

Changing boundaries, defending boundaries

Gender relations in the
Swedish Armed Forces

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- I. Pettersson, Lena, Persson, Alma & Berggren, Anders W. 2008. Changing gender relations: Women officers' experiences in the Swedish Armed Forces, *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 29(2): 192–216.
- II. Persson, Alma. 2010. Soldiers and secretaries: Gendered boundary work in the Swedish Armed Forces, *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 26(2): 166–175.
- III. Persson, Alma. 2010. "Framåt gubbar!" Genus och militär praktik i ett internationellt insatsförband. *Tidskrift för genusvetenskap*, no. 1–2, 145–164.
- IV. Persson, Alma. An unintended side effect of pepper spray: Gender trouble and "repair work" in an Armed Forces unit. Manuscript under "revise and resubmit" at *Men and Masculinities*.

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Norrköping, September 2011,

Alma Persson

Part I

Theoretical framework

INTRODUCTION: CHANGING GENDER RELATIONS IN THE “NEW ARMED FORCES”?

“I remember the women who were part of our unit [back in the 1980s]... There was an exercise in the yard, and everyone just stopped and stared, because there were girls doing completely normal things; the whole regiment came to a halt. It was quite a remarkable experience—made you realize the pressure those girls were under...” (Excerpt from interview with a male military officer at the Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters)

“[Resolution 1325] is not about cultural imperialism,” the lecturer, a military officer in green uniform, emphasizes, “not about bringing Swedish gender equality to the world. It is for the sake of the operation.... At home with young guys this is not a problem,” he says, “but now that we are going abroad we need women [soldiers] who can interact and work with local women.” (Excerpt from ethnographic field-notes from an international service unit)

“The most important change is that we have a completely new purpose. That’s the big paradigm shift, so to speak, that we are going out internationally... Now we are going where things are dangerous, where you might actually get killed... If you are to remain in this organization, both civilians and officers, you have to be prepared to take on your share of responsibility out there.” (Excerpt from interview with a senior civilian administrator at the Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters)

In the Swedish Armed Forces a thorough transformation is currently taking place, as the organization moves from an invasion-based defence that guards the Swedish borders to an international defence organization that takes part in peacekeeping operations around the globe. In the organization, this is described as “the big paradigm shift”. The Swedish Ministry of Defence goes even further, stating that this transformation constitutes “the biggest reform in modern military history” (Sweden Ministry of Defence 2009).

This thesis is concerned with how the organizational transformation can be understood as a gendered and gendering process. The quotes above are excerpts from my studies that target the connection between gender relations and the making of what Armed Forces employees label the “New Armed Forces”. The first quote is from a senior military officer

who recalls the sensation of women in military uniform in the early 1980s when the first steps were taken towards abolishing the male monopoly on the military profession in Sweden. He also reflects on the pressure these women must have felt, when simply doing their job made their male colleagues stop and stare. The second excerpt fast-forwards the issue of women in the military into the 21st century. Today, women are not as sensational or contested as they were in the 1980s. Instead, they constitute a gendered resource that is made essential in peacekeeping work. The last quote is a description of the transition into an international defence organization, the paradigm shift that is changing military work in fundamental ways. The civilian Headquarters employee underlines that “going out there” is something that civilians and military officers alike need to be prepared for, and illustrates how occupational boundaries are breached in the “New Armed Forces”.

Research on gender and the military shows that although gender relations are an integral part of how military work is organized, there is nothing self-evident about the ways in which they are configured. On the contrary, what it means to be men and women in the military is continuously negotiated and reinterpreted, and varies over time and between different localities (Berggren 2002, Carreiras 2006, Higate 2003, Sjöberg 2009, Sundevall 2011, Whitworth 2004). Studies also show that the categories men and women (and indeed civilian and military) can be challenged and changed. However, change can also be resisted and gender boundaries can reappear in new form. This thesis discusses how the transformation into an international defence organization is used to both change and defend gender boundaries in military work, as well as occupational demarcations.

Defending the borders of the nation from armed attack has been the duty of Swedish men for centuries, and the primary purpose of the military. Today, the formal restrictions that excluded women from the military profession are gone, and the purpose of the organization is transformed. Instead of protecting the Swedish borders, soldiers are now to go abroad in international peacekeeping operations. In these operations, women are regarded as essential. In the year 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security (United Nations 2000). The resolution firmly states that peacekeeping operations are to be made up of military units where women are present

on all levels and gender awareness prevails. Traditional boundaries of gender in the Swedish military are, no doubt, dissolving. At the same time, the transformation of the military can itself be understood as a gendering process that gives rise to new gender boundaries. When Resolution 1325 is put to work, international research shows that gender binaries tend to be reinforced (Carreiras 2010, Sion 2008, Valenius 2007).

Along with the breaching of gender boundaries, the tenacious boundaries that have kept positions of power reserved for military men are challenged, as well. Traditional demarcations that separate civilian categories from professional military officers are no longer self-evident. When Swedish military units go abroad to work in peacekeeping missions worldwide, the soldiers are not only military officers. In addition to professional military officers, Swedish peacekeeping units are made up of men and women who take a break from their employment as police officers, truck drivers, or students, or as civilian administrators in the military. But like the changing gender relations, the blurring of occupational categories and boundaries is contested terrain.

This thesis shows how the Swedish Armed Forces' transition into an international defence organization is perceived by those who are in the midst of it all, based on interviews with women pioneers in the military profession as well as women and men employed at the Headquarters who are currently active in the transformation process. With the additional help of an ethnographic study, it shows how gender relations are challenged and defended in the military practices of an international service unit, and how the increased emphasis on peacekeeping generates new gendered boundaries, meanings, and interactions in the organization. The thesis builds on previous research in the fields of feminist studies of organization, critical studies of men and masculinities, and studies of professions and occupations, as well as military studies. The theoretical framework is made up of a "doing gender" perspective and a relational approach to gender and occupations.

For a scholar of gender studies interested in working life, the military is a most fascinating research context. It is also an organization highly inaccessible to outsiders, which makes this study somewhat unique. Its originality is built up further by the wide-ranging empirical material upon which the study is based. Among the interviewees, some of the top executives in the Armed Forces Headquarters are found, as well as members of

the first generation of women to enter the military profession in Sweden. Together with the ethnographic study that sheds light on the everyday work in an international service unit, the study aims to provide a multi-faceted account of gender relations in the context of a changing Swedish Armed Forces.

Aim and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to show how gender is done in the context of the Swedish Armed Forces' transition into an international defence organization. The thesis analyses how the increased focus on peacekeeping shapes gender relations and occupational relations in military practices. It employs a doing gender approach and attends to the paradox of how established ways of doing gender can simultaneously be changed and defended in everyday work. The aim is operationalized into three research questions:

- How are established ways of doing gender in the organization changed and/or reproduced in military practices?
- How does the focus on peacekeeping shape gender relations in military work, in terms of producing new gender boundaries, meanings, and interactions?
- How are organizational boundaries maintained or deconstructed in organizational practices, at the intersection of gender relations and occupational relations?

This thesis is based on two interview studies and an ethnographic study. The first interview study discusses how gender relations have changed since the inclusion of women into the military profession. The interviewees are members of the first generation of women military officers in Sweden. The second interview study addresses organizational boundaries and the intersecting relations of gender and occupation. It is based on interviews with senior and executive members, both men and women, of the Armed Forces Headquarters, who are in different ways active in the ongoing transformation process. The ethnographic study follows an international service unit during their final stages of training before leaving for a peacekeeping mission abroad. It focuses on gender relations in everyday

military work, and problematizes how the transformation of the Armed Forces changes what it means to be military men and women. Throughout the thesis, a practices approach to gender and occupations is present.

The thesis is divided into two parts. Part I consists of an introductory framework, and Part II is made up of the four constituent articles. The purpose of Part I is to bring the pieces together, relate them to previous research and theoretical debates, and discuss the conclusions of the individual articles jointly. Its first section presents the theoretical framework and the epistemological positioning of the thesis and discusses the previous research that is relevant to the study at hand. A chapter on methodology describes how the empirical studies were conducted, including reflections on methodological issues that cut across the different studies. Next, a thorough summary of each article is provided. Part I ends with the overall conclusions of the thesis, and a discussion of its contribution to existing research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This thesis draws upon a diverse range of previous research: feminist studies of organization, critical studies of men and masculinities, studies of professions and occupations, and military studies. There is no solid demarcation between these fields; on the contrary, they overlap in many ways. However, they tend to emphasize different aspects of the issues covered in the thesis.

In this chapter, I present the previous research that this thesis taps into and contributes to. The first section attends to research on gender and organizations, with an emphasis on research that employs a doing gender approach. Next, I focus on critical perspectives of men at work and discuss research that conceptualizes homosociality and sexuality. A further section is devoted to research that scrutinizes the interconnections between gender relations and occupational relations in working life. The fourth section brings together research on gender, war, and the military. A discussion on how the present study ties in with these four fields of research concludes the chapter.

Doing gender in organizations

Over the past 40 years, gender studies has developed into a wide-ranging and diverse field of research that attends to the social and linguistic construction (and deconstruction) of gender. In the sprawling mix of theorizing and empirical inquiries that now constitutes this field, it is increasingly difficult to pin down one all-encompassing definition of what gender is. Danish feminist theorist Nina Lykke suggests that we define the field of feminist/gender studies as “the construction of discursive sites of resistance to exclusion, fixity and oppressive meanings of gender/sex (i.e. sites that make it possible to resignify gender/sex)” (Lykke 2010, 34). This definition captures the central theme in gender studies: challenging essentialist, stable, and homogeneous understandings of “men” and “women”.

The pursuit of diverse, destabilized, and theoretically grounded ways of knowing gender can start from numerous epistemological positions and focus on countless empirical contexts. The thesis at hand focuses on the practising of gender, and builds on the idea that organizations are important gendered, and gendering, institutions. Norwegian sociologists Elin Kvande and Bente Rasmussen describe organizations as the “melting pot or ‘transformer’ where society’s general perceptions and ideas of masculinity and femininity are produced” (Kvande & Rasmussen 1993, 47, my translation).

Since the pioneering (and much debated) study *Men and Women of the Corporation* by U.S. business administration scholar Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977), an increasingly established field of research has emerged. The structural, cultural, and symbolic aspects of gendered organizations have attracted the interest of many scholars. Important discussions within this field of research concern the construction of gender in organizations (Andersson 2003, Sundin 1995), the gendered character of leadership (Fogelberg Eriksson 2005, Collinson & Hearn 2005), and the gendered division of labour (Pettersson 1996, Cockburn & Ormrod 1993).

In its attempt to understand the practising of gender in organizations, this thesis employs a “doing gender” approach that perceives of gender as a situated social practice that comes into being through social interaction. In their now classic article that came to name this research tradition, U.S. feminist theorists Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman (1987) suggest that gender should be understood as a routine, methodological, and recurring accomplishment, embedded in everyday interaction. They state that “doing gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine ‘natures’” (West & Zimmerman 1987, 126). This approach transforms gender from an essential, individual category into an accomplishment that is interactional and situated in institutional arenas.

That one article gave rise to a field of studies that is still expanding. The doing gender approach has been widely adopted, not least in research on gender and organizations (Andersson 2003, Gherardi 1994, Gherardi & Poggio 2001, Herbert 1998, Korvajärvi 1998, Kvande 2003, Martin 2003). Kvande (2007) highlights a number of characteristics of a doing gender approach to organizations. It is a perspective that focuses on eve-

ryday activities and social practices in organizations, and that allows for plurality and variation, rather than binary or static categories. It is an open-ended approach that captures the dynamics of both stability and change and the paradoxes of gendered practices. Furthermore, a doing gender analysis enables an understanding of gender patterns in organizations beyond the practices of individual organizational actors.

Finnish gender- and organization scholar Päivi Korvajärvi (1998) presents an overview of studies that combine an interest in gender and organizations with a “doing gender” perspective. Korvajärvi divides the field into four main strands of research: the ethnomethodological view that focuses on interaction; the cultural view that highlights symbols and meanings; the processual view, where processes and practices are in focus; and the performative view that analyses identities. My perspective is inspired by several of these traditions, but the most important influence comes from the processual strand.¹

U.S. sociologist Joan Acker, whom Korvajärvi uses to exemplify and illustrate the processual perspective of gender and organizations, states that gendering processes are an integral part of all organizational processes and that places, tasks, and traits tend to be understood as either “masculine” or “feminine” (Acker 1990, 1992). In her definition, the concept of gendering processes means that “advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine” (Acker 1990, 146).

Critics have claimed that this is an essentialist and determinist approach, but my view of Acker’s work is closer to Kvande’s reading of it. She states that Acker “illustrates how the link between gender as a social construction and women and men can be established historically and contextually rather than essentially. Gender in this context is created daily through participation in work organizations, and [Acker] ties the concept

¹ As an example of the ethnomethodological approach, Korvajärvi mentions West and Zimmerman (1987); the cultural is exemplified by Gherardi (1995), the processual by Acker (1990), and the performative by Butler (1990). A similar typology of the field is found in Kvande (2007), who distinguishes between the interactional approach, the practices approach, the negotiations approach, and the symbolist approach.

of gendering clearly to human agency by focusing on practices, thus also making structures moveable through human agency” (Kvande 2007, 96). Based on the work of Acker, Swedish gender- and organization researcher Susanne Andersson develops the concept of ordering practices, which aims to provide a “dynamic, analytical tool to capture both variation and structure” (Andersson 2003, 177). Ordering practices are relational activities, material as well as discursive, that contribute to the formation of gender patterns in organizations. This concept is used to analyse how gender patterns are shaped in the military practice of the international service unit.

West and Zimmerman’s article “Doing Gender” launched a heated and enduring debate. Critics argue that the concept runs the risk of turning just about everything men and women do into one blurry and diffuse category of “doing gender”, thereby obscuring both change and variation (Risman 2009). It has been suggested that the concept of “undoing gender” might be better suited for capturing change and variation (Butler 2004, Deutsch 2007, Hall et al. 2007). West and Zimmerman (2009) respond to the criticism by stating that change and variation are not necessarily about gender being undone, but rather redone. Kvande (2007) argues that the doing gender approach is neither static nor deterministic, but flexible and open to both variation and change. Gender can be done in ways that reproduce existing gender relations, or in ways that challenge them. By focusing on practices, variations in the relational constructs of masculinities and femininities can be unravelled.

Critical perspectives on men at work

An analysis of how gender is done in organizations calls for a theoretical framework that can also conceptualize men and masculinities. Such a framework is found in critical studies on men and masculinities, a “range of studies that critically address men in the context of gendered power relations” (Hearn 2004, 50).

