extending) registry became apparent in how participants referred to the potential use of their personal and professional competencies – for example, someone with a culinary background contributing to food provision. In addition, several participants underscored the importance of inclusive participation during crises, noting that one could register without a designated role or specialized expertise. This emphasis on flexibility and general willingness to help mirrors the dynamics of a Type 4 (emergent) registry. Ideally, an assignment and competence registry could enhance the coordination of diverse volunteer efforts by offering a more realistic estimation of the committed volunteer reserve.

Women's agency cannot, however, be fully realized without the right conditions for action in real crises and national defence situations. These conditions are deeply embedded in societal norms and values. A key example raised by participants – and corroborated by previous research (e.g. Danielsson and Eriksson 2022; Lee et al. 2022) – is the persistent double burden faced by women: the desire to step into crisis roles is often constrained by caregiving responsibilities, particularly in the absence of adequate support systems. Even when women are willing and able, their contributions risk being rendered invisible or undervalued, especially within institutional contexts that continue to privilege masculine ideals (see also Danielsson and Eriksson 2022; Kratochvíl and O'Sullivan 2023). Importantly, this is also a question of how employers enable volunteering and how such engagement is supported, whether through financial compensation or through structured access to training and preparedness exercises.

To summarize, the findings highlight that women's agency in national defense and crisis preparedness depends on three interrelated elements: motivational factors (i.e. drivers of agency), enabling conditions that mitigate barriers to agency, and institutional mechanisms, in this case, the assignment and competence registry. While motivation is a necessary starting point, it is not sufficient on its own. Women also need access to supportive environments and structures that allow meaningful engagement. The registry emerges as a key mechanism by aligning individual capacities with relevant tasks. Its existence, and the presence of favorable conditions for response, can further strengthen motivation. Together, these three elements form a mutually reinforcing cycle. If any one is absent, women's agency cannot be fully realized in the context of preparedness and national defense.

Conclusions

This study contributes to both scholarship and practice. On the academic side, it connects two strands of literature rarely examined together: women's agency in crisis and national defense (e.g. Al Oraimi and Antwi-Boateng 2023; Hart 2022; Phillips and Martsenyuk 2023), and research on volunteer-related registry systems (e.g. Hodge, Gable, and Cálves 2005; McLennan et al. 2021; Schmidt et al. 2018; Winn, Chatfield, and Govern 2021). The findings suggest that such registries can serve as mechanisms that strengthen women's agency in meaningful ways. The study also contributes to conceptual clarity by applying the DRC typology of organized behavior (Dynes 1970; Quarantelli and Dynes 1977), showing how different types of registries may be understood within national preparedness systems.

The practical value of this study lies in how it identifies both the opportunities and challenges associated with assignment and competence registries. In Finland, such a registry – intended for individuals who have not completed conscription – is currently under consideration as a means to strengthen crisis preparedness and national defense, while in other countries, similar initiatives may be considered in the future. These findings can inform the design and implementation of such systems, should they be developed. In particular, attention must be paid to the constraints that may limit their effectiveness. While a registry holds potential to strengthen women's agency, it risks becoming what Wright (2025) terms a "hollow concept" if the challenges surrounding participation are left unaddressed. Without confronting these barriers, the registry itself may evolve into a "hollow structure," a mechanism with symbolic value but limited practical impact on women's meaningful involvement in national defense.

These reflections also connect to broader international debates on the future of the WPS agenda. In light of the recent setbacks to the WPS agenda in the United States, Armstrong (2025) highlights the need for other alliance members to safeguard this increasingly vulnerable agenda. As a new NATO member state and a country that emphasizes a whole-of-society approach to national defense, Finland may have an important role to play in this regard. For example, Græger (2025) points out that the Nordic countries, traditionally characterized by high levels of gender equality, can assume responsibility and contribute not only to defense and deterrence but also to the advancement of the WPS agenda. The assignment and competence registry currently being developed in Finland could serve as a potential counter-response to global trends that marginalize women's contributions, helping to promote a more inclusive and resilient model of national defense.

This study is not without its limitations. A key contextual limitation lies in the fact that the research was conducted in Finland, a country with a male-dominant conscription-based military service. This differs from, for instance, Sweden and Norway, where gender-neutral conscription policies are in place (Jonsson et al. 2024). These differences raise the question of whether the perceived potential value of an assignment and competence registry might vary across national contexts. Another clear limitation concerns the participant group: the findings reflect the views of a specific subset of women, namely, those who have undergone NGO-provided security-related training. Therefore, the results should not be generalized to all Finnish women.

These limitations open avenues for future research. First, comparative studies could explore the potential of such registries in countries with different defence models and

gender policies. Second, further research could examine the views of women who have not received security training to determine the extent to which their perspectives align with or diverge from those presented in this study.

