

Women in campaigns 1550–1850 household and homosociality in the Swedish army

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Abstract

The article presents the main results from my study of social conditions in the Swedish Army between 1550 and 1850. The focus is on women's involvement and importance in the military. The most strikingly result is that women for a long time played a more crucial role in the Army than many people are unaware of. As a consequence, the unisexual, masculine, compulsory, military service which existed during most of the 20th century can be treated as an historical parenthesis. Nowadays women are permitted to serve in the military as soldiers, in older times women fulfilled their military duties as soldiers' wives. In a long-time perspective, the military role of women has shifted from wife to professional: the article explores this process. Soldiers on campaigns in the 17th century built households and had families, regardless of wartime or peacetime, and their households were also a natural part of the military, simultaneous with a strong male bonding principle, homosociality. Although conflicts existed between the two principles of organization, household and homosociality, they operated together at any rate until the beginning of the 19th century. The article illustrates how this cooperation worked, but also how the rise and fall of the household system in the military may be explained. Military thought, growth of state authority, a professionalization process and changed cultural norms were crucial. However, I want to emphasize the social practice of gender relations as a promoter of change: how norms and measures connected with marriage affected the military.

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Keywords: Gender; Military; Household; Homosociality; Earlymodern Sweden

1. Introduction

Faced with the Great Northern War in 1700 and the decampment of the Svea Life Guards, Colonel Knut Posse wrote a letter to the King, Charles XII. His questions concerned equipment, organization, armament and economy. In a final point Posse asked how

many “womenfolk” he might bring, because “women were needed for baking, laundry and keeping the soldiers clean”.¹

The King complied with almost everything, but ignored the question of how many womenfolk could be included. Major Folke Wernstedt, one of the authors of the monumental work on the history of the Svea Life

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¹ Militära ämnessamlingar, Administrativa handlingar rörande armén, (M 587), (*The National Archives*). The date of the letter is December 18, 1699. “[...] några kvinnfolk [...] behövas för bakning, tvätt och bussarnas renlighets skull”.

Guards, believes that this probably referred to several soldiers' wives who followed the troops on the March eastwards. According to Wernstedt this was the custom for armies at this time, and not only the Swedish army (Wernstedt, 1954, p. 356). At the turn of the 17th century, armies in general included not only male soldiers, but also women and children. Notions about gender and war, sanctioned by usage where war is associated with men only, apparently do not always correspond to reality.

Based on empirical evidence from primarily Swedish campaigns, this article discusses war and gender conditions, their continuity and change from 1550 until the middle of the 19th century.² Why was it accepted for women to take part in campaigns at the turn of the 17th century, while the same thing was unthinkable 200 years later? Explanations about the decline of women's presence on campaigns in previous research pay much attention to modernization processes in the military and political measures taken by various states in order to reduce military costs. This article argues, however, from a different angle and emphasizes how the change was promoted by practice in gender relations, that is to say, how soldiers became married. Thus, the most powerful argument is that both the upswing and the decline of women's presence on campaigns were related to attitudes from military authorities towards soldiers' and women's sexual relations; how the military authorities handled soldiers' marriages and how this treatment underwent substantial changes. These attitudes followed a pattern which also formed a chronology within the military organization: 1500–1700, adaption and integration of soldiers' wives; 1700's, reaction and conflict about women's presence on campaigns; 1800's, settlement and segregation. During the latest period, soldiers' wives were no longer seen as an integrated part of the military on campaigns.

The article begins with a review of previous research, which indicates a need for a further analysis focused on gender relations, and continues with a brief description of social conditions in Swedish campaigns. The survey of the Swedish campaigns ends with a comment on social conditions in early modern armies in general. The concept of household and homosociality is introduced as an explanatory context for the social organization of the people in those armies. Finally, the article ends with a discussion of how the long-term changes might be

interpreted; in other words, in what way a gender perspective contributes an explanatory context to an issue which previously has been treated as primarily a military task.

2. Barton C. Hacker revisited

In the 1980's the American historian Barton C. Hacker drew attention to the matter of the large number of women in the early modern European armies, rarely noted in military history (Hacker, 1988, 1981). He established the fact that it was not, as contemporaries claimed, only prostitutes and thus morally reprehensible women. Apart from them, there were in fact women sutlers, who made a living by selling food, tobacco, liquor and other necessities to the soldiers. Most of the women, however, seem to have been the soldiers' wives. According to Hacker women were an obvious and significant feature of the European armies from about the middle of the 14th century until the late 1800's. Their presence was an important prerequisite for the early modern armies' ability to operate because they were responsible for diet, health and social care. According to Hacker, the women maintained the soldiers' health and well-being on a large scale, and although the phenomenon has not previously attracted attention in military historical research, it was one of the main prerequisites for the large armies and the military revolution of the 17th century (Hacker, 1981).

Hacker provides an explanatory context for the presence of women in the campaigns of earlier times: their useful work was a vital part of the 17th-century military conditions. Generally, according to Hacker, women's work in maintaining the soldiers reduced the military costs. Why, then, did women cease to take part in campaigns? For Hacker, who does not examine the decline in detail, it was a result of the development of state formation in many parts of Europe. During the 1700's and 1800's states became bureaucratized and went through a professionalization process where among other things their authorities grew, as did their responsibilities. Among other things, the organization of warfare and financial considerations shifted to military institutions, which took over the tasks that women previously were responsible for. These political measures were taken in order to reduce economic spending on the military. This development led to a decline of the presence of women in campaigns and by World War I the whole phenomenon was forgotten (Hacker, 1981).

Ongoing research has modified and nuanced Hacker's vision of World War I as the definitive end to an era where women were involved in military organizations. Although

² This article is built on the main results of the project "'How many womenfolk may I bring?' Women in Campaigns 1550–1850", financed by The Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet). The results are thoroughly discussed in Sjöberg, 2008a, 2008b.