The concept of masculinity has been vigorously debated for decades. It started out as a way to explicitly and systematically gender men, to analyse and problematize men as men, rather than as un-gendered representatives of humankind. Since then it has been developed, problematized, and by some, discarded altogether (Connell 1995, Connell & Mes-

serschmidt 2005, Hearn 1996, 2004, Johansson 1998, Petersen 2003). The term masculinity has been criticized for being imprecise, descriptive, essentialist, even anti-feminist (Collinson & Hearn 2005). In order to be fruitful, researchers argue that masculinity needs to be understood in the plural sense, as masculinities (Connell 1995, Higate 2003, Kvande & Rasmussen 1994). In addition, masculinity needs to be used as a flexible rather than static or essentialist concept, and to be placed in a framework of gender relations (Nordberg 2005, Whetherell & Edley 1999). I argue that a perspective of doing masculinities reduces the risk of reaffirming masculinity as an essential, stable, and homogeneous category. An emphasis on practices and men's interactions with women as well as other men enables a contextual analysis of gender relations (Kvande 2007).

In studies of men and masculinities, organizations are important arenas where masculinities and men's power are reproduced (Collinson & Hearn 2005). One of the organizations most intimately connected to men and masculinities, numerically as well as symbolically, is the military (Carreiras 2006, Sasson-Levy 2011). In such an organization, it is acutely relevant to make issues of men and masculinities explicit, and scrutinize what it means for the Armed Forces to be so inseparably connected to men.

A highly relevant concept in relation to the military that sheds light on how bonds between men are formed and reinforced is homosociality. U.S. organization scholar Jean Lipman-Blumen (1976, 16) defines the concept as "the seeking, enjoyment and/or preference for the company of the same sex" and argues that men's preference for the company and admiration of other men is a pivotal part of gender segregation and discrimination in working life.

A number of Swedish scholars have developed the concept further. Swedish sociologist Gerd Lindgren has conceptualized and studied homosociality in a range of organizations (Lindgren 1985, 1992, 1999). She calls homosociality "the logic of brotherhood" (Lindgren 1996, 4), and uses it to analyse how the gendered division of labour is reproduced in organizations. Lindgren states that men's homosocial practices make up a competitive ritual where men who are joined by similar experiences validate one another, and as a result, exclude their women colleagues. In addition, Swedish feminist organization scholar Charlotte Holgersson (2003) shows that homosocial practices that shape organizational life

have far-reaching consequences that contribute to a reproduction of unequal gender patterns in society at large. Moreover, homosocial practices exclude not only women. Men who do not conform to the ideals that dominate a particular organizational setting can be kept out of the brotherhood, as well, since homosocial practices contribute to the maintenance of a dominant form of masculinity (Bird 1996).

When men work to prove themselves as men, they tend to do so in relation to a male audience (Kimmel 1994). Reaffirming and articulating heterosexual desires and actions is one way to strengthen homosocial bonds between men. In a study of the homosocial organization of young men's heterosexual practices, Australian sociologist Michael Flood (2008) describes how men talk, brag, and even lie about their sexual conquests in order to reaffirm their masculinity and achieve status in the eyes of their male peers. Flood argues that heterosexual storytelling is a key ingredient in male bonding and masculine affirmation. In the reproduction of dominant forms of masculinity, sexuality is an important resource (Pascoe 2007). This point is particularly relevant when it comes to the military context.

Intersecting relations of gender and occupation

So far, I have argued that gender needs to be understood as a situated accomplishment, and that theoretical tools need to encompass how gender is done in terms of femininities as well as masculinities. A relational view on gender is an important theoretical starting point for the thesis. Australian gender theorist Raewyn Connell argues that the relational character of gender is crucial: "Gender is, above all, a matter of the social relations within which individuals and groups act... It is a pattern in our social arrangements, and in the everyday activities or practices which those arrangements govern" (Connell 2009, 10). The gender arrangements that characterize a particular society or organization are based upon a set of relations that encompass both the tangible and concrete relations between individual men and women and the symbolic and slightly more elusive relations that are active in the construction of men/masculinities and women/femininities.

The concept of gender relations is used throughout this thesis. An emphasis on relations might be misleading in the sense that it can be in-

terpreted as a focus on the relations between the genders, that is, between men and women. This would, however, be a reductionist use of the concept that would stabilize the categories of men and women into two homogeneous groups that are different from one another. Instead, I see gender relations as a tool for analysing relations between men and women as well as within groups of men or groups of women, something that facilitates an analysis of femininities and masculinities as diverse and plural categories. In addition, the concept of gender relations extends beyond men and women and includes “femininity” and “masculinity” as symbolic constructs that are formed in relation to one another, oftentimes in terms of binaries.

The study at hand also attends to how gender relations work in context and interact with other social categories. While gender is the main focus, the understanding of what gender means in a particular context often demands an analysis that expands beyond a focus on men and women. In the field of gender studies and feminist theory, there is an increasing interest in how gender interacts with other categories of difference and inequality (Connell 2009). The concept of intersectionality brings together research that attends to and theorizes upon multiple categories of difference (Crenshaw 1991, Davis 2008, Collins 1998, McCall 2005).

U.S. sociologist Leslie McCall (2005, 1771) defines intersectionality as an analysis of “the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations”. She distinguishes between three approaches that differ in their views on categories. The anticategorical approach rejects and deconstructs categories, while its opposite, the intercategorical approach, uses categories strategically, to document their multiple and conflicting dimensions. The third approach, the intracategorical one, is closest to my use of the concept. This version of intersectional research uses categories, while remaining critical of them. An intracategorical take on intersectional studies focuses on how categories are produced, experienced, and resisted in everyday life. In particular, it targets the boundary-defining processes that are active in a particular social setting.

When an intersectional approach is employed, it is crucial to look closely at the intra-action between categories at play in a particular empirical setting (Lykke 2005). For the thesis at hand, the intersections that are targeted in the analysis are primarily those that connect gender relations

to occupational relations. In the analysis, I do not explicitly refer to the concept of intersectionality or discuss the field, debate, and theory it represents. However, I frequently use the concept of intersection in order to capture the relational character of gender and how it interacts with other social categories to shape everyday work, organizational boundaries, and divisions of labour in the setting of the Armed Forces.

Apart from gender, the category that I find to be most important in the study of the Swedish Armed Forces is that of occupational relations. Research that focuses on the gendered character of professions and occupations starts from the view that occupations, much like gender, are constructed, changeable, and relational in character. Research in the field of gender and professions shows that organizations are formed by a combination of gender and professional dynamics (Crompton 1987, Davies 1996, Witz 1992). The very idea of “the professional” is assigned a masculine connotation (Kerfoot 2002). Studies show how the relation between men and women within an established profession changes along with the gender composition. For example, when the share of women in a previously male-dominated profession increases, new, gendered demarcations tend to emerge (Einarsdottir 1997, Pringle 1998, Silius 1992). The “professional project” is inherently gendered, in the sense that both the actors involved and the criteria for inclusion and exclusion are saturated with gender (Dahle & Iversen 2001, Witz 1992). In organizations that are, like the military, composed of diverse occupational groups, hybridity tends to produce tensions that need to be resolved (Tallberg 2009).

Occupational demarcations are gendered and draw upon formal as well as symbolic boundaries in the organization. The proper place and task of particular occupational categories in an organization is no more self-evident than the proper place and task of men and women. These issues are negotiated in social relations in everyday work. An illustration is provided by Swedish organization researcher Elisabeth Sundin. In a study of how gender, technology, and occupations interact in two organizational settings, she shows how the local understanding of a technology, and which gender it should be assigned to, fundamentally changes the gender boundaries and the occupational demarcations. The technology in question is computer-aided design (CAD). In one setting, a crucial organizational boundary separated fieldwork from in-house work. The former carried a masculine connotation and the latter a feminine one. CAD was

an indoor task, thus it was perceived as women's work. In the other setting, there was a struggle between occupational groups who wanted to claim the new technology. The same technology was perceived as a professional instrument, and was understood as a technology for engineers and architects, most of whom were men (Sundin 1995).

A concept that has been used to analyse how occupational demarcations are understood and negotiated in organizations is boundary work. Boundary work targets the practices that are used to establish, challenge, or defend a professional sphere from competing interests. It highlights the flexible, pragmatic, and to some extent, arbitrary character of, for example, occupational boundaries that tend to be perceived as natural, self-evident, or universal (Fröberg 2010). The concept was first used in the sociology of science by U.S. sociologist Thomas F. Gieryn (1983, 1999), who used it to analyse the cultural cartography of science and scientists' quest for epistemic authority. Following Gieryn's theoretical construct, British sociologist Davina Allen (2000, 2001) uses boundary work in her analysis of how health care workers accomplish formal boundaries and negotiate the concrete division of labour in a district general hospital. She analyses how occupational boundaries are created in social processes in the workplace and sees the negotiation of formal and symbolic boundaries as part of everyday health-care work. Allen understands occupational jurisdiction as a practical accomplishment, and views boundary work as "micropolitical strategies through which work identities and occupational margins are negotiated" (Allen 2000, 348). However, in light of the discussion above on the inherently gendered character of occupational relations, I argue that a gender perspective needs to be included, in order to understand these strategies.

Gender, war, and the military

When it comes to war, militarization, and the military, gender relations are an "intrinsic, interwoven, inescapable part of the story" (Cockburn 2011). And yet, much research on the military tends not to acknowledge the fact that military institutions as well as military practices are deeply gendered. However, there is a growing body of research that investigates and theorizes about the intricate connections between gender and the military, from the gendered practices in specific military contexts to how

the very ideas of nations, war, and peace can be understood as gendered phenomena. This section brings together some of the important work in the area, to provide an overview of key issues and perspectives that this thesis draws upon.

In a forthcoming book on gender and military practices, British sociologist and gender scholar Jeff Hearn states that “military matters are urgent and powerful; how militaries, armies and those in them are organized and act are literally matters of life and death” (Hearn forthcoming, 67). Hearn points specifically to the enduring connection between men and the military, and the fact that many armies are made up exclusively of men and boys. The tenacious link between ideals of masculinity and the symbol of the soldier hero can be traced back through Western cultural tradition to Ancient Greece (Dawson 1994). Only in six of the nearly 200 states of the world do women make up more than five per cent of military personnel, and even then they tend to be assigned tasks traditionally perceived as feminine. If we look at designated combat forces, 99.9 per cent of the soldiers are estimated to be men (Goldstein 2001).

In terms of numbers, armies are obviously gendered. So is the very idea of the nations they are to protect. Practices of war are embedded with gender norms, in terms of gendered notions of peacekeeping, nations, and violence, as well as perceptions of men and women (Kronsell & Svedberg, forthcoming). Political science and international relations researchers state that the nation itself is based on a gendered dualism. Traditionally, women and femininity have been associated with peace, while war has been associated with men and masculinity. Swedish political science scholar Maud Eduards (2007) argues that when nations are built, women and men are traditionally assigned very different roles as citizens: women give birth to children, while men defend the nation. Women have been the symbol of the nation that the male soldiers fight to protect. This fundamental division between men and women is not mere symbolism; by Swedish conscription law, it was the duty of all men to defend women, children, and national territory in case of war as late as 2010. This does not mean that all men have been welcome to fulfil the duty to protect the nation. For example, heterosexuality has been mandatory for military men and a sexual interest in other men was grounds for discharge in Sweden as late as the 1970s (Sundevall 2011).

By the looks of things, the military is all about men. This is, however, not the case. For centuries women have played a vital (yet unrecognized) part in the military (Enloe 1983, Hacker 1981). Swedish historian Maria Sjöberg (2008) shows that women were an integral part of the military in the capacity of maids, prostitutes, and reserve labour, and as wives and children of the soldiers, from 1550 to 1850. Long before the formal restrictions against women in the military profession were abolished in Sweden in 1989, women held military employment. They were typically employed in areas such as cooking, laundry, and nursing, but they also carried weapons as air surveillance volunteer workers during the Second World War (Sundevall 2011). In general, women who work in military organizations are found outside the bounds of the military profession. In the Swedish military, women make up 40 per cent of the civilian workforce (Persson 2009).

One reason there is still a shortage of feminist analyses of war and the military is that there have been strong ties between the women's movement and the peace movement. To a great extent, the field of gender studies owes its existence to the previous generations of activists within the women's movement. Many feminist activists have also been anti-militarist activists, who were not very interested in the inclusion of women within military structures (Kronsell & Svedberg 2001, forthcoming). Rather than criticizing the pattern of excluding women from the military, they regarded the military as a patriarchal institution, and war the result of masculinist values and practices. From this point of view, there is nothing to be gained from women's inclusion in these institutions (Goldstein 2001). From a standpoint perspective, feminist anti-militarist scholars have analysed processes of gendered militarization and the connections between patriarchy and militarism (Cockburn 2011, Enloe 1983). Although these perspectives make for crucial contributions to studies of international relations, it is also relevant to problematize how they help sustain the dichotomous view of gender by reproducing the stereotype of pacifist women and war-prone men.

In spite of this legacy within gender studies, there is a growing body of feminist research on the military as a gendered and gendering institution. Portuguese sociologist Helena Carreiras (2006) states that military organizations are particularly interesting sites for feminist research, because they make up an "extreme case" of gendered organizations. She

argues that there are three important dimensions of gender that need to be considered concerning the way advantage and exploitation are structured in military organizations. First, the military is characterized by a gendered division of labour. As in organizations in general, power and opportunity are heavily gendered as masculine. In addition, women are by law excluded from key specialties and positions in many military organizations, which is rarely the case elsewhere in modern societies. Second, Carreiras underlines the overwhelming numerical dominance of men, a dominance that increases even further in positions that involve prestige, power, and high ranks. Third, the conflation between hegemonic masculine culture and ideology and the soldier makes the military an important source of normative conceptions of gender that help reproduce gender patterns in society at large.

U.S. sociologist Melissa S. Herbert (1998) analyses the social tight-rope that military women walk in their everyday work in an institution that is defined by its association with men and masculinity. She shows how women negotiate gender barriers and try to combine the demands of being a good enough soldier, while retaining just the right amount of traditionally feminine characteristics to be accepted as women military officers.

At the intersection of military studies, gender studies, and international relations, a field of research that specifically targets the connections between gender and peacekeeping is currently emerging. The importance of gender balance is often highlighted when peacekeeping missions are discussed. It is argued that the success and effectiveness of the operation is improved when the share of women increases, and that women bring unique qualities to the operation (Bridges & Horsfall 2009). A study of Dutch peacekeepers in Bosnia and Kosovo (Sion 2008, 561) shows that peacekeeping was perceived by soldiers as a feminine branch of military work, a “blurred new reality” where traditional gender patterns become fuzzy. In contradiction, others argue that peacekeeping, like military work in general, is saturated with dominant forms of masculinity that reaffirm gender demarcations at the expense of gender mainstreaming and increased equality. For example, there is a tenacious connection between peacekeepers, men, and sexual exploitation of local women (Higate 2007, Whitworth 2004).