Notes

1. We use the term "Russian aggression" in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolutions, including ES-11/1 (2022), which condemned the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine as an act of aggression (United Nations General Assembly 2022).
2. It was also noted that the registry could equally help clarify the wartime roles of men who have not performed conscription-based military service, such as those who have completed non-military service or been exempted for health reasons.
3. In Finland, the concept of the fourth sector typically refers to spontaneous volunteers and emergent groups that self-organize in crisis situations outside the formal structures of the third sector (e.g. Raisio et al. 2019).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This research received funding from the Scientific Advisory Board for Defence (MATINE).

Notes on contributors

Harri Raisio (Ph.D.) is a University Lecturer in the School of Management at the University of Vaasa and an Adjunct Professor at the University of Eastern Finland. His research has focused on topics such as complexity leadership, comprehensive security, spontaneous volunteering, and public deliberation. He has been published in journals including Policy Sciences, Administration and Society, International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters, Public Administration Quarterly, Defense Studies, Radioprotection, and Public Administration Review.

Annukka Jokipii is a Professor of Accounting at the University of Vaasa. Her research focuses on information resilience, internal control, corporate governance, and fraud. She has been published in journals such as Critical Perspectives on Accounting, Managerial Auditing Journal, Journal of Business Finance & Accounting, and International Journal of Auditing.

Juha Lindell (Ph.D.) is a University Lecturer in the School of Management at the University of Vaasa. His research has focused on topics such as complexity leadership, wicked problems, and change management. He has been published in journals including Radioprotection, Sustainability, Landscape and urban planning, and Tertiary Education and Management.

Tomi Niemi (Ph.D.) is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the School of Management, University of Vaasa. His research focuses on administrative sciences and user-centred service development, with a particular interest in individual user perceptions, co-creation, and collaborative decision-making.

Marianna Polvi holds a University of Applied Sciences degree in Social Services and is currently pursuing a Master's degree at the School of Management, University of Vaasa.

References

Al Oraimi, S., and O. Antwi-Boateng. 2023. "Surviving Patriarchy: Ukrainian Women and the Russia-Ukraine War." *Journal of International Women's Studies* 25 (6): Article 8. https://doi.org/10.3968/j.css.1923669720130905.2702.

Armstrong, M. A. 2025. "Turning to Gender Analysis in Times of Upheaval: An Intervention Piece." *Defence Studies*. https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2025.2546787.

Berzina, I. 2020. "From 'Total' to 'Comprehensive' National Defence: The Development of the Concept in Europe." *Journal on Baltic Security* 6 (2): 1–9. https://doi.org/10.2478/jobs-2020-0006.

Boersma, K., J. Ferguson, P. Groenewegen, F. Mulder, A. Schmidt, and J. Wolbers. 2019. "Platform Governance of Self-Organized Initiatives in Response to Disasters." In *Smart Hybridity: Potentials and Challenges of New Governance Arrangements*, edited by Koppejan, J., P. M. Karre, and K. Terrier, 31–42. Hague, Netherlands: Eleven International Publishing.

Boichak, O. 2021. "Camouflage Aesthetics: Militarisation, Craftivism, and the In/Visibility of Resistance at Scale." *Contemporary Voices: St Andrews Journal of International Relations* 3 (1): 1–13. https://doi.org/10.15664/jtr.1561.

Braun, V., and V. Clarke. 2006. "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology." *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3 (2): 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.

Danielsson, E., and K. Eriksson. 2022. "Women's Invisible Work in Disaster Contexts: Gender Norms in Speech on Women's Work After a Forest Fire in Sweden." *Disasters* 46 (1): 141–161. https://doi.org/10.1111/disa.12464.

Dynes, R. R. 1970. *Organized Behavior in Disaster*. Lexington, MA: Heath Lexington Books.

Elomaa-Krapu, M., M. Kaunonen, and P. Åstedt-Kurki. 2020. "Volunteer Experiences of Wartime Nursing in Finland During World War II." *Nursing Inquiry* 27:e12334. https://doi.org/10.1111/nin.12334.

Finnish Government. 2023. "A Strong and Committed Finland: Programme of Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's Government." *Publications of the Finnish Government* 2023:60.

González-Hidalgo, M., and A. Cabana Iglesia. 2025. "Trending Discourses and Silences Around the Role of Women in Wildfires: A Systematic Scoping Review and Some Reflections from the Field." *Journal of Rural Studies* 115. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2024.103553.

Græger, N. 2025. "The Nordic Region and NATO: Security Relations in Change." In *Handbook of Nordic Cooperation*, edited by Græger, N., R. Hemstad, P. Nedergaard, and P. Stadius, 307–321. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Hart, L. 2022. "Willing, Caring and Capable: Gendered Ideals of Vernacular Preparedness in Finland." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* 29 (2): 405–427. https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxab012.

