



## **Women in the Swedish Armed Forces:**

**How does the Swedish Armed Forces promote women in order to attract them to their organisation?**

**Author: Ann-Sofie Andreasson**

School of Business, Economics and IT

International programme in Politics and Economics

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Supervisor: Tuba Inal

Examiner: Fredrik Sunnemark

## **Abstract**

The following Bachelor thesis is analysing how the Swedish armed forces promotes women in order to attract them to their organisation. Specifically it investigates (1) “How does the Swedish armed forces break the social norms of what it means to be a soldier?” (2) “How do they present a gender equal division of labour?” (3) “How do they try to affect women’s attitude towards the organisation?” This study investigates the Swedish armed forces, an organisation with a great underrepresentation of women. The underrepresentation of women is something that the Swedish armed forces openly tries to change through their marketing. This thesis is a single case study with both qualitative and quantitative approach, using Harding’s gender process theory in a descriptive design. By gathering television commercials from the Swedish armed forces user page on YouTube, I explore how the Swedish armed forces tries to minimize the underrepresentation of women. Their strategies are analysed by using Harding’s three gender processes. The results show that the organisation is active in all three processes, but focuses on breaking the social norms of what it means to be a soldier.

Key Words: Women in the military, Promotion of women, The Swedish Armed Forces, Harding’s gender process theory, Gender norms.

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# 1. Introduction

In all times, strong men have been sent to fight in war. The image that slowly portrays is the image of the strong, brave men that is about to go off to war in a masculine arena and the women who wave their men off while staying back in the feminine area where they belong. The image of the strong man and the weaker woman (Eishtain, 1987: 3-5). In war and armed forces, women are rarely the first thing you think of. Even though women are often strongly connected to war through their relation to anyone in the military (Enloe, 2000: ix). Through times, there have been women fighting in wars as part of a military, but considering that roughly half of the world's population are women and that the percentage of women in the military is not even close to that rate, we can clearly see that women are underrepresented in this field.

This underrepresentation of women is present all around the globe, independent of what kind of standards of gender equality the nation has. And even in a nation as Sweden, a nation known for its gender equal society and laws, the underrepresentation of women in the military is present, standing with a representation of 13 percent (Försvarsmakten b, 2016). The Swedish armed forces is responsible for Sweden's military defence and are very particular that they want to have more women in their organisation. The former supreme commander Sverker Göranson claims that the Swedish armed forces is more effective with an equal gender division and a broader recruitment, he means that the differences in people help the organisations development orientation and makes it a trustworthy authority (Försvarsmakten a, 2012). Despite that the Swedish armed forces are standing for equality, the percentage of women is still low, thus the Swedish armed forces implement various strategies to encourage the participation of more women. This thesis will investigate these strategies i.e. how they promote women in order to attract them to their organisation by using their television commercials. The question is summed up to: How does the Swedish armed forces promote women in order to attract women to their organisation?

Women have been active in the Swedish armed forces since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in civil services and voluntary organisations such as "Lottorna", "Blå Stjärnan". It was not until 1980 that women could apply for some of the military educations and services. So in 1980, 103 women applied for the basic education in air force, 30 women begun the education and 28 women completed it. The following year, the government decided that both men and women could be recruited to commanders, but women were not accepted in all branches of

the Swedish armed forces until 1989. But the women still had to finalise their officer education before entering the basic military service until 1994, which was not needed for men. Today the military service is replaced with a system where both men and women can apply on equal terms. Now women represent 13 percent of the total employment in the Swedish armed forces. Among the officers and special officers the representation is 5.5 percent, and among soldiers, group commands and sailors, the representation is 12 percent. The percentage of women among the civil employees are today at a level of 38 percent (Försvarsmakten b, 2016).

By using Sandra Harding's theory that gender equality is a process through three levels of symbolic norms, structure and individual gender, I will be able to investigate how the Swedish armed forces promotes women in order to attract them to their organisation. The processes are the symbolic, concerning norms and prejudice, the structural, about how the work is organised and divided, and the individual, what the individual believes (Jämställd förskola och skola, 2016) This by first asking, how the Swedish armed forces breaks the social norms and prejudice of what it means to be a soldier. Second by asking, how the organisation tries to present the division of labour as gender equal, and third by asking, how the organisation tries to affect women's attitude towards the organisation.