In addition, Resolution 1325 and the struggle concerning gender mainstreaming is an important theme in research on gender and peacekeeping operations. When the UN Security Council resolution was first adopted in 2000, British defence researcher Susan Willett relates that its passage was initially celebrated by feminist activists and gender scholars as a victory. Ten years on, she states that the resolution is more of a rhetorical than a practical commitment, and that women “remain excluded from formal peace negotiations and [are] marginalized from the decision-making processes that reconstruct their future” (Willett 2010, 156–157). This, Willett argues, is a result of the dominant epistemology of masculinity, militarism, and war, into which the idea of gender mainstreaming has been submerged. This is further complicated by the tendency to essentialize women’s contributions to peacekeeping operations, thereby reinforcing a binary understanding of gender (Carreiras 2010, Valenius 2007).

Theoretical perspectives and analytical tools

From the previous research presented above, I make use of a number of concepts and theories to carve out a theoretical framework that guides the analysis. As described, the doing gender approach is fundamental. The focus on gender as practice is the theoretical perspective that brings together all of the articles in my study, but the practices approach reaches beyond a focus on gender. The thesis analyses not only how gender is done in the military related to women/femininities and men/masculinities, but also how gender is done in relation to the doing of occupational relations. Rather than stable, homogeneous, or essential categories, I consider gender, masculinities, and occupational relations to be recurring accomplishments, embedded in everyday interactions. This perspective allows for plurality and variation, and captures the paradox of simultaneously changing and defending established organizational boundaries.

As stated above, three research questions guide the analysis. The first, which asks how established ways of doing gender in the organization are challenged and/or reproduced in military practices, is addressed in all four articles. Based on the interviews with senior women officers, I discuss whether and how gender relations have changed since the inclusion of women in the military profession in the 1980s. Gender relations and gender boundaries are important concepts, for example, when analys-

ing situations where the officers relate that gender boundaries have been negotiated, challenged, or reproduced. The second article, based on interviews with Headquarters members, attends to gender boundaries in a different form, which I will elaborate on shortly. The final two articles discuss the practising of gender in an international service unit. Article three employs a doing gender approach in order to shed light on the contradictory ways in which gender relations are practised in the unit. Article four zooms in on how masculinity is done in the context of one specific exercise, where the soldiers are exposed to pepper spray. This turned out to be a critical incident in the making of military men in the unit. Repair work is developed into a concept that helps understand the soldiers' struggle to deal with the unintended side effects of pepper spray. In addition to repair work, the connections between homosociality and heterosexuality, and how they shape the doing of masculinity, is a pivotal part of the analysis.

The second question addresses the focus on peacekeeping and how it shapes gender relations in military work in terms of producing new gender boundaries, meanings, and interactions, and is taken up in articles two and three. In the second article, the transformation is discussed from the point of view of those who are involved in it at the Armed Forces Headquarters. Informed by feminist organization studies, the concept of boundary work makes up the key analytical tool for analysing how informants either maintain or deconstruct gender boundaries against the backdrop of the organizational transformation. The third article shifts the focus from the Headquarters office desks to the muddy terrain of the international service unit that in a sense embodies the "New Armed Forces" described by the Headquarters informants. Based on ethnographic observation, the concept of ordering practices is used to analyse how gender patterns are shaped in a peacekeeping unit.

The final research question, which concerns how organizational boundaries are maintained or deconstructed in organizational practices, and how gender relations intersect with occupational relations, is the focus of the second article. The concept of boundary work is developed into a tool that can account for intersecting sets of social relations. In the analysis of the Headquarters interviews, I attend to gender relations as well as occupational relations, and how the interviewees work to either

maintain or deconstruct organizational boundaries between civilians and military officers as well as between men and women.

Before the analytical tools are put to work when the four articles are presented, I describe how the empirical studies were conducted and discuss the important methodological issues related to them.

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I present the empirical studies that form the basis of the thesis and reflect upon key methodological questions related to conducting the research. First, I describe how each of the three empirical studies was carried out. Next, I attend to the methodological discussions that could not be squeezed into the article format, such as the implications of conducting interviews and ethnographic observation. In addition, I discuss the methodological issues that cut across the empirical studies, such as ethics, the role of the researcher, and how I conducted the analytical work. A table presenting the aim, methodology, analytical tools, and material of the empirical studies and the four articles is presented on the following page to provide an overview.

Conducting the studies

The first interview study

The first round of empirical work was carried out in 2003. It consisted of interviews with eight women officers, and focused on their experiences of gendered working conditions in the Swedish Armed Forces. The study was conducted in a research collaboration between the National Institute for Working Life in Sweden and the Swedish National Defence College.² The initial aim was to analyse how gender relations in the Swedish Armed Forces had been influenced by women's entry into the organization. The officers interviewed had spent an extensive period of time working in the military, 15–20 years. This means that they belong to the very

²At that time, this work had not yet taken on the form of a doctoral dissertation project. The interview study was designed by Lena Pettersson at the National Institute for Working Life, Anders W. Berggren at the Swedish National Defence College, and myself. Together with Lena Pettersson, I conducted four of the interviews. The other four were conducted by Anders W. Berggren. After all interviews had been transcribed, Lena Pettersson and I analysed the material and we wrote the article together.

	Article 1	Article 2	Article 3	Article 4
Title	“Changing gender relations”	“Soldiers and secretaries”	“Framåt gubbar!”	“An unintended side effect of pepper spray.”
Journal & publication year	<i>Economic and Industrial Democracy</i> (2008)	<i>Scandinavian Journal of Management</i> (2010)	<i>Tidskrift för genusvetenskap</i> (2010)	<i>Men and Masculinities</i> (under review)
Method	Based on the first interview study	Based on the second interview study	Based on the ethnographic study	Based on the ethnographic study
Aim	Explore the dynamics of changing and reproducing gender relations	Show how gendered occupational boundaries are drawn and redrawn in the Armed Forces	Discuss ordering practices in a military unit, and the gender patterns they create	Show how military men are done and undone during an intense pepper spray exercise
Key analytical concepts	Gender relations, change, gender boundaries	Boundary work, gender relations, occupational relations	Ordering practices, doing gender	Repair work, homosociality, compulsory heterosexuality
Empirical material	Interviews with eight women officers	Interviews with eight members of the Armed Forces Headquarters	Fieldnotes from five weeks of observation with an international service unit	Fieldnotes from five weeks of observation with an international service unit

Table 1 Overview of the empirical studies and the articles

first generation of women who entered the military profession, and they ranked from captain to major. Half of the interviewees were Army officers, half Air Force officers. At the time of the interview, they were attending training programmes for promotion at the National Defence College.

The interviews were semi-structured and guided by a number of key themes. The women officers’ views on gender equality and affirmative action were addressed, as well as gendered career obstacles and opportunities and the characteristics of a good, and not so good, workplace in the organization. The interviews were conducted at the National Defence College. They lasted between one and two hours, were tape recorded, and transcribed in full. For ethical reasons, and due to the high degree of visibility of women at this level in the organization, sensitive material has

been left out to avoid the risk that any interviewee might be identified. These decisions were discussed with the informants, and they have all approved of the quotes selected from their particular interviews.

When the study was designed in collaboration with the National Defence College, a starting point was that diverse experiences and opinions were to be represented in the material. From that criterion, research colleagues at the Swedish National Defence College made a selection of informants. Four of the officers had publicly (in internal documents, personnel magazines, etc.) expressed their positive experiences of being women in the military profession. The remaining four had, in similar arenas, criticized women officers' unequal opportunities in the organization. The choices made when selecting the informants were connected to an interest in the reproduction and change of established gender relations. By selecting officers who publicly supported the prevailing gender relations of the organization as well as officers who publicly criticized them, the dynamics of negotiating gender boundaries were made visible.

There are some methodological limitations to this approach. In the article based on this study, the selection of informants was discussed briefly in relation to the non-random sample of interviewees. It is likely that a random selection would have provided a different set of empirical material and that the dualism of positive and critical voices was reinforced as a result of the selection. However, it provided an interesting look into the range of perspectives, experiences, and voices that can be found among women officers in the organization. Therefore, I consider the selection to carry limitations as well as benefits for the analysis.

In retrospect, I find that the analysis could have benefited from a critical discussion of the implications of time, and what it means to analyse memories of events dating back some 20 years. What the interviewees remember is important; they remember these situations and feelings for a reason, but what they remember, and how, is affected by the time that has passed. A critical methodological reflection concerning memories and how the officers constructed their past and presented themselves in the interviews would most certainly have been beneficial.

Another methodological limitation that is not problematized in the article is the choice of interviewing only women. This means that an important aspect of gender relations goes unexplored, and that the change

that the women have undergone cannot be mirrored by the possible changes of their male peers. This insight has been important when designing the studies that followed, where themes such as gender relations and military men are explored in both an empirical and a theoretical sense.

After having analysed the material from the first interview study, we were left with a number of unanswered questions. What does the talk about a “New Armed Forces” mean for the gender relations in the organization? How can we understand and theorize upon the relationship between gender and the military/civilian-categories? And what about the men in the organization, both military and civilian? These questions guided the design of the second interview study.

The second interview study

The second round of empirical work started from the question of how the on-going transformation of the Swedish Armed Forces might reshape relations of gender as well as occupation. In an organization that is often inaccessible, constantly changing, and difficult to overlook, finding the right place to begin my research was a challenge. The decision was made to start in the Headquarters and interview some of the people who were involved in the organizational transformation on a strategic level. Researchers within the National Defence College helped to establish contact with a number of key actors who could help shed light on the ongoing structural transformation of the Armed Forces. The overall transformation of the organization’s primary purpose, from an invasion-based defence where the main task of the military was to defend the nation’s borders against armed attack to participation in international peacekeeping operations, constitutes a starting point for the study. Alongside the transition from an “old” invasion-based defence organization to a “New Armed Forces”, the organizational relations connected to gender as well as to occupations were changing, too.

The informants were selected from the strategic level of the Armed Forces Headquarters. The primary criterion for selection was that they were, in different ways, part of the ongoing transformation. Some represented different occupational groups, others were past or present members of the highest executive group, and others still were specialists working

with gender equality, recruitment, or human relations. In total, nine informants participated in the study. Four interviewees were men and five were women. Four of the persons interviewed were professional officers (although not all were presently employed in a military position). Eight persons held civilian positions at the time of the interview.

I met with the informants at their offices. Each interview lasted between 90 minutes and two hours, was digitally recorded, and transcribed in full. In the interviews, I was interested in how they described the ongoing transformation of the organization, as well as how they experienced the organizational relations in the Armed Forces on a more personal level. Since they worked in very different contexts, I chose not to use a detailed standardized interview guide for all interviews. Instead, I presented my main interest at the start of the interview and then let the interviewee shape the direction of the interview. I did, however, keep a short list of themes that I wanted covered. These themes concerned the overall changes in the Armed Forces and the informant's views on patterns of gender and occupational relations in the organization and the future of these relations. The interviews often became a mix of, on the one hand, more "official" accounts that very much resembled (sometimes almost verbatim) phrases from the gender equality policy or directives of the Supreme Commander, and on the other hand, highly personal experiences and reflections of, for example, sexual harassment or discrimination.

For ethical reasons and due to their visibility in the organization as well as their degree of specialization, detailed descriptions of the informants are not included in the article. To further protect the anonymity of the interviewees, they have all read and approved of the quotes selected from their interviews.

In the second study, one of the important delimitations was to focus on interviews, rather than, for example, documents. Documents, such as gender equality policies and key political documents, like Resolution 1325, are included in the empirical material, but a systematic document analysis has not been conducted. Such an approach would certainly provide an interesting comparison to the interviews, where more "formal" accounts and regulations could be contrasted to the fuzzy, arbitrary, and contradictory practices that are accentuated in the interviews. However, I chose to limit the empirical material to interviews, since I found this ma-

terial to be better suited for understanding how gender and occupation are made sense of and how they intersect in everyday work.

A number of questions emerged in the course of the second interview study that motivated further research. How were the issues and goals discussed by the strategic actors understood and implemented in the everyday work of soldiers? Considering these questions, I found the international service to be an ideal site for the final study. Here, Resolution 1325 was a matter of everyday military work, and there were increasingly high demands to recruit more women in all positions and ranks. This time, the research questions required a different set of methodological tools than interviews.

The ethnographic study

In the final empirical study, interviews were replaced by an ethnographic approach, to account for the complexities and nuances of everyday military work. I joined a Swedish Armed Forces international service unit for their final five weeks of training before being deployed. I was interested in several aspects of military work, such as gender relations and the changing nature of the soldier occupation, but had not predetermined any specific research questions. Throughout the course of the fieldwork, more specified research questions were developed.

When I started my attempts to find a unit to follow, a few criteria were crucial. I needed an international service unit whose commander would grant me full access during the final phase of training when the whole unit was gathered in one place. In addition, it was important that their deployment fitted my schedule, to make intense fieldwork possible. Again, colleagues at the National Defence College helped establish the initial contact with a commanding officer, who then granted me full access to the unit, including a personal entry card that allowed me to move freely within the regiment around the clock. This enabled me to participate in the wide range of activities that make up everyday life in a military unit: outdoor pancake and pea soup lunches, lectures, exercises at the shooting range, pastime in the lodgings, strenuous exercises, and so on.

The selected unit was made up of approximately 250 people, divided into two subunits: the rifle unit and the support unit. The rifle unit was made up of five rifle platoons. The support unit was focused on logistics,

and holds medical, personnel, and support staff. All members of the rifle unit had completed conscription, that is, military service. All commanders, from deputy platoon commanders and higher, were military officers. Some members of the support unit were military officers, as well; others had employment outside of the military (as truck drivers, police officers, or administrators) from which they took a leave of absence to be part of the peacekeeping mission. The support unit staff with the least military experience had undergone a shorter military training adapted for international service. All members of the unit were labelled “soldiers” during their time in the unit. About five per cent of the soldiers were women, none of whom held a commanding position.

The empirical data collected consist of observations of everyday work and life at the unit, conversations, and spontaneous, unstructured interviews with the unit members. In order to get the broadest possible view of the field, I tried to spend time with different members of the unit, women and men, soldiers and commanders, members of the rifle unit and the support unit. In total, I spent approximately 150 hours observing everyday activities in the unit. Many of these hours were spent watching the soldiers exercise, in situations where all I could do was watch, at the shooting range, during lectures, physical training, etc. In addition, I had countless conversations, ranging from a good-morning chat on the bus to conversations with a group of soldiers in the break during an exercise, and a number of scheduled one-on-one interviews of an informal character. I also intended to include focus group interviews in the material, but this turned out to be problematic, for practical reasons.