Hacker deals with the topic in general terms, his division of the rise of the trend of women and children in military campaigns in the 17th century and its decline in the 19th century still seems valid. Remarkably, this chronological curve seems to have been shared by countries which, in regards to other things, developed in very different ways. Equally notable is that this process, wherever it occurred, seems to have been connected with the rise of politics and states that emerged during the 19th century. In the 17th century and even earlier women were involved in campaigns, in the 19th century they gradually became separated from the military. However, research in the 20th century on the military relationships suggests that the participation of women in the military never ceased entirely. In practice, women continued to serve the military, but in different ways. Their position was no longer as wives of soldiers, but instead, in other capacities: for example, they were professionally trained as nurses (Moberg, 2007). Women also supported the military outside the military organization *per se*: for example, in patriotic associations, where they ideologically promoted military interests.³ Although the financial responsibility for soldiers' families was difficult to avoid completely, during the 19th century the military authorities believed it was possible to reduce costs in war by keeping the women and children at home. In Prussia changes in the military based on reasons of economics coincided with discursive shifts. The German historian Karen Hagemann shows how those changes co-vary with a nationalist-minded rhetoric in politics that emphasized that men and women are essentially different and should therefore perform different but complementary tasks in society. Women's place in the nation was defined primarily in terms of their duties as mothers and wives in the family and household, at home, while the men's role was to defend the nation as warriors, at the front (Hagemann, 2002).

Although some of Hacker's ideas have been modified in ongoing research, until recently they have certainly not been followed up systematically; in studies of contemporary sexual conditions in the military, however, his views are often a given point of departure (Enloe, 1983, pp. 1–17). Further, Hacker vaguely outlines a chronological development which has been confirmed more or less in historical studies of soldiers' social conditions. For instance, in German armies during the 17th and 18th centuries there were women (and other civilians) who were important in ensuring the well-being of the combatants (Burschel, 1994, Pröve, 1995).

Military institutions gradually increased their responsibility for the soldiers. This process coincided with a decline of women's participation in campaigns, which ultimately ceased completely. The German conditions were similar to those in other countries (Loriga, 1992; Goldstein, 2001, pp. 60–83; Godson, 2001, pp. 1, 12–13, 255; Venning, 2005). The historian Peter Wilson underlines a heightened morality, in particular concerning sexuality, by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation as an explanation of the decline of women's presence in camps (Wilson, 1996, pp. 127–128). However, the military historian John A. Lynn II, who recently published an exhaustive examination of women in early modern armies in Europe, offers another explanation. Lynn's study is based on several types of data, popular culture, paintings, formal regulations from military authorities, etc., and confirms generally the chronological development outlined by Hacker. Like Hacker, Lynn wants to see the change in women's participation on campaigns as a part of the 17th-century Military Revolution, but unlike Hacker and Wilson he argues that the decline of women on campaigns is a sign primarily of the military's modernization (Lynn, 2008).

Putting together the explanations of the decline of women's presence in campaigns in previous research, we see three alternatives, partly overlapping and contradictory. First, the economic one: the role of the growing national authority and the military-political measures they take in order to reduce economic spending on the military. According to Hacker the presence of women on campaigns during the 17th century reduced military costs, while during the 19th century the exact same phenomenon created financial problems. How can this be? Second, is the moral and religious explanation, which stresses the role of Reformation and Counter-Reformation, and includes how church morals which concerned family and marriage, affected the military development. This explanation neglects, however, the fact that regulations continued to ban prostitutes and illegal sexual congress in camps during the centuries since the Reformation, although they were not very successful. Soldiers continued living sinfully, and both soldiers' wives and prostitutes were still part of the campaigns during the 18th century (Sjöberg, 2008a, 2008b, pp. 131–135). The third alternative is a process of modernization within the military, which supposedly had an impact on the decline of women's presence in campaigns. This perspective is apparent when Lynn brings forward "changing military utility as explaining the decline in participation of camp women" (Lynn, 2008, p. 59). The simple conclusion from the differing explanations is that

³ On women's military work, see Åberg, 1984; Sundevall, 2011; On women's support for the military in patriotic associations, see Vammen, 1992; Reder, 1998; Östberg, 1999.

they indicate a need for further analysis. In the light of shifts in gender studies, which to a large extent highlight the discursive entrenched norms and values, it is possible to further develop previous interpretations. Points of departure, then, should be that the development of states, increasing moral strength in the church or reforms in the military organization, cannot be isolated from cultural and social conditions that determined what was possible to think and do, and what for the same reasons fell off.

Like Hacker, Wilson and Lynn this article focuses on ordinary soldiers' wives. However, there are differences between our perspectives, too. Instead of starting with fundamental changes in society such as the growth of states, bureaucratization and the increasing professionalism of armies and from there clarifying, as do Hacker, Wilson and Lynn, what the possible effects were for women I find it useful to think the other way around: what possible effects upon armies and states were generated by gender relations? In other words, where previous scholars assume that women were affected by military and state reforms, my approach is the opposite: I examine how changes in the conditions of prevailing gender relations might have affected the military organization.⁴ By gender-related changes I mean how the military authorities responded to the social practices of soldiers and women; whether they sanctioned soldiers' marriages or not, for instance, or how violations of sexual norms were treated. The focus thus shifts from simply taking account of war-managerial policies to highlighting the social practice of gender relations which forced these measures. Gender relations are conceived as a promoter of historical change: in this article evidence from the Swedish campaigns will elucidate the importance for this process of conditions surrounding the ease or difficulty for soldiers to marry. My arguments are based mainly on changes in the Swedish military organization, and the sources I make use of are foremost formal regulations, diaries, letters and records from chaplains in camps. Comparisons with other armies, based on previous research, will be continuously made in the following survey of social conditions in the Swedish Army.

