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Wargaming the Welfare State: How Sweden's Cold War Crisis Exercises Forged Public-Private Collaboration in Total Defence

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Abstract

A changing geopolitical environment has led to the reintroduction of total defence in Sweden. This thesis investigates how crisis exercises, wargaming, and preparedness conferences shaped private-public collaboration in Sweden's total defence system during the late Cold War period, from the early 1970s to the late 1980s. Utilising a corporatist theoretical framework, the study draws on primary archival sources to address a significant research gap in understanding how these activities influenced private-public collaboration. Findings reveal that these activities shaped public-private collaboration by serving as socialisation and identity-shaping tools, fostering trust-based relationships and a collective sense of duty; as incentive-shaping arenas, aligning state and industry interests through corporatist negotiations; and as operationalisation and coordination tools, translating abstract plans into operational readiness. These interlinked mechanisms created a dynamic, mutually reinforcing cycle that strengthened collaboration within Sweden's corporatist framework. By highlighting the business sector's perspective and the practical enactment of corporatism, this research offers theoretical insights into historical private-public collaboration in a total defence context and practical lessons for contemporary total defence rebuilding.

Keywords: Corporatism, Total Defence, Public-Private Collaboration, Crisis Exercises, Wargaming, Preparedness Conferences, Cold War

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*“Study history, study history. In history lies all the secrets of
statecraft.”*

- Winston Churchill

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Glossary

Overview	
Rikskommissionen för ekonomisk försvarsberedskap (RKE)	The National Commission of Economic Defence Preparedness
Riksnämnden för ekonomisk försvarsberedskap (RKE)	The National Committee of Economic Defence Preparedness
Överstyrelsen för ekonomiskt försvarsberedskap (ÖEF)	The National Board of Economics Defence Preparedness
Överstyrelsen för ekonomisk försvar (ÖEF)	The National Board of Economic Defence
Överstyrelsen för civil beredskap (ÖCB)	The National Board of Civil Preparedness
Civildöversstyrelsen	The Civil Defence Board
Handlingsberedskap	Operational readiness
Industrins Försvarsbyrå	The Defence Industry Bureau
Östekonomiska byrån (ÖEB)	Institute for Eastern Economic Affairs
Svenska Arbetsgivareföreningen (SAF)	Swedish Employers' Confederation
Näringslivets Beredskapsbyrå (NBB)	Business Sector Preparedness Office
Sveriges Mekanförbund	Swedish Association of Metalworking Industries
Jernkontoret	The Swedish Steel Producers' Association
Landsorganisationen (LO)	Swedish Trade Union Confederation

Krigsberedskapskommissionen	War Preparedness Commission
Riksarkivet	Swedish National Archives
Krigsarkivet	The War Archives
Försvarets Materialverk (FMV)	The Swedish Defence Materiel Administration
Försvarets Forskningsinstitut (FOI)	Swedish Defence Research Agency
Myndigheten för Samhällsskydd och Beredskap (MSB)	Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency

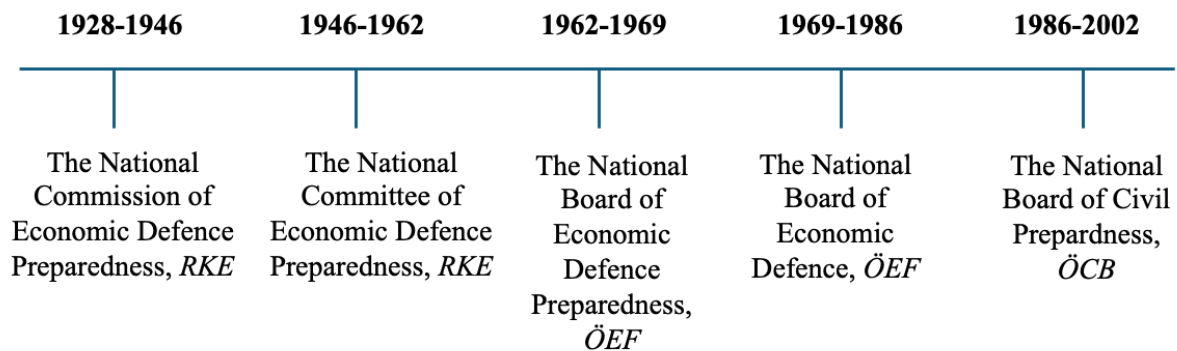


Figure 1: *The evolution of Swedish economic defence agencies*

1. Introduction

As the global geopolitical order is changing from the post-Cold War framework, Sweden is facing a deteriorating security environment, requiring the rebuilding of its total defence system, as reflected in the Swedish 2025–2030 total defence decision.¹ Historically, Sweden's total defence, shaped by the World Wars and developed during the Cold War, integrated military, civil, economic, and psychological components into a whole.² The total defence relied on public-private collaboration through economic defence measures such as the K-company system and strategic stockpiling, which ensured Sweden's self-reliant neutrality.³

This thesis focuses on a critical yet underexplored element of this history, namely the role of preparedness conferences, crisis exercises, and wargaming in shaping public-private collaboration within Sweden's total defence during the late Cold War. The geopolitical landscape was changing during this time, and Sweden's total defence gradually moved away from strictly preparing for war to embracing a broader approach to crisis readiness.⁴

As we will show, these activities were critical in fostering coordination, trust, and capability alignment between state actors and the business community, in addition to being mere operational tools. We argue that preparedness conferences, crisis exercises and wargaming were essential in cultivating a collaborative culture, enabling Sweden to sustain one of the world's most resilient total defence systems at the time.

The research aims to explain how these practices underpinned Sweden's preparedness and offers lessons for today's challenges. This topic has gained renewed relevance, as evidenced by recent calls for increased joint exercises.

¹ 'Nytt totalförsvarsbeslut för perioden 2025-2030', *Myndigheten för Samhällsskydd och Beredskap (MSB)* Accessed April 1, 2025.

<https://www.msb.se/sv/aktuellt/nyheter/2024/december/nytt-totalforsvarsbeslut-for-perioden-2025-2030/>

² C Eriksson et al., "En Forskningsagenda För Civilt Försvar," *Försvarets Forskningsinstitut (FOI)* (2023); Larsson, M. "Det Militärindustriella Komplexet Grundläggs." *Företagskällan*, last modified 25 April 2025. Accessed February 15, 2025.

<https://www.foretagskallan.se/foretagskallan-nyheter/lektionsmaterial/det-militarindustriella-komplexet-grundlaggs/>.

³ P Isaksson, *Vår Beredskap Var God* (Stockholm: Timbro Förlag, 2021); H Jörgensen, "Neutrality and National Preparedness: State-Led Agricultural Rationalization in Cold War Sweden," in *Science for Welfare and Warfare: Technology and State Initiative in Cold War Sweden*, ed. P Lundin, N Stenlås, and J Gribbe (Watson Publishing International, 2010), 173–193.

⁴ Erik Bergelin, "The Spirit of Total Defence: Cold War Militarization of Swedish Elites" (Seminar presented at the Higher Seminar in Statecraft and Strategic Communication, Stockholm School of Economics, March 19, 2025).

1.1 Research question

The thesis research question is the following:

"How did crisis preparedness conferences, exercises and wargaming shape public-private collaboration in Sweden's total defence system during the late Cold War?"

1.2 Purpose & expected contribution

As the tide of geopolitics is shifting and the global rule-based order is being dismantled, the experiences and knowledge from Swedish Cold War total defence are once again becoming highly useful. However, the knowledge is at risk of being forgotten. Given the central role that businesses have had and must have in Swedish total defence, the topic of public-private collaboration is of considerable importance. This study aims to draw from this knowledge and these experiences to enhance the understanding of Cold War total defence public-private collaboration by investigating and analysing the role of preparedness conferences, wargaming and exercises in this context and their potential as tools for contemporary and future application. By examining historical records, we seek to understand the conditions under which exercises, wargames and conferences occurred, and specifically, these activities' role in developing and shaping the Swedish total defence. We will utilise the theoretical concept of corporatism to analyse the empirical material. By applying a corporatist theoretical framework to the historical data, we aim to generate insights that, when synthesised with contemporary research, can inform our understanding as Sweden enters this new historical paradigm.

The relevance of the business sector for the Swedish total defence, and by extension of public-private collaboration, is showcased by, for example, the current governmental investigations "Utredningen om näringslivets försörjningsberedskap"⁵ and "Näringslivets roll inom totalförsvaret".⁶

More specifically, the current need for and relevance of these kinds of activities with private and public actors participating has recently been brought to attention in various forums. For

⁵ "N 2022:08. Utredningen Om Näringslivets Försörjningsberedskap.," n.d. [*The Investigation into Business Supply Preparedness*]

⁶ "SOU 2019:51. Näringslivets Roll Inom Totalförsvaret.," n.d. [*The role of the business sector in total defense*]

example, by the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise⁷, as of 11 February 2025, in the article “Nu övar vi näringslivet – tillsammans med Försvarshögskolan”, which calls for the increase of joint exercises between the private sector and government agencies.⁸ In another article, as of 13 March 2025, in *Dagens Nyheter*, a researcher at the Swedish Defence Research agency (FOI) appeals to expand scenario exercises with public and private actors within food security as part of the total defence.⁹ The rising attention in the media points towards the renewed relevance of the topic. Public actors have also highlighted the matter; for example, Länsstyrelsen Norrbotten emphasised their focus on collaboration and exercises with the business sector in March 2025.¹⁰

Despite extensive discourse on public-private cooperation in total defence, the existing knowledge remains scattered and fragmented.¹¹ In particular, academic research on preparedness conferences, wargaming, and crisis exercises held jointly with the public and private sectors in a Swedish context during the Cold War and their role in shaping private-public collaboration is nearly non-existent.

The Cold War period provides an extensive source of knowledge into the functioning of a total defence, and the Cold War experiences continue to play an essential role in the current development, as the roles of industry-state relations remain central today and in the future. In response to calls in the media for increased exercises between the private sector and government agencies, and recognising the scarcity and fragmentation of existing research, this study contributes to a more coherent understanding of public-private cooperation in total defence, a matter of strategic importance for national security.

⁷ *Svenskt Näringsliv*

⁸ F. Palmheden, ‘Nu Övar vi Näringslivet – Tillsammans Med Försvarshögskolan’, *Svenskt Näringsliv*, Februari, 11 2025; [*Training the Business Sector – Together with the Swedish Defence University*]. Accessed May 10, 2025.

https://www.svensktnaringsliv.se/sakomraden/eu/nu-ovar-vi-naringslivet-tillsammans-med-forsvarshogskolan_1227115.html

⁹ Gripenberg, P. and J., Vestergren. “Livsmedelsberedskap: Statlig Plan Saknas Fortfarande”, *Dagens Nyheter*, March, 13, 2025

<https://www.dn.se/sverige/pandemin-och-kriget-i-ukraina-har-provat-livsmedelsberedskapen-staten-saknar-fortfarande-plan/>

¹⁰ “Gemensam planering av totalförsvaret i Norra civilområdet,” Länsstyrelsen, last modified March 18, 2025. Accessed April 1, 2025.

<https://www.lansstyrelsen.se/norrboten/om-oss/nyheter-och-press/nyheter---norrboten/2025-03-18-gemensam-planering-av-totalforsvaret-i-norra-civilområdet.html>

¹¹ J. Ingemarsdotter and others, ‘Näringslivets Roll i Totalförsvaret - Centrala Frågor Och Vägar Framåt’, *Försvarets Forskningsinstitut (FOI)*, 2020

<https://www.foi.se/rapportsammanfattning?reportNo=FOI-R--4649--SE>

2. Background

2.1 The Current Geopolitical Situation & Its Relevance

The tides of geopolitics are currently changing.¹² The U.S.-led rules-based order established since 1945 is being replaced by a new one, characterised by increased multipolarism and geopolitical instability. This change has several implications for Sweden, its military posture and defence policy. In the new total defence decision for 2025 to 2030, the Parliament acknowledges the serious security and political situation in our vicinity. The total defence decision specifies that total defence should be designed and sized to defend Sweden against an armed attack and contribute to the defence of NATO allies. Additionally, the civil defence must be able to ensure the most essential societal functions in times of crisis or war.¹³ Consequently, the need to rebuild and improve Sweden's total defence capabilities is at an urgency not seen since the end of the Second World War.

2.2 The Late Cold War Context

This study is limited to examining the late Cold War, as the conflict entered a phase of relative de-escalation during the 1970s. The shape of the Swedish total defence exercises manifested this de-escalation.¹⁴ From the 1940s to the 1960s, there tended to be a focus on the military activities within the public-private exercises in Sweden, with the military command leading the exercises. Following the 1973 Oil Crisis that created shock waves across the entire world economy, economic defence and supply preparedness were concepts that became central anew.¹⁵ It gave rise to a new formulation, a *peace-time crisis*¹⁶, described as an inability to maintain normal standards of production, export and consumption due to supply chain disruptions not caused by war or the threat of war. In the event of a peace crisis, the primary purpose was to preserve domestic production capabilities. Many crisis exercises and wargames from the middle of the 1970s to the 1980s were inspired by the Oil Crisis. In

¹² 'Prospects for a Multipolar World Order – GIS Reports', Geopolitical Intelligence Services, 2023. Accessed 7 May 2025. <https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/multipolar-world-order/>

¹³ "Nytt totalförsvarsbeslut för perioden 2025-2030."

¹⁴ E., Bergelin, "The Spirit of Total Defence: Cold War Militarization of Swedish Elites."

¹⁵ J. Ingemarsdotter, 'Beredskap att agera: Lärdomar för framtiden från det civila försvarets övningar 1937-1997', *Försvarets Forskningsinstitut (FOI)*, 2021.

¹⁶ "Ny Organisation för ÖEF: Betänkande Av ÖEF-Utredningen (H 1975:04)" (Gotab, 1976).; "*Fredskris*"

summary, the less imminent threat of war and global supply constraints led to an increased focus on exercises confronting various peacetime crises.

2.3 The Concept & History of Swedish Total Defence

The Swedish concept of total defence is defined in the law of total defence and heightened readiness.¹⁷ Today, the Swedish total defence consists of a military and civil branch of defence.¹⁸

The historical background of the total defence dates back to the First World War, during which Eli Heckscher headed the War Preparedness Commission¹⁹. Although the commission was temporary, it would establish the groundwork for more permanent institutions for Sweden's supply preparedness.²⁰

The subsequent development of the Swedish total defence is the product of Sweden's neutrality during World War II and the post-Cold War tensions. As the policy officially assumed that Sweden would be forced to fend for itself, an atmosphere of urgency was generated, precipitating the introduction of military readiness into Swedish peacetime consciousness.²¹ The restrictions on global trade during the Second World War underlined a central issue: Sweden was dependent on imports of some resources of strategic importance. Thus, storing goods became one way of mitigating the threats to the nation's supply line.²² While the domestic provision of resources was one of the most essential underpinnings of Sweden's total defence policy, it was also necessary for the credibility of the nation's neutrality policy. Sweden needed to appear capable of exercising sovereign decision-making both during times of peace and war, and could not seem to rely on the NATO bloc.²³

¹⁷ Lagen om totalförsvar och höjd beredskap, 1992:1403

¹⁸ "Totalförsvaret - du är en del av Sveriges beredskap," *Myndigheten för Samhällsskydd och Beredskap (MSB)*. Accessed May 10, 2025. <https://www.msb.se/sv/rad-till-privatpersoner/sa-fungerar-vart-forsvar/totalforsvaret---du-ar-en-del-av-sveriges-beredskap/>.