During the day, I continuously made quick and sketchy notes of conversations, exercises, and ideas to explore in the analysis later on. Every now and then, and whenever a situation that I considered crucial occurred, I tried to step aside to write down verbatim sentences to include in the fieldnotes. At night, I developed these jottings into more elaborate fieldnotes that included reflections about my impressions, feelings, and ideas for further observations. In the articles, excerpts from the fieldnotes are edited for clarity. Quotations within excerpts and in running text are verbatim accounts. For ethical reasons, I do not state when the study was conducted or what destination the soldiers were heading for. Further considerations on ethics, anonymity, and consent are discussed below.

The most important delimitation in the third study is the form of military work that was observed, that is, a military unit in the final stages of training. I did not spend time with them at camp after they went abroad. Joining a military unit in a conflict area might have been possible, but it would have required great efforts to acquire permission from the authorities, and it is likely that this process would have delayed the project substantially. In addition, discussions with members of the unit studied made apparent that the camp environment abroad is restricted in a way that makes it difficult to conduct observations. Observations outside of the camp would likely require armed military personnel, meaning that what I would actually be observing is their job of protecting me. Therefore, it was decided that to study a unit in the final steps of training would be more practical, while also facilitating a more flexible research process where military practices could be observed.

Interviewing

Research interviews come in all shapes and sizes. They range from unstructured, narrative, and open-ended conversations to structured, survey-like ones. They can be carried out in great numbers and follow a strict interview guide, or be used in smaller scale with in-depth accounts of a few informants, with one or a few open questions. Furthermore, interviews can be one-on-one encounters or different kinds of group sessions. A common feature that applies to most of these forms of interviews is that they are all interactional and suitable for the exploration of opinions, experiences, and emotions (Denscombe 2007).

In the thesis at hand, interviews have been a very important source of empirical material. Two of the studies are based primarily on qualitative in-depth interviews. In addition, there are a number of interview-like conversations in the ethnographic material. These have not been recorded and transcribed, but are documented in the fieldnotes. In the two interview studies, the interviews differ in important ways. In total, 17 in-depth interviews were conducted. Nine of them were conducted solely by me, four were carried out in pairs with a colleague, and four were done by a colleague only. All of these interviews were recorded and transcribed in full. This means that in four cases, I have analysed the material based only on the transcripts. To handle this limitation, the three of us discussed

the interviews together and shared the recordings, so that we could all listen to each other's interviews. However, the forms of communication that were not caught on tape (looks, gestures, etc.) remained unavailable to me. Another methodological issue in the first interview study is, of course, the interviewers. Interviews are interactional, and the interviewer shapes the situation, together with the informant. In this case, four interviews were carried out by two women researchers, and four by one male researcher. In the analytical process, we tried to be perceptive of the potential implications of the different interviewers.

I have worked with a loosely structured form of in-depth interviews, aiming to keep the interviews open and leaving space for interviewees to influence their direction (Kvale 1997). Depending on the individual interviewees' experiences, interests, and personalities, the character of the interviews changed as well. Rather than a list of predetermined questions, an interview guide of themes that I wanted covered was used, including questions that might be interesting in relation to each theme. That way, I felt free to let the conversation take its course, and at the end I could take a minute to make sure that the themes had been covered along the way.

When I first started conducting interviews as an undergraduate student, my understanding of this form of research was that I was supposed to somehow compile the "true" views of the interviewee. Therefore, I was careful not to interfere with or affect their stories in any way. At this point, I was influenced by the conventional approach to interviewing that urges the interviewer to minimize his or her effects on the situation, in order to limit the distortions that can come out of the interactions between informant and interviewer. From such a perspective, the interview is understood as a "pipeline for transmitting knowledge" (Holstein & Gubrium 1997, 113).

When doing interviews for this thesis, I moved from this view towards one where truth was not the object of inquiry and where my influence on the situation was inevitable and even productive. U.S. sociologists James A. Holstein and Jaber F. Gubrium (1997) describes this as a form of "active interviewing". From such a methodological standpoint, interviewing becomes a reflexive practice where interviewer and interviewee both contribute to the knowledge production. Informants are not viewed as vessels of knowledge for the researcher to tap into. Rather, they construct knowledge in collaboration with the researcher. From the point

of view of an active interviewer, the interview is not about asking a predetermined set of questions in the most neutral way possible. Instead, it can be highly productive to confront the informant with alternative views that he or she can respond to. For example, when a woman officer firmly stated that she had never witnessed a single case of sexual harassment in 20 years, I might mention a story told by another informant whose experience was very different, or the statistics of sexual harassment in the organization. Rather than a simple “no, nothing like that has ever happened to me”, a rich material emerged that included a number of sexual and/or violent situations that the informant was eager to make sense of as something other than sexual harassment.

Looking back at the research process, I find that some of the most interesting material has come out of a discussion between me and an interviewee. In some cases I have mentioned that the informant said one thing at the start of the interview, and one hour later said the opposite. In these cases, the interviewee often ended up saying, “I have never thought of it that way before. But when you say it like that, I did use that word and that must mean that I actually....” Then the interviewee says something that she has never thought of before, that has come out of the situated interaction with the interviewer. It is almost as if she begins to analyse her own interview in the research situation.

Ethnography

Ethnographic fieldwork constitutes an expanding and increasingly diverse range of qualitative methodologies, traditionally associated with anthropology, but frequently used also in sociology, organization studies, and gender studies, for example (Ambjörnsson 2004, Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, Neyland 2007). In this section, I will elaborate on some key issues related to the ethnographic study described above, and expand on reflections associated with it.

When an ethnographic approach is employed, participant observation is usually the primary, although not necessarily the only, form of data collection. These observations are typically carried out “in the field” as informants go about their daily business, rather than in situations constructed specifically for the purpose of research. Ethnographic studies tend to be small scale and carried out in a specific, limited context, to facili-

tate an in-depth, situated account of interactions, meanings, and practices. The research process is often fairly unstructured, meaning that the design and focus can evolve and be refined as the work progresses (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007).

In the case of this study, all these characteristics of ethnography apply. I conducted five weeks of participant observation in one specific military unit, approximately 150 hours, as the soldiers prepared for an international peacekeeping mission. The design of the ethnography was emergent, meaning that I entered the field with a general interest in a number of themes, while trying to maintain an open mind and allow the project to develop throughout the research process. Participant observation, along with informal and unstructured interviews, generated the most part of the data.

As a participant observer, I followed the unit through their daily life at the training site. The emphasis shifted back and forth, from participant to observer, depending on the situation. In many of the activities, I was limited to simply observing their work. I often found myself longing for the undisturbed conversations of interviews. Instead, there were mostly short talks in between shooting drills, passing remarks, and exercises where I had to keep my distance for safety reasons. The shooting range is no place for uninterrupted conversations, and neither is an exercise in riot control where Molotov cocktails are surging through the air. At these times, all I could do was watch passively and make notes. A lot of the time, however, I was an active participant. At lunches, during breaks, and at night in the café, I socialized—discussed the recent exercise, the future of the Swedish military, or a recent episode of a popular sitcom like all the other soldiers. On some occasions, when I was alone with one or two members of the unit, spontaneous conversations arose and I became more of an interviewer.

I often felt that I was perceived as an elusive character in the military environment. Considering the fact that I was often the only person dressed in something other than green camouflage, it should come as no surprise that my fieldnotes from the first few days have a number of entries about my feeling like an alien, an intruder, and an outsider. Looking back, it is apparent that my interactions with the informants were shaped by the way I was perceived in that particular situation. This also shows that there is a connection between the ways informants define the re-

searcher and the forms of interaction that take place during fieldwork (Agar 1996). Some of the unit members thought of me as a bit of an organization evaluator, and took the chance to tell me what was wrong with the military these days. Others perceived of me primarily as a woman, referring to me as “the lady”, pulling out chairs, and so on. Some seemed to find amusement in testing how much sexualized joking and explicit jargon I could handle. Others still, mainly women soldiers, took the chance to confide in me and air some frustrations regarding military macho culture. These different ways of making sense of my presence provided me with very different data: sex jokes mixed with dysfunctional aspects of the military organization and emotional stories of sexual harassment.

An important issue related to ethnography is how to document observations in a systematic, yet quick and unobtrusive way that does not interfere with the situation. In ethnographic work, the process of turning the messy, unfinished, selective traces of one’s lived experience into written text is a pivotal process (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw 1995). Researchers seem reluctant to describe it in the same detail as other methodological aspects. Maybe it feels a bit too personal, too flawed, or simply too mundane to reflect upon.

Like most observers, my fieldnote writing routine was based on continuous jotting down of phrases, situations, and ideas. Because I consider words to be important, I tried to write down verbatim accounts right away when a situation appeared that I found especially important. I often stepped aside for a minute to do so, when we were at lunch or in field training situations where a notebook would be a potential disturbance. At lectures or at meetings, it was, of course, easier to take notes. Every night, I spent at least an hour or two writing full fieldnotes based on the scribbles of the day. On a few occasions this routine failed, since I was too exhausted after a long day to even think about starting up my computer. I quickly learned, however, that it was hard to catch up, once material had started to accumulate, and that memory fades surprisingly fast.

In the fieldnotes, I elaborated on descriptions of the particular exercises, situations, actions, and conversations that had taken place. In addition, I made notes of my reflections and feelings connected to the fieldwork, that I was frustrated because I felt like such an alien, that the observation work was exhausting, that I was confused by some of the cultural

codes and, eventually, that I felt that I was no longer seeing anything interesting, surprising, or “new”, because I was becoming so familiar with the environment. In the fieldnotes, I also included things I found surprising, or that I did not understand and needed to follow up on the next day. Almost every day, I thought of potential themes for analysis and entered them into the fieldnotes as well.

When doing participant observation, it is important to remain open to what is happening and try to not to take things for granted. I tried to give the military unit “the traditional ethnographic treatment of strangeness” (Neyland 2007). Considering the fact that I did not understand what people were saying during the first few days, due to the use of military terminology and abbreviations, this was not a big challenge. As the work progressed, it became apparent that the number of things that were going on always exceeded my ability to see, hear, and remember. In the myriad of activities, it was necessary to reflect upon what caught my attention and why. As a researcher, I tried to observe that which was most relevant to my research focus, while also paying attention to things that at first glance seemed irrelevant or difficult to make sense of. Considering my research interests, it comes as no surprise that certain things were quick to catch my eye. Comments and conversations on gender, what men and women are like, gender equality, Resolution 1325, and affirmative action were crucial. In addition, material that relates to organizational change, the “New Armed Forces”, and being a soldier in the international service were topics of particular interest to me. So were accounts of sexualized jargon, jokes, and views on sexuality. These were often the times when I stepped aside to make verbatim notes or write down questions to elaborate on later. However, I tried hard to also make notes of things I did not find very interesting at first glance, and to include accounts of things I did not understand.

Another key aspect of ethnographic work is the ways in which informants define, redefine, and react to the researcher subject, and how the empirical work is shaped by these processes (Agar 1996). Since this is an important topic that reaches beyond the scope of ethnography, I will explore it in relation to both observations and interviews in the following section.

The researcher self

A methodological aspect that I have always found fascinating is what the researcher self means in different parts of the research process (Coffey 1999). Time and time again, the empirical work has reminded me that it matters who is acting the part of the researcher. Therefore, I have tried to be very attentive to my own ways of being, in fieldwork as well as in interviews, and make notes of situations where I have felt a need to reflect upon my own role as a researcher.

In methodology, this is often referred to as the “interviewer effect” or the “observer effect” (Denscombe 2007, Spano 2006). The idea is that “the data ... are affected by the personal identity of the researcher” (Denscombe 2007, 184). I do not particularly care for this terminology, as it suggests that the purity of a situation is somehow affected, contaminated, or distorted by the presence of a researcher. In the previous discussion of active interviewing, I argued in favour of research as a relational process, where each interview and observation takes form through the interaction between the researcher and the informants. There is no outside position from which I can passively watch and record what is going on without having an “effect” on the situation. Furthermore, a great deal of interesting material has come out of situations where I am, so to speak, pulled in by an informant.

In interviews, the interviewer can try to create a specific climate, or establish a certain type of relationship with the interviewee. But the personal characteristics of the interviewer are difficult to escape, and the researcher self plays an important part in shaping the situation. The age, sex, skin colour, and countless other characteristics affect the relationship that is established in each particular interview, and ultimately shapes the material that comes out of it (Letherby 2003). The first face-to-face encounters with informants were very different. In some interviews, a warm and welcoming atmosphere was instantly established. At other times, the interviewee was initially reserved, and I found myself being slightly chattier in order to overcome the awkward first few minutes. In some of the Headquarters interviews, the physical space of some of the Headquarters offices seemed to inspire quite a formal approach, and in those cases I could feel that I needed to overcome the age gap between me and the

senior executive in military uniform by assuming a more formal approach.

An important aspect of doing qualitative research like interviews and ethnographies is the power asymmetries that can emerge from the research situation. These approaches are often depicted as egalitarian and emancipatory, but they do harbour potentially exploitative elements (Burman 1997, Stacey 1988). Interviews can be oppressive situations where the interviewer is in control, and researchers can exploit the trust of interviewees who are lured by the intimate atmosphere of one-on-one conversations (Kvale 2006). Though this is a pressing methodological and ethical issue, I often felt that the tables were turned in that respect, particularly in the second interview study. In some of the interviews, I was working quite hard to overcome the inferior position that my age, gender, and lack of military experience produced. I was asked what the “essay” was about, when I was going to graduate, how old I was, and so on. As an interviewer, I have often considered my outsider position to be an advantage that allows me to be naïve and have seemingly simple things explained to me in detail by the interviewees. In the interviews where I was perceived as a young girl writing some essay for school, I had to assume quite the opposite approach and emphasize the number of interviews I had conducted or use abbreviations and terminology that showed I was familiar with the military.

As a woman interested in feminist epistemologies, studying the military, I was constantly reminded that gender matters in every part of the research process (Ramazanoglu & Holland 2002). This was perhaps most obvious in the ethnographic study where the most prominent feature of my researcher self was undoubtedly my gender. From the very first day, it became apparent that gender was done not only between members of the unit but also in relation to me as a researcher. In a male-dominated setting such as a military unit, it mattered that I was not one of the guys. Had I been a man, employing the same methodological and theoretical approach, I am convinced that the reactions would have been very different. Nonetheless, they would have provided important insights into gendered practices in the military context.