3. 1550–1700: Adaption and integration

During the 16th century, Swedish sources mention very little about women's lives in campaigns. In the formal framework of the military organization, the so-called *Articles of War*, women are mentioned only as possible victims of sexual abuse, which was strictly

prohibited but a tangible reality. This was rather different on the continent. In German regiments, special officers were appointed (Hurenweibel) who had command of noncombat forces, so-called baggage. Under their leadership, a motley crew of servants, drivers, artisans of various kinds, and, most importantly, many women and children, were gathered. These commanders were responsible for soldiers' wives, their widows, sutlers, and the notorious, but in practice accepted, camp whores. In connection with the Thirty Years' War, however, the special office was abolished, and attitudes towards prostitutes hardened (Burschel, 1994, pp. 137, 257). In The Netherlands a similar process occurred, but earlier. From the 1570's prostitutes were formally banned in camps. Those who were married to soldiers and women who were hired to do laundry and take care of wounded soldiers were, however, still allowed to be in the camps and campaigns (Swart, 2006, p. 88).

From the 17th century, sources from regiments on the continent provide ample evidence of social conditions. In two enlisted Bavarian regiments from the year 1646, the military historian Geoffrey Parker calculates that there were 480 men of the infantry, but also 314 women and children, 74 servants and 3 sutlers. The cavalry had 481 men, 236 servants, 102 women and children, and 9 sutlers. There were also 1,072 horses (Parker, 1988, p. 78).⁵ The German historian Herbert Langer's cultural studies of the Thirty Years' War presents additional figures, which are derived from a camp in Ulm in 1630: 360 horsemen with 600 horses, 66 men, 78 girls, 307 boys and 24 children (Langer, 1981, p. 97). These estimates indicate that the number of women and children in those regiments was significant, although not overwhelming. Parker's study of the army in Flanders presents several figures. To begin with, Parker notes that although the military leadership, with reference to costs, tried to restrict and even prohibit soldiers from marrying, marriage was still a common occurrence in the army. Marriages resulted in births, and between the years 1628 and 1637, 571 children were baptized in the Antwerp garrison church! In 1620 there were 85 women divided among the 42 companies, a figure that, according to Parker, indicates only the minimum number. Compared to the calculations above, the number of women is still quite small. Parker says that because not all of the soldiers were married and had their wives with them in the camp, the officers were obliged to accept a number of prostitutes, a category of

⁴ This perspective is discussed in Sjöberg, 2001, p. 21.

⁵ Parker's information is built upon calculations in Redlich, 1964, pp. 157ff.

women which is not included in Parker's calculations (Parker, 1972).

Figures above can be supplemented by personal experiences. For example, a nowadays frequently consulted diary written by Peter Hagendorf, an ordinary soldier in the Thirty Years' War, and edited by the German historian Jan Peters, provides insight into the everyday life in campaigns from an individual soldier's horizon, where the presence of women and children was as self-evident as it was necessary in a soldier's struggle for survival (Peters, 1993).⁶ In an earlier article, I pointed out that Peter Hagendorf's records testify that women in campaigns were not passive followers, but very much involved in the economy of campaigns, the pillage and plundering. A wife at his side was not a burden to Hagendorf but rather, an assurance of a reasonably social and decent existence in campaigns (Sjöberg, 2007, pp. 218–219).

Military sources in Sweden from the 17th century are still very laconic about women in campaigns. There is no data which quantitatively can confirm Hagendorf's experiences. Women and children were not recorded anywhere. Nevertheless, compared with earlier times, a remarkable change can be noted. Women's presence in campaigns is confirmed on a general level in the strongly expanded legal system of the armed forces in 1621. Compared with the 1600's *Articles of War*, those versions a century later were considerably more extensive and detailed. These regulations also highlighted the presence of women in campaigns. One could speak of a certain visibility.

The *Articles of War* of 1621 contained regulations for both organization and social order in the armed forces.⁷ Hierarchy, piety and obedience were obvious themes of the legal framework and known from previous regulations. In the 89th paragraph it was stated, however:

No whores should be permitted in the camp, but if someone wants to have his wife with him, he may be allowed to. If someone carried on immorally, and intends to continue doing so, then marry her properly.⁸

Not surprisingly prostitutes were banned and not permitted in camps, but it was permissible for a soldier

to have a wife with him. Marriage and household organization were legalized. The pragmatic reasons for this are clear from the provision to someone who previously lived "immorally" but still wanted to keep the object of his affections, it was all right on the condition he would "marry her properly". The implication, if the rule was obeyed, was simple: the number of soldier marriages equaled the reduction in the number of camp whores. Thus, marriage was a tool to raise the morality of campaigns and the moral behavior of soldiers.

Although formal rules allowed women to be in camps and campaigns, they give no information, however, about whether women really followed their husbands in campaigns. The Swedish marching scheme from Wittenberg in 1631, however, illustrates both the military mindset and the fact that women were expected to be present in campaigns. In addition to trucks and armaments the marching scheme numbered foot soldiers (heads) and horses, not officers, in the cavalry. The army, thus, is likened to a riding body. Seen in this way, it was only logical that the cavalry was calculated by the number of horses, not by the number of officers who were riding the horses. In total foot soldiers and horses come up to 29,515. Finally, the marching order noted also what was not included. There was a large number of extra horses, "ridden by women and boys", as well as by several male individuals. None of these groups was to be included, nor those who sat in wagons that accompanied the infantry and cavalry (*Svenskt Krigshistoriskt Arkiv*, 1861, pp. 80–81). The marching order is thus clear on what was the 17th-century military assessment of an army's strength. Horses and foot soldiers were the only essential elements, nothing else. Judging by the marching scheme, apparently the presence of women and boys was not perceived as surprising or problematic. Perhaps they were even considered useful, as they rode on the spare horses which otherwise would have to trot alongside, without riders?