¹⁹ *Krigsberedskapskommissionen*

²⁰ P. Malmberg and others, 'The Role of Industry in Sweden's Total Defence: Past, Present, and Future', Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences, 2023.

²¹ D. Brommesson, A.-M. Ekengren and, and A. Michalski, "Sweden's Policy of Neutrality: Success Through Flexibility?," in *Successful Public Policy in the Nordic Countries: Cases, Lessons, Challenges*, ed. C. de la Porte et al. (Oxford University Press, 2022), 284–305. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192856296.003.0014>.

²² Isaksson, *Vår Beredskap Var God*.

²³ S., Nilsson, "The Swedish Oil Weapon: Storage of Fuel in Sweden During the Cold War – Energy Security and Environmentally Related Aspects" (Master's Thesis, Uppsala Universitet, 2021 <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1642502/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.

During the Cold War, the total defence consisted of four pillars: military, civil, psychological and economic defence.²⁴ The “totality” of the different components is often stressed, as the various forms of defence were effective only when integrated as a cohesive whole.²⁵ A critical aspect in which the economic defence differentiated itself from the other branches in the total defence was the fact that its primary constituent was the business community, and not the state.²⁶ Economic defence was dropped as an organisational term in 1986 (although it has recently resurfaced), when the *National Board of Economic Defence* (ÖEF) was converted into the *National Board of Civil Readiness* (ÖCB), and therefore, when the term “total defence” is used henceforth, the economic defence is implied to be included.²⁷

Sweden’s total defence was considered one of the most comprehensive and resilient total defence systems in the World during the Cold War.²⁸ Following World War II, Sweden would emerge, along with Switzerland, as one of the countries in the world with the highest spending on total defence initiatives per capita.²⁹ The system was later dismantled following the fall of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1990s. The dismantling became known as the “strategic timeout”.³⁰ Following the Russian illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, the Swedish government decided to rebuild its total defence, whose resources had been decimated during the strategic timeout.³¹ The total defence as a concept had ceased to exist, and only a fraction of the resources and manpower of the Swedish Armed Forces remained after the reductions in defence spending during the 1990s and 2000s.³²

²⁴ Eriksson et al., “En Forskningsagenda För Civilt Försvar.”

²⁵ Larsson, “Det Militärindustriella Komplexet Grundläggs.”

²⁶ M. Olsson, C. Ryghammar and J. Lundén, ‘Näringslivets Syn På Roller Och Ansvar i Totalförsvaret’ (2017). Accessed 4 March 2025. <https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI-R--4551--SE>

²⁷ Ingemarsdotter, “Beredskap att agera: Lärdomar för framtiden från det civila försvarets övningar 1937- 1997.”

²⁸ K. Lallerstedt, ‘Rebuilding Total Defense in a Globalized Deregulated Economy The Case of Sweden’, *PRISM*, 9/3. Accessed 25 February 2025.

<https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/2846418/rebuilding-total-defense-in-a-globalized-deregulated-economy-the-case-of-sweden>.

²⁹ Malmberg and others, ‘The Role of Industry in Sweden’s Total Defence: Past, Present, and Future’.

³⁰ I.-L. Söderkvist, ‘Var Står vi Nu i Arbetet Med En Planeringsmodell För Totalförsvaret Och Hur Anpassas Detta till CBRNE-Frågora?’, *Myndigheten för Samhällsskydd och Beredskap (MSB)*, 2019

<https://www.msb.se/contentassets/812c21f59f53400daf6f3c55f01d02e5/inga-lill-soderkvist-msb-planeringsmodell.pdf>; Lallerstedt, ‘Rebuilding Total Defense in a Globalized Deregulated Economy The Case of Sweden’.

³¹ J. Ejnelind, “Kristersson’s Sweden: Rebuilding the Civil Defence,” *Uttryck Magazine*. Last modified June 16, 2024. Accessed March 14, 2025.

<https://www.uttryckmagazine.com/2024/06/16/kristerssons-sweden-rebuilding-the-civil-defence/>.

³² Eriksson et al., “En Forskningsagenda För Civilt Försvar.”

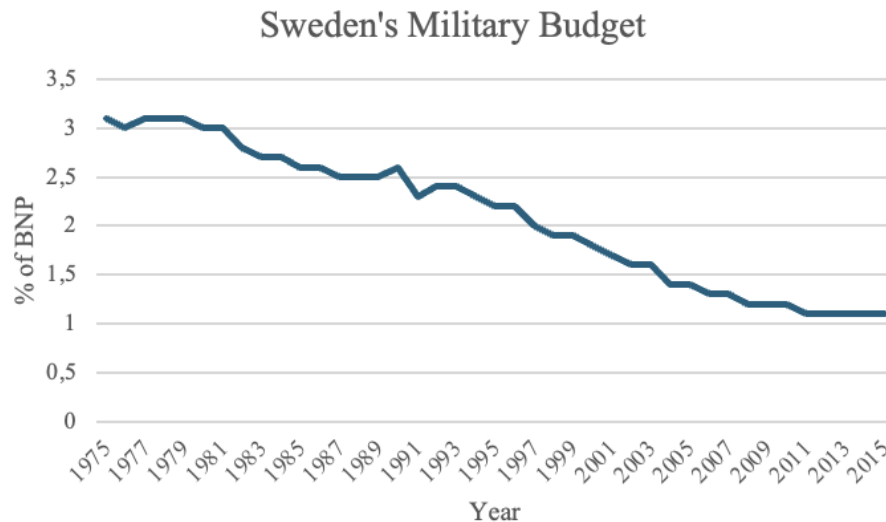


Figure 2: *Development of the Swedish Defence budget as a percentage of GDP 1975-2015*³³

2.4 The Political-Economic Context for Public-Private Collaboration

As discussed above, Swedish total defence has been and continues to be highly dependent on the business sector and thus private-public partnerships and collaborations.

Sweden has offered a favourable environment for cooperation with the different parts of the labour market and the state, historically as well as presently. The trajectory towards this environment was initiated by the Saltsjöbaden Agreement³⁴, an event that is an illustrative example of the Swedish collaborative context. An agreement signed between the Swedish Employers' Confederation (SAF) and the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) in 1938 facilitated conflict resolution between the different actors on the labour market. The agreement reduced suspicion between the different power bases of Swedish society and would facilitate greater cooperation on issues including total defence.³⁵

Business-state cooperation, such as economic intelligence, developed in various areas during the early Cold War. The total defence collaboration between public and private actors was detailed across multiple contingency plans, agreements and collaborative public-private forums, including the Institute for Eastern Economic Affairs (ÖEB). As detailed by Jörgensen, ÖEB was an economic intelligence agency which was co-financed by the industry

³³ Constructed by the authors. Data from Försvarsmakten

³⁴ *Saltsjöbadsavtalet*

³⁵ Isaksson, *Vår Beredskap Var God*.

and the state and engaged in the examination of the Eastern Bloc's economic capabilities.³⁶ This was part of a broader societal corporatist development, characterised by deep collaboration between various interest groups and societal power bases. During this time, the Swedish preparedness initiatives, public and private, also began to arise,³⁷ and the National Board of Economic Defence (RKE) regarded the business sector's role as crucial for economic defence.³⁸

The state's and private sector's interdependence was crucial in maintaining national security and an effective policy of neutrality. Such a policy restricted the country's options for trade in times of crises or war, making it dependent on itself. Retaining the strategic independence and defence means of the nation necessitated assuring Sweden's ability to not only secure the supply of goods during crises but also to protect and develop critical resources over time.³⁹ While competition in open markets was allowed, specific industries were heavily regulated to preserve national autonomy. Nonetheless, the level of self-sufficiency began to decrease during the later phases of the Cold War. For example, the share of foreign weapon technology rose from 10% in the 1960s to 30% in the 1980s.⁴⁰

Perhaps the most well-known and an integral part of the economic defence was the K-company⁴¹ system. As part of Sweden's economic defence, parts of the private sector were engaged through agreements with selected companies, designated as K-companies. These companies were expected to continue operations during crises or war, sometimes shifting their focus to align with the needs of total defence and were tasked with producing substitute goods or stockpiling strategic raw materials.⁴²

³⁶ H., Jörgensen, "Economic Intelligence During the Cold War: The Role of Swedish Business in the Formation of the East Economic Bureau". In S. Fellman and J. Ottosson (Eds.), "New perspectives on Swedish Economic History: Institutions, Infrastructure and Finance". 175-194. 2024.

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ J. Ingemarsdotter och C. Eriksson, "Vi får klara oss själva: Hotbild och självbild i den svenska försörjningsberedskapen 1962–2002", Scandia: Tidskrift för historisk forskning 89, nr. 1 (2023): 68, <https://doi.org/10.47868/scandia.v89i1.25209>.

³⁹ J. Ingemarsdotter, 'Economic Defence - From Cold War Strategies to Post-Invasion Awakenings', *Försvarets Forskningsinstitut (FOI)*, 2024 <<https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI%20Memo%208411>>.

⁴⁰ N. Stenlås, 'Military Technology, National Identity and the State', in *Science for Welfare and Warfare: Technology and State Initiative in Cold War Sweden*, ed. by Lundin P., N. Stenlås, and J. Gribbe (2010), 61–84.

⁴¹ *K-företag*, "krigsföretag"

⁴² Ingemarsdotter and others, 'Näringslivets Roll i Totalförsvaret - Centrala Frågor Och Vägar Framåt'; J. Ingemarsdotter and J. Lundén, 'Vem Levererar Om Kriget Kommer? - Om Näringslivet, Försörjningsberedskapen Och Framtidens Totalförvar', *Försvarets Forskningsinstitut (FOI)*, 2019 <<https://www.foi.se/rapportsammanfattning?reportNo=FOI%20Memo%206745>>.

2.5 Exercises as a Tool in Total Defence - Past & Present

Exercises were a critical tool in the total defence during the Cold War, based on the understanding that “*the numerous binders filled with plans and tables were not sufficient*”.⁴³ Exercises were considered crucial across all branches of total defence to establish and maintain preparedness. As collaboration is both a prerequisite for successful exercises and an outcome expected to improve as a result of participating in these activities, we view exercises including private businesses as one venue to build and bolster private-public collaborations within the total defence. As this study will show, preparedness conferences, exercises, and war games were viewed as critical to building capabilities and creating engagement, awareness, and knowledge of Swedish total defence amongst public and private actors.⁴⁴

After the Cold War, total defence exercises ceased until the exercise TFÖ 2020 was held between 2019 and 2021. TFÖ 2020 was the most extensive total defence exercise in 30 years and was arranged by the Swedish Armed Forces and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB). Participants included public parties and parts of the business sector.⁴⁵

Since TFÖ 2020, several regional total defence exercises have taken place, but these do not typically include the private sector.⁴⁶ The lack of private sector participants creates fragmentation in preparedness efforts, with public actors training primarily with other public actors, and private companies training within their organisation without broader coordination. Overcoming this lack of integration remains an obstacle to increasing Sweden's overall defence readiness.⁴⁷

⁴³ Ingemarsdotter, “Beredskap att agera: Lärdomar för framtiden från det civila försvarets övningar 1937- 1997.” 66

⁴⁴ Ingemarsdotter, “Beredskap att agera: Lärdomar för framtiden från det civila försvarets övningar 1937- 1997.”

⁴⁵ J. Elovsson, ‘Totalförsvarsövning 2020’, *Krisinformation*, 2021

<http://www.krisinformation.se/forbered-dig/handelser-och-storningar/2019/tfo-2020>, Accessed March 16 2025.

⁴⁶ L. Enell, ‘Det blir Norrbottens roll – om Ryssland attackerar Finland - P4 Norrbotten’, *Sveriges Radio*, 2024

<https://www.sverigesradio.se/artikel/det-blir-norrbottens-roll-om-ryssland-attackerar-finland>, Accessed March 30, 2025; ‘Många lärdomar efter totalförsvarsövning i västra Sverige - Kustbevakningen’, *Kustbevakningen*,

(2024), Last modified October 28, 2024, Accessed February, 18 2025

<https://www.kustbevakningen.se/nyheter/manga-lardomar-efter-totalforsvarsovning-i-vastra-sverige/>; ‘Övning

Som Stärker Totalförsvaret, Länsstyrelsen Halland’, *Länsstyrelsen*, 2024, Last Modified September 26, 2024,

Accessed February, 18 2025

<https://www.lansstyrelsen.se/halland/om-oss/nyheter-och-press/nyheter---halland/2024-09-26-ovning-som-stark-er-totalforsvaret.html>; ‘Länets aktörer har övat för höjd beredskap, Länsstyrelsen västerbotten’, *Länsstyrelsen*,

2024. Accessed February, 18 2025.

<https://www.lansstyrelsen.se/vasterbotten/om-oss/nyheter-och-press/nyheter---vasterbotten/2024-10-28-lanets-aktorer-har-ovat-for-hojd-beredskap.html>.

<https://www.lansstyrelsen.se/vasterbotten/om-oss/nyheter-och-press/nyheter---vasterbotten/2024-10-28-lanets-aktorer-har-ovat-for-hojd-beredskap.html>.

⁴⁷ Palmliden, “Nu Övar vi Näringslivet – Tillsammans Med Försvarshögskolan.”

On the other hand, the current business community's interest in total defence in general and exercises in particular is strong, according to a study by FOI. While companies express a willingness to participate in exercises, there is a perception among companies that authorities lack interest in business community involvement. Following the sentiment of being kept at arm's length, the companies perceived they did not get opportunities to contribute their knowledge and resources.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Olsson, Ryghammar, and Lundén, "Näringslivets Syn På Roller Och Ansvar i Totalförsvaret."

3. Literature review

In this literature review, we present an overview of previous research on businesses' role in Swedish total defence during the Cold War to identify gaps within the area, serving as promising avenues for our research. We take a broad approach by including works that discuss total defence in Sweden and with references to businesses.

Research on the role of the business sector and public-private collaborations in Sweden's total defence during the Cold War is relatively limited. The area is characterised by a significant number of government and state agency reports, with a vast majority produced by FOI, which provide extensive data and practical insights but lack substantial academic engagement and theoretical development.

This presents a significant research gap, not the least given how dependent total defence was on the business sector, as evident in various investigations and reports from government agencies. These reports describe the business sector as the foundation of Sweden's supply preparedness and general ability to manage a crisis, particularly through its critical role in ensuring the availability and distribution of essential goods and services.⁴⁹

Moreover, research on activities such as preparedness conferences, exercises and wargaming as a tool is non-existent beyond one grey literature work discussed below. Thus, this research gap confirms relevance and justification for our research question.

3.1 Private-Public Collaboration within Total Defence

This section examines how the Swedish government engaged with the business sector with a focus on two key concepts: stockpiling and the K-company system.