At times, being a woman resulted in quite old-fashioned expressions of gentleman-like behaviour: pulling out chairs, opening doors, calling me “lady”, and so on. On other occasions, my gender inspired a very different

set of behaviours. For example, on my last day of fieldwork, one of the commanders (jokingly, I assumed) offered to “oil up” some of the soldiers and have them dance for me as a farewell ceremony. This can be interpreted as a response to the presence of a researcher in the form of a “staged performance” (Monahan & Fisher 2010), but nonetheless provides important insights into the gendered and sexualized characteristics of this social setting. On some occasions, I had a feeling that some soldiers wanted to test me, the way they did their women colleagues, by firing off one explicit sex joke after the other, while paying close attention to the expression on my face. Describing this as an “observer effect”, I find, does not do the situation justice. Instead, I devoted sections of the fieldnotes to this kind of behaviour, and included it into the analysis as ways of doing gender.

The analytical process

Once the empirical work was done, interviews transcribed, and fieldnotes compiled, the important work of systematically analysing and writing remained. The amount of time and effort that goes into analysing, writing, and rewriting tends to be underestimated and, so to speak, under-analysed. Once the product is finished, it can be difficult to account for all the steps, choices and impromptu ideas that have taken place in the course of “writing up”. However, reflecting on the analytical process is pivotal, and this section aims to describe the analytical strategies that were employed when working with the empirical material.

For me, the first step has always been to assemble all of the material and conduct a first, concentrated read-through. In this first step, the primary purpose was to get an overview of the material. In the interview studies, I proceeded to work on one interview at a time. Inspired by Swedish sociologist Boel Berner (2005), a form of coding technique was developed. I read each section of fieldnotes or interviews and asked questions about what was happening, what it meant, and what concepts or categories could be used to make sense of it. I employed a thematic approach, an analytical strategy for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes in the empirical material. From a thematic analysis, patterns (themes) that captured something important in the data related to the research questions were carved out (Braun & Clarke 2006).

It is notoriously difficult to pin down why one finds a certain theme to be “important”. Oftentimes, it is about prevalence; a certain issue keeps appearing in most or even all of the interviews. In the case of the first interview study, change was a theme that appeared over and over again and called for attention. It can also be about a single word that stands out or is somewhat puzzling, like the “double fault” that became a fundamental theme in the second interview study. It can also be a situation where something critical seems to be at stake, like the pepper spray exercise in the ethnographic study. Through the analytical process, I employed a number of more systematic techniques to identify themes: repetition, similarities/differences, and theory-related material (Ryan & Bernard 2003). Repetition captures the most prevalent accounts, while the similarities/differences approach aims to systematize dominant views on, for example, men and women, as well as contradicting ones. The theory-related strategy draws on the theoretical concepts that frame the analysis, for example, boundary work.

Throughout the research process it is important to be open to surprises. Things that are puzzling or difficult to grasp, or seem like anomalies, often hold important keys to understanding the research context (Berner 2005). Being perceptive of things you do not expect to find can trigger pivotal analytical trails. In the study at hand, there were several surprises that turned out to be crucial. One was the fluidity of the occupational system in the Armed Forces Headquarters. Going into the second interview study, my preconception was that the military was a clearly defined system of rank, jurisdiction, and occupational demarcation. Positions were either military or civilian, I thought. Early on, I came upon the term “independent positions”, which challenged this understanding. Throughout the interviews, I kept asking what these positions were and what formal regulation surrounded them. It turned out that every informant had a different idea of what these positions were, and indeed, whether they existed or not. This became an important analytical theme, and one that led me to the theoretical concept of boundary work.

In the study at hand, a few of the themes were there from the very beginning of the analytical work, based on the research questions and the ideas that came up during the interviews. Most themes, however, come out of the repeated reading of the interview transcripts and fieldnotes. “Gender boundaries”, “Metaphors”, “Gender equality”, and “The New

Armed Forces” are examples of themes from the interviews. Each theme was indicated with a different coloured highlighting pen. At the end of the interview, I summarized the main content, questions to look for in other interviews, and potentially interesting analytical points. In the case of the ethnographic study, a memo of each theme was written, including a short description of each note from the fieldnotes and the page it was from. From the beginning there were ten themes, for example, “Being a soldier”, “Sexual harassment”, and “Resolution 1325”. One theme was dedicated to methodological issues, including my own feelings and thoughts on doing fieldwork. The scope of the themes ranged from a few entries to several pages.

Once the interviews or fieldnotes were analysed and sorted into a manageable number of themes, I started working on one theme at a time, either by making mind maps or by writing memos. In this phase, it was apparent that writing and thinking are inseparable activities. Writing is the most important way of knowing (Richardson & St. Pierre 2005). In the course of writing and rewriting, ideas appear, arguments are refined, and analytical points eventually emerge. In the writing process, I continuously refined the themes in the “double-fitting” manner of manufacturing the key and the keyhole at the same time (Berner 2005, 140). Through this back-and-forth process, theoretical insights and empirical material merged into an increasingly coherent and abstract analysis.

Ethical considerations

Throughout the research process, from the initial design of the study to its published outcome, the researcher is faced with ethical considerations and decisions. In this section, I discuss some of the important measures that I have taken to handle potential power asymmetries, assure the well-being of the participants, and follow good research practice in general.

According to good research practice, researchers are to pay particular attention to four ethical aspects, in order to protect the health and integrity of participants: information, consent, confidentiality, and use of the material (Vetenskapsrådet 2002). Information and consent are very different issues in the three studies. When I conducted interview studies, I contacted each of the informants and asked if they were interested in participating. I included a description of the project in the letter, and en-

couraged them to contact me if they had any further questions. At the start of the interview, I repeated this description, asked if they had any questions, and made sure they gave consent to their participation. I also underlined that they were free to withdraw that consent at any time, either to leave the interview altogether or to choose not to answer any particular question.

In the ethnographic study, meeting these ethical standards was a lot more complicated. When I discussed my study with members of the unit before and during fieldwork, I provided rather brief descriptions of my research interests. This was partly because I wanted to keep an open mind and be prepared for unexpected phenomena that might emerge from the observations and turn out to be surprising and important. In addition, I hoped that this approach would reduce the risk of informants reacting against, or overly complying with, what they thought I wanted to hear. Therefore, the information provided beforehand was a lot more vague than before the interviews.

It was impossible to inform everyone I came into contact with about the details of my work. The unit was made up of 250 people. In addition, other units were in the same training site, and sometimes soldiers at these units sat with us at lunch or in the café at night. There were also instructors who were part of the training, sometimes for a few hours and sometimes for weeks. I tried to make sure that everyone I met understood that I was a researcher, and that it was their choice whether they talked to me or not. Even that turned out to be a difficult task, and halfway through the fieldwork, some soldiers still thought that I was a nurse, a reporter, or an evaluator from the Headquarters. Since the individual soldiers had no choice in my being there, I tried to make sure that they knew they could always choose not to actively participate. In some situations, I felt that I was not welcome, but that the soldiers were too polite to ask me to leave. At those times, I was careful not to insist.

Considering the ethical difficulties related to the ethnographic study, I found confidentiality to be of great importance. In the case of the ethnography, I do not disclose the destination of the unit or the year of their training. In addition, I am deliberately vague about rank and other personal characteristics that could identify an individual member of the unit. Therefore, when I quote a “male commander”, the individual is one of countless potential informants.

When it comes to confidentiality, I have found interviews to be much more problematic. In both interview studies, individuals could be recognized by someone familiar with the organization, based only on a specific story that he or she told in the interview. In the case of the women officers, this is because of their seniority and pioneer status in the officer profession. In the early years that they described, the number of women was so low that they were known throughout the organization. This problem has been addressed by discussing the excerpts from each interview with the informants. They have been free to remove excerpts, in part or in full, whenever they found that they were too easily recognized or the material was potentially sensitive. This turned out to be the case in several interviews, and all of the excerpts included in the article have been approved by the interviewees.

In the Headquarters study, I employed the same approach. In this case, the informants were often well known and visible in the organization and they were employed in positions that make them easy to identify. Therefore, I decided to include only very brief information about the informants, both in general and in relation to each excerpt. In some cases, I felt that I could only reveal one out of the two important characteristics of gender and occupational category. For instance, I could state that the interviewee was a woman, but if I had added that she was a military officer she would become too easily identifiable. The descriptions as well as the excerpts were discussed with the informants, and they approved of them.

I have assured informants that the empirical material would not be used for any other purpose than research. Whenever someone other than myself (and in the case of the first interview study, my research colleagues) has seen parts of the transcripts, names and characteristics have been removed beforehand. In addition, I have stored the recorded and printed material in a locked cupboard, and electronic material in password-protected computers. When interviewees have asked to see their transcripts or read the finished article or thesis, I have sent it to them and encouraged them to reflect and comment on the texts.

ARTICLE SUMMARIES

In this chapter, I present a summary of each of the articles.³ First, I present the article “Changing Gender Relations”, which is based on the first interview study with women officers and discusses how gender relations have changed since the inclusion of women in the military profession. Next, boundaries of gender and occupation on the strategic level of the Armed Forces Headquarters are focused in “Soldiers and Secretaries”, based on the second interview study. The last two articles are both based on the ethnographic study. Gender relations in the international service unit are discussed in the article “Framåt gubbar!” (translated as “Forward, Men!”). The concluding article, “An Unintended Side Effect of Pepper Spray”, takes a close look at a dramatic military exercise that raised questions of what it means to be a military man, how the brotherhood of soldiers is formed, and how their homosocial camaraderie is constrained by heterosexual ideals.

Changing gender relations

The article “Changing Gender Relations: Women Officers’ Experiences from the Swedish Armed Forces” was published in *Economic and Industrial Democracy* in 2008 (with co-authors Lena Pettersson and Anders W. Berggren). The article aims to explore the dynamics of gender and the simultaneous processes of change and reproduction of established gender relations. Change is discussed both in relation to the organizational transformations that have taken place since the inclusion of women in the military profession, and in terms of changing views on gender among the officers interviewed. The article asks what gendered conditions are considered important to challenge, and what resources the women officers draw upon in order to renegotiate and change established gender relations.

The article is informed by research on gendered organizations, particularly in male-dominated organizations and occupations. A theoretical starting point is that gender is constantly shaped and reshaped in situated

³ In Part II of the thesis, the papers are included in full.

organizational practices. Connell (2002) stresses the relational character of gender, and the concept of gender relations is fundamental to the analysis. Gender relations are the dualistic constructs that separate women/femininity and men/masculinity into binary categories, where one is defined in relation and contrast to the other. Gender relations are shaped both in the social interaction between real-life men and women, and in more abstract constructions of symbolic relations. Apart from gender relations, gender boundaries is a vital concept. In the article, gender boundaries are used to analyse processes of inclusion and exclusion in order to understand and problematize the maintaining as well as challenging of established gender relations in the Armed Forces. Three research questions guide the analysis. When and how are established gender boundaries challenged in the organization? What perceptions of men, women, and gender equality are expressed? How do these perceptions change over time, and what does this process mean for the gendered conditions in the organization?

The study shows that a range of practices are used in the organization to exclude women and to distance them from the brotherhood of their male colleagues. The officers find themselves in situations where they negotiate their own inclusion and employ different strategies to become fully accepted members of the officer profession. In the interviews, the women officers describe open hostility from male superiors, as well as anonymous threats that aim at scaring women away from a unit where no woman officer had ever worked before. Excluding practices often draw upon the idea of women as physically inferior to men. One of the most common strategies described by the interviewees, therefore, is to challenge their male colleagues' physical superiority, for example, by outdoing their protagonists at the running track. As they prove themselves on this traditional arena of the organization, several of them describe that they have become accepted and included. It is a strategy that an individual woman can employ to negotiate inclusion for herself, as an exception to the rule that men make better officers. However, it is a limited form of acceptance that does not change the underlying idea that men are superior to women. In a sense, gender patterns on a larger scale might even be further reinforced, as this challenge reaffirms the norm of physical fitness as the way to measure a person's professional abilities in the military.

A starting point when designing the study and selecting informants was that they should represent a range of opinions in the internal debate on women's opportunities in the military. The second theme of analysis explores these issues. Two major standpoints are expressed by the interviewees. One standpoint argues in favour of gender neutrality, in the sense of not addressing issues of gender or issues concerning women officers. According to this view, every officer should be treated as an individual, regardless of gender, and being addressed as a member of the group "women officers" is insulting. The other standpoint offers an opposite view, and states that there are gender patterns in the organization that need to be discussed, and structural conditions that inhibit women. When these standpoints are considered, the issue of women's inclusion in the military becomes instantly problematic. A person who adheres to the first position finds gender equality initiatives insulting, because she wants to be treated no differently than her male colleagues. For her, inclusion means to be part of the group and treated the same. The opposite is true for a person who represents the second standpoint, whereby treating women as "one of the guys" equals exclusion. Whether or not a certain practice is considered an act of inclusion, therefore, depends on which standpoint one adopts. One person's inclusion is another person's exclusion.

When the officers reflect on their years in the military, an important theme concerns the changes they have undergone themselves. Related to the previous discussion about the two differing standpoints that are found amongst the officers, these opposing views on gender represent the past and present for most of them. The women interviewed talk about their early years in the Armed Forces, how they wanted to fit in and prove that they could "take it" and be tough enough for the military. They do not recall objecting to the gendered conditions in the organization back then, even though they now see that there were highly problematic gender patterns. They were busy proving themselves, and were too low in rank to influence the organization at large. Over time, most of them say that they have abandoned this individual perspective and adopted an increasingly structural one where they criticize the gendered working conditions. Being older and higher in rank, they can put their foot down more often and work towards more equal opportunities for women. Instead of gaining

acceptance for themselves on the running track, they raise issues such as sexual harassment and discrimination on a structural level.

The contribution of the article is that it highlights the complexities of changing gender relations in the Swedish military, discussing the connections between organizational transformation and the individual officers' changing perceptions of gender and problematizing the distinction between including and excluding practices. An individual perspective on gender, where being "one of the boys" is the ultimate proof of inclusion and acceptance, does not challenge the established gender patterns that structure working conditions in the organization. The opposite approach, a structural view on gender and a critique of unequal conditions, is a more challenging one. When fundamental aspects of the organization's culture and working condition are criticized from the structural position, resistance is massive. The analysis shows that as the women officers' perceptions of gender change towards a more structural perspective, a resource for challenging established gender boundaries and shaping more equal conditions in the military emerges.

Soldiers and secretaries

The article "Soldiers and Secretaries: Gendered Boundary Work in the Swedish Armed Forces" was published in the *Scandinavian Journal of Management* in 2010. The aim of the article is to show how gendered occupational boundaries are drawn and redrawn in the Swedish Armed Forces through the practising of "boundary work" (Gieryn 1983). Three research questions guided the analysis. First, what symbols and images do the informants draw upon when practising boundary work? Second, how are divisions of gender and occupation constructed, and how do those divisions intersect? Third, how do informants envision boundaries of gender and occupation in the future of the Armed Forces?