There are already scholars who have investigated gender equality at the individual level for the employed at the Swedish armed forces, as seen further in the literature review. Therefore the individual process in this thesis will be focused on in what way the organisation tries to affect women's attitude towards the organisation instead. This is a qualitative and quantitative single case study with descriptive design that focuses on two lines of scholarships: women in the military and gender norms. On a global level, the first line of scholarships focuses on the unrecognized female soldiers in history and about sexual harassment within the military. On a national level, the second line of scholarship is concerned with what the men thinks of women as colleagues and the women's experience within the Swedish armed forces. There are also scholars arguing of whether it is good or bad to have women in the military. However, there is a gap of scholars studying how the Swedish armed forces themselves are trying to attract women to their organisation. This is very important when investigating, research needs to be made from both perspectives, both from the individual's point of view and the organisation's point of view. This thesis will therefore help to fill this gap by using the Swedish armed forces television commercials through Harding's gender process theory and ask three questions: (1) How does the Swedish armed forces break the social norms of what it means to

be a soldier? (2) How does the organisation try to present the division of labour as gender equal? (3) How does the Swedish armed forces try to affect women's attitude towards the organisation?

This study is interesting from a theoretical perspective, since the theory used is applied on a military organisation instead of its common use on school and society. This opens up a new way of using the theory. The Swedish armed forces gains a big part of Sweden's yearly budget, it is therefore of political interest to see how the Swedish armed forces take a standpoint in the political debate of the gender issue and actively promotes women. The military is often associated with men and it is therefore interesting from a social perspective to see how the Swedish armed forces tries to break that norm.

This thesis will begin with a literature review that discusses former scholarships about the subject of recruitment theory and women in the military. The following chapter will present the theoretical approach where Harding's gender process theory will be described. Further chapters goes through the specific aim and research questions. The methods chapter describes the use of single case study together with how the data was gathered and the content analysed. Finally the analysis chapter will identify the theories in the data collected and analyse it to give a conclusion of this study.

## **2. Literature review: Prior scholarships on women in the military**

This thesis aims to contribute to the scholarships that investigate women in the military, also to the scholarships that investigate how to attract women to male-dominated professions. There are many feminist scholars exploring this subject around the world and scholars concerning the Swedish armed forces. There are also many scholarships investigating different recruitment studies and their effect on the management. But there is a lack of scholars investigating how the Swedish armed forces promotes women in order to attract them to their organisation.

### **2.1 Recruitment strategies**

The existing scholars that study different recruitment attraction theories are many. Leisink and Seijn (2008) for example, claim that organisations often select people that already share the organisations values when recruiting. Not rarely will people not sharing the exact same values leave the organisation. This results in that over time, the organisation gets introvert and have trouble changing and develop. This can be bad for the organisation since the world is changing all the time and organisations have to adapt to survive (Leisink and Seijn, 2008: 120). Most scholars apply different recruitment theories to different situations, situations such as application process, recruitment process and its impact on the management (Celani and Singh, 2011 and Karasek and Bryant, 2012). Harding (1986) talks more about the division and dichotomy between men and women, also that there is an asymmetry that leads men to be superior to women. She means that gender equality or inequality is produced through three different processes, and how this asymmetric society is constructed results from causing dualism between genders and using them to organize social activity (Harding, 1986: 53). Therefore the scholars using her theory are more focused on school and society's construction.

Stoken and Mehay (2011) discuss the difference in recruitment strategies for the military between USA, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom. They argue that there are great differences between how they recruit. Canada and Australia use one recruitment function that recruits for the whole military, while USA and United Kingdom use separate recruitment functions for every branch within the military. They also use different approaches, such as advertisement to specific jobs and advertisement to the military in general. United Kingdom wants to cover the whole spectrum of target groups when it comes to location of advertising



and some only focus on one specific area. The Australian military tries to bring awareness to the younger people and women, while USA focuses on answering questions of what the navy life and job mean (Stoken and Mehay, 2011).