⁴⁹ J. Lundberg, *Totalförsvarets Civila Del: Framväxt Och Fall – Erfarenheter För Framtiden*, Myndigheten För Samhällsskydd Och Beredskap (MSB), 2023 <https://rib.msb.se/filer/pdf/30502.pdf>; J. Ingemarsdotter, 'Ekonomiskt Försvar: Vad Och Varför', *Försvarets Forskningsinstitut (FOI)*, 2024 <https://www.foi.se/rapporter/rapportsammanfattning.html?reportNo=FOI%20Memo%208482>; Ingemarsdotter, 'Economic Defence - From Cold War Strategies to Post-Invasion Awakenings'; Ingemarsdotter and Lundén, 'Vem Levererar Om Kriget Kommer? - Om Näringslivet, Försörjningsberedskapen Och Framtidens Totalförsvär'.

3.1.1 Stockpiling

Strategic stockpiling was considered a key to supply preparedness, and the business sector played a crucial role in it.⁵⁰ Much of the research on economic aspects within the total defence concept during the Cold War has focused on stockpiling, most prominently that of oil and foodstuffs.

Nilsson examined Swedish oil storage in the context of total defence and found that the business sector played a significant role in maintaining oil reserves, notably as regulatory requirements shifted responsibility to private companies in the 1980s. The study describes how mechanisms such as financial incentives, state-backed soft loans, and regulatory frameworks mandating storage levels facilitated this system. A multidimensional network of actors, ranging from state agencies, industrials and individuals involved in the oil storage, is outlined.⁵¹ However, while Nilsson acknowledges these mechanisms and the network of actors, the essence of how collaboration functioned in practice is not the central focus of the analysis and remains underexplored.

Eriksson and Ingemarsdotter provide a historical perspective on the Swedish business sector's involvement in oil storage within the total defence framework in their article "*Bergkunskap i Totalförsvarets Tjänst*". Their study emphasises how, from the 1950s, private companies became involved in the stockpiling of oil and how storage obligations, state-mandated contracts, and financial incentives, such as state-backed loans, paved the way for the industry's compliance. Moreover, it describes how the 1973 oil crisis led to the formulation of the aforementioned peacetime crisis, prompting private companies to expand their storage responsibilities to manage increased oil reserves.⁵² While Eriksson and Ingemarsdotter detail how state policy guided corporate involvement, their analysis, like Nilsson's, lacks an analysis of the private-public collaboration and its underlying incentives.

Besides oil, foodstuffs were central in strategic stockpiling. Consequently, the agricultural sector is another focal point of the rather scarce research within the Cold War economic

⁵⁰ A.-S. Stenérus et al., "Beredskapslagring – En Kunskapsöversikt Om Beredskapslagring Som Ett Verktyg För Ökad Försörjningsberedskap i Sverige," *Totalförsvarets forskningsinstitut (FOI)* (2019); J., Lindgren, A., Odell, and A.-S., Stenérus, "Beredskapslager Som En Del Av Försörjningsberedskapen - Lärdomar Från Pandemin," *Totalförsvarets forskningsinstitut (FOI)* (2020), <https://foi.se/rapporter/rapportsammanfattning.html?reportNo=FOI%20Memo%207341>.

⁵¹ Nilsson, "The Swedish Oil Weapon: Storage of Fuel in Sweden During the Cold War – Energy Security and Environmentally Related Aspects."

⁵² C. Eriksson and J. Ingemarsdotter, 'Bergkunskap i Totalförsvarets Tjänst', *Geografiska Notiser*, 77/4 (2019), 156–69.; [*Geological Knowledge in the Service of the Total Defence*]

defence. Bertilsson and Eriksson shed light on the importance of knowledge supply and its impact on the political governance within the total defence, with a particular focus on food security and preparedness in their article “*Totalförsvarets Livspolitik: Kunskapsförsörjningen i Den Svenska Livsmedelsberedskapen*”.⁵³ Jörgensen’s chapter “*Neutrality and national preparedness: State-led agricultural rationalisations in Cold War Sweden*”, found in the anthology *Science for welfare and warfare: Technology and state initiative in Cold War Sweden*, discusses the rationalisations and efficiency gains in the context of agriculture in the decades following the Second World War. His text also underscores the extensive influence of the agrarian interest organisations, representing the business interests, in the sector’s development.⁵⁴ All of the research above highlights a critical aspect of total defence: the centrality of food security as a measure of preparedness. Yet, none of these research papers describe the interactions between the business community and the government agencies and how their collaboration was shaped.

While research on stockpiling provides some insight into how the business sector supported preparedness, the K-company system, discussed next, offers a more structured, contractual framework for private-public collaboration in total defence.

3.1.2 K-companies

As discussed above, the business sector’s critical role was managed mainly through the K-company system.

Various reports from the FOI list K-companies as an integral part of the Swedish total defence during the Cold War. For example, the two reports, “*Vem levererar om kriget kommer?*” by Ingemarsdotter & Lundén and “*Näringslivets roll i totalförsvaret*” by Ingemarsdotter et al., describe that as part of Sweden's economic defence, parts of the private sector were engaged through agreements with selected companies, designated as K-companies.⁵⁵ It represented a specific form of public-private collaboration that went

⁵³ F. Bertilsson and C. Eriksson, “Totalförsvarets Livspolitik: Kunskapsförsörjningen i Den Svenska Livsmedelsberedskapen,” *Historisk Tidsskrift* 144, no. 1 (2024): 33–62. [*Total Defense Food Policy: Knowledge Supply in Swedish Food Preparedness*]

⁵⁴ Jörgensen, “Neutrality and National Preparedness: State-Led Agricultural Rationalization in Cold War Sweden.”

⁵⁵ Ingemarsdotter and others, ‘Näringslivets Roll i Totalförsvaret - Centrala Frågor Och Vägar Framåt’ [*The Role of the Business Sector in Total Defense - Key Issues and Paths Forward*]; Ingemarsdotter and Lundén, ‘Vem Levererar Om Kriget Kommer? - Om Näringslivet, Försörjningsberedskapen Och Framtidens Totalförsvär’. [*Who will supply if war comes - On the Business Sector, Supply Preparedness, and the Future of Total Defence*]

beyond their obligations in stockpiling, as described in section 2.3. The reports further describe that from the companies' perspective, the advantages of being a K-company included protection from conscription, preferential treatment for repairs and maintenance, exemptions from certain regulations and rationing, and support during wartime resource shortages. Nevertheless, the reports only scratched the surface of the private-public collaborations that were the essence of K-companies.

Although K-companies are frequently mentioned in research on, for example, total defence and public-private collaboration, published academic studies focusing explicitly on K-companies are nearly nonexistent. For example, a recent article, "*Unpacking the varying strategic logics of total defence*" by Ångström and Ljungkvist, highlights K-companies in the context of Sweden's total defence strategy, while it is not the focus of their work.⁵⁶ Yet, the article lacks an in-depth analysis of the collaboration form.

Additionally, in an short article Malmberg, Ottosson, Eriksson, and Jansson discuss the historical collaborations between the state and companies on total defence and describe that K-companies constituted the core of the Swedish economic defence and that these were companies that operated on the private market during regular times but were obligated to supply goods and services according to contingency plans in times of crisis or war. While the article does not go into detail on the enablers underlying the collaboration, they presume it was a mutually beneficial collaboration which entailed "*a form of give and take that benefitted both parties*".⁵⁷ However, they do not explain exactly how it was mutually beneficial.

Beyond specific initiatives like stockpiling and K-companies, Sweden's unique political and institutional context also shaped the nature of public-private collaboration. The following section explores research on the broader corporatist context.

3.2 Corporatism & the Total Defence

The transformation of the Swedish industry's relationship with the state went hand in hand with the prevailing socio-political framework of the post-war era, Stenlås argues in the

⁵⁶ J., Ångström and K., Ljungkvist, "Unpacking the Varying Strategic Logics of Total Defence," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 47 (2023): 498–522.

⁵⁷ Malmberg and others, 'The Role of Industry in Sweden's Total Defence: Past, Present, and Future'.

chapter *Military Technology, National Identity and the State*, in *Science for Welfare and Warfare: Technology and state initiative in Cold War Sweden*. There was a close state-industry cooperation following the Second World War, which had demonstrated the importance of a robust industrial base. Stenlås argues that this contributed to the emergence of a corporatist framework, where organised interest groups became greatly integrated into the official decision-making process. Stenlås also explains how this phenomenon results from Sweden's distinctive political stability, where groups including unions, voluntary organisations, and other organised interest groups are able to influence policy and legislation within their areas of interest in exchange for reinforcing the legitimacy of existing power structures and policies. The corporatist framework greatly shaped the total defence and the cooperation of interests since it gave credibility to the government's defence policies. Stenlås argues that as a result, key decisions were shifted away from arenas where they might have faced political opposition or debate. Stenlås limits the analysis to the development of the defence industry in relation to the emergent corporatism, and leaves the question of how changes in total defence more broadly affected the shaping of public-private collaboration unanswered.⁵⁸

Aligned with Stenlås' perspective, Isaksson argues in the book "*Vår beredskap var god*" that the Swedish business community perceived it as its duty to share the burden of national security in times of crisis. He explains that this was manifested in the frequent participation of industry executives in the boards of the different preparedness authorities.⁵⁹ Sweden's isolation led to a mutual dependency between the state and private companies, a phenomenon developed during World War II. For instance, Bofors, though a private company, became functionally subordinate to the Armed Forces during World War II; the Armed Forces were its only customer at the time. This relationship was also commercially rational, and the mutual dependency created a stable market situation with recurring revenue for the company while delivering dependable weapon systems for the armed forces.⁶⁰ However, this case is a singular, anecdotal example. As such, it does not offer a systematic understanding of private-public collaboration in the total defence context.

⁵⁸ Stenlås, "Military Technology, National Identity and the State."

⁵⁹ Isaksson, *Vår Beredskap Var God*.

⁶⁰ Larsson, "Det Militärindustriella Komplexet Grundläggs."

Larsson conducts research in the area, highlighting public-private partnership in the chapter “*Swedish total defence and the emergence of societal security*”, which is found in an anthology that otherwise primarily addresses the development of societal safety and security in the Nordic countries in the post-Cold War era. Larsson describes how proponents of the total defence system at an early stage realised it requires involvement of actors outside the state, with an emphasis on the private sector. A way of implementing this was through training sessions, held by the Institute for Higher Defence Education (IHT) at the Swedish Defence University, where a group that ranged from senior state officials and military staff to corporate executives from the private sector spent several weeks conducting wargaming exercises. Larsson writes that this phenomenon was considered globally unique and elaborates on the networking aspect of this “*playhouse for defence professionals*”⁶¹ using Mills’s work on the concentration of power among three dominant institutions: the government, the military and large corporations.⁶²

Consequently, while research on the socio-political foundation of total defence provides important theoretical insights, it does not distinctly address how collaboration was shaped in practice and overlooks the operational mechanisms that facilitated and formed public-private collaboration. While Larsson mentions exercises, highlighting their importance, they are only briefly mentioned, and how they shaped collaboration is not explained. The following chapter will discuss the current research, emphasising public-private total defence exercises.

3.3 Exercises as Public-Private Collaboration Tools

The IHT exercises described above were far from the only exercises with public and private sector participants within the total defence context. The research that closest borders the research question of this thesis is the paper “*Beredskap att agera*” by Ingemarsdotter, published by FOI.⁶³ Although the central aim of the research paper is to highlight civil defence as a vital part of total defence during the Cold War and exercises regarding both military and non-military threats, it also underscores the coordinated exercises between industry representatives and state agencies. While the paper is related to and occasionally overlaps with the research in this study, there are several key differences.

⁶¹ Larsson, ‘Swedish Total Defence and the Emergence of Societal Security’, 48.

⁶² S. Larsson, ‘Swedish Total Defence and the Emergence of Societal Security’, in *Nordic Societal Security: Convergence and Divergence*, ed. by S Larsson and M Rhinard (London, 2020), 45–67.

⁶³ Ingemarsdotter, “Beredskap att agera: Lärdomar för framtiden från det civila försvarets övningar 1937- 1997.”

Firstly, Ingemarsdotter's paper's scope is primarily descriptive, aiming to provide a historical overview of civil defence exercises and concluding with the challenges civil defence faces today regarding exercises. It lacks, however, an analysis of how these exercises shaped public-private collaboration. Secondly, it is a government report published by FOI, and therefore not a peer-reviewed academic paper. Thirdly, Ingemarsdotter's study adopts the perspective of central and local authorities rather than that of the business sector, which played a significant role in the civil defence exercises.

It should also be noted that Ingemarsdotter makes several explicit calls for research, highlighting key areas for further investigation and knowledge development regarding exercises. For instance, regarding exercise participants, forms of private sector involvement in exercises, exercise methods, and exercise scenarios.

In summary, the presented literature highlights that exercises were indeed an important tool to foster the private sector involvement in total defence as well as nurturing the public-private collaborations, constituting a confirmation of the research question's relevance, and the lack of any additional literature is a testament to the research gap and need for further research.

4. Methodology and sources

4.1 The Historical Method

This study adheres to the ontological school of realism. By this, we claim that there is a real world existing independently outside our attempts to know it, and our efforts to obtain knowledge will partly be based on how reality is composed.⁶⁴ As a result of this, we align with Popper's perspective: "*the aim of science is to discover the truth about what really exists, and theories are appraised on the extent to which they fulfil that aim*".⁶⁵ The attempt to answer the research question will be based on this reasoning.

Drawing on historian John Gaddis's emphasis on context and contingency, we analyse sources through iterative hermeneutic cycles, where initial interpretations are refined as understanding of historical and institutional contexts deepens.⁶⁶ Gaddis has been a prominent critic of what is perceived as a positivist overreach within historical analysis, instead advocating for nuanced, contingent explanations.⁶⁷ We aim to conduct research that is as value-free, objective, and independent as possible. While we strive for objectivity, we recognise the interpretive nature of historical analysis.

Since this study aims to conduct historical research, it is structured as an archival study. It entails a qualitative content analysis, meaning that the text analysis is carried out in a systematic way. Consequently, the focal point is interpreting and constructing the meaning of the analysed material.⁶⁸ This approach of conducting historical research is applied in this study.

According to Gaddis, a common pitfall when studying history is the application of reductionist explanatory models regarding one's conclusions. We adhere to this line by acknowledging that our findings will not construct a universally applicable explanatory model, recognising that our findings stem from a very specific historical context.

⁶⁴ A. H. Van de Ven, *Engaged Scholarship: A Guide for Organizational and Social Research* (Oxford, 2007). 58-62.

⁶⁵ Van de Ven, *Engaged Scholarship: A Guide for Organizational and Social Research*. 59

⁶⁶ A. Popp and S. Fellman, 'Writing Business History: Creating Narratives', *Business History*, 59/8, 1242–60.

⁶⁷ J.L. Gaddis, *The Landscape of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁶⁸ Popp and Fellman, "Writing Business History: Creating Narratives."