Hodge, J. G., L. A. Gable, and S. H. Cálves. 2005. "Volunteer Health Professionals and Emergencies: Assessing and Transforming the Legal Environment." *Biosecurity and Bioterrorism: Biodefense Strategy, Practice, and Science* 3 (3): 216–223. https://doi.org/10.1089/bsp.2005.3.216.

Hurley, M., K. A. M. Wright, K. Lund, K. D'Hert, J. I. Gil Ruiz, and D. Morais. 2024. "Engaging Women, Peace, and Security in Defence: The Role of the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives." *Defence Studies* 24 (3): 472–486. https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2024.2348590.

Jalava, J., H. Raisio, T. Norri-Sederholm, H. Lahtinen, and A. Puustinen. 2017. "*Kolmas Sektori Viranomaisten Turvallisuustoiminnan Tukena* [The Third Sector Supporting Authorities in Security Functions]." In *Publications of the Government's Analysis, Assessment and Research Activities*, Vol. 76. Helsinki: Prime Minister's Office.

Jonsson, E., M. Salo, E. Lillemäe, F. B. Steder, T. Ferst, K. Kasearu, J. Novagrockiene, J. Österberg, T. Sederholm, S. Svensén, T. Szvircsev Tresch, and T.-T. Truusa. 2024. "Multifaceted Conscription: A Comparative Study of Six European Countries." *Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies* 7 (1): 19–33. https://doi.org/10.31374/sjms.166.

Kalnes, Ø., and N. M. Bjørge. 2025. "'So, We Have Occupied TikTok': Ukrainian Women in #ParticipativeWar." *Media, War & Conflict* 233–250. https://doi.org/10.1177/17506352241307010.

Kratochvíl, P., and M. O'Sullivan. 2023. "A War Like No Other: Russia's Invasion of Ukraine as a War on Gender Order." *European Security* 32 (3): 347–366. https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2023.2236951.

Lee, C.-C., K.-C. Huang, S.-Y. Kuo, Y.-J. Lin, K.-Y. Ke, T.-Y. Pan, L.-L. Tai, C.-K. Cheng, Y.-L. Shih, H.-T. Lai, and B.-H. Ke. 2022. "Gender Matters: The Role of Women in Community-Based Disaster Risk Management in Taiwan." *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 77:103046. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2022.103046.

Mattila, J. I., and S. K. Malinen. 2024. "Exploring the Normative Structure of Finnish Soldiers' Home Association: Understanding an Auxiliary Organization Through Volunteer Values." *Armed Forces & Society* 712–734. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X231224736.

McLennan, B., J. Molloy, J. Whittaker, and J. Handmer. 2016. "Centralised Coordination of Spontaneous Emergency Volunteers: The EV Crew Model." *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* 31 (1): 24–30.

McLennan, B., J. Whittaker, and J. Handmer. 2016. "The Changing Landscape of Disaster Volunteering: Opportunities, Responses and Gaps in Australia." *Natural Hazards* 84 (3): 2031–2048. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11069-016-2532-5.

McLennan, B., J. Whittaker, T. Kruger, and J. Handmer. 2021. "Navigating Authority and Legitimacy When 'Outsider' Volunteers Coproduce Emergency Management Services." *Environmental Hazards* 20 (1): 7–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/17477891.2020.1727829.

Merchant, R. M., J. E. Leigh, and N. Lurie. 2010. "Health Care Volunteers and Disaster Response—First, Be Prepared." *New England Journal of Medicine* 362 (10): 872–873. https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMp1001737.

Morais, D., S. Turner, and K. A. M. Wright. 2022. "The Future of Women, Peace, and Security at NATO." *Transatlantic Policy* 21 (2): 103–111.

Morgan, D. L. 1996. "Focus Groups." *Annual Review of Sociology* 22:129–152. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2083427.

Nahkur, O., K. Orru, S. Hansson, P. Jukarainen, M. Myllylä, M. Krüger, M. Max, L. Savadori, T.-O. Nævestad, S. F. Meyer, A. Schieffelers, A. Olson, G. Lovasz, and M. Rhinard. 2022. "The Engagement of Informal Volunteers in Disaster Management in Europe." *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 83:103413. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2022.103413.

NATO. 2024. *Women, Peace, and Security*. Brussels: NATO.

Neuendorf, K. A. 2019. "Content Analysis and Thematic Analysis." In *Advanced Research Methods for Applied Psychology Design, Analysis and Reporting*, edited by Brough, P., 211–223. New York: Routledge.

Parker, A., and J. Tritter. 2006. "Focus Group Method and Methodology: Current Practice and Recent Debate." *International Journal of Research and Method in Education* 29 (1): 23–37. https://doi.org/10.1080/01406720500537304.