The study made by Stoken and Mehay also finds that in all countries, the regular 'join the navy' advertisements are not so common anymore, it has been replaced by outreaches of promoting specific jobs instead. They mean that all four countries are working for reducing the costs of advertisement but in the same time increase the reassuring that the quality of the people employed still stands. Case studies in Canada and Australia shows that a minimum level of advertising expenditure is good in the long-term viability for a recruiting program. This since the advertising now affects the future idea of the military, in the same way as former advertising has affected the idea of the military today (Stoken and Mehay, 2011).

Stoken and Mehay have looked into why the Australian defence force have an underrepresentation of women, and found out that the way the Australian defence force has advertised to women have not been successful. Mainly because the women have the impression that the organisation is male-dominated with little female leaders. The risk of sexual harassment are also contributing to them not wanting to take part. Therefore the Australian defence force have decided to put their recruiting focus on giving more information of how it is for a women in the organisation, and started up a webpage for women in the Australian defence force to post experiences. Their aim is to inform women about the life within the organisation and to change the wrong perceptions made, together with answer any possible questions that women can have about it. Stoken and Mehay found out that the Canadian forces increased their recruitment budget to be able to broaden their target group to women and aboriginals, this to increase the size of their force but also to help getting more public recognition. To reach this goal the Canadian forces started to take part in women promoting days, take partnership with women's organisation, contact with women's student organisations at collages, and networking with coaches and players at women's athletic events. The British armed forces have not chosen to actively change their proportion of women in their organisation, instead they ensure that there is a place for women if they want to participate. The United States military tries instead to not only attract women to the stereotypic professions within the military, such as, nursing and administrative, but attract them to navy life also, this by creating a webpage where women in the navy can inform about how their day at work could look like etc. (Stoken and Mehay, 2011).

## **2.2 Women in the Military**

The existing research about women in the military often aims at if there is a difference between men and women in their results from the same training together and how the stereotypic judgement of women is played out (Boldry; Wood; Kashy, 2002). But there are also scholars who investigate women in military history, and find out that there actually have been women fighting together with the armies, called 'soldier-girls', but that they have not been recognized earlier for their substantial work, because mostly they were called "camp followers" or "wives", by people seeing them (Hacker, 1981). Many scholars also aim their study to the investigations about sexual harassment in the military both for men and women. The result showed three differences; first, women experienced sexual harassment more often than men, both in group and individual. Second, women had more likely been exposed of sexual harassment than men. And third, women mostly experienced the sexual harassment from men, while men's experience of sexual harassment mostly was from men (Magly; Waldo; Drasgow; Fitzgerald, 1999).

Further, on a national level, for example in the USA, research aims at studying how the women in the US armed forces are in double jeopardy when going to war. Sheila Jeffreys argue that women are not only exposed of the obvious dangers of being killed and wounded, as same for the men, but also of the danger of being raped by their male colleagues. Her argument follows that since this double jeopardy often is the case, then women cannot possibly be equal to men on the frontline. Resulting in that women's organisations should not be promoting gender equality in every kind of organisation, since it puts women at risk for example in the armed forces (Jeffreys, 2007).

Other scholarships focus on the Swedish armed forces and took a sample of 1350 soldiers and investigated the men's attitudes towards women. The results showed that among men who tended to be older, lower in rank and less educated, the attitudes were more negative towards women in the Swedish armed forces. It is also interesting to see that the men that instead were more positive toward women in the Swedish armed forces also interacted better with the women. The research thus showed that education, rank, and age were crucial to get better attitudes towards women in the Swedish armed forces (Ivarsson; Estrada; Berggren, 2005). There is also a study about female officers' experiences in the Swedish armed forces, about how they have been treated in the Swedish armed forces, together with women highlighting the importance of changing the attitudes towards gender, race and rank (Pettersson; Persson; Berggren, 2008).