4.2 Structure of the Study

This thesis is structured as an inductive study, in the sense that empirics constitute the foundation of the study. It means that the contextualisation and justification of the study have been made in relation to the existing pool of knowledge. Furthermore, one draws conclusions from the data as it is collected, contrary to the method of implementing a theoretical framework a priori. We follow the structure for historical research, which builds a narrative based on available evidence, something that is continuously developed as new material is examined.⁶⁹ Recognising that assessing historical material is an inherently complex process with several interpretive factors is crucial. This process involves making deductive assessments based on the information one gathers. The amount of relevant material only becomes apparent as the authors examine it through the lens of their research question. The process is inherently iterative and interpretive. Gaddis notes that historical analysis often involves a “*reiteration loop*”⁷⁰, where the researcher’s understanding and theoretical perspectives develop in response to the interaction with the empirics. The conclusions may themselves alternate the original theory. In that sense, historical research is a deductive task which requires repeated acts of induction.⁷¹ Our research follows Gaddis’ notion of a reiteration loop, where we seek to inductively shape the understanding of our research question by deductively approaching the empirical material based on both corporatism theory and our evolving analytical perspective.

Furthermore, most of the material used in this study is understandably only available in Swedish. This applies particularly to the archive material, while some secondary sources are written in English. A consequence of this is the extensive glossary, intended to act as a guide for the reader herself between the different organisational names and particular words.⁷²

4.3 Selection of Empirics

The empirics for this paper, in particular, are primarily derived from archives. The archive material stems from different repositories such as the Swedish National Archives in Marieberg, the War Archives in Arninge and the Centre for Business History in Ulvsunda. In particular, the archive of the National Board of Economic Defence (ÖEF) has been studied,

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Gaddis, *The Landscape of History*. 46

⁷¹ Gaddis, *The Landscape of History*.

⁷² See glossary

along with its predecessor, the National Board for Economic Defence Preparedness (RKE) and its successor, the National Board of Civil Preparedness (ÖCB).⁷³ The journals *The Economic Defence*⁷⁴ and *The ÖEF Bulletin*⁷⁵, published by ÖEF, and volumes on the different crisis boards within ÖEF, have been particularly enlightening.

In addition, the archives of organisations and agencies, such as the Civil Defence Board⁷⁶, Society & Defence⁷⁷, and the Defence Staff⁷⁸ at the War Archives, have been examined. Many additional archives were studied, yet they were excluded from the selection of the empirical data for this study. The archives of individual companies and business groups have been excluded to limit the scope of the study. The archive material consists of various documents, from journal articles, memorandums, handbooks, meeting exercise plans and evaluations, documents, protocols and letters.

The sources used in this thesis include both primary and secondary sources, following their respective definition in *The Princeton Guide to Historical Research*, with the distinction being whether the source was present at the historical event being described or not.⁷⁹ The empirics in this study solely consist of primary sources.

A challenge with an archival study is to access relevant material. Some records can be classified or require specific permission, leading to delays in the data-gathering process. The confidentiality of certain documents highlights the extent to which total defence matters concern national security. Additionally, archival research includes the inherent issue that many historically interesting documents do not make it into the archives or are simply lost.

4.4 Source Criticism

Remaining critical towards historical sources is one of the central aspects of the historical method.⁸⁰ Remaining critical towards historical sources is one of the central aspects of the historical method. One of the primary ways of doing this is by examining level

⁷³ See timeline

⁷⁴ *Det Ekonomiska Försvaret*

⁷⁵ *ÖEF Bulletinen*

⁷⁶ *Civilförsvarsstyrelsen*

⁷⁷ *Folk & Försvar*

⁷⁸ *Försvarsstaben*

⁷⁹ Z. M. Schrag, *The Princeton Guide to Historical Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021), 105.

⁸⁰ R. Westerberg, in *Socialists at the Gate: Swedish Business and the Defense of Free Enterprise, 1940-1985* (Stockholm, 2020), 36.

tendentiousness. The researcher can address this matter by applying different criteria to the material; for instance, determining if the source is valid, meaning evaluating if it is real or fabricated, and determining if the source is credible, meaning evaluating the dependency of the source regarding the research. Furthermore, one should closely evaluate the interdependence of several sources delivering the same information. This can be conducted by examining how the sources relate to each other.⁸¹

Sources in general, and archives in particular, have always been constructed by someone, leaving the researcher to grapple with the inherent question of the intentions behind why the archive was preserved for the subsequent world.⁸² An archive is not created in a vacuum free of biases and preconceived notions, as the intentions and aspirations of its creator matter. Popp and Fellman put it as follows: “*Archives and archival practices are firmly embedded in institutional contexts and societies’ memory paradigms, influencing what is remembered, what is preserved, how documents are indexed and organised, how archival knowledge is defined and even what forms archives take*”.⁸³ The archive material does not provide a direct connection to a certain historical event. The source will always be a record of that event, which is a curated and constructed version of it. As Schrag describes it: “*As a general rule, archives are the creation of the powerful, whether they are individuals, businesses or governments*”.⁸⁴

Consequently, it is crucial to be aware of the inherent challenges of archival sources. However, the specific archives examined in this study consist of material from government agencies subject to legislation in Sweden, forcing these government agencies to keep records of their past and present activities; this means that there should, at least theoretically, be fewer biases and preconceived notions that have influenced the creation. Furthermore, an additional challenge is that the data found in the archives is the exclusive data used to construct the empirical section, thus leaving the researcher restricted, without any possibility of constructing new data.⁸⁵ The study’s findings are limited to what already exists. This is opposed to a business and management study that, for example, studies leadership styles in startup companies, using semi-structured interviews and surveys.

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Popp and Fellman, “Writing Business History: Creating Narratives”; Z. M. Schrag, *The Princeton Guide to Historical Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021). 189

⁸³ Popp and Fellman, ‘Writing Business History: Creating Narratives’, 1245

⁸⁴ Schrag, *The Princeton Guide to Historical Research*. 189

⁸⁵ Westerberg, 2020, 55.

4.5 Delimitation

The empirics are primarily based on data from the latter part of the Cold War, ranging from the early 1970s to the late 1980s. This delineation is explained by the increased involvement and more central role of the business sector in Sweden's total defence during this period, consequently leading to increased joint exercises. This was driven by the development outlined in section 2.2.

An additional limitation regarding the selection of preparedness conferences, crisis exercises and wargames is that total defence activities, which did not include aspects of economic defence and supply preparedness, have been excluded. This is because such activities focused on coordination between military and civilian authorities, with little involvement from the business community. Several activities have been excluded because of limited business sector involvement in the exercise. One quintessential example is TFÖ 87 (Total Defence exercise 1987), an exercise of considerable size in 1987 where civilian representation consisted almost exclusively of civilian authorities.⁸⁶

We limited the analysis to a restricted number of cases, which was necessary because of the extensive number of preparedness conferences, crisis exercises and wargames conducted. Decisions on limitations were made based on the relevance of each exercise to the research objectives and the availability of sufficient data. Moreover, by focusing on a limited number of crisis boards but including multiple activities for each, the study aims to provide a clearer picture of continuity and the development of these activities and collaboration over time. This approach enabled a more effective illustration of patterns of adaptation, learning, and cooperative development throughout the studied period.

Lastly, since this research paper addresses Swedish total defence public-private collaboration, the geographical scope is limited to Sweden. The Swedish model of total defence includes several aspects considered globally unique. This distinctive phenomenon is formed by specific historical conditions that have influenced its development and underpinnings. A comparable study conducted in a different country or period could tell a different story and potentially yield other conclusions.

⁸⁶ *Operationsledningen övning TFÖ-87*, Nedre Norrlands Militärrområdesstabs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, F2B:1

4.6 Ethics of historical research

This thesis has conducted historical research following the ethics stated by *The Princeton Guide to Historical Research*. The ethics are based on different virtues. *Curiosity* is inherent in the field and has been promoted by, e.g. seeking to downplay confirmation bias in the empirics discovered. Secondly, *accuracy* is an essential part of the historian's work. While complete accuracy is difficult, historians balance contradicting data and fragmentary sources. The third virtue, *judgement*, allows us to form our conclusions. In addition, it is "... to help people understand not just what they want to remember, but what they need to remember".⁸⁷ *Empathy* is a vital aspect of historical work, as it forces the historian to perceive the world through the eyes of their study subject, by understanding their beliefs, motivations and actions. Historical research is not conducted within a vacuum but in relation to other people. *Gratitude* is, therefore, an essential scholarly ethic, expressed through the duty of presenting findings and sharing knowledge. The final virtue of historical research is *truth*, which is achieved by demystifying the past. A notion that is inherent in the mission of sound historical research.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Ibid, 30

⁸⁸ Schrag, *The Princeton Guide to Historical Research*.

5. Theory

It is often claimed that historians dismiss the use of theory.⁸⁹ Rather than a theory, a historical phenomenon or event will be the starting point for historical research. However, theories are, to a large degree, generalisations, which is crucial to historical research, rendering the claim simplistic. These generalisations are inherently rooted in historical context, rather than transcending it, which is what Gaddis argues differs the historian from the social scientist. The idea for a historian is not to predict the future, but rather to illuminate the past.⁹⁰ The theoretical framework of this study is the concept of corporatism, which serves as a lens through which to interpret the observations made in the empirical research to aid in building an understanding. Corporatism in the context of this study is both a theoretical concept and a socio-political model situated in the historical events described.

5.1 Corporatism as a theoretical concept

Katzenstein argues that corporatism has its ideological background in the cross-class collaboration that originated in small European states during the 1930s. The emergence of the welfare state in post-war Europe further exacerbated this. The historical roots of this phenomenon go further back; a high degree of specialisation within export industries fostered closer cooperation between different sectors of society. Combined with early universal suffrage, which favoured proportional representation over the majority rule seen in larger industrialised nations at the time, this reflected a strong commitment to power-sharing among different political groups. This is referred to as democratic corporatism, in which different interest groups significantly influence the democratic policy-making process.⁹¹

5.2 Swedish Cold War Corporatism

During the beginning of the Cold War, Sweden was characterised by a corporatist socio-political framework. As we have discussed in 2.3, organised interest groups exerted significant influence over labour market policies and were highly influential in the political decision-making process.⁹² Major issues were typically resolved through direct negotiations

⁸⁹ Gaddis, *The Landscape of History*.

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ P.J. Katzenstein, *Small States in World Markets: Industrial Policy in Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985)

⁹² Stenlås, "Military Technology, National Identity and the State."

between the state and interest organisations, without the need to mobilise public opinion. Mediating organisations, including unions, interest groups, and organised capital, were central in managing delicate policy issues discreetly, without subjecting the issues to public scrutiny or debate. While the corporatist systems of fascist regimes in the 1930s resolved the power struggles of different interests by absorbing them into the state, the Swedish corporatist system distinguished itself by maintaining the independence of the aforementioned groups. This came to be known as “*free corporatism*”, in contrast to the more authoritarian “*state corporatism*”.⁹³

Isaksson describes how Swedish corporatism, in its infancy, was closely aligned with a more protectionist industrial policy, aimed at mitigating the vulnerabilities associated with the nation's relative economic openness.⁹⁴ This was manifested in the Lex Boliden bill from 1934, which restricted foreign corporations from acquiring and controlling Swedish firms with access to domestic mineral resources. The law was repealed in 1983, along with the initial shift away from corporatism.⁹⁵

During most of the 20th century, Sweden was considered a politically stable society, relative to neighbouring European nations.⁹⁶ The 1950s and 1960s saw the height of Swedish corporatism. In post-war Sweden, there was a fundamental “*spirit of understanding*”.⁹⁷ ⁹⁸ This stems from several historical, economic, and political factors that have shaped the evolution of corporatism over time, where the Saltsjöbaden Agreement set the precedent. Different interests in Swedish society could wield power and reach compromises and consensus with other stakeholders that were mutually beneficial through discussions and negotiations. While a majority of Swedish business leaders were supporters of the conservative party, they also developed close connections to the Social Democrats who ruled uninterruptedly from 1932-1976, a phenomenon not replicated in many democracies in the World.⁹⁹ Hugo Hammar, the director of Götaverken, a large shipbuilding enterprise in Gothenburg, made the following remarks on the matter: “*It is quite peculiar when one sees that big business*

⁹³ Westerberg, 2020, 55.

⁹⁴ Isaksson, *Vår Beredskap Var God*.

⁹⁵ ‘Bolidens Historia’, *Boliden*. Last modified 2014. Accessed February 10, 2025.

https://www.boliden.com/globalassets/about-boliden/bolidens-history/337-5365-historisk-folder_2014_se_c.pdf

⁹⁶ Isaksson, *Vår Beredskap Var God*.

⁹⁷ *Samförståndsanda*

⁹⁸ R., Westerberg, “Corporations and Corporatism: Swedish Big Business and the Harpsund Conferences 1955–1962,” *Scandinavian Economic History Review* (2024.): 1–18.. 1

⁹⁹ Isaksson, *Vår Beredskap Var God*.

repeatedly enters into an alliance with the Social Democratic government”.¹⁰⁰ For instance, the influential industrialist Marcus Wallenberg, head of the Wallenberg family, had close ties to Social democratic ministers, such as Tage Erlander, Gunnar Sträng and Per Edvin Skiöld, despite their ideological differences. This can arguably be considered a marriage of convenience. In general, the political right was weaker in smaller European states than in the larger countries.¹⁰¹ This held true for Sweden in particular. At the end of the Cold War, organised business started to distance itself from corporatist arrangements as a practice for establishing policy during the rise of globalisation and free trade, and the prominence of neoliberal policies from the government's side.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Isaksson, *Vår Beredskap Var God*. 120

¹⁰¹ P.J. Katzenstein, *Small States in World Markets: Industrial Policy in Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985). 137

¹⁰² M., Micheletti, *Civil Society and State Relations in Sweden* (London: Routledge, 2019).

6. Empirics

In the empirical chapter of this study, we begin by introducing the political and legal context of private-public collaboration within economic defence. We then describe a variety of preparedness conferences, exercises and wargames that were held during the late Cold War and their impact on the private-public collaboration. This includes the selected total defence exercises at the time, encompassing large parts of the societal body. It also includes a range of smaller, focused industry-based exercises with different boards in the ÖEF organisation representing various sectors.

Following the Oil Crisis of 1973, there was an increase in awareness of the economic threats to Sweden and the vulnerabilities in the increasingly globalised Swedish industry. An article in the newspaper *Arbetet* from 1974 conveys the remarks from the State Secretary Anders Thunborg at the security conference Society and Defence. He considers the risk of supply disruptions in other parts of the world, and their potential consequences for Sweden, as more significant than the perceived threat of war.¹⁰³ His speech, “Energy Crisis and Swedish Security Policy,” serves as a call for a comprehensive approach to defence, moving beyond the previously more military-technical focus of the discussion.¹⁰⁴ As this study will show, there was an increased frequency of preparedness conferences throughout the 1970s, leading to an increased exercise activity focusing on peacetime crises during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s.

The development towards crisis exercises was further underscored by an article from ÖEF in 1975.¹⁰⁵ Although it considered stockpiling within the industry and business community to be a fundamental preparedness measure, the article acknowledged the financial challenges for firms associated with it: “*However, in recent years, companies' own stockpiling has decreased relative to the sharply increasing consumption, partly due to profitability reasons*”.¹⁰⁶ ÖEF considered complementing stockpiling measures with replacement production of certain goods or recommencing discontinued production as a consequence of the structural changes to the Swedish industry.