One of the few women who described the experiences of the conditions in campaigns is the aristocratic Agneta Horn, who, because of her father's military service, was born abroad, in Riga, in August 1629. Over time she became quite well traveled. In her famous description of herself, her life and her experiences, she also wrote about how she at only six weeks of age had come with her mother, Kristina Oxenstierna, to her father, Gustav Horn, who was in camp in Kurland (the western part of Lithuania). Mother and daughter stayed in the camp throughout the autumn and winter. In the spring, when Gustav Horn was called away from Kurland to the war in Germany, Kristina and Agneta

⁶ The diary is also used in Bernhard R. Kroener, "...und ist der jammer nit zu beschrieben. Geschlechterbeziehungen under Überlebensstrategien in der Lagergesellschaft des Dreissigjährigen Krieges", Hagemann, 2002: Lynn and John, 2008, pp. 11, 90.

⁷ *Ärstrycket*, (*Archives of Military*).

⁸ "Inga horor skall lidas i lägret, men vill någon ha sin hustru med sig, det står honom fritt. Finns även någon som ett orenligt leverne ha fört, och tänker den att behålla hos sig, då äkta henne ordentligen."

went home to Sweden, where Kristina gave birth to another child, their son Axel. The family was thus split up, but only temporarily. Despite strict admonitions from those at home that small children should not suffer the hardships in campaigns, the family became united in camp again, “Because she took us both with her and sailed to Germany and landed at Wolgast, where my father met her. Then, he took her and us with him to the army, which at the time was in Neumark” (*Agneta Horns lefverne*, 1910, p. 17).⁹

The fact, that Commander Gustav Horn brought his wife and children on campaigns gave Agneta Horn an opportunity to be where the fighting took place and from there she watched the 1640’s war between Denmark and Sweden. “But then came the King of Denmark and camped across from our army. And they began to shoot at each other’s camps with guns. Because they were shooting so close together the bullets fell into our tent” (*Agneta Horns lefverne*, 1910, p. 72).¹⁰ As an adult, Agneta continued to be in campaigns, in Poland and Germany, this time following not her father but her husband, Lars Cruus. Her notes from this period of life gave witness to the hardships and tribulations. First it was the journey by sea and then the uncomfortable carriages, “And I was so sick and so tired. Both from the trip by sea and the journey in a peasant wagon that shook me. I was so stiff, I could not manage to move when I arrived” (*Agneta Horns lefverne*, 1910, p. 123).¹¹ Like many others, Agneta Horn also suffered as a victim of the consequences of war. During the campaign in Poland, she lost her husband, and because of her tragic loss, she went back home to Sweden. She became a widow at the age of 26 and did not remarry. She lived until the age of 42.

Testimonies of women’s presence in camps and campaigns during the 1600’s show no evidence of surprise or dismay at the fact that women and children were there. The rules in the *Articles of War* reveals that social conditions in the Swedish army even on the formal level were similar to those in armies on the continent. The absence of attention when soldiers received the formal right to join campaigns accompa-

nied by their wives and the sudden change in *Article of Wars* suggest that soldiers were engaged in sexual relations and marriages in campaigns even before permission was gained. Subsequently the Swedish war leadership was obliged to adjust the regulatory framework to that which was already established as a social practice. Like their counterparts on the continent the Swedish army thus integrated soldiers’ wives into the military organization. In theory the legal framework in the military was a forceful weapon against immorality: the more soldiers who get married, the fewer number of unmarried women, prostitutes, in the camps. Regulatory concessions for soldiers to keep their wives in campaigns stood firm during the 17th century. The early 18th century, however, noticed a change in the attitudes of some military leaders towards accompanying women: for them the presence of women caused trouble.

4. 1700’s: Reaction and conflict

In Charles XII’s time as commander, the presence of women in campaigns was opposed. In a resolution from 1700 concerning the War Fiscal (Krigsfiskal) Hadorff’s memorandum regarding the “large number of women who were with the regiments”, the King argued that this was contrary to what he had commanded earlier that year. He instructed the War Fiscal to continue to ensure that women who were in the army also applied for special permissions. Only a special category would be authorized to join the army: namely, women sutlers, those who would provide the sale of tobacco, liquor and food to soldiers. The appropriate permissions would be issued by the War Fiscal with approval from the King. After that, the Judge-advocate (Generalauditor) should also be informed. Women who had no authorization could not be “tolerated” and would simply be ejected. The War Fiscal was also permitted to bring an action against those officers who in these cases deliberately went against the royal decrees.¹²

Charles XII clearly strove to minimize the number of women in the army. Equally clear was that Charles’ view was not shared by everyone in the army. Why else would officers be accused of not only violating the royal orders, but also of doing this intentionally? Other things pointed in the same direction. One of Charles XII’s officers, Leonard Kagg, kept a journal in the years 1698–1752. His notes up to the time he was released from Russian captivity in Siberia and returned to Sweden have been published (*Lewenhaupt*, 1912).

⁹ “Ty tog hon oss båda med sig och seglade så till Tyskland med oss landsteg vid Wolgast, och där kom min herr far emot henne och tog henne och oss med sig till armén, som då låg uti Neumark.”

¹⁰ “Men sedan kom kungen i Danmark och slog lager mitt emot vårt. Och de började till att beskjuta varandras lager med styckena (kanonerna). Eftersom de låg så nära ihop och sköt trillade kulorna in i tältet till oss.”

¹¹ “Och var jag så sjuk och trött. Både av det att jag har varit på sjön och av det att bondevagnen har skakat mig, så jag var så öm, att jag inte orkade röra mig, när jag kom fram.”

¹² B 134, (*Library of Uppsala University*).

One of the episodes he was involved in during the campaign of 1708 deserves particular attention. On June 20 of that year, Kagg's regiment, the Östgöta Cavalry, was crossing the Beresina River. The King had ordered that "...all women and sutlers should be turned away, left on the riverbank and not allowed to cross over with the army. They should go back to Sweden" (Lewenhaupt, 1912, p. 100).¹³ The last man to cross the river, Leonard Kagg himself, drew up the bridge without letting any woman cross the river, "... but they went a few miles away and came back to the army again" (Lewenhaupt, 1912, p. 100).¹⁴ Kagg's description underlines therefore both that women were in the army, and that Charles XII did not want them there. The women in the entourage seem not to have joined the army abroad along the route; the order that they should return home, back to Sweden, suggests that they had already been included in the army at home (Sjöberg, 2008b, pp. 379–380).