The vital tool in the analysis is the concept of boundary work. Originally used by Thomas F. Gieryn (1983, 1999) in the sociology of science, the concept was employed to analyse how scientists work to establish authority over competing groups. They do so by practising boundary work that distinguishes "non-science" from "proper science". Others have used the concept to analyse strategies to negotiate occupational relations, for example, in the health care sector (Allen 2000, 2001). These analyses

do not incorporate a gender perspective, and therefore, important aspects of the boundary work practices go unexplored. The contribution of this article lies in the gendering of the theory of boundary work. Informed by feminist theories of organization, and drawing on previous research on occupational relations, the article analyses the building and dismantling of organizational demarcations and begins to disentangle the intertwined relations of gender and occupation in the Swedish military Headquarters.

The analysis is based on three themes: metaphors and images as boundary work, the construction of organizational divisions, and visions of a “New Armed Forces”. In the interviews, I show that informants use metaphors and images as rhetorical devices when practising boundary work. One important image is that of the organizational divide between military officers and civilian employees, who in these descriptions are living in separate worlds in the organization. Between these groups, the informants describe rivalry, guarding of turf, and a downright “battle for positions”. Through these accounts, and by following the metaphors and images used in the interviews, a picture emerges of a “war” being fought where the status of the different occupational groups is on the line. Along with these images come the metaphors of insiders and outsiders, which are used by interviewees to describe how they perceive their position in the organization. An “inner circle” of military officers is described, as well as feelings of not belonging or being included, because of not being a military professional. Using these images and metaphors as rhetorical devices, informants either maintain occupational demarcations by describing the state of affairs as natural and complementary, or deconstruct them by highlighting the unjust and irrational boundaries that structure the organization.

Metaphors that informants draw upon when they do gendered boundary work primarily revolve around the dualistic construct of core and support. This dualism intersects with the concepts of insiders and outsiders. The core of the organization comprises combat, that is, the task closely related to the “inner circle” of military officers. That which is not perceived as core is understood as support, and associated with civilian employees. Even at the highest level of the organization, this division prevails and colours, for example, the ways in which interviewees describe the division of labour between the Supreme Commander and his deputy (a woman civilian titled the Director General). Masculine symbols

related to soldiers and warriors are tied in with the highly valued core of the organization, while the category civilian is conflated with women and assigned an inferior role. Thus, drawing on ideas of core and support can be used to maintain traditional gender boundaries and preserve demarcations of both gender and occupation.

In the second theme, more concrete aspects of the organizational divide are added to the symbolic constructs of gender and occupation previously discussed. Here, the focus of attention is the informants' negotiation of organizational relations, in terms of the proper place of women, men, civilians, and military officers in the military system. They describe an organization that is made up of two separate systems, one military and one civilian, characterized by different values, rules, opportunities, and traditions. These differences result in conflicts and contested boundaries. For example, there is an ongoing conflict related to leadership, and who should be allowed to hold managerial positions in the Headquarters, that is reflected upon in the interviews. On the one hand, some informants defend the status quo and argue that leadership is connected to the core of the organization, and therefore, should be conducted by military officers. On the other hand, other informants try to negotiate a more open view of competence, where civilian qualifications are assigned a higher value. The first position considers separate systems to be natural and complementary, the other aims at a blurring of boundaries that are, at times, considered both unjust and irrational.⁴ The one occupational demarcation that appears to go uncontested is the one that reserves positions of combat (i.e. the core task) for military officers. As we shall see in the third study, this demarcation, too, appears to be blurred when one looks more closely at military practice.

Across the two occupational systems, there is a gendered demarcation that complicates the question of status and inclusion. There is an expression in the Headquarters of the "double fault", describing the feel-

⁴ Recent research shows that the blurry boundaries between occupational categories, and their inherently gendered character, have a long history and reach far beyond the Swedish context. Though the categories of military and civilian appear to be formal and static, they vary greatly across time and space. For example, meteorologists have, in Sweden, been labelled military, "civilian-military", and civilian at different points in time (see Sundevall 2011).

ings of being an outsider in two ways at once, namely, as a woman and a civilian. Women informants, to a much higher extent than their male colleagues, state that there are gendered conditions that hold them back. The experiences of male civilians are different. They report that they have mostly felt included; despite the fact that they are not military professionals, they have been treated as “one of the boys”. It seems that being a man helps reduce the gap between military and civilian employment, while being a woman adds to the existing sense of being an outsider and not fully accepted.

The third theme attends to the informants’ thoughts about the future and about what will characterize the organizational relations in the “New Armed Forces”. The transformation from an invasion-based defence force to an international peacekeeping organization is described as a paradigm shift that is stirring things up, regarding both occupational demarcations and gender relations. In the global setting of the “New Armed Forces”, related to the United Nations Resolution 1325, women are increasingly sought after, for example, when international units are assembled. As gender equality moves from the margins of internal policymaking to the centre and the core task of the peacekeeping organization, informants state that it becomes easier to legitimate. When gender equality is linked to combat, the most tenacious gendered boundary is breached. This discussion will be problematized further in the third article.

Informants believe that the ongoing paradigm shift will influence occupational boundaries, as well. They state that the new purpose calls for other competences than those related to “bullets and gunpowder”. Informants who practise boundary deconstruction argue that civilians are needed in the “New Armed Forces”, in managerial as well as specialist positions, and that the future holds a very different division of labour, where the division between core and support will be blurred. Others representing the opposite view maintain that the fundamental demarcation is the one that places officers in the core and civilians in the support organization.

The article shows that the division of labour in the military organization is not a static phenomenon. On the contrary, occupational demarcations are subject to constant negotiations that are saturated with gender. In the setting of the Armed Forces Headquarters, the dualistic construct of core and support appears to be fundamental to the outcome of these negotiation processes. The contribution of the article lies in the development of

a gendered concept of boundary work that enables an analysis that can begin to disentangle the multiple dimensions of organizational relations. By analysing these intersections, a more multifaceted understanding of how gendered occupational boundaries are drawn and redrawn is obtained. The general conclusion is that it is not possible to challenge one dimension of the organizational relations without simultaneously affecting the other in ways that may be difficult to predict. There is no way of knowing how a change in one dimension affects the other. When one boundary is abolished, others tend to appear instead. This turns out to be the case in the article presented next. In this case, new demarcations of gender and an emerging division of labour are related to Resolution 1325.

Framåt gubbar

In 2010, the article “‘Framåt gubbar!’ Genus och militär praktik i ett militärt insatsförband” was published in the Swedish journal of gender studies, *Tidskrift för genusvetenskap*. The original title translates to “‘Forward, Men!’ Gender and Military Practice in a Peacekeeping Unit”. The article explores gender relations and military practice in a Swedish military unit preparing for an international peacekeeping mission. The aim of the article is to discuss ordering practices in a military unit and the gender patterns they create. By employing the concept of ordering practices, I intend to capture variations as well as structures and carve out a dynamic account of gender relations in military practices.

Theoretically, the article is situated in the field of gender and organization studies. A starting point for most research in this field, as well as the article at hand, is that organizations are gendered, and gendering, institutions. Another point of departure is that gender relations are always situated in a specific, local context and that the analysis must be contextualized in relation to it. Therefore, the article draws upon research that attends to the question of gender in military organizations. Military organizations are extreme versions of gendered and gendering organizations (Carreiras 2006). Nonetheless, concepts commonly employed to theorize about gender relations in organizations apply in the military, as well: gendered division of labour, leadership, and the construction of gender in organizations.

For the analysis, a key concept is that of ordering practices (Anderson 2003). The concept is developed from a doing gender approach and draws on feminist organizational studies. It aims to theorize relational activities that are enabling as well as restricting, material as well as discursive, and shape patterns of gender. In the article, the interest is directed towards ordering practices that define the character and place of men and women, in other words, the practices that shape patterns of gender in the military. Three sets of ordering practices are analysed in the article: the practice of taken-for-granted masculinity, the practice of stereotyping, and the practice of the gendered resource.

The practice of taken-for-granted masculinity analyses how women in the unit disappear into a seemingly homogeneous green mass. When soldiers are addressed at gatherings, exercises, and lectures, the most common naming of them is “men”, “guys”, “gentlemen”, and “warriors”. This kind of address neutralizes the differences between soldiers and creates a sense of homogeneity. Women are not pointed out as different, but part of the collective. In a sense, this is a practice that creates inclusion for women soldiers. However, the collective in which they are included is not a gender-neutral one, but one in which masculinity is clearly constructed as the norm. Here lies the exclusionary aspect of the practice of taken-for-granted masculinity: it contributes to rendering women invisible and reaffirming men as the soldier norm.

The practice of stereotyping works in the opposite way to that of taken-for-granted masculinity. This practice dominates the informal settings of lunches, lounging in the barracks, and talking over coffee in the café at night. In these situations, the perceived differences between men and women are highlighted, and ideas of women and femininity distilled into a few common stereotypes. Through the stereotyping of women, they are lifted from the ostensibly gender-neutral soldier collective and constructed as different. Three stereotypes are discerned in the material: the seamstress, the feminist, and the sex object. The seamstress represents tasks that may or may not be part of the soldier occupation, but are nonetheless attributed to women members of the unit. An example is a talk over lunch, when a commander jokes about how women, left unattended, might just start redecorating the office and sew curtains, instead of getting a file from the archive as instructed. The joke assigns stereotypical feminine traits to women, in general, but also turns tasks associated with these

traits into a joke, thereby creating a gendered hierarchy. The feminist stereotype is not assumed by anyone at the unit. During my stay with them, I never heard a soldier refer to him- or herself as a feminist or argue from such a standpoint. Therefore, it is particularly interesting to make note of the repeated remarks that criticize feminists and draw upon such opinions to create a negative stereotype that women at the unit should steer clear of. An example is the use of the name of a known Swedish politician and feminist as a profanity (“Oh, Gudrun Schyman—pardon my language!”). The third and most common stereotype is the one constructing women as sex objects. This practice is sometimes directed at the women who are present at the unit, but more often is part of the “special climate” and jargon at the unit. Women are almost always present in discussions between soldiers, as partners, potential conquests, or just “chicks”, and interaction is riddled with sexualized language. This practice is the one that most frequently constructs women as the Other, different from the soldier, in general. Women soldiers can choose to publicly object to the climate, but rarely do so. The common approach is to take active part in it to show that they are as tough as the rest. If they comply, it is easier for them to remain part of the soldier collective and keep themselves at arm’s length from the negative stereotypes that tend to be assigned to women.

The practice of the gendered resource is one that, in parallel with those that render women invisible or assign negative stereotypes to them, constructs women as a gendered resource that complements their male peers. The practice of the gendered resource is clearly related to the United Nations’ Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security, and results in a new gendered division of labour at the unit. Both soldiers and their commanders in the unit state the opinion that women are important in the military. Their gendered contribution is rarely specified, but it is often stated that things are “better” and “different” when they are present in a unit. When the focus is shifted from the relations within the unit to the international missions, the contributions of women solidify. It is said that women are necessary for the success of the operation, particularly for the sake of local women in the country they are heading for. These women are oppressed, and may find it difficult to trust a man in uniform, due to previous experiences of sexual violence. The most tangible example of women’s gendered contribution is the role of women soldiers in a search

group whose task is to search a house for guns, ammunition, drugs, or hidden people. Soldiers are urged to “use the woman soldier” in the very specific tasks of questioning women, performing body searches on women, and interacting with women locals. The paradox of this practice is that the more concrete the contribution of women gets, the easier it becomes to pin down the handful of positions in a 120-person rifle unit where they are needed. Based on how the role of women is interpreted at the unit, the benefit of a more gender-equal military unit becomes a question of employing a handful of women and placing them in a very specific and gendered niche.

In conclusion, three sets of ordering practices make up the paradoxical doing of gender at the unit. The practice of taken-for-granted masculinity reinforces a masculine soldier norm that tends to render women invisible. In contrast, the practice of stereotyping heightens the perceived differences between men and women soldiers. The practice of the gendered resource constructs women officers as complementary to their male peers, and is related to the specific tasks women are assigned as a result of Resolution 1325.

The contribution of the article is that it shows how the interpretation of Resolution 1325 has created new distinctions between women and men that affect how military work is conducted at the unit. Three issues are discussed: the women’s niche, the role of men, and the dislocation of gender equality. At the unit, a women’s niche has been established, involving new gendered demarcations and an emerging gendered division of labour. In terms of numbers, it runs the risk of cementing or even reducing the already low number of women required to perform a gender-equal peacekeeping operation. The role of men is affected, as well. The men at the unit can draw on perceptions of local men as oppressors, thereby constructing a self-image of modern, equal, and enlightened Swedish men. In addition, the issue of gender equality is relocated. As the focus on local men and women increases, the interest in discussing gender equality as an internal question within the unit seems to decrease. Gender equality as a problem becomes marginalized in the unit, and problematic gender patterns assigned to those “down there”.

An unintended side effect of pepper spray

The final article, titled “An Unintended Side Effect of Pepper Spray”, is currently under “revise and resubmit” at *Men and Masculinities*. The aim of the article is to show how military men are done and undone in the context of a highly strenuous military exercise. The title refers to an intense evening, during which the members of the rifle unit were to use and be exposed to pepper spray (oleoresin capsicum, OC). This exercise created a social space in which the established ways of being military men became troubled. I show that important insights into the doing of gender in organizations can be gained from a close look at what leaks through the cracks, as the soldiers’ “manly” behaviours crumble.

The article is based on the same ethnographic study as the “Framåt gubbar” article presented above. However, it takes a different approach, by zooming in on one event that makes up the core of the analysis. During the fieldwork, it became apparent that something out of the ordinary happened during this exercise. The OC night is perhaps best described as a critical incident that reveals important insights into the doing of gender in military work. Therefore, there is much to be learnt from a close look at this particular exercise and its aftermath. In addition to the OC night, empirical material from the 150 hours of observation is used to analyse the doing of masculinity in the unit. The theoretical contribution of the article lies in the development of repair work (Weatherall 2002) as a tool for analysing how gender relations, masculinities, and heterosexuality are sustained in organizational practices.