¹⁰³ *Arbetet*, 1974-06-07, SAFs Arkiv, Centrum för Näringslivshistoria (CfN), F14 HA 11

¹⁰⁴ *Energikrisen och svensk säkerhetspolitik*

¹⁰⁵ *Vår försörjningsberedskap: En orientering om Sveriges ekonomiska försvar*, SAFs Arkiv, CfN, F14 HE 50

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*

6.1 Political, Legal & Organisational Context

6.1.1 Propositions & government inquiries

Government investigations¹⁰⁷ and propositions¹⁰⁸ from the 1960s through the 1980s reflected the business sector's key role in economic defence, highlighting the central role cooperation between the public and private sectors played in total defence. For example, SOU 1977:1, *the total defence 1977-82*, articulates this dependency by defining economic defence as “*an umbrella term for how the business sector is to adapt to changed conditions during a blockade and war*”.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, Proposition 1981/82:102 states that: “*The business sector is the foundation of the economic defence,*”¹¹⁰ highlighting its centrality while claiming that “*recurring exercises and simulations involving relevant personnel within authorities and the business sector*”¹¹¹ are needed to improve crisis readiness.

While government documents on total defence during the 1960s through the 1980s offer limited discussion and description of exercises involving the business sector and their role in strengthening Sweden's total defence and the public-private collaboration within the total defence system, several investigations and propositions nonetheless highlight their importance. In Proposition 1967:76, it was put forward that “*Training, exercise, and information activities must therefore be considered of great value. Through information about the significance and functioning of the economic defence, as well as through training, the interest of the business sector can be influenced in a way that promotes preparedness.*”¹¹² The necessity of larger, joint exercises within the framework of the total defence was stressed as early as 1961 in the official government report *SOU 1961:66*.¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ E.g.: ‘SOU 1976:5. Säkerhetspolitik Och Totalförsvaret.’; ‘SOU 1977:1. Totalförsvaret 1977-82.’

¹⁰⁸ E.g.: “Proposition 1967:76. Kungl. Maj:Ts Proposition till Riksdagen Angående Omorganisation Av Överstyrelsen För Ekonomisk Försvarsberedskap,” n.d.; “Proposition 1981/82:102. Om Säkerhets- Och Försvarspolitikerna Samt Totalförsvarets Fortsatta Utveckling,” n.d.; “Proposition 1984/85:160. Om Ledningen Av de Civila Delarna Av Totalförsvaret m.m.,” n.d.

¹⁰⁹ “SOU 1977:1. Totalförsvaret 1977-82,” n.d., 21.

¹¹⁰ “Proposition 1981/82:102. Om Säkerhets- Och Försvarspolitikerna Samt Totalförsvarets Fortsatta Utveckling,” 40.

¹¹¹ “Proposition 1981/82:102. Om Säkerhets- Och Försvarspolitikerna Samt Totalförsvarets Fortsatta Utveckling,” 464.

¹¹² “Proposition 1967:76. Kungl. Maj:Ts Proposition till Riksdagen Angående Omorganisation Av Överstyrelsen För Ekonomisk Försvarsberedskap,” 9.

¹¹³ “Totalförsvarets Högsta Ledning : 1960 Års Försvarsledningsutrednings Betänkande 2,” *Lagen.nu*. Accessed March 25, 2025. <https://lagen.nu/sou/1961:66>.

6.1.2 Legal framework for private-public collaboration within total defence

The involvement of the private business sector in total defence through their rights and obligations per the legal framework concerning various laws and regulations is a complex, albeit highly relevant issue. Several reports and publications provide a comprehensive picture of the legal conditions for companies within total defence today. Still, no such overview exists for the Cold War period. Producing an exhaustive compilation and analysis of the legislation in this area over time during the Cold War is beyond the scope of this thesis; instead, we present a general overview of some of the most central aspects of the legal framework relevant to the research question at hand.

First and foremost, businesses were mandated to provide total defence authorities with information about, e.g. personnel, equipment, and raw material and to assist in planning their roles in the total defence. Employers and employee organisations also had to consult with authorities on their defence-related tasks at various levels, participate in exercises, and offer support and information as required for planning efforts.¹¹⁴ Additionally, businesses consuming large quantities of essential goods which were stockpiled by the state for war or crisis could be required to provide storage space or purchase from state reserves.¹¹⁵

In summary, the extensive legal framework imposed significant regulations and requirements on businesses in various ways.

6.1.3 Organisation of ÖEF and involvement of business sector representatives

The National Board of Economic Defence Preparedness (ÖEF) was formed in 1961 by transforming the National Committee of Economic Defence Preparedness (RKE) as detailed by proposition 1961:8¹¹⁶. In 1969, the name was shortened to The National Board of

¹¹⁴ SFS 1982:1004. *Lag Om Skyldighet För Näringsidkare, Arbetsmarknadsorganisationer m.Fl. Att Delta i Totalförsvarsplaneringen*; SFS 1948:390, *Lag Om Skyldighet För Näringsidkare m.Fl. Att Biträda Vid Planläggningen Av Rikets Ekonomiska Försvarsberedskap*, n.d.

¹¹⁵ SFS 1976:295, *Lag Om Skyldighet För Näringsidkare Att Medverka Vid Lagring För Försörjningsberedskap*, n.d.; SFS 1977:741, *Förordning Om Skyldighet För Näringsidkare Att Medverka Vid Lagring För Försörjningsberedskap*, n.d.

¹¹⁶ Proposition 1961:84. *Angående riksnämndens för ekonomisk försvarsberedskap framtida organisation och verksamhet, m. m.*

Economic Defence (ÖEF)¹¹⁷. All organisation structures included lay members on the board of directors, with representation from the business sector.

In 1975, a central review of ÖEF took place with the “*ÖEF-investigation*”.¹¹⁸ It was proposed that ÖEF should have one normal (viz., non-crisis) organisation and one adjusted crisis organisation. The proposed normal organisation for ÖEF consisted of four specialised units: an economic defence unit to oversee external collaboration and coordination including exercises and preparedness conferences, a program planning unit with four program specific subunits (fuel, clothing, metal and chemical) to manage investigative and planning tasks, a preparedness stockpiling unit to manage preparedness stockpiling and an administrative unit to handle shared economic and personnel responsibilities. The organisation was to be guided by a board with a Director General, eight additional members, and two staff representatives, with balanced representation from public interests and industry to support crisis planning and execution.¹¹⁹

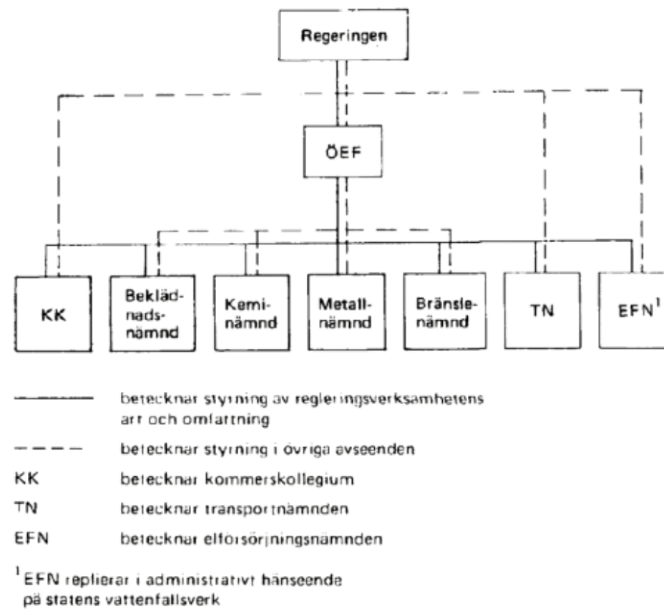
The proposed crisis organisation for ÖEF was built on the normal structure and introduces several additional elements to ensure sufficient capability under crisis. In a crisis, ÖEF was to act as the central coordinating body for the entire economic defence, with overall responsibility for leading planning and regulatory efforts in cooperation with other state authorities and the business sector.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Proposition 1969:136. *Förslag rörande beredskapslagring av olja.*

¹¹⁸ Ds H 1976:4. *Ny organisation för ÖEF. Betänkande av ÖEF-utredningen.*

¹¹⁹ Ibid

¹²⁰ Ibid



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Figure 3: *Crisis organisation of ÖEF as proposed in Ds H 1976:4*

The crisis structure (Figure 3) emphasised execution and inter-agency coordination. Several dedicated crisis-specific bodies are proposed to handle specialised areas of regulation, including a fuel board, a chemical board, a metal board, and a clothing board. These boards were to be organised under ÖEF's leadership and staffed with personnel from ÖEF, other government agencies, and the business sector. Notably, they are to include interest representation¹²², trusted representatives from the business community, underscoring the importance of industry insight and cooperation in crisis planning and implementation.¹²³ The suggestions in the ÖEF-investigation were confirmed through proposition 1976/77:74.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Ibid

¹²² *Förtroendemannainslag*

¹²³ Ds H 1976:4. *Ny organisation för ÖEF. Betänkande av ÖEF-utredningen.*

¹²⁴ Proposition 1976/77:74. *Om inriktningen av säkerhetspolitiken och totalförsvarets fortsatta utveckling.*

6.2 Crisis Exercises & Wargaming Activities

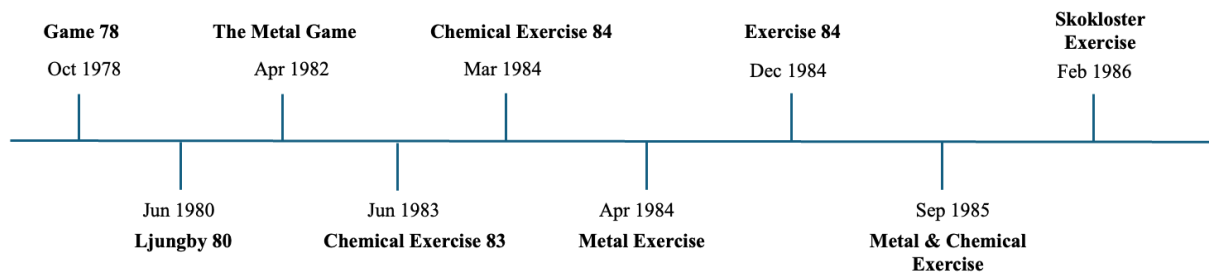


Figure 4: *Timeline over selected crisis exercises*

6.2.1 Selected Exercises with the Metal & Engineering Board

6.2.1.1 Game 78 - Autumn 1978

Game 78¹²⁵ simulated a peacetime crisis with representatives from the business community and ÖEF. More than one hundred people participated, and it was held in Växjö. The emphasis of the exercise was on the metal and manufacturing industries. The scenario encompassed an import loss of critical metals, following political disruptions in Southern Africa. Specifically, the representatives participated in different crisis simulations that could arise from the supply loss of alloyed metals, e.g. chromium, cobalt, manganese and vanadium, that had been identified as central components in certain types of manufacturing. Although these were at times difficult to replace, it was concluded that the loss of electrical components would be even more severe, potentially paralysing the entire business sector.¹²⁶

The game was generally considered to be valuable: “*Many also felt that exercises and simulations of this kind are simply essential to ensure that relevant issues and problems are thoroughly examined and reviewed*”.¹²⁷ Game 78 followed the 1977 defence decision, which was the first time the government and parliament established overarching goals and tasks for the supply preparedness. In essence, there was a strong sentiment among the political leadership that training activities must increase,¹²⁸ after a long time of planning. It was

¹²⁵ *Spel 78*

¹²⁶ Det Ekonomiska Försvaret, Edn 4/4, 1978, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B4:1. 9

¹²⁷ Ibid

¹²⁸ Det Ekonomiska Försvaret, Edn 4/4, 1978, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B4:1

formulated as: *“Planning for leadership and organisation in wartime, in the form of supply authorities at the central, regional, and local levels, has been carried out to some extent. However, special exercises involving the various parts of the crisis organisation need to be expanded in scope”*.¹²⁹ This is concluded by *“Game 78 should be followed by other similar exercises from the perspective of supply preparedness, with consideration also given to the period after the exercise, as well as to other areas of supply”*.¹³⁰ From the perspective of ÖEF, gaining insight into the business representatives standpoint on issues related to the economic defence was of great value. These issues included, e.g. when peacetime crisis stockpiles should be replenished, how planning to address peacetime crises should be carried out and how ÖEF could increase crisis awareness. The views tended to align: *“During the discussions held in the course of the exercise, it became evident that the business sector representatives and ÖEF often shared similar views on these issues”*.¹³¹

Simultaneously, the exercise allowed the business community to express their opinions and be listened to by the government agencies. One industry representative perceived a tendency on behalf of the state to underestimate the flexibility of the business community, which constantly faced crises it is accustomed to dealing with. He stressed that more careful consideration needs to be taken during the exercises. However, Sten Lundberg, the general director of the ÖEF, partly objected to the abovementioned statement by the representative. He believed it should perhaps be added that one must distinguish between crises that unfortunately affect different industrial sectors or individual companies, and crises that have serious consequences for the entire society - the latter types of crises were of much larger dimensions and therefore put society to completely different tests.¹³²

It was also noted that industry representatives favoured aspects including voluntariness and legal certainty. *“It appears that, from the perspective of the business sector, voluntary agreements are considered preferable”*.¹³³ Additionally, in a letter in conjunction to the game, SAF executive Ingvar Selander conveyed the business community’s wish that *“in the future, one should not have to pay for training, exercises, etc.”* concerning national and crisis board exercises, and that *“all affected companies in the country should be treated similarly”*.¹³⁴ In

¹²⁹ Ibid

¹³⁰ Ibid

¹³¹ Det Ekonomiska Försvaret, Edn 1/4, 1979, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B4:1. 5

¹³² Det Ekonomiska Försvaret, Edn 1/4, 1979, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B4:1

¹³³ Det Ekonomiska Försvaret, Edn 1/4, 1979, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B4:1. 5

¹³⁴ NBB letter, SAFs arkiv, Centrum för Näringslivshistoria (CfN), F14 HE:50

summary, it was stated that the exercise fostered strong personal relationships between ÖEF and the participating companies.¹³⁵



Figure 5: Picture from Game 78. From left: Kurt Crona (*The Swedish Association of Local Authorities*), Åke Sundquist (*The Swedish Wholesale Federation*), Olof Blomqwist (*Malmö Industrial Works*).¹³⁶

6.2.1.2 The Metal Game - April 1982

The Metal Game¹³⁷ was carried out as group work, and different presentations were held for the Metal and Engineering board. The purpose of the exercise was described in the article *Supply preparedness with new conditions* in ÖEF's journal, *The Economic Defence*:

*“Awareness and knowledge of the challenges related to supply preparedness must therefore be increased among the relevant authorities, organisations, and companies. This is best achieved through the type of exercises and seminars that ÖEF has started organising.”*¹³⁸ The exercise scenario included challenges associated with the import loss of different metals and how companies and state agencies could mitigate the consequences. Participating companies included Volvo, Saab-Scania, LM Ericsson, Gränges and Tibnor¹³⁹. Leading up to the

¹³⁵ Det Ekonomiska Försvaret, Edn 3/4, 1978, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B4:1.