Despite the King's attitude and his explicit order, the women were back again. Not only Kagg's diary but also other empirical evidence indicates that the King's restrictive attitudes towards women in campaigns were neither immediately nor fully observed. A few sources registered the women who, together with their husbands, were released after having been in Russian captivity for more than ten years and finally returned to Sweden. Among those who served in the Svea Life Guards and arrived in Sweden in the spring of 1722, 225 men, 51 wives (or widows) and 32 children were listed (Wernstedt, 1954, p. 555). Which of the women returning homeward who had left with the Svea Life Guards on their departure from Sweden and which of them had been added into the army during the campaign in Russia is not possible to say. In any case, the above mentioned request from Colonel Posse before the break-up in 1700 about how many womenfolk he might bring in order to better organize laundry and catering suggests that women still followed their husbands in campaigns, all the way from Sweden. In another article I noted a letter written by a woman in Charles XII's army. Judging by the contents it appears that even this woman joined the army already before it left Sweden.

Regardless of whether women joined the army already at home or whether they first seized the moment when soldiers settled camps abroad, they were doubtlessly a significant part of the social composition of

armies at that time. The King's restrictive approach to the phenomenon was also not unambiguous. Olof Hermelin, who in 1701 was appointed secretary of office in campaigns wrote several letters home to his friend Samuel Barck, secretary of the royal cabinet and subsequently a member of the royal court of the Queen Dowager, Hedvig Eleonora, in the years 1702–1709. His letters dealt with future political issues in general and even the development of the war. Olof Hermelin's perceptions of various more or less eminent persons were also taken up. In passing, he made observations about the social life in camps, in which women appear to have been a natural feature. Among other things, Hermelin mentioned that some high-ranked women in the camp would like to meet the Swedish King, which Charles XII was not opposed to. In connection with this, Olof Hermelin also gave an account of who the three most prominent women in camp were and concluded that all of them were the most gallant of ladies. He continued his letter by pointing out what he considered problematic, saying that it had become quite popular to take over other people's wives. Soon no one would be satisfied with his own. He did not want to see that fad come to Sweden, especially considering those poor men like himself who were not there (von Rosen, 1913, p. 4). None of Olof Hermelin's letters suggests that Charles XII was hostile to the existence of aristocratic women in camps. Women from socially higher-ranked levels were never subject to regulations, and if we are to believe Olof Hermelin, their behavior was fairly free from gender norms and church morality, without any intervention. Women from socially lower-ranked levels were however constantly reminded of the moral conduct required of them if they wanted to stay in the camps. It is clear that the King's restrictive attitude was directed only to the latter. However, it was a standpoint which in fact did not have a very large impact. The chaplain of the German Dragoon regiment noted for the years 1704 and 1705 that he had married no less than 17 couples, sending the list to the royal consistory. He also attached a list of forthcoming marriages, prepared on the basis of other clergy endorsements. Some of those ecclesiastical notes are also intact.¹⁵

To sum up, although the empirical evidence is slight, there is no doubt that a significant number of women were also in Swedish camps and on campaigns. Their presence was noted mainly in diaries and letters, but also

¹³ "[...] kvinnfolk som marketenterskor vid hela vår armé skulle tillbakavisas, de skulle lämnas på andra sidan strömmen, och inte över strömmen marschera, utan de skulle gå hem till Sverige."

¹⁴ "[...] men de gick över en mil längre bort och kom alla till armén igen." Åberg, 1984, p. 8 mentions the episode.

¹⁵ Acta Ecclesiastica, Fältkonsistoriets akter. Lorentz Hagen, Bowroniki den 2 oktober 1705, Anders von Kemphen, Kungliga fältlägret vid Jarislau den 6 augusti 1704; den 11 augusti 1704, (*The National Archives*).

when they were involved in crimes either as perpetrators or victims, or when they intended to get married. The crime that in particular chaplains was trying to restrain and punish was immorality. In the preserved archives of chaplains' activities during the 1700's, it is obvious that the fact that soldiers could marry in camps did not prevent immorality, in particular sexual congress outside of marriage. Unmarried women were in particular accused of being immoral. Numerous reports of extra-marital sexual relations were sent to a higher judicial body, the Royal Consistory (Sjöberg, 2008a, 2008b, p. 555, pp. 121–137). On the basis of this it seems clear that women's presence in camps and campaigns was not without problems but was thoroughly desired. Based on the empirical evidence, the early 1700's were characterized by reactions and conflicts revolving around a phenomenon which had not previously received any particular attention among the military leaders.

Long periods of peace occurred in the 1700's although Swedish campaigns still took place. Documents concerning these campaigns, however, show that women continued to be present, although to a far lesser extent than previously. For example, there is a roll of ecclesiastical hearings and communions, signed by a chaplain, Johan Magnus Kämpe, preserved from Skaraborg Regiment.¹⁶ The roll also listed the marriages that occurred during the campaign. The Drummer Sven Leijon married to the widow Maria Dorothea Nitzén. The wedding took place in Damgarten, where the widow lived. A year later, on April 30, 1761, the Regiment was in Greifswald where Johan Zvänström, a soldier, married "the womanfolk" Barbara Ementia Hilgendorf (born in 1735 in Nipars in Swedish Pomerania). On March 16, the Regiment was in Deyerslagen, where Håkan Lindqvist (born in Skåne) married the maiden Anna Catharina Willner, born in Tribtes. In June the Regiment moved into Ludnohagen where the soldier Elias Sätterman married to Charlotta Amalia Mejern, a maiden from Stralsund. In each case the chaplain demanded a certification stating that there was nothing preventing the marriage; in practice, this was a check to confirm that neither one of the couple was already married to somebody else. To sum up, Johan Magnus Kämpe, who had entered married couples into the books since 1753, married four soldiers to women whom they obviously had met abroad, in an ongoing campaign. Considering the long period of time,

nearly ten years, one can note that the number of regimental soldiers who were married in this way was not particularly large. However, at the same time, Kämpe's written notes confirm that marriage was still something to be documented; the military leadership did not seem to have any objections. Even during the war in Finland against Russia in the late 1700's, marriage was still a possibility. Parish records from the Svea Life Guards, in lists of those took part in the communion there is also some information about those who got married while on the campaign.¹⁷ In 1789 the 23-year-old soldier Anders Berg, in Lieutenant Colonel Louis de Geer's company, got permission to marry Britta Stina Carosius in Borgå. Anders Flinck and Nils Kihlgren were also permitted to marry. However, there was not a mass movement to the altar. In the totals of the list of those who belonged to one of the companies, there were 115 men and just 3 women, the latter probably from the lower social strata.