There is an article about the Australian defence forces' campaign called "Havas" in the beginning of 2015 where they try to promote women, by first showing different women's faces stating that they have asked Australian women what they wanted to do with their life if they could choose freely. Followed by a presentation of the answers together with how they fit with women that work within the Australian defence force, such as, "Lead" with the background of a women commander who gives orders to other soldiers. Followed by "see the world" together with pictures of women on missions all around the world. These kind of television commercials are very similar to the commercials made by the Swedish armed forces since they try to give the people an insight of how the work can be when working within the military (B&T, 2015). But this article only states that they do promote women to their organisation and that they look forward for them joining, with no further discussion of how they want to attract more women with this campaign, or what kind of strategy this campaign has.

So there is a gap in this field: scholarships on an international level discuss how women are not acknowledged for the work that they have done in the past, and about the sexual harassment within military organisations. On a national US level the scholarships argues about how the women's organisations are promoting women in certain areas, such as women on the military frontlines, where they are not safe from sexual harassment. On an Australian national level scholars write articles about how Australia have a campaign which promotes women in the military, but more to show the opportunities a women can have in the organisation, rather than breaking any norms. And on a national Swedish level the examination is of what experiences and attitudes the employees of the Swedish armed forces have towards gender equality. But there is no investigation of how the actual organisation, the Swedish armed forces, promotes women to attract them to their organisation. They are very open that they need more female employees and that they want gender equality, so it is interesting to investigate how they actually promotes women in order to attract them. Therefore this thesis will fill that gap.

This thesis will primary contribute to the scholarships that examines women in the military. It will be useful since it will give a description of how the Swedish armed forces promotes women in order to attract them to their organisation. Secondary, it will contribute to the gender equality scholarships since it could help other male-dominated organisations in what way they can attract more women. I hope that this thesis as a result can show other countries how the promotion of women within this kind of organisation can be possible.

### **3. Theoretical approach: Harding's gender process theory**

This chapter will discuss concepts and theories of gender equality, first a definition of what I mean with the word "promote" in this thesis. Second a description of gender norms and how they have affected our society through times. Followed by an overview of Sandra Harding's theory of gender equality in three levels, the symbolic, the structural and the individual. In the end of the chapter an analytical framework will be presented, this framework will show how the theory will be applied on this case.

#### **3.1 Encouragement**

The word 'promote' can be used in many different ways, resulting in many different meanings and definitions. But in this thesis 'promote' means to actively support or encourage someone or something (Dictionary, 2016). The word 'promote' will therefore throughout this thesis only be defined as this. I understand that the word also often means advancement in rank, but as stated, this is not the definition 'promote' fulfils in this thesis.

#### **3.2 Gender norms**

In the sense of Nordic masculinity and femininity, Marie Nordberg claims that masculinity is connected to men and femininity is connected to the masculinity construction's antithesis, meaning that femininity is everything that is not masculinity (Nordberg, 2004). Ann Towns means that norms are not only the relationship between behaviour and being, but are also of great importance to value. Since they give certain kinds of behaviour validity and other kinds of behaviour devalue. It is the value that is key for understanding what affect norms have on our society. She means that the official status of women is usually an effect of former political, economic and cultural conditions and processes. The status that women has is therefore an indication of former conditions that women have had, and not just their defining standard (Towns, 2010). Which means that it is now that we change the status of women for the future.

Ann Towns tells us that in ancient Greece it was believed that a woman was only a "lesser man", meaning that all humans could have different combinations of male and female elements that made them more or less a man. The male elements involved physical strength, domination and courage, and the female elements involved physical weakness, submission and cowardice. But these elements were not labelled on the actual gender, so if a woman had

many male elements, and there were no man that could rule, the woman with the male elements could rule instead (Towns, 2010).

Later the French enlightenment and cultural practices came which connected the word “male” to French kingship and state. Resulting in that Sweden emulated this in the 1720 constitution and prohibited females to have access to the Swedish throne. Up until that change women had ruled as both state officials and as monarchs in Sweden. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century a two-sex model occurred, causing a distinction between the genders and creating elements to instead be either male or female. This caused the meaning of “political” and the meaning of “man” to blend together, resulting in that coercion and physical strength got connected to the police and military (Towns, 2010).