¹³⁶ Ibid

¹³⁷ *Metallspelet*

¹³⁸ Det Ekonomiska Försvaret, Edn. 3/4, 1982, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B4:1. 12

¹³⁹ At present part of the SSAB group

exercise, Director General Nordbeck remarked that: *“The strength and ability of the business sector to adapt to new conditions form the foundation of our supply preparedness”*.¹⁴⁰

Following the exercise, an evaluation of the exercise in the journal *The Economic Defence* considered how the extensive workload restricted the time for a more in-depth review of the issues.¹⁴¹ However, the evaluation still concludes that the games should gradually increase in difficulty level. Following the exercise, ÖEF bureau chief Andres Muld observed that *“a first general reflection is that, in my opinion, scenarios involving concrete questions are among the best ways to enhance preparedness in this area”*.¹⁴²

It also became clear that there was a strong sense of the benefits of limiting bureaucracy among the industrial representatives. Following the exercise, Sven Johansson, Head of the Metal and Engineering Board, stated: *“Personally, I believe that in the metal sector, most problems can be solved through voluntary agreements. It must be clear that extensive regulations require a very large bureaucratic apparatus. Much can certainly be managed with simpler methods”*.¹⁴³

During the time around the exercise, ÖEF saw a shift in focus and consequential changes in their policies. This was built upon the realisation of the dormant potential of the business sector in strengthening preparedness and the consequent importance of joint exercises. Roland Kiessling, the CEO of the Swedish Association of Metalworking Industries, commented on this in conjunction with the exercise: *“Of particular interest is ÖEF's new policy to focus not only on stockpiling but also on strengthening the industrial manufacturing potential for critical goods. This policy is likely to contribute to enhancing the overall competitiveness of the industry as well”*.¹⁴⁴

Board exercises like this one were reported to have provided a wealth of valuable experience for the ongoing work with the various boards under ÖEF, particularly regarding allocating tasks and developing systems for distributing scarce resources during times of crisis. In the context of a similar crisis board game the same year, Nordbeck concluded that: *“This*

¹⁴⁰ Övningsdokument, 1982, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, F16:4

¹⁴¹ Det Ekonomiska Försvaret, Edn. 2/4, 1982, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B4:1

¹⁴² Det Ekonomiska Försvaret, Edn. 2/4, 1982, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B4:1. 5

¹⁴³ Det Ekonomiska Försvaret, Edn. 2/4, 1982, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B4:1. 4

¹⁴⁴ Ibid

provides us with guidance in our continued work, while we can also note that there is still much to be done in this area".¹⁴⁵ Although Nordbeck acknowledged the need for further efforts in the area, the crisis exercises of 1982 were largely considered successful, having accomplished the established objectives. The increased understanding of the requirements of supply preparedness in the ordinary operations of a firm was considered a bonus effect.¹⁴⁶

6.2.1.3 Metal and Engineering Board - April 1984

The exercise was structured in a boarding school format and was held in Södertälje with slightly more than forty participants. There were representatives from e.g. ÖEF, Swedish Metal Producers' association, Swedish Association of Metalworking Industries, and heavy industry companies including Gränges, Atlas Copco and Uddeholm. Participants were divided into different groups by the metal and engineering industry sectors. For instance, Group One consisted of representatives from the iron and steel industry, Group Two consisted of non-ferrous metal producers, and Group Three consisted of capital goods manufacturers.¹⁴⁷

First, the assignment was to apply adequate regulation methods concerning the *Rationing Law*¹⁴⁸ and apply for a license during times of scarcity.¹⁴⁹ Then, different groups worked on identifying potential loss of industry output and bottlenecks following import losses of the aforementioned raw materials. Lastly, a mapping of each company's owners was conducted, examining whether they were Swedish or not, as well as reviewing customers and suppliers throughout the value chain diagrams.¹⁵⁰ The scenarios were constructed with the assistance of industry experts from the private sector.

Polls with questions were sent out to the participants following the exercise, providing insights into the perception of the exercises from the perspective of the industry representatives.¹⁵¹ Proximity to Stockholm was the most critical factor in terms of the location of the exercise. The participants also emphasised the value of seclusion to discourage

¹⁴⁵ Det Ekonomiska Försvaret, Edn 1/4, 1982, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B4:1. 5

¹⁴⁶ Det Ekonomiska Försvaret, Edn 3/4, 1982, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B4:1

¹⁴⁷ ÖEF dokument, 1984, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet i Arninge, F16:4

¹⁴⁸ Ransoneringslag (1978/268)

¹⁴⁹ ÖEF dokument, 1984, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet i Arninge, F16:4

¹⁵⁰ Ibid

¹⁵¹ Ibid

participants from returning home at night, enjoying the camaraderie of the boarding school format.

There was an interest and engagement on the part of the participants, which was repeated after several board exercises. ÖEF concludes that the goals of the games and exercises, to “*utilise the combined resources according to the demands of the situation*”, had been reached.¹⁵² Additionally, ÖEF tested its preparedness plans against the Swedish industry's competencies, resources and experiences in a realistic setting. The general director, Gunnar Nordbeck, commented when summarising the exercise: “*We don't believe that a few hundred bureaucrats in the (public)¹⁵³ administration will enable us to handle a crisis. It is a strong business sector that gets the job done, and strength is achieved, among other things, through joint exercises where problems are discussed. Without these, a crisis would catch us off guard. Above all, what we want is operational readiness^{154, 155}*”.

6.2.2 Selected exercises with the Chemical Board

6.2.2.1 Exercises with the Chemical Board - June 1983 and March 1984

The Chemical Board held annual crisis exercises, and the 1983 and 1984 editions built on earlier ones. The exercises were financed by ÖEF, which funded board and lodging for the company representatives. The focus of the 1983 exercise was the administrative tasks and delegation of responsibility between the board and chemical companies in the context of a peacetime crisis. It was described as follows: “*The exercise is essentially about turning the chemists recruited from the industry into civil servants.*”¹⁵⁶ The outcome was positive as: “*Participants from the business sector and industry organisations have declared their readiness to join a crisis organisation*”.¹⁵⁷

According to subsequent reports, there were “*tough negotiations*” during the exercise between the Chemical Board and chemical companies designated for substitute production regarding the production of detergents.¹⁵⁸ The head of the chemical board, Walter Sköldefors,

¹⁵² Ibid

¹⁵³ Author's note

¹⁵⁴ *Handlingsberedskap*

¹⁵⁵ Det Ekonomiska Försvaret, Edn 3/4, 1982, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B4:1. 17

¹⁵⁶ ÖEF Bulletinen, Maj 1983, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B5:1. 5

¹⁵⁷ ÖEF övningsdokument, 1983, ÖCbs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, F16:2

¹⁵⁸ ÖEF Bulletinen, Juni 1983, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B5:1

negotiated with directors from the private sector, including a surfactant manufacturer, a fatty acid factory, and a detergent producer.

The 1984 exercise simulated the cessation of petroleum and petrochemical products imports into Sweden. In particular, the petroleum product naphtha, a vital raw material for the Swedish plastics industry at the time, was no longer imported.¹⁵⁹ Participants included private companies, industrial organisations, labour unions, central government agencies and the press. Participating companies included, among others, Berol Kemi, Boliden Kemi, Modo, Kema Nord, Electrolux and Bofors. *“It is encouraging to see such great interest in the exercise and the activities of the Chemistry Board. However, there was a certain gap in the planning this time, possibly due to the exercise management’s pleasant surprise at the level of interest shown by the business executives”*, an ÖEF manager concluded.¹⁶⁰

Lastly, the evaluation of the 1983 exercise concluded by noting the importance of serving tasty food and drinks, something that was highly appreciated by the participants.¹⁶¹

6.2.2 Selected Exercise with Fuel Distribution Centre

6.2.2.1 Ljungby 80 - June 1980

Ljungby 80 was an exercise involving both haulage contractors and oil companies, held in Southern Sweden. Most importantly, it involved the Fuel Distribution Centre (*DMC*)¹⁶², established in 1943 as a consortium of oil companies and tasked with planning and distributing fuel and petroleum products during crises and wartime. In 1961, it was restructured into a joint-stock company, with the oil companies owning a majority, and its planning managed by ÖEF.¹⁶³ The company had gained importance following the oil crisis of 1973. The oil companies were generally the Swedish subsidiaries of large global petroleum companies like Texaco, Gulf and Shell, and a few Swedish companies. Around fifty workers from these petroleum companies participated. The assignment consisted of hauling oil and different types of fuel from oil depots owned by petroleum companies in Southern Sweden, to particular gas stations operated by the military and civilian defence, as well as selected gas stations owned by petroleum firms. The operation was carried out using trucks owned by

¹⁵⁹ ÖEF övningsdokument, 1984, ÖCBs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, F16:2

¹⁶⁰ Ibid

¹⁶¹ Ibid

¹⁶² *Drivmedelscentralen*

¹⁶³ Det Ekonomiska Försvaret, Edn 3/4, 1980, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B4:1

DMC and K-company haulage contractors. According to the prearranged agreement, the DMC assumed control of all tank trucks at a designated drop-off location and covered any costs incurred while the vehicles were under its management.¹⁶⁴

Ljungby 80 was a critical exercise, as it was the first time that wartime preparedness was tested throughout every stage of a value chain in the civilian sector. The participating petroleum companies were praised for contributing personnel and material for the exercise. Director General of ÖEF, Gunnar Nordbeck, concluded that: *“There are very few examples of a similar exercise anywhere in the world. Humble as it may be, this is a unique opportunity for us to test our supply preparedness”*.¹⁶⁵



Figure 6: *Filling a Gulf tank with Texaco gasoline during Ljungby 80. From the left: Lennart Brunbäck (Almarssons Åkeri), Gunnar Nordbeck (ÖEF), Karl-Erik Kvist (Texaco)*

6.2.4 Joint exercises

6.2.4.1 Exercise -84 - December 1984

Exercise 84¹⁶⁶ came to be one of the most extensive total defence exercises held during the late Cold War, and the largest exercise that solely encompassed the economic defence.¹⁶⁷ The intention was to highlight the distribution of tasks and collaboration within the total defence, in situations with significant shortages of critical supply imports. This involved many actors within the total defence, working under realistic conditions. It also aimed to identify sectors

¹⁶⁴ Ibid

¹⁶⁵ Det Ekonomiska Försvaret, Edn 3/4, 1980, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B4:1. 11

¹⁶⁶ *Övning 84*

¹⁶⁷ ÖEF Bulletinen, December 1984, ÖEFs Arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B5:2

with bottlenecks and supply-critical areas of society and foster understanding and interest in supply preparedness. It involved more than eighty central government agencies, industry organisations and private companies, journalists, and regional and local authorities. About 2,500 people were involved altogether, and it took place over three weeks.¹⁶⁸

The exercise included two scenarios, one peacetime crisis and an intensified scenario with the outbreak of war. Exercise 84 provided valuable indications of what needed to be improved regarding the organisation and functionality of the economic defence. It was important that the initiated work did not stop at merely acknowledging that certain aspects needed improvement, but that certain measures would be implemented.¹⁶⁹

In the handbook “Exercise regulations for Exercise -84: Exercise with the Economic Defence Crisis Organization”, released by ÖEF in conjunction with the exercise, ÖEF’s view regarding the division of total defence capabilities between the private and public sphere was articulated as follows: “*To the greatest extent possible, the private sector's own capabilities should be utilised to address tasks that arise during crises and war*”.¹⁷⁰

The handbook also stresses that an important preparedness measure is the joint exercise of leadership, as a way of enhancing the ability to pool and coordinate resources.¹⁷¹ This required collaboration between a variety of actors: “*Collaboration between ministries and agencies, as well as cooperation between agencies and organisations such as those in the business sector, plays an important role*”.¹⁷² A great range of measures had to be implemented in order to satisfy the demands of national preparedness, which affected different functions and sectors of society. According to the handbook, many companies, organisations, and authorities are thus affected by both contingency planning and exercise activities.

An outcome further stressed by Exercise 84 was the earlier-mentioned changes in priorities of ÖEF and other state agencies engaged in total defence. As a result, the focus of the economic defence shifted to exercises and operational readiness, rather than stockpiling, in the late stage of the Cold War.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁸ Tidsskriften Folk och Försvar, nummer 1, 1985, Folk och Försvars arkiv, Krigsarkivet, L1:10

¹⁶⁹ ÖEF Bulletinen, December 1984, ÖEFs Arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B5:2

¹⁷⁰ Handbok för övning - 84, 1984, ÖCBs arkiv, F16:1. 10

¹⁷¹ Handbok för övning - 84, 1984, ÖCBs arkiv, F16:1

¹⁷² Ibid

¹⁷³ Tidsskriften Folk och Försvar, nummer 1, 1985, Folk och Försvars arkiv, Krigsarkivet, L1:10

6.2.4.2 Metal & Engineering Board Exercises - Autumn 1985

During the fall of 1985, the Metal and Engineering board conducted five one-day exercises. The exercises were held by the different sector groups within the board.¹⁷⁴ For example, the sector group representing the iron and steel industry analysed how its supply preparedness would be impacted if titanium and vanadium imports were reduced to 20-25% of their usual levels. There were also discussions with the Armed Forces and the Swedish Defence Materiel Administration (FMV) about the regulation of foreign trade, particularly whether certain goods would be permitted to be exported and how private companies could accommodate military needs in a crisis. The supply situation was assessed as critical, leading to the decision that the use of the metals could only occur under licenses issued by the Metals and Engineering Board. The sector group, therefore, processed a number of license applications.¹⁷⁵

6.2.4.3 The Skokloster exercise - February 1986

The Metal and Engineering board conducted the Skokloster exercise¹⁷⁶ along with the Chemical board in February 1986 with about seventy participants.¹⁷⁷ The scenario was a critical supply situation with rationing and regulations placed on several goods, in particular paint and tinplate. It was the first joint exercise between two different crisis boards, marking a new initiative of the board exercises. The purpose was to practice and test the regulation and distribution of scarce industrial goods at the regional administrative board level and to practice cooperation between the two boards and the regional authority.

The stated mission was to achieve *operational readiness*, a concept increasingly prevalent in the later exercises during the 1980s. The term operational readiness emphasises flexibility and dynamic adaptability in the supply preparedness: “*Operational readiness takes precedence over rigid detailed planning*”.¹⁷⁸ This was due to increased awareness concerning the dependency on the business community. “*It is, in fact, only through close cooperation*

¹⁷⁴ ÖEF Bulletinen, Februari 1986, ÖEFs arkiv, B5:2

¹⁷⁵ Ibid

¹⁷⁶ Skoklosterövningen

¹⁷⁷ Skoklosterövningen: Utvärdering, ÖCBs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, F16:4

¹⁷⁸ ÖEF Bulletinen, Mars 1986, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, B5:2. 4

*between crisis preparedness officers and the business sector that we can, already in peacetime, build the level of readiness required in times of crisis or war”.*¹⁷⁹

The most important purpose was to raise awareness of the problems related to these areas among the participating boards and regional authorities. Several issues were raised during the evaluation of the exercise. It was stated that the cooperation between the two boards functioned poorly, while the improvement of which was one of the main goals of the exercise. A solution to mitigate this issue was to establish discussion forums between the different crisis boards to enhance the continuous dialogue between the exercises.¹⁸⁰

Moreover, the regional authorities also expressed difficulties in making contact with the boards. This is postulated to result from the fundamentally different modes of operation in the industry and at the regional public level. The exercise evaluation noted that a lack of understanding of each other’s “*languages*” and vastly different ways of operating led to mutual misunderstandings, which created significant collaboration challenges. The crisis boards believed that the primary contribution of the regional authorities lay in their administrative competencies rather than their technical expertise.¹⁸¹

A week later, at a conference, general director Nordbeck called for the industry to take greater responsibility in times of crisis and said that society must pursue a new division of roles. The CEO of the Swedish Association of Metalworking Industries,¹⁸² Roland Kiessling, emphasised the Swedish industry’s great adaptability during times of peace and highlighted the importance of companies planning for crises at present.