Women were found in other Swedish companies, too, on a small scale. For example, in Carl G. Silverhielm's company, the list included 115 men and 2 women. Both women got married in 1789, each to a soldier; even though one was under arrest, it was apparently possible to marry him. In the communion lists from 1790 there are several notes in the margin about those who got married. Names of soldiers' wives were often noted and sometimes even the place where they were living. For instance, 40-year-old Mats Modig has his wife in Stockholm while Carl Gustaf Utter has his wife in the countryside. According to calculations from the lists, the total of all the wives in Stockholm or somewhere else was just eighteen. Seven wives were noted merely as absent. No places were listed for them but they were at least not living in the military quarters where the lists of communions were set up. In the same lists it was noted that Michael Hjelm was given permission to marry and Olof Wessman was married in Sveaborg, the famous Swedish fortification outside Finland.

The *Articles of War* from 1798 were, however, quite similar to previous legislations. The rules were still harsh regarding immorality and promiscuous women. Many edicts are known from previous versions of the legislation. The wives of soldiers and their possible presence in campaigns did not, however, attract any attention: this phenomenon was not mentioned either in the legislation of 1798 or later. Unlike its predecessors, however, these *Articles* also pursued an increasing

¹⁶ *Skaraborgs regemente, Regementschefsexpeditionen. Förhørs- och kommunionssrullor, Serie D 16, 1677–1723. Vol 1, (The Archives of Military).*

¹⁷ Svea Livgarde, Livbataljon, Kommunionlängder, DI:3 1788–1790, (*Stockholm City Archives*).

segregation between the sexes. Unmarried women were driven away (as before); those who were married to soldiers were supposed to be at home with their children, something which was accompanied by changing economic conditions. The conditions for the category of soldiers with the longest history of unregulated guarantees for their relatives, the enlisted men, were now improved. For example, when enlisted soldiers left to serve in campaigns or on other expeditions, their wives and children were allowed to go on living in their husband's or father's accommodations. Even if the men died, the survivors could either receive the value of the accommodation either as money or in kind. Families of enlisted soldiers were thus ensured maintenance guarantees (Forsberg & Stiernswärd, 1849, pp. 1–2).

5. 1800's: Settlement and segregation

Based on records there is no doubt that the number of accompanying women was diminishing and eventually women in campaigns would completely disappear. In the parish rolls for the Svea Life Guards, who were ordered to Germany between 1805 and 1806, neither wives nor children were noted. The new order is seen in Grenadier Lars Rudberg's memos from this war, "Lists from the year 1805 and the following, in which we were ordered by his Royal Majesty on September 6th to departure for Karlskrona, which also took place on the 9th of the same month, when we took leave of our dear wives and relatives [...]" (Sjöberg, 1908, p. 18).¹⁸ It was now obviously natural for soldiers, no matter what rank, to leave wife and family at home.

Like some other states in Europe the measures of the Swedish state in the 1800's were somewhat similar to the caretaking policy which later was significant in the forthcoming welfare state. In the 1840's, the growing degree of support for dependents was distributed selectively, however. The benefits were relevant only for married soldiers' families. Unmarried soldiers' families, their parents or other relatives, could expect to be reimbursed for only six months while married soldiers' families, wives and children were entitled to compensation for the entire time the soldier was out on campaign or held captive (Forsberg & Stiernswärd, 1849, p. 3).¹⁹ Thus the rules for reimbursement

followed a deep-rooted gender norm: the importance of the man's duty to feed his family. This male breadwinner model was clearly in evidence even when it came to housing. While married soldiers were held captive, their wives and children were forced to move away from their quarters in the regiments, but for this they would be compensated fairly at the going rate. The relatives of unmarried soldier could not expect corresponding compensation.

The legislation made it clear: marriage was the ideal and the norm. The regulations in the 1800's apparently assumed that soldiers in general were married. At least, it was assumed that soldiers at some time during their military careers were married. Unlike the previous rules the later ones also clearly focused on facilitating and encouraging marriages among soldiers. It was also considered obvious that the soldier – when he was not in service – was living together with his wife and children, if he was married. According to a Royal Decree from 1756, which was still followed in the 1840's, there were estimates of how much space families should be allotted in garrisons, "...as far as space permits, 6 square *alns* of floor space when the room is 5 *alns* high, for each man, his wife and older children" (Forsberg & Stiernswärd, 1849, p. 4).²⁰ While this was not overly spacious, it at least allowed enlisted soldiers to have a home in their home country, Sweden, something which had not been the case previously.

State authorities in Sweden thus calculated that soldiers were married and therefore had families to take care of. Financial support was based on the families, not on the soldiers themselves. This was obviously not the case in other countries. In her study of the British Army, Myna Trustram stresses the ever-present marital problems, still not resolved in the second half of the 1800's. From the military authorities' point of view it was clear that married soldiers were more advantageous because the social situation was more stable, but they also caused difficulties concerning security and accommodations for their families. Unmarried soldiers were easier to manage, but their sexual activities with prostitutes caused not only social unrest, but also venereal diseases, which in turn resulted in rendering them useless for the military. Throughout the 1800's the British military authorities wrestled with the problem of how soldiers would best fulfill their military obligations, as married or as unmarried (Trustram, 1984). Similar problems were current also in the Danish Army (Petersen, 2002).