The article begins with a detailed account of the OC night, that is, the night when the soldiers in the rifle unit had their faces sprayed with pepper spray. Apart from teaching the soldiers how to handle this weapon and cope with its effects themselves, this exercise also turned out to provide them with an opportunity to learn about what it means to be military men. The exercise took place one long afternoon and evening. After an introductory lecture, soldiers gathered in the yard to practise the technique, using empty OC containers. They were laughing, chasing each other, and wrestling on the grass. As one instructor noted, however, “no one will be laughing tonight”. Later, as the 50 soldiers gather in the gym, they each take turns being sprayed with OC. They are given a series of tasks to perform while the effect of the substance increases:

One after the other, they box on the padded shield, handcuff the attacker and, blind from the pepper spray, head to the shower guided by their partners. There is no time to get out of their uniforms before they start rinsing the pepper spray from their eyes. Unlike their commander, many of them do cry. They hyperventilate, too. The pain, fear, and panic make them scream. In pairs, they stand in the shower, uniforms soaking wet, comforting each other. Cold water is poured into eyes that feel like they are on fire. Warm water is poured over bodies that are shaking from the shock. They are tender, repeating phrases like “There, there,” “You did good,” and “It’s almost over”. Some of the men hold their hyperventilating partners in an attempt to calm them down.

During this part of the exercise, there seems to be no energy left for keeping up appearances or acting tough. It is too scary, and the pain is simply overpowering. The soldiers help each other through it, and are remarkably tender towards one another. They are weak, crying and holding each other. Afterwards, their commander praises their accomplishment, saying that they are all “heroes on their own level”.

As the OC is rinsed from their eyes and they begin to pull themselves together, the intimate atmosphere wears off. Over the following days, they spend a lot of time talking about what happened that night. They compare the pain of the pepper spray to “taking a bullet”, and say that is was the worst experience of their lives. During lunch the day after, I am with a group of soldiers who are talking about the exercise:

During lunch on Tuesday, a group of male soldiers talk about yesterday’s OC exercise. “Things were damn manly in the shower, huh?” one soldier says with a crooked, ironic smile. “Yeah,” another replies, “there we were, holding each other and stuff.” “Yes,” I say, “but that was really nice, wasn’t it? There was a lot of love there.” The guys stir, seem uncomfortable. After a moment’s silence one of them responds: “That sounds like rape in the shower, sort of.” “Yeah,” another soldier says, “grabbing each other’s ass and stuff.”

Apparently, what was going on in the shower as the OC was burning their eyes is not considered “manly” by the soldiers. Neither is “holding each other and stuff”. It is also apparent that my remark made the soldiers very uncomfortable. Describing their camaraderie and support for one another in the shower in terms of love launched rapid protest and was associated with sexual violence.

When analysing what happened during OC night, I employ three analytical tools. The primary one is repair work, a concept I borrow from ethnomethodology and conversation analysis and adapt to suit the theoretical and methodological context at hand. I use repair work to analyse

ethnographic material in order to understand how individuals in a particular social context attend to “trouble” that disturbs their established ways of doing gender. I argue that repair work is an essential form of doing gender, and that it provides important insights, because it shows what the actors themselves find troubling and worth repairing, and how they go about mending it. The two additional analytical concepts are homosociality and compulsory heterosexuality. Homosociality sheds light on how bonds between men are formed and reinforced. Compulsory heterosexuality is employed to explore the connection between masculinity and sexuality related to the homosocial practices of the soldiers.

The analysis is divided into three themes that all start from an aspect of that OC-infused night. The first, performing the soldier hero, discusses how the OC exercise was turned into a situation where soldiers were taught how to perform as military men. Before the soldiers get their eyes sprayed with OC that night, their commander precedes them. He knows they are watching closely, filming him even, and he seems determined to put on a good show. Before he starts, he says repeatedly (in a child-like distorted voice) that he wants them to see him crying, which I discuss as a form of preventive repair work employed to handle the fact that his eyes will run profusely in front of the anticipating audience. Apart from the tears, he performs a flawless version of the strong, aggressive, and enduring warrior. In the finale, he turns to the soldiers, stretches his hands above his head and shouts “Rock on!” The soldiers laugh and applaud him. The soldiers seem eager to follow his lead, but few are able to. They do cry, hyperventilate, and call for their mothers. But instead of criticizing their efforts, the commander calls them all “heroes on their own level”. By drawing on the image of the soldier hero, he helps to mend their broken masculinities in a collective act of repair work.

The second theme, the intimacy of brothers, discusses the camaraderie that is so highly valued by the soldiers and considered a vital part of the soldier occupation. Soldiers are trained for dangerous and trying situations, and looking out for each other is one of the most important things they learn to do as soldiers. The friendships that are formed during international service are often described as the main incentive for wanting to be a member of a peacekeeping unit. They call it the “band of brothers”, the invisible bond that connects soldiers who are or have been on an international mission. It is a gendered concept, and there are similar exam-

ples of how camaraderie is given a masculine connotation. Soldiers are “men” or “warriors”, united as “brothers” as they go in this “boyish adventure”. The OC night was one of many situations where the soldiers reinforced their homosocial brotherhood and strengthened the bonds between them. But the intimacy of their camaraderie that night comes with certain complications.

To me, what I witnessed in the shower during OC night was an example of this brotherhood and friendship. When I mentioned that I thought there was “a lot of love there”, I caused a lot of discomfort. The final theme, the heterosexual imperative and the boundaries of male camaraderie, tries to explain why things became so awkward during our discussion over lunch. Even before my remark about love, the soldiers were uncomfortable with what had happened the night before, and that things were not very “manly”, as they were “holding each other and stuff”. My comment was interpreted as a homosexual reference and caused “trouble” that they were eager to repair. There are other examples where the link between friendship and intimacy between men needs to be firmly separated from homosexual practices. I argue that compulsory heterosexuality constitutes the “scene of constraint” (Butler 2004, 1) within which male camaraderie is constructed. Without this framing, it would be difficult for men to form such intimate bonds and still construct a highly traditional version of being military men. Heterosexuality is a condition for homosocial bonds between men in the unit. When it is challenged or somehow troubled, the soldiers are quick to repair it by making the boundaries of male camaraderie explicit.

In conclusion, the article shows how the OC exercise becomes a social space in which the doing of masculinity is troubled. Tied up with homosocial bonds and constrained by compulsory heterosexuality, soldiers engage in “repair work”, in order to mend what has been broken as an unintended side effect of pepper spray. The theoretical contribution of the article lies in its development of repair work as an analytical tool for studying how gender is done in everyday work. The concept serves to identify situations where gender is “on the line” amongst the myriad of practices that constitute the doing of gender in organizations. It sheds light on what is considered gender trouble in a specific organizational context, why it is troubling, and how it can be mended.

CONCLUSIONS: CHANGING BOUNDARIES, DEFENDING BOUNDARIES

This study aims to show how gender is done in the Swedish Armed Forces, in relation to its transition into an international defence organization. Based on qualitative interviews and ethnographic observation, it considers how established ways of doing gender are changed and reproduced in military practices, how the focus on peacekeeping reshapes gender relations in military work, and how organizational boundaries are maintained and deconstructed in organizational practices. Theoretically, the study is informed by research on gender in organizations, critical studies of men and masculinities, studies of professions and occupations, and military studies. The analysis shows how the increased focus on peacekeeping generates new gendered boundaries, meanings, and interactions in military practices. The redirection of military work affects occupational relations, the gendered division of labour, and what it means to be military men and women. Ultimately, it reshapes gender relations as well as occupational relations.

In this chapter, I discuss the general results of the three studies, find analytical connections across the articles, and sum up the main conclusions of the thesis. The first section attends to changing gender relations in the Swedish Armed Forces. The second discusses how the redirection towards peacekeeping produces new gender boundaries. Subsequently, the intersecting relations of gender and occupation are addressed. In the concluding section, the theoretical contribution of the study is outlined.

Changing gender relations

Throughout the Swedish military, there is pressure to reshape traditional patterns of gender, to challenge macho stereotypes, and reach a more even distribution of men and women. In itself, this is not a novel idea. On the contrary, the woman question in the military is contested terrain and has

been debated throughout the 20th century, before, during, and after the abolition of the male monopoly on the military profession (Berggren 2002, Kryhl 1996, Nilsson 1990, Sundevall 2006, 2011). The military tends to be regarded as an organization out of the ordinary, but I argue that the process of changing and defending established gender relations is far from unique. In general, gender equality efforts in organizations are situated in a force field of change and reproduction. The well-trodden ways of doing gender clash with the ideas of trying out new paths (Mark 2007). This section discusses how established ways of doing gender are both changed and reproduced in the Swedish Armed Forces. It also extends the discussion to include more general themes connected to strategies for changing gender relations in organizations.

The process of changing gender relations in the Swedish military is not a linear one. On the contrary, signs of traditional gender boundaries being reproduced occur simultaneously with patterns that suggest that gender relations are changing. When the interviews with senior women officers are juxtaposed with the ethnographic study of a contemporary military unit, the theme of gender and change in the Swedish military captures these complexities.

The senior women officers interviewed describe changing gender relations and attribute an important part of this change to the way they interpret and act upon gendered conditions in the military. They recall that they expected to face resistance at first, pioneers as they were in an extremely male-dominated profession. Several state that they even considered it a spur, a challenge for them to overcome. When faced with what they would later consider sexual harassment and discrimination, they “took it” and worked even harder to prove their worth. Some 20 years later, they are no longer interested in “taking it”. Instead, the senior officers talk about a growing critique that they increasingly articulate publicly in the organization.

Looking at the young soldiers who are now in their twenties, as the senior officers were when they entered the military, it seems as if things are very much the same. The men and women who are part of the studied unit learn, in a range of subtle and not so subtle ways, how to do gender in acceptable ways. In this particular context, the ancient soldier hero archetype (Dawson 1994) remains an important backdrop for the doing of masculinity. Sexualized jargon colours interactions, and the soldiers are

careful to steer clear of anything that would suggest that they are not heterosexual. They work hard to create a sense of camaraderie, and being included into the “band of brothers” is highly valued.

The homosocial practices of the men soldiers and the sexualized atmosphere of the unit highlight the otherness of their women colleagues. When the young women soldiers describe how they react to, for example, sexualized jokes, they use the same expression as their senior colleagues: “taking it”. They rarely object, although they are to some extent critical; rather, they show their male peers that they are just as tough. The young women are not publicly critical. Instead they “take it”, joke about it, try not to take it personally, and develop thick skin. Blushing, reporting sexual harassment, or crying is just not an option to them. In that respect, the dynamic in the interaction between military men and their young women peers is similar to the one that the senior women officers recall from the 1980s.

Women in male-dominated organizations develop a range of strategies to manage and make sense of the gender barriers (Bird & Rhoton 2011, Kvande 1999). The process that a majority of the senior women officers describe, moving from a “taking it” approach to a more critical one, resonates with the patterns that Swedish feminist organization scholar Anna Wahl (1992) finds among women MBAs and engineers in male-dominated work organizations. Wahl shows that, like the officers in the study at hand, the young women engineers and MBAs are eager to fit in and adapt during their years at university. From this position, where gender relations and discrimination are not problematized, their views and strategies change as they get older.

Considering this result, it seems unlikely that the objective of changing gender relations can rely on a shift in generation or simply the passing of time. As the senior women (and perhaps the men) change their ways of understanding and relating to gendered aspects of their work, history repeats itself in the sense that the young men and women who follow in their steps start again from a very similar position. Even if they might change over time, it is uncertain whether the organization changes with them.

In contrast to the tendencies to reproduce familiar patterns, there are indeed new ingredients that appear to be mixing things up when it comes

to gender relations in the military, in Sweden as well as internationally. Resolution 1325 is one such addition that clearly differentiates the conditions of the junior soldiers from those of the senior officers. It is an example of gender mainstreaming, which is currently becoming a widespread and influential strategy of addressing gender inequality (Ivarsson 2004, Mark 2007, Squires 2005, Walby 2005). It is promoted by organizations that are key actors in setting the agenda for policymaking: the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the European Union (Daly 2005). Resolution 1325 stresses “the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations” (United Nations 2000, 2).

British sociologist Sylvia Walby (2005) discusses a number of tensions that come with the notion of gender mainstreaming. One of them, which I find to be particularly relevant in the case of the Swedish Armed Forces, is which understanding of gender equality that is to guide the mainstreaming process. Walby distinguishes between three ways of understanding gender equality: sameness, difference, and transformation. It is not evident which of these approaches has guided the resolution. However, as the call of the United Nations is transformed from policy to everyday work practices in the studied military unit, it seems clear that it is the difference approach that prevails. Women soldiers are seen as different from their male colleagues, and this difference is argued as the main reason they are needed in the forces. The difference logic is not new to the Swedish military. In the 1990s, a major gender-equality initiative was conducted under the label of “The Creative Difference” (Berggren 2002). The project was based on the idea that women and men were different and that these differences should be affirmed, so that women and men could complement each other and improve the organization’s performance.

In the reinterpretation of gender differences that is connected to the local understanding of Resolution 1325 at the international service unit, it is the affirmative difference that guides the practising of gender mainstreaming. A sameness approach would likely highlight the need to include women in the military organization and treat them equally with men, while a transformative approach would propose a more thorough restructuring of the organization itself, informed by a gender perspective. According to the interpretation that prevails in the studied unit, women are needed in order for the operation to be successful and efficient, because they are considered to be different from their male colleagues.

However, the Headquarters interviews suggest that the interpretation of the gender equality issues in the Armed Forces is still subject to negotiation. The difference approach is not the sole prevailing understanding of gender relations. The analysis of the Headquarters interviews shows how boundary work is practised to either deconstruct or maintain the demarcations between civilians and military officers, men and women. A transformation approach to gender is present in the boundary work that aims to deconstruct demarcations between men and women as well as between occupational categories. The “New Armed Forces”, these informants argue, require a new way of organizing work in the military, where competence rather than rank is emphasized and boundaries are blurred. In contrast, those who want to maintain organizational demarcations draw on a difference approach, especially when it comes to occupational categories, and argue that clearly separated tasks and roles in military work need to be sustained in the future, as well. Regardless of whether informants prefer to maintain or deconstruct rigid boundaries of gender and occupation, they draw upon the increased international focus that lies ahead.

Gendering peacekeeping

What it means to be a woman soldier in the Swedish military has been debated for decades (Sundevall 2011). This thesis has shown that it continues to be renegotiated, and that the transition towards a peacekeeping organization produces new ways of understanding what it means to be a woman in the Swedish Armed Forces, and brings old ideas back to life.

Kvande (2007) states that paradoxes tend to characterize the gendering of organizations. Change may occur in one area or level of an organization, while others remain intact. This study adds to the emerging field of studies that focus on gender and peacekeeping by analysing the paradox of changing gender boundaries, while at the same time constructing new ones.

In general, when women are discussed in relation to peacekeeping, they tend to be characterized as either vulnerable victims (local women) in need of protection or as peacekeeping agents whose legitimacy rests on their unique female qualities. Women are assumed to be different kinds of soldiers than men, and approach their peacekeeping tasks differently. In

the United Nations work of gender mainstreaming peacekeeping troops, the focus has not been on challenging established gender relations or stereotypical assumptions about men and women. Instead, the difference of women both as victims of conflict and as agents in conflict resolution has been reaffirmed (Whitworth 2004).