Peterson, C. 2006. "Be Safe, Be Prepared: Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals in Disaster Response." *OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing* 11 (3): Manuscript 2. https://doi.org/10.3912/OJIN.Vol11No03Man02.

Phillips, S. D., and T. Martsenyuk. 2023. "Women's Agency and Resistance in Russia's War on Ukraine: From Victim of the War to Prominent Force." *Women's Studies International Forum* 98:102731. May–June. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2023.102731.

Quarantelli, E. L., and R. R. Dynes. 1977. *Different Types of Organizations in Disaster Responses and Their Operational Problems*. Vol. 41. Newark, DE: University of Delaware, Disaster Research Center. https://udspace.udel.edu/items/a8a794a7-650c-4e86-8eff-7c3361c5c7ec.

Raisio, H., T. Niemi, A. Puustinen, J. Kosonen, and V. Valtonen. 2025. "Co-Producing National Defense? Strategic Considerations for Spontaneous Volunteer Involvement." *International Journal of Public Sector Management*. Accepted for publication.

Raisio, H., A. Puustinen, and J. Lindell. 2022. "#StrongTogether? Qualitative Sentiment Analysis of Social Media Reactions to Disaster Volunteering During a Forest Fire in Finland." *Sustainability* 14 (7): 3983. https://doi.org/10.3390/su14073983.

Raisio, H., A. Puustinen, T. Norri-Sederholm, and J. Jalava. 2019. "'Those Who Agree to Play on Our Terms Will Be Taken In': A Qualitative Study of the Perceptions of Public Authorities and NGO Representatives Regarding Self-Organizing Fourth-Sector Activity." *Public Administration Quarterly* 43 (3): 4–44. https://doi.org/10.1177/073491491904300301.

Rantavuo, E., J. Halonen, T. Niinimäki, and T. Seppänen. 2021. "Volunteers as an Integrated Part of the Oil Spill Response Capacity in Finland." *International Oil Spill Conference Proceedings* 1 (1): 688700. https://doi.org/10.7901/2169-3358-2021.1.688700.

Robert, L., V. Lummaa, and J. Loehr. 2019. "Self-Sacrifice and Kin Psychology in War: Threats to Family Predict Decisions to Volunteer for a Women's Paramilitary Organization." *Evolution and Human Behavior* 40 (6): 543–550. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2019.06.001.

Schmidt, A., J. Wolbers, J. Ferguson, and K. Boersma. 2018. "Are You Ready2Help? Conceptualizing the Management of Online and Onsite Volunteer Convergence." *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 26:338–349. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5973.12200.

Stallings, R. A., and E. L. Quarantelli. 1985. "Emergent Citizen Groups and Emergency Management." *Public Administration Review* 45 (Special Issue): 93–100. https://doi.org/10.2307/3135003.

Strandh, V. 2019. "Crisis Volunteerism Is the New Black? Exploring the Diversity of Voluntary Engagement in Crisis Management." *Risk, Hazards, & Crisis in Public Policy* 10 (3): 311–331. https://doi.org/10.1002/rhc3.12164.

Strandh, V., and N. Eklund. 2018. "Emergent Groups in Disaster Research: Varieties of Scientific Observation Over Time and Across Studies of Nine Natural Disasters." *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 26:329–337. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5973.12199.

Twigg, J., and I. Mosel. 2017. "Emergent Groups and Spontaneous Volunteers in Urban Disaster Response." *Environment and Urbanization* 29 (2): 443–458. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247817721413.

United Nations General Assembly. 2022). ES–11/1 *Aggression against Ukrain*e. https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/ES-11/1 .

Valtonen, V., and M. Branders. 2021. "Tracing the Finnish Comprehensive Security Model." In *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence*, edited by Larsson, S. and M. Rhinard, 91–108. New York: Routledge.

Väyrynen, T. 2023. "War Agency in Women's Auxiliary Military Organizations: The Case of Lotta Svärd in Finland." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 25 (3): 414–433. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2022.2135559.

Winn, J. I., S. Chatfield, and K. H. Govern. 2021. "Medical Volunteers During Pandemics, Disasters, and Other Emergencies: Management Best Practices." *Seattle Journal of Technology, Environmental & Innovation Law* 11 (2): Article 2.https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3902193.

Wither, J. K. 2020. "Back to the Future? Nordic Total Defence Concepts." *Defence Studies* 20 (1): 61–81. https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2020.1718498.

Wright, K. A. M. 2022. "Where Is Women, Peace and Security? NATO's Response to the Russia–Ukraine War." *European Journal of Politics and Gender* 5 (2): 275–277. https://doi.org/10.1332/251510821X16499363293389.

Wright, K. A. M. 2025. "Moving Beyond a 'Hollow Concept': Realising Women, Peace and Security at NATO Under a Trump Presidency." *Defence Studies* 25 (3): 731–739. https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2025.2474059.