¹⁸ "Förteckning för år 1805 och de följande, då vi av Hans Kgl. Majestät den 6 September blev kommenderade att avgå till Karlskrona, som ock skedde den 9:e samma månad, då vi tog avsked från våra kära hustrur och anhöriga [...]"

¹⁹ The legislation refers to a Royal Letter from November 11, 1808.

²⁰ The legislation refers to a Royal Letter from October 26, 1756. "[...], 6 kvadratalnar av golvet, då rummet är 5 alnar högt, på var man, hustru och större barn." One *aln*=c. 24 in, or c. 0.6 m.

A comparison with other countries therefore underlines that the Swedish military authorities were not alone in their difficulties regarding the marital issue. However, in Sweden, perhaps the easiest way was chosen, which simply meant financially encouraging marriage.

In comparison with their European counterparts, the economic and social responsibilities of the Swedish army for its soldiers were relatively great. While this financial support was a change from earlier conditions as it implied an explicit separation of wives and children from the military body, it upheld a long, historical tradition where the army had an overall responsibility for the social conditions of the soldiers in general. Enlisted soldiers' families were for instance housed in buildings which belonged to the military. Similar to the military authorities of the 1600's, those of the 1800's took responsibility for soldiers' well-being, though the measures were different. But unlike the 1600's, the military activities during the 1800's were clearly separated from the rest of society, even regarding the physical environment. Regiments got their own buildings, for example, generally located outside cities. Distinctions between civil and military became clear, as did even the differences between men and women.

6. An explanatory context: Household and homosociality

Social relationships in the Swedish army correspond generally to the chronology that has been suggested in previous research. In the 1600's there seems to have been an upswing in the numbers of women and children in armies; the Swedish one was no exception. The Israeli military historian Martin van Creveld stresses the general nature of armies in Europe in the 1600's: "A force numbering, say 30,000 men, might be followed by a crowd of women, children, servants and sutlers of anywhere between fifty and a hundred and fifty percent of its own size, and it had to drag this huge 'tail' behind it wherever it went" (van Creveld, 1977, p. 6). This so-called tail sat the scene for what was characteristic of the early modern-era armies. Martin van Creveld's description gives the impression that the so-called tail was completely unregulated, a thoroughly chaotic and disorganized burden to the army. The testimonies in Swedish documents give in part another image, however; the so-called tail fulfilled particular tasks and was thus useful, and it was normatively organized in accordance with prevailing marriage.

To the extent that soldiers in the Swedish army had families, they followed the current law that generally – both at home and in campaigns – was based on a social

organization of *households*. Regarding both maintenance and having a family, one can argue that soldiers' wives in campaigns, like wives of farmers at home, fulfilled socially stabilizing functions by providing soldiers both physical and spiritual support. As mentioned above, Colonel Knut Posse, Svea Life Guards, said that women in campaigns took care of baking, catering and the laundry. His idea was formulated at the end of the 18th century and is consistent with the preliminary conclusion Barton C. Hacker drew in the early 1980s (Hacker, 1981, 1988). Apart from Posse's opinion, however, few Swedish documents can confirm how these wives actually did this. We must content ourselves with the assumption that Posse's idea was not just a fantasy. What documents do confirm, however, is that it was considered that soldiers' wives offset social unrest in campaigns by preventing soldiers from immoral living: in fact, their presence were to prevent extra-marital sexual contact. The army's use of women can thus be extended to another aspect, namely, to further social stability and moral elevation.

Regardless of war or peace, home or abroad, the foundation of social stability was the household. Parallel with the social organization in households which was maintained by soldiers on campaigns, however, these households were also embedded in an organization which was distinctly and exclusively male. It was *homosocial*: from the outset regiments and companies were distinctly male social corporations.²¹

Thus, significant for the armies was that for a long time there was an existing interaction between a heterogeneous social organization in households and a male social corporation. According to previous research the point is, however, that both principles of organization were prerequisites for early modern armies, not only the Swedish one. The homosocial organization was as necessary as the household organization: they were mutually dependent. Ultimately, of course, these arrangements reflect unequal gender relations in general. The feature or structure is well-known to gender historians; in order to maintain balance, harmony and hierarchy, the primary task of women, the females, was to assist men, the males. But the way in which the female role was fulfilled has shifted from time to time. In the 17th century it could be done on campaigns, while this was not possible in the 19th century. The 18th century can be seen as an intermission. It was still all right for soldiers to have their families on campaigns but not as natural as before: reactions and conflicts occurred.

²¹ The concept of homosociality is discussed in Sjöberg 2008b.

The polarization between the 17th and the 19th centuries is clear. This means that the answer to the question why soldiers' wives went on military campaigns during the 17th century but not during the 19th can be found in the process in which a household organization grew and became formally established as a social organization in campaigns and then gradually was phased out. The 18th century conflict, where the presence of women was opposed by military leaders, was the initial stage of the decline of the household system in the military. One can note the prolonged process. Neither the upswing nor the downfall of the household system in the military occurred rapidly, which underlines that the final result was never given from the very beginning; rather, it was forced by the necessity to solve the conflicts arising from ordinary people's sexual needs.

The settlement of the household organization in campaigns took place parallel to the emergence of other opportunities for women to work within the military. The maintenance functions that previously, and only on an informal basis, had been laid on the wives certainly still existed, but were changing. The new conditions were marked perhaps most clearly in terms of health care. Florence Nightingale's famous efforts in the Crimean War in the mid-1800's marked the beginning of a new era: women were now requested for their professions, laundrywoman, cooks and nurses, no longer as soldiers' wives (Sjöberg, 2008a, 2008b, p. 184).