In peacekeeping, it appears that gender itself “makes a difference”. If the military is a man’s world, peacekeeping is the branch in which women are made essential. A study of operational effectiveness in Australian peacekeeping troops argues that an increased share of women is key (Bridges & Horsfall 2009). In addition to increasing operational effectiveness, women are expected to engender trust in the foreign troops, act as role models for local women, and decrease the level of their male peers’ misconduct—all this, simply because of their gender.

Several of these arguments are found in my studies. When the strategic actors in the military Headquarters envision the gender relations that are characteristic of the “New Armed Forces”, they are highly optimistic. They argue that there is a need for new competences and categories of military personnel. As Swedish units go “out there” to take part in international peacekeeping operations, informants state that gender boundaries are redrawn. This change is primarily attributed to Resolution 1325. This document has become a resource for placing gender equality at the centre of the discussion by relating it to the “core” task of combat and the success of international operations. Thus, the boundary that has separated issues of gender equality from the “core” of combat is breached. At the same time, the tenacious connection between men, masculinity, and combat is weakened.

However, the ethnographic study shows that when soldier work is observed more closely, these changes are accompanied by new, emerging demarcations of gender. As the contribution of women becomes more clearly articulated, it is also made increasingly clear where they are needed and why. Resolution 1325 and the idea of gender mainstreaming could potentially be interpreted as a signal that gender awareness is an important aspect in all parts of peacekeeping work, for women as well as men. However, this does not appear to be the way in which gender relations are played out in practice. In the study of the international service unit, it is apparent that Resolution 1325 has produced new gendered meanings that reshape the organizing of military work and create a gen-

dered division of labour. In this context, the participation of women soldiers is highlighted, not because of a general political idea of equality, but for the good of the operation. This is the effect that a member of the headquarters referred to as “ingenious”, because it means that the woman question has been incorporated into the most highly valued core of military work.

In the studied unit, women officers are assigned a complementary character that is explicitly connected to Resolution 1325. I find such a complementary view on gender to be problematic. The instructor who urges the search group to “use the woman soldier” has seen the importance of women colleagues in an international operation, but as he tries to convey this message to the soldiers he defines the one woman in the group as an important, yet different, member of the operation. The complementarity of women is also problematic when it comes to numbers. The benefits of a gender-equal operation, according to the interpretation of Resolution 1325 at this unit, are achieved when four women are strategically placed in particular positions within a 120-person rifle unit. When Resolution 1325 is operationalized this way, it runs the risk of creating a gendered niche, where a handful of women are supposed to complement their male peers, thus creating a new and gendered division in military work. Compared to the perspectives of the senior women officers, who remember that they fought hard to be accepted on the same terms as their male peers and proved their right to be in the military profession on the running track or in fist fights, this marks a significant contrast. Judging from the previous research discussed, these tendencies are not limited to the particular context of the studied unit.

In addition to reshaping military work along the lines of gender difference and producing new divisions of labour, the process of gender mainstreaming also contributes to a redefinition of gender equality in the Swedish military. According to the local interpretation of the resolution, women soldiers are needed in peacekeeping units for the sake of women in the local community abroad. As the instructor in the lecture on Resolution 1325 at the international service unit put it, “At home with young guys [gender equality] is not a problem, but now that we are going abroad we need women who can interact and work with local women.” Before Resolution 1325 entered the gender equality debate in the organization, gender equality was very much considered a problem “at home” as well.

However, informants relate that it was difficult to connect the importance of gender equality to operational efficiency back then. This study shows that the transition into a peacekeeping organization changes gender relations by turning gender equality into a question that concerns the core task of the organization. But it also results in new demarcations where gender equality is once again constructed as a question for, and about, women.

Intersecting relations of gender and occupation

One of the main conclusions of this study is that strategies for changing gender relations need to be open for multiple categories. The gender patterns of a particular organization are intertwined with other social relations. In this study, occupational relations prove to hold important keys to how gender patterns are shaped. The relevant categories are highly contextual, meaning that there is no fixed set to start from. Each organization or sphere of work is characterized by its own unique set of boundaries, its own definition of centre and margin; practical competence is distinguished from theoretical knowledge (Allen 2000, Dahle & Iverssen 2001), indoor work from outdoor work (Sundin 1995), science from non-science (Gieryn 1983), and civilian from military (Sjöberg 2009). These boundaries are not self-evident. On the contrary, as Gieryn underlines, they are “drawn and redrawn in flexible, historically changing and sometimes ambiguous ways” (Gieryn 1983, 781). These boundaries tend to come with a gendered connotation, either in terms of numbers where women are working on one side of the demarcation and men on the other, or in terms of the gendered symbols that colour the boundaries and render them legitimate (Solheim 2001). Occupational demarcations produce organizational centres and margins that are connected to hierarchies and unequal working conditions.

The study at hand discusses how organizational boundaries are maintained as well as deconstructed at the intersection of gender relations and occupational relations. It shows that organizational centres and margins are situated constructs that are negotiated in social interaction. It also shows how occupational demarcations are defended and challenged through the practising of boundary work, and how that process is saturated with gender. In the empirical material, there is an abundance of ac-

counts about what it means to be a soldier, a military officer, a civilian man, a woman in the military, or a “damn secretary”. These accounts are related to organizational centres and margins, and to inclusion and exclusion in or from the “band of brothers”, “the boys”, “the gang”, the “inner circle”, and the military profession.

In addition, this thesis shows that both in the administrative sphere of the Headquarters and in the military practice of an international service unit, gender and occupational category intersect in ways that shape working conditions, divisions of labour, and occupational jurisdiction. One way of understanding this intersection is through the demarcation between combat and support, a construct that contributes to the reproduction of gender boundaries in the Swedish military. Symbolically as well as numerically, women are connected to supportive functions of military work, and men to positions related to combat. American sociologist Mady Wechsler Segal (1995) states that there is a connection between the proportion of combat jobs and the number of women in the military. Even in a defence organization where women are formally excluded from combat, the number of women increases along with the number and proportion of supportive positions.

Acker (1990) states that advantage and disadvantage are patterned through a distinction between men/masculinity and women/femininity. This study underlines that advantage or disadvantage, in terms of constructing people, positions, tasks, and issues as central or marginal, draws on gender, but also on organizational demarcations related to the binary construct of core and support. In the military organization, combat is generally assigned the elevated status of “core” task and ascribed a high value. The way it is described, it is the task that is the most exclusive. Not all consider women to be capable of it, and indeed combat positions were the very last ones from which women were by law excluded. It is an important, highly valued task, and there is a widespread agreement that it is exclusively reserved for professional military officers. Much can be gained in terms of influence and status, if a person manages to associate herself with the core of combat, or if a question like that of gender equality is transformed from an administrative, marginal issue to a central one connected to the “core”.

In the Headquarters interviews, the only occupational boundary that all informants agree upon is that combat is for professional military offic-

ers. And, a few would add, for men. Considering this unquestioned demarcation, it is fascinating to find that in practice, combat is not reserved for either men or professional military officers. All members of the international service unit are labelled “soldier”, and all might be needed in a conflict situation, for example, if there is a riot that takes many hours to stop. The fact that some of them are women who work as administrators in the Headquarters, or men who are employed as truck drivers, does not change that. There is an apparent tension here between how combat and military work is perceived and how it is carried out in practice.

Intimately connected with the “core” of combat are leadership, stereotypical ideals of the warrior, and masculine characteristics. If a person wants to claim status in the military, it is a great advantage to associate him- or herself with the “core”, by highlighting their combat experience, their position in the rifle unit (rather than the support unit), their physical capacity, or their masculinity. Both women and men can draw upon these resources, and they do. Women engage in fist fights, take part in sexual jargon, beat their male peers on the running track, and mention their time at military school—all intended to demonstrate status and be included in the military community. Men who feel a need to “repair” their bruised sense of “manliness” after the pepper spray exercise draw on the soldier hero archetype, by accentuating the physical pain and connecting it to the combat symbol of “taking a bullet”. These strategies are not reserved for members of the military profession. Civilian men can use their experiences as conscripts, their gender, and their status as managers as ways to bring themselves closer to the “inner circle”. Civilian women can object to the supportive position that others assign to them, highlighting the strategic importance of their work or the changing needs for competence in the organization.

In their attempts to earn respect, power, and a sense of belonging, the informants are not equally successful, however. Civilian women report that it is notoriously difficult to become a part of the core and be fully included in the organization, due to the “double fault” of their gender and civilian status. Their male colleagues, in contrast, state that they are included as “one of the boys”, in spite of their occupational status. The core and centre of the military organization as it is constructed by informants in the studies is made up of men, military professionals, and soldiers in combat. The organizational transformation calls for a different

definition of centre and margin. An increased emphasis on peacekeeping challenges combat as the key task as well as the ideal of the (masculine) warrior. As the organizational relations are coloured by the transition into an international defence organization, gender and occupation intersect in new ways and new boundaries emerge.

Doing gender, boundary work, and repair work

In this concluding section I outline the theoretical contribution of the thesis and discuss how it relates and adds to existing research on doing gender and occupation in the military as well as in other organizational contexts. However, it is relevant to first discuss the limitations of the study. Since it is qualitative and looks closely at practices, interactions, and experiences, the study cannot represent or account for the wide-ranging and diverse context that is the Swedish Armed Forces. From the conviction that gender needs to be understood as a situated practice, there is bound to be a myriad of issues and complexities that are prominent in other parts of the organization but fall outside of the scope of this study. However, the actors and arenas that are targeted here are not picked at random. Rather, they are important in the sense that they shed light on crucial aspects of gender relations, occupational relations, and the organizational transformation of the Armed Forces. Together, they can provide insights into past and present formations of gender in the military, including the ongoing transformation process. The experiences of women who entered the military profession in the early 1980s are represented, as well as the perspectives of different categories of key members of the Headquarters and the men and women soldiers who are to embody the so-called “New Armed Forces” in an international peacekeeping mission.

This thesis shows how boundaries are changed and defended through the practising of gender in the military. The practices approach to gender and the construction of occupational relations are united by their connection to boundaries. Boundaries are used to separate one thing from another; they are based on dualisms and binaries. Gieryn (1983) compares this aspect of boundaries to the literary device of the “foil”. Just as the famous character Sherlock Holmes comes to life in relation to the contrast of Watson, what is understood as science becomes understandable when juxtaposed with, for example, religion. Through the use of contrast, what

is on the one side becomes the opposite of what is on the other, and the difference between the two is amplified. The dualism of men/masculinity and women/femininity is based on the maintenance of gender boundaries. Norwegian anthropologist Jorun Solheim (2001) suggests that gendered boundaries in organizations are ultimately about power, the power to define the boundaries of others, while protecting one's own. Exclusion is one of the primary ways of establishing boundaries. In Solheim's view, power lies in the capacity to exclude others, to lock the door to one's own (privileged) space.

I find that the concept of boundary work (Allen 2000, 2001; Gieryn 1983, 1995) holds great potential for showing how inclusion and exclusion is practised in everyday work. The concept highlights the constructed, changeable, and relational aspect of occupations and occupational jurisdiction. In the thesis, I use boundary work as a tool for understanding how demarcations in military practices are accomplished. In Gieryn's analysis, the emphasis is placed on how scientists establish demarcations against non-science. Allen (2000, 2001) employs a different approach, focusing on workplace interactions. She extends the concept to include practices as well as rhetorical devices that aim at accomplishing occupational demarcations.

This study develops the concept of boundary work into one where relations are emphasized. The analysis focuses on practices and symbolic constructs that both maintain and deconstruct occupational boundaries, that is, both the building and dismantling of occupational demarcations. In addition, and more importantly, my interpretation of boundary work is that these practices are acted out in a setting that is deeply infused by gender norms. In the thesis, the concept is combined with a doing gender approach that can enclose multiple social categories. Hence, the existing theory of boundary work is developed into a gendered framework that facilitates a disentangling of intersecting organizational relations. For example, the analysis shows how the sometimes blurry distinction between civilian and military personnel in the Armed Forces is made sense of by drawing on the binary of core and support. When a task, person, issue, or position is connected to the core, a range of resources is made available to increase the status and legitimacy in the organization.

However, in order to understand the complexities of these processes, for example, why a male civilian is treated as "one of the boys" while

a woman describes that she feels like an outsider and is always “last in line”, the demarcations between occupational groups are not enough. When gender is taken into account, the binaries come together so that women/femininity is linked to support and men/masculinity to the core of combat. As a result, they reinforce one another and form an even stronger demarcation. When the issue of gender equality is connected to the “core” of international peacekeeping work, it is rendered legitimate. At the same time, new, gendered boundaries arise out of the international service unit’s interpretation of the gender mainstreaming strategy, and a budding gendered division of labour emerges.

This study also contributes to the field of doing gender in organizations by developing an approach that focuses on how the everyday practising of gender becomes disturbed, and analyses how gender trouble is repaired, in order to restore the established ways of doing gender and masculinity. This approach draws upon critical studies of men and masculinities, and makes use of research that theorizes about the connections between masculinities, homosociality, and sexuality. The concept of repair work (Weatherall 2002) is developed into an analytical tool for better understanding how gender is done in everyday work practices by targeting situations when the established ways of doing gender are disturbed or troubled.

In the analysis, two forms of repair work are discerned: preventive work and reactive work. Preventive repair work describes the practices that are used to safeguard against potential gender trouble. It is best illustrated by the commander who repeatedly announces that he intends to cry in front of his soldiers. The more frequent form of repair work includes the individual and collective practices that aim to manage a situation where trouble has for some reason arisen. The most apparent example is the talk over lunch the day after the pepper spray exercise, when a comment of mine gave rise to intense efforts to repair what they interpreted as a reference to homosexuality.

British feminist scholar Stevi Jackson (1999, 181) argues that we need to find ways to “address the ways in which heterosexuality and gender are sustained at the macro level of structures and institutions as well as the micro level of our everyday social practices”. The repair work approach is a tool for analysing the latter, that is, the ways in which gender and heterosexuality are reproduced in everyday interaction. It pro-

vides a tool for understanding what is considered gender trouble in a particular context, why it is troubling, and how it is to be mended. In the analysis of the international service unit, it highlights the intricate and intimate connections between compulsory heterosexuality and the homosocial brotherhood of soldiers. In a sense, repair work is also connected to boundaries. When the established, appropriate, or acceptable ways of being a man in the military are for some reason transgressed, repair work is a way to return to the secure zone and erase the footprints. When repair work is done, it provides an important clue as to where boundaries of acceptable gender behaviour are drawn, and what they are based upon.

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