6.2.4.4 Preparedness Conferences

Preparedness conferences were organised gatherings of representatives from the military, government agencies, municipalities and business leadership. Various conferences were arranged by ÖEF and its different crisis board during the period, however some of the largest and most significant preparedness conferences were organised by the Business Sector

¹⁷⁹ Ibid

¹⁸⁰ Skoklosterövningen: Utvärdering, ÖCBs arkiv, Krigsarkivet, F16:4

¹⁸¹ Ibid

¹⁸² *Sveriges Mekanförbund*

Preparedness Office¹⁸³ (NBB), a subordinated organisation to SAF, to discuss coordinate and educate on issues related to total defence, promoting a mutual understanding on issues related to national security.

In 1976, a large preparedness conference arranged by NBB was held at the industrial company ASEA's headquarters in Västerås. It was the fifth conference in its order and the first one in ten years within the eastern civil defence district. The purpose of the conferences was stated in the invitation: *"The growing import dependency and structural transformation within Swedish industry have gradually resulted in new obligations for a large number of companies. To provide the business leaders of our most supply-critical companies with a comprehensive overview of the responsibilities that fall upon them in this context, as well as to create opportunities for authorities to receive input from the business sector, special executive management conferences will be held in various parts of the country over the coming years"*.¹⁸⁴

Before the conference, one of the organisers sent a letter to an ÖEF presenter, making the following request based on feedback from a previous conference; *"Is it possible to imagine that ÖEF's presentations could be more focused on clarifying preparedness measures and the involvement of companies across various sectors of the business community?"*.¹⁸⁵ The conference concluded that Sweden's industrial development and transformation had led to an increase in global integration, a consolidation towards fewer and larger industrial entities, a decrease in stockpiling and had created a vulnerability to disturbances in international trade. The need for additional stockpiling of industrial inputs to be managed by the industry rather than the state, while emphasising that the state should bear the associated costs, was recognised by the ÖEF during this time.¹⁸⁶

The participants acknowledged that while ÖEF ultimately led the planning for Sweden's economic defence, they would lack any real substance without the active participation of companies. While certain companies perceived it as burdensome to assist in the planning, most recognised it as both necessary and potentially beneficial. *"Being designated as a K-company can offer significant advantages if resource shortages arise during various crisis*

¹⁸³ Successor to the Industry Defence Bureau

¹⁸⁴ Inbjudan till beredskapskonferens i Västerås, 1976, SAFs arkiv, CfN, F14 HA 13

¹⁸⁵ Brev från NBB till ÖEF, SAFs arkiv, CfN, F14 HA 13

¹⁸⁶ Vår försörjningsberedskap: En orientering om Sveriges ekonomiska försvar SAFs arkiv, 1975, F14 HE:50. 12

situations”.¹⁸⁷ Most importantly, “a dialogue between companies and authorities is necessary, if for no other reason than to ensure they speak the same language”.¹⁸⁸

The preparedness conferences became a platform for finding common ground between the total defence agencies and the business community. Matters that involved national security and the business community were emphasised. The theme of the annual People and Defence conference 1985, located at Storlien, was “*Swedish Industry in a Security Policy Perspective*”.¹⁸⁹ Aspects such as industrial espionage were discussed, which had a significant national security aspect. This was mentioned by SAF executive Peter Ander at the conference, “*Distrust in our willingness or ability to handle, for example, sensitive components, which must largely be imported, could lead to us being left without the conditions to obtain them. The conference program thus highlights several issues that are vital for our industry and important for our security*”.¹⁹⁰ Additionally, Ander acknowledged that by 1985 the dependency on imports is not a new one, although its role was increasingly central and that this phenomenon was well-documented in exercise simulations and contingency planning in the economic defence.

The industry's participation in ÖEF sector boards was accompanied by specific demands from its representatives, which were expressed in connection with the exercises, seminars and conferences at the time. For instance, the director of the Swedish Association of Metalworking Industries Gösta Sandén, stated at a preparedness conference in 1985, that the industry's demand on the regulations regarding a rationing system in times of crisis included an equal and fair treatment between all companies, clear and understandable motives and swift processing of cases.¹⁹¹ He also stated that each company should preferably have a single point of contact for regulatory matters. This should potentially be delegated to a regional level, since it would be challenging for the Metal and Engineering board to maintain direct contact with all of the companies in the sector. Lastly, Sandén highlighted what is perhaps the most critical priority for companies: reducing costs. This included efforts to minimise inventory, which tied up working capital and negatively affected profitability. He stressed that this was essential for the sector he represents.

¹⁸⁷ Beredskapskonferens i Stockholm, 1975, SAFs arkiv, CfN, F14 HA 12

¹⁸⁸ Ibid

¹⁸⁹ Det Ekonomiska Försvaret, Edn. 1/4, 1985, ÖEFs arkiv, Krigsarkivet

¹⁹⁰ Tidskriften Folk och Försvar, nummer 3, 1985, Folk och Försvars arkiv, Krigsarkivet, L1:10. 3-4

¹⁹¹ ÖEF dokument: Minnesanteckningar, 1985-03-11, ÖEFs arkiv, F16:4

Another point of discussion at these conferences was the growing belief that actors other than ÖEF were important in creating supply preparedness. General director Nordbeck stated, "*ÖEF believes it is important to promote greater consideration of preparedness aspects during the decision-making stage within the business sector and in political decisions*".¹⁹² There would be a greater focus on transforming society in times of crisis. This included preparing to shift production to rely on domestic raw materials as substitutes for imports and as inputs for essential goods needed to sustain the population during a crisis. The argument was that this could reduce expensive stockpiling for the state and the industry, while also improving supply preparedness. "*But built-in preparedness naturally entails some costs for businesses*", Director General Gunnar Nordbeck conceded. How these were to be distributed was expected to be negotiated and decided on a case-by-case basis. The ÖEF director concluded, however, "*that such built-in preparedness in peacetime planning by businesses undoubtedly gives individual companies greater opportunities to survive during crises or wartime*", thus also considering the commercial and business-oriented aspects of the supply preparedness on behalf of the industry.¹⁹³ Moreover, there were *executive conferences*¹⁹⁴ that targeted specific industries' business leaders. One of the first was held with the packaging industry in Malmö in 1971, with over a hundred participating business leaders, including Gad Rausing from Tetra Pak. The private sector attendees considered that planning for preparedness must be carried out "*efficiently and at reasonable costs*".¹⁹⁵

Lastly, the exercises and conferences often concluded on a patriotic note, reinforcing the sense of solidarity around the issues discussed. The director of SAF Curt-Steffan Giesecke ended the preparedness conference in Västerås with the following words: "*... Swedes have always had a certain ability to pull themselves together, become helpful, and remain loyal when the situation becomes serious. This is encouraging, and recent surveys also show that the will to defend is strong.*" He quotes an old soldier's manual: "*'If the soldier loses his weapon in battle, he is to charge the enemy head-on, take the enemy's weapon from him, and defeat him with it'. Perhaps we all need a bit of that spirit - both in times of peace and in times of war*".¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² Tidsskriften Folk och Försvar, nummer 3, 1985, Folk och Försvars arkiv, Krigsarkivet, L1:10. 10

¹⁹³ Ibid

¹⁹⁴ *Chefskonferenser*

¹⁹⁵ Beredskapskonferens i Malmö, SAFs Arkiv, CfN, F14 HA 8

¹⁹⁶ Avslutning Beredskapskonferens i Västerås, 1976, SAFs arkiv, CfN, F14 HA 13

7. Analysis & Discussion

In this analysis and discussion chapter, we explore how crisis preparedness conferences, exercises, and wargaming shaped public-private collaboration in Sweden's total defence system during the 1970s and 1980s, a period when economic defence shifted from wartime to peacetime crisis preparedness. We analyse exercises as tools for socialisation and identity-shaping, incentive-shaping mechanisms, and operationalisation and coordination tools. Through a corporatist lens, the discussion synthesises these effects of exercises, illuminating how state-industry collaboration reflected and reinforced Sweden's corporatist setting.

7.1 Exercises as Tools Shaping Private-Public Collaboration

In the headings of this section, for the sake of conciseness, we use the term *exercises* as an umbrella term for preparedness conferences, exercises, and wargaming.

7.1.1 Exercises as Socialisation and Identity-Shaping Tools

Preparedness conferences, crisis exercises and wargames enabled private-public collaboration to move beyond bureaucratic and institutionalised cooperation to personal and trust-based relationships. This was displayed by, for example, claims that Game 78 “*fostered strong personal relationships*” and that it highlighted “*the shared views*” between ÖEF and the participating companies on numerous issues.

The socialisation and identity-shaping effects of these exercises extended not only to a positive atmosphere but also to the cultivation of a shared sense of purpose and collective identity. This is evident in several post-exercise evaluations. For example, following the Metal & Engineering Board exercise in 1984, organisers noted the “*immense interest and engagement on the part of the participants*.” Similarly, the Chemical Board exercises of 1983–1984 were praised for generating “*great interest in the exercise*”, with the organisers expressing “*pleasant surprise at the level of interest shown by the business executives*”. Importantly, these activities also revealed a tendency to identify with the cause and growing willingness to engage in economic defence structures among business actors: “*Participants from the business sector and industry organisations have declared their readiness to join a crisis organisation*”. Lastly, the relevance of the ostensibly ordinary life and events

surrounding the activities should not be neglected. Both participants and organisers of the exercises highlight the importance of the seemingly trivial aspects such as food, communal meals and pleasant getaways at secluded locations. This was a way of helping to build and maintain camaraderie and companionship within the public-private domain.

These examples highlight an essential underpinning of the corporatist approach to Swedish total defence, which relies not only on institutions but also on shared mentalities and identities, and how these activities were a key mechanism in building this. After all, the foundation of the total defence is shared values and a collective sense of duty towards them.

7.1.2 Exercises as Incentive-Shaping Tools

There was a strong commercial logic for the Swedish Industry's participation in the wargames, exercises and conferences. This is apparent in how the private sector participants argued for decreased preparedness storage and preparedness measures carried out "*efficiently and at a reasonable cost*" at preparedness conferences. The wargames, exercises and conferences became forums for various negotiations. The industry's cost concerns were further expressed by the desire to reduce stockpiling, reduce working capital and increase profitability. ÖEF gradually considered this a more viable solution in developing a new paradigm within supply preparedness, thus creating a consensus. This pragmatic corporatist approach also included industry leaders such as Roland Kiessling, linking crisis preparedness to the industry's competitiveness, noting that ÖEF's novel focus on the manufacturing potential for critical goods also "*enhances industry competitiveness*".

The fact that the crisis preparedness activities functioned as a microcosmos of corporatist negotiations provided strong incentives for business executives to actively participate as these forums became central to consensus-building among different interest groups and served as a platform for safeguarding their interests. During these activities, state and private sector representatives engaged in dialogue about addressing various issues, reflecting the corporatist preference for resolving issues through direct engagement between organised interests and the state without the need to mobilise public opinion. This is described in the Chemical Board exercise 1983, which resulted in "*tough negotiations*" between the board director and the chemical firms designated for substitute production. This type of decision-making between state and business interests is conducted away from the eye of public scrutiny.

The increase in exports during the 1970s and 1980s led to the intertwining of the Swedish industry and the state's interests. Specifically, the industry's focus on competitiveness with the state's striving for strategic autonomy. In concrete terms, there was greater concern for supply disturbances after the Oil Crisis, which led to a stronger emphasis on maintaining control of vital goods such as sensitive components and specific raw materials. This mutual dependency served as fertile ground for intimate collaboration, similar to the previously mentioned Lex Boliden (section 5.0). Yet again, the economic openness influenced the framework for corporatist collaboration, but in a completely different setting.

The importance of increasing industry involvement gradually became evident for ÖEF. Director General Nordbeck noted in conjunction with the Metal & Engineering exercise 1984, that it is “*a strong business sector*” and not “*a few hundred bureaucrats*” that will enable Sweden to handle a crisis. Simultaneously, industry representatives consistently advocated for voluntary agreements rather than regulation to solve most issues and voiced scepticism toward “a very large bureaucratic apparatus”. The industry was resistant to regulation and bureaucracy, which was reflective of a wider societal shift toward neoliberalism, a trend that intensified with the end of the Cold War, ultimately leading to the end of the corporatist model.

Additionally, the industry expressed the desire for equal treatment for all companies regarding total defence involvement and transparency regarding regulation and expectations from ÖEF. In a corporatist manner, there was an alignment of the two parties’ interests through a process of discreet, consensus-driven policymaking. In this sense, the Swedish corporatist socio-political framework facilitated private-public collaboration, although market-driven incentives and concerns remained important for the business sector.

7.1.3 Exercises as Operationalisation and Coordination Tools

Exercises and wargames translated abstract plans, theoretical models of cooperation, and legal frameworks into an operational form of collaboration, serving as a cornerstone of the corporatist logic underpinning Sweden’s crisis preparedness.

During the late Cold War, Sweden's economic defence planning shifted from rigid preparedness planning to what ÖEF termed operational readiness: a flexible, practice-driven approach to crisis governance grounded in public-private interdependence. Preparedness

conferences, crisis exercises, and wargames were essential for the state to develop operational readiness with the business sector, reflecting the important principle of corporatism, which states that legitimacy and effectiveness arise from institutionalised negotiation between the state and other interests. This principle was enacted through exercises within the economic defence, transforming formal coordination structures into operational practice.

It was acknowledged that planning alone was insufficient for operational readiness, and exercises became instrumental to not only the stress-testing of plans and routines but also to enable iterative improvement and adjustments of these plans. An example is Ljungby 80, where the fuel distribution system was tested, exposing logistical and regulatory challenges. Afterwards, ÖEF noted that the exercise had constituted “... *a unique opportunity for us to test our supply preparedness*”. Exercises enabled the application of legal and regulatory frameworks in practice, and training business representatives in using these. For example, during the Metal Game 1982, rationing and licensing systems were used under realistic conditions.

Exercises were an opportunity to test specific plans and routines and the entire ÖEF crisis organisation, including its complex hybrid governance, institutionalised cooperation with government agencies and the business sector, and the more specific crisis boards. The exercises were an opportunity to operationalise the formal collaborative structures of crisis boards, consisting of representatives from government agencies, industry associations, and companies, into active entities. The composition of these boards ensured that business interests were directly involved in crisis planning and decision-making, and the arrangement demonstrated the corporatist principle of power-sharing among different stakeholders.