Nightingale and other nurses in the war in the mid-19th century showed that the old tradition of women taking part in campaigns had not yet completely ceased. The conditions were different, however. What were previously women's chores, part of the natural order, were now professionalized and in women's hands; further, these women were quite distinct from the war conflict — professional women were civilians within the military. The gradual disappearance of the household system on campaigns was thus associated with the emergence of sharper distinctions between civil and military.

7. Concluding discussion: Gender and long-term changes

Previous research has not seen the presence of women on campaigns as a part of a vital household system within the military, and has therefore overlooked the gender norms in which the change was enclosed. Both the creation and abolishment of their presence in previous research is linked in a simplistic way to a modernization within the military and the emergence of

the growing authority of the state. During the 17th century, when armies were fed by those living where the troops were, the presence of women in campaigns was a solution to problems concerning soldiers' supplies, because of their work in maintaining the men. During the 19th century, when the military abroad was to be fed by resources from home, the absence of women in campaigns solved the same problems: in both cases women were placed in situations that were the most economical for the authorities. In the latter case, national authorities took over and expanded their responsibility for the maintenance of soldiers on campaigns. Thus states benefitted from a discursive innovation, in which state-formed welfare and overall social responsibility were preferable to other solutions. Karen Hagemann notes how this idea in Prussia was linked to the King and particular male norms. The King's overall responsibility to the people and state was seen as similar to the man's responsibility for the household and family, "Only that man who properly led his household, cared for and protected his family was a good citizen, because a bad family father could not be a good citizen" (Hagemann, 2002, p. 366).²² Citizenship was thus a male obligation, "The state and nation developed thereby towards a union between men" (Hagemann, 2002, p. 366).²³ Male and female was seen as opposites of each other. This idea reached its heyday in the end of the 19th century.

The idea of men and women as opposites was nothing new for the 1800's: it had been a reality earlier as well. This idea was combined with a way of thinking about gender which implied that differences between women and men were predominantly differences in degree (Bloch, 1978). Notions of gender as different in kind or as different in degree seem to have been present in all times: at certain times and in different areas, however, one idea dominated over the other. In a previous study, I have argued that the idea of gender as a matter of differences in degree was the dominant conception in the 1600's. This was obvious in the juridical sphere. Differences among the sexes, and unequal legal rights, were matters of degree, not of kind: women could legally replace their absent men, a measure which was fundamental to the household system (Sjöberg, 2001). On the contrary, the conceptions of gender in the 1800's were based on the view that women were a different species than men. Both

²² "[...] nur der Mann war ein 'Bürger', der seinem Haus ordnungsgemäss vorstand, für seine Familie sorgte und sie beschützte, den ein 'schlechter Hausvater' konnte kein guter Bürger sein."

²³ "Staat und Nation entwickelten sich damit zu einem Männerbund."

campaigns — in the 1600's, where the household organization was significant, and the 1800's campaigns, where the homosocial organization was predominant — can therefore be linked to discursively entrenched notions of gender. The 1600's highlighted men and women as different in degree, while the 1800's highlighted them as complementary opposites.

The idea of gender gives a cultural context to the political measures in the 1800's, where it was natural and normal that men were in campaigns, at the front, while their wives and children were at home. These cultural norms provide a comprehensive answer to the question of why there were differences in reaction on the part of the authorities when faced with issues such as soldiers' families and immoral behavior in camps. The cultural norms of the 1600's made it natural to unite these families with their soldier husbands in campaigns abroad, while this was unthinkable in the late 1800's. Naturally, the question can be raised as to why these changes occurred. What social elements existed in the 1600's which promoted the contemporary societal structure, and what was behind the change in the 1800's? This article stresses two partly interrelated issues in the social conditions of the Swedish Army, namely, conditions for soldiers' families and the threat to social order which was always posed by unmarried women. It is reasonable to seek the driving forces behind the changes in precisely these two areas. Both areas concern how ordinary soldiers and women behaved morally on campaigns: that is to say, how the marriage institution was practiced.

When the military rules in the early 1600's formally allowed soldiers to marry while out on campaign, it was, in my opinion, both an adaption to what was already practiced, *and* a way to maintain a monopoly on sexual relations. In the middle of the 1800's, the situation was both similar and very different. Even at that time, the institution of marriage was threatened. The generally declining marriage rate, which Sweden during the 1800's shared with other Nordic countries, does not indicate that men and women had ceased to have intimate relations. The many births of children outside of wedlock speak for themselves. Rather, the drastically declining marriage rate was due more to the fact that the purpose and the validity of the institution were sharply questioned (Sjöberg, 2001, pp. 175–179).

The military-sanctioned, regulatory protection and extended economical support for soldiers' families during the 19th century can be interpreted as a part of a national, long-term, care-taking policy, which on an overall level aimed at creating favorable conditions for the survival of the marriage institution. Conceptions of

gender where the differences between men and women were explained as a result of the basic opposition of their natures prohibited the same solution against immoral sexual behavior in the 1800s as was used in the 1600s. Thus, in the 1600s marriage among soldiers on campaigns reduced sexual immorality, in the 1800s it was simply unthinkable to allow women to undergo the same hardships as men. Women and men were thus segregated from each other. As Hacker and now Lynn predicted, the war management actions were also important in the Swedish development, in a broad sense, as they were political measures taken by the state. Unlike Hacker's state perspective or Lynn's military perspective, however, this article stresses the social practice among ordinary people which forced changes in the state policy. The social practice of gender relations and the conflicts which emerged became evident during the 18th century. During this century some of the military leaders doubted the efficiency of the marriage institution in the struggle against sexual immorality. The formal validity of marriage was, however, still intact. At the beginning of the 19th century, it became apparent that marriage and the household system would probably not survive as a sponsored military organization on campaigns. This article stresses that changes in attitudes towards the household system in the military were a result of how the state authorities responded to actions, sexual relations, by ordinary people, soldiers and women in camps. Thus it is possible to suggest that state policy affected gender relationships to be sure but that to an equal extent it was the other way around as well — that gender relationships, violations of sexual norms, had an impact on state policies.

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