The communication between the different parties proved significant during the crisis exercises. They functioned as a mechanism for building mutual trust and overcoming barriers caused by jargon. This was necessary as The Skokloster exercise evaluation notes that a lack of understanding of each other’s “*languages*” caused significant challenges in collaboration and during a preparedness conference it was pointed out that a “*a dialogue between companies and authorities is necessary, if for no other reason than to ensure they speak the same language*”. The lack of communication between the crisis boards and the regional authorities at the Skokloster exercise further proves this. While the corporatist framework enabled dialogue between interest groups, continuous and repetitive exercises achieved

effective communication and trust. Exercises developed into a part of corporatist collaboration, where the participants learned to speak the same language.

Furthermore, joint exercises helped correct misconceptions and foster mutual understanding between sectors. For example, during Game 78, an industry representative raised concerns that authorities tended to underestimate the flexibility of the business community. These kinds of issues could be overcome by exercises which enabled more effective cooperation and ensured that crisis planning reflected a mutual perception of the private sector's capabilities.

7.2 Discussion

This study aimed to answer the following research question:

How did crisis preparedness conferences, exercises and wargaming shape public-private collaboration in Sweden's total defence system during the late Cold War?

Our work finds that crisis preparedness conferences, exercises and wargaming shaped public-private collaboration in several ways.

First, exercises served as a socialisation and identity-shaping tool. Exercises, wargaming and conferences became a platform for socialisation where food and social activities are an important element. This not only made participation coveted but also enabled these activities to foster a public-private collaboration that moved beyond formal ties by building personal, trust-based relationships. These activities' inherent social interaction element also contributed to a positive collaborative atmosphere through heightened interest and engagement among participants. Moreover, the activities led to a shared identity by increasing the willingness to contribute and belong to the economic defence, reflecting the Swedish corporatist approach to total defence, basing it on a collective sense of duty.

Second, exercises served as an incentive-shaping tool. The crisis preparedness activities functioned as arenas for corporatist negotiation and consensus-building where business representatives engaged directly with state actors away from the public's eye. Since preparedness policies impacted businesses' commercial conditions, participating in these activities was necessary in order to protect and promote their interests. This was conducted in accordance with the prevailing corporatist logic of the time, with collaboration between organised groups and the state as a means of aligning interests. The activities also highlighted

the Swedish total defence's dependency on industry, and contributed to aligning interests between industry and state in the light of their mutual dependence.

Third, exercises served as operationalisation and coordination tools. The exercises and wargames functioned as a practical method to translate abstract plans, legal frameworks and formal structures into real-life cooperation, enabling public and private actors to test, adjust and apply crisis governance in practice; this reflected the corporatist principle that legitimacy stems from structured collaboration. Moreover, exercises and wargames helped operationalise structures like ÖEF's crisis boards, ensuring business representatives were involved in crisis planning. The activities also proved that communication was crucial by exposing misunderstandings and the need for a shared language between sectors. The activities also helped correct assumptions and improved understanding of the other party. Together, this fostered a more coordinated, trust-based, and realistic form of crisis readiness.

That is, crisis preparedness conferences, exercises, and wargaming during the late Cold War shaped public-private collaboration in Sweden's total defence system by fostering trust-based relationships and shared identity through socialisation, aligning state and industry interests and incentives via negotiations, and enhancing practical coordination by translating abstract plans into effective crisis governance. This was to a large extent enabled by, and can be understood through the lens of, the prevailing corporatist socio-political framework.

However, we postulate that these mechanisms are not isolated phenomena but rather interlinked, constituting a dynamic and mutually reinforcing process (Figure 7). We argue that the socialisation and identity-shaping elements made exercises a highly suitable platform for corporatist negotiation and consensus-building, which was critical to achieving an effective incentive structure and goal alignment; together, these factors made exercises an effective means to improve coordination and procedures. In the process, trust-based relationships were fostered through social interactions, which paved the way for productive negotiations, and consequently, alignment of industry and state interests and a shared commitment to economic defence. These aligned interests, in turn, drove more effective coordination, improving motivation to refine and operationalise crisis plans and structures. The improved coordination fed back into the socialisation process, reinforcing trust and shared identity by improving collaboration. Thus, exercises, conferences, and wargaming became a self-reinforcing cycle, creating a strong public-private collaboration in Sweden's total defence system.

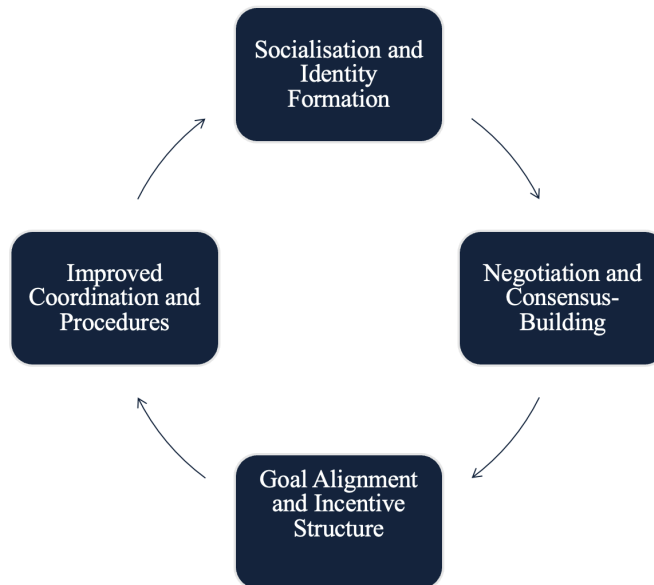


Figure 7: *Visualisation of the conceptual process*

Our findings contribute significantly to understanding private-public collaboration in a Swedish late Cold War total defence context in general, and how exercises shaped this collaboration in particular. As outlined earlier in his work, there is little research on total defence exercises during the late Cold War in Sweden. There is a particularly significant empirical gap in the impact of such exercises on private-public collaboration, a question that virtually no existing research asks. Thus, the most important contribution to previous research and the knowledge domain is our demonstration of how conferences, exercises, and wargames shaped collaboration.

Moreover, practically all research considering such exercises adopts the state's viewpoint, with limited attention to how business actors perceived, shaped, and navigated the collaboration process, even though it is well established that the total defence system heavily depended on the business sector. By focusing on the business sector's perspectives and exploring the mechanisms that shaped collaboration, we provide a more balanced and holistic understanding of public-private interaction.

In relation to the only prior work that explicitly addresses total defence exercises, *Beredskap att agera*, this paper moves beyond Ingermarsdotter's comprehensive descriptive historical

overview of civil defence exercises in Sweden by offering an analytical perspective that deepens understanding of these exercises and their role in shaping public-private collaboration. We also contribute toward addressing her call for future research regarding exercise participants, forms of private sector involvement in exercises, exercise methods, and exercise scenarios by answering our research question, and, to the best of our knowledge, we are the first to do so.

However, this work also contributes theoretically by highlighting the informal processes through which Sweden's corporatist model was enacted in practice. The resulting self-reinforcing process offers a grounded empirical account and a conceptual process. It moves corporatist theory closer to practice by linking it to the concrete mechanisms that facilitated and shaped public-private collaboration. Yet, the societal transition towards more neoliberal policies at the end of the Cold War intuitively raises the questions of how these mechanisms that shaped public-private collaboration in a corporatist context might have evolved or persisted.

8. Conclusion

8.1 Summary

This thesis examined how crisis exercises, wargames and preparedness conferences shaped public-private collaboration in the late Cold War. Empirical material, consisting of primary sources, has been collected by conducting an archival study. Corporatism has served as a context for Swedish post-war society and served as a theoretical lens for examining empirical material. We have found that these activities shaped public-private collaboration during the specified period in various ways. Firstly, it enabled the public-private collaboration to move beyond institutionalised and bureaucratic forms toward building a common identity and strong personal relationships. Secondly, it aligned the incentives of the business and state by serving as arenas for corporatist negotiations. Thirdly, the exercises translated preparedness plans into practice, operationalising supply preparedness through operational readiness and enabling improved communication. Finally, we postulate that these mechanisms are interconnected in a dynamic, mutually reinforcing cycle that strengthens collaboration.

8.2 Theoretical Contributions

With this study, we intended to address the research gap outlined in 1.3. The main theoretical contribution is explaining how crisis exercises, wargames and preparedness conferences shaped private-public collaboration in Sweden's total defence during the late Cold War in response to the research gap identified. Moreover, we also reduce the knowledge gap of the industry's perspective on total defence in general and exercises in particular, while expanding the knowledge on total defence exercises, their participation, and their nature.

Additionally, the findings extend the corporatist framework beyond its structural and socio-political features to a dynamic and practical corporatist collaboration. While corporatism enabled the establishment of public-private collaboration within crisis exercises, games and conferences, it was also enacted as a lived experience through the exercises.

8.3 Practical Contributions

As Sweden is rebuilding its total defence in a transforming geopolitical environment, we have intended to highlight the enduring relevance of the lessons of the Cold War, bridging the past with the present. As the scale of such a mission far exceeds any single study, we hope it can form a part of a broader understanding of the topic. First and foremost, we conclude that exercises involving the private sector were imperative for a well-functioning total defence, which we would argue still is the case. One learning is that a well-functioning public-private collaboration within the total defence both requires establishing an institutional political and legal framework and nurturing the social capital required for its development. Another implication of the results is that the collaboration design should preferably draw upon voluntary agreements and certain legal mandates, with consensual joint coordination preferable to state coercion. The finding that the crisis activities did not only serve as a forum to voice scepticism towards bureaucracy but also as a means of mitigating it is highly interesting in light of the current anti-bureaucracy discourse, as evidenced by, for example, the Draghi report and its perspective on bureaucracy and competitiveness.¹⁹⁷ One additional practical contribution is thus the insight that joint exercises can serve as a strategic tool to address bureaucratic inefficiencies.

Finally, one cannot begin with these kinds of activities soon enough, and we find that this study provides strong support for all parties voicing the need to increase private-public joint exercises.

8.4 Reflections on Limitations & Future Research

In this study, we aimed to incorporate both the public and private sectors' perspectives. While this has been partly achieved, it should be acknowledged that most of our empirical data has been gathered in archives of governmental agencies, highlighting one limitation of the study. We believe that further research could include material from the archives of particular companies that participated in these exercises and conferences to achieve true multiperspectivity.

¹⁹⁷ “The Draghi Report on EU Competitiveness”. *European Union*. Accessed May 12, 2025. https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-competitiveness/draghi-report_en.

Moreover, an archival study poses some inherent limitations, such as access to sufficient data, ensuring its quality, and establishing causal relationships between variables. Future research could achieve greater reliability and robustness by leveraging a triangulation method¹⁹⁸ while having the potential to reveal new patterns and narratives.

Given the inductive nature of this research, the conclusions are not thoroughly theoretically grounded; a promising venue for further research is thus both to apply additional theories to understand the mechanisms of public-private collaboration better and to explore comparative perspectives across other nations' total defence systems to contextualise and refine the what has been observed in Sweden's late Cold War experience. Moreover, in seeking to leverage the corporatist theory to answer the research question, we acknowledge a potential shortcoming in our analysis: we are sometimes somewhat unnuanced in applying corporatism, lacking extensive exploration of the tensions between corporatism and the empirical observations. In our focus on how corporatism can be used to explain the development of public-private collaboration, we may have overlooked alternative explanations which deserve scholarly attention, such as power imbalances or extensive legal requirements, to mention a few potential explanatory factors.

The temporal scope limitations of this essay call for further research. As this study focuses on Sweden during the late Cold War, future research could extend the temporal scope into the earlier phases of Sweden's total defence system to understand its foundational principles and early evolution. One of these foundational principles includes the duty system,¹⁹⁹ and its possible socio-cultural effects on the sense of duty. While we have highlighted the importance of the latter, we have neglected the former and additional factors that might have served as antecedents to it. Future research could also explore the post-Cold War period to understand how the framework has adapted in response to changing political, economic and geopolitical dynamics, or the implications of the shift towards neoliberalism.

Finally, the archival material we have examined contains a wealth of information that could not be fully included within the scope of this research, particularly given the limitations inherent in a master's thesis. Future studies could investigate not only entirely different

¹⁹⁸ M Kipping, R.D. Wadwhani, and M Buchelli, "Analyzing and Interpreting Historical Sources: A Basic Methodology," in *Organizations in Time*, ed. Wadwhani R.D. and Marcello Buchelli (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 305–329.

¹⁹⁹ *Pliktsystemet*

research questions but also similar or related questions that extend or deepen the current analysis, leveraging the same material.

9. References

9.1 Archive material

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10. Appendix

10.1 AI Appendix

10.1.1 Declaration of usage of AI

During the working process of this thesis, the following AI tools have been utilised:

ChatGPT, Perplexity and Grammarly.

ChatGPT and Perplexity were used for the same purpose, which was to improve the text by generating synonyms, formulations and precise definitions for specific words. By identifying these, the accuracy and clarity of the text were enhanced. Importantly, the LLM's role was limited to broadening vocabulary and improving the language of the thesis. It did not conjure entire sentences and paragraphs, nor was it used to provide or analyse any data. While LLMs such as ChatGPT and Perplexity can occasionally produce incorrect output, we believe that this has been mitigated by the fact that it has not been used as a source for information. Additionally, output by an LLM has never been taken for granted, but thoroughly examined before being used. With Perplexity, the users can choose which LLM they want to use. In this process, the Chat GPT 4 LLM has been used when utilising Perplexity. This renders the difference between them minor in this context, simply reflecting the authors' personal preferences. Early attempts were made at screening for previous research on the subject, which did not produce the desired outcome, highlighting several shortcomings of using large language models in academic screenings. The risk of so-called hallucinations is significant, with the LLM producing its own facts, such as creating its own research papers and referencing these. Furthermore, as we adopted the method of an archival study, a highly analogue and practical procedure, AI has not played a part in the data collection process. However, as all of our data has been in Swedish - at times a rather old-fashioned Swedish - we occasionally used the LLMs to translate the written text in producing a draft of e.g. a quote. We manually tweaked this draft to achieve the correct nomenclature, such as an organisation, in a consistent manner.

Grammarly was used as a writing assistant to detect spelling and grammar errors in the text. While Grammarly is not used as an LLM search engine, it is powered by one. It functions as an extension in the document, similar to other types of writing assistants like the open-source

reference management software Zotero, which was also used in the referencing system of this thesis. The purpose of using Grammarly was to enhance the quality and reliability of the text, finding particular errors that were missed in the process of writing and reading the text. In several instances, it also helped us remove redundant words that easily slip into the text, improving the readability and assisting in reaching the word limit requirements. However efficient, it sometimes gave suggestions that would have resulted in unsuitable or incorrect formulations for the context. For instance, it consistently suggested changing the tense in the empirical section, describing the exercises, conferences and games. We considered the past present tense to be suitable, since it is about explaining events in the past and clarifying the sequence of these events. It should be noted that Grammarly does not change the text automatically but provides suggestions that the author must implement.

We conclude that while AI tools delivered several insights into the improvement of the text, they should be used with caution and always supervised by a human who examines the output.

10.1.2 Generative AI Sources

Chat GPT 4 - OpenAI, last iteration in April 2024 (LLM)

<https://chatgpt.com/>

Perplexity - Using Chat GPT's 4.1 model (LLM)

<https://www.perplexity.ai/>

Grammarly (powered by an LLM)

<https://www.grammarly.com/>