So the 19<sup>th</sup> century “woman” was given all the characteristics that was in direct opposition with the ones connected to the state, since the state was characterized by force and reason, the women became characterized by weakness and emotion. When the state was characterized with new and modern, the women was characterized by traditional and non-changing. When the state was connected to science, women was more characterized with religion and faith. And when the state was self-interested, the women became connected with selflessness. After the First World War, which was based on the brutality and competitiveness of men, the more peaceful mind of a women resulted in that the wave of women’s suffrage was on the move and in 1919 Sweden enfranchised women (Towns, 2010). But the old thoughts are still hard to wean, creating social norms of what a women is and should be.

“It was believed that a women who would place herself in an environment that was both numerically and ideologically “male” must either be looking for a husband or for multiple sexual partners or must wish that she were, in fact, male”(Herbert, 1998)

Herbert tells us that women have started entering the military since the 1940’s and that it has raised questions of what kind of women wants to perform that profession, since a “real woman” should not want to not shower for weeks. A real woman should not want to sleep on the ground in the woods, or carry weapons. Because a “real woman” is not interested in doing things that are “man things”. She claims that nowadays the people in responsibility for advertisement for the military know that the confusion between female and male “things” affect their recruitment, and many try through different strategies to show another picture of it in their advertisement (Herbert, 1998).

### 3.3 Harding's Theory

Sandra Harding is an awarded and distinguished research professor at UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) in feminist and postcolonial theory. A few publications from Harding are: "*The science question in Feminism*, 1986", "*Whose science? Whose knowledge: thinking from women's lives*, 1991" and "*Science and Social Inequality: Feminist and Postcolonial Issues*, 2006" (UCLA, 2016). This thesis will use the theory from "*The science question of Feminism*, 1986". Harding talks in this book about division and dichotomy between men and women, also that there is an asymmetry that leads men to be superior to women. She means that gender equality or inequality is produced through three different processes, how our society is constructed is a result from causing dualism between genders and using them to organize social activity. She refers to the three processes as; gender symbolism, gender structure, and individual gender. Harding states that to think that the gender equality within these processes or levels are always symmetric is a fallacy (Harding, 1986: 53).

Harding also claims that the interpretations of masculinity and femininity within these three processes differs from culture to culture, but that there are probably also some features to masculinity and femininity that are the same independent of culture. She argues that there is no reason to say that gender differences are theoretically unimportant or politically irrelevant just because there are race, culture and class differences between men and between women. Harding also claims that independent of culture, what is seen as manly is often more valued than what is seen like womanly. In cultures that include both different genders and different races, race is always within a gender category and gender within a race category. Meaning that a sexist policy could be different for the same gender but different race, and a racist policy could be different for men and women within the same race (Harding, 1986: 18).

Easy put one can explain the three gender process theory like this: a young girl was told by her teacher to draw a grandmother on a piece of paper. The girl draws an old lady, with a bended back and a scarf on her head. The old lady also gets a cane to help her walk. After the girl is done with her painting, the teacher asks the girl if this is how her own grandmother looks. The girl answers with a laughter: "no, my grandmother drives a motorcycle". This task thus showed that the young girl knows and is affected by the norms and prejudice that a grandmother is associated with an old lady, which is the symbolic process. In the structural process the girl is affected by how society is structured to follow the norm. Therefore the girl thought that the norm of an old lady is what the teacher asks of her when asking for a painting

of a grandmother, which results that the girl draws the norm of an old lady instead of her own grandmother. But in the individual process the girl actually knows that a grandmother does not need to look like the old lady she drew. So this task states how the symbolic and structural process affects the young girl even if the girl has another individual view (Jämställd förskola och skola, 2016).

The gender symbolism stands for what label a specific gender gets just because of the gender, such as norms and prejudice (Harding, 1986: 18). So in this case, it concerns what stereotypes, norms and prejudice the society has of what it means to be a soldier in the Swedish armed forces. Thus in this thesis this process specifically aims at how the Swedish armed forces break the social norms of what it means to be a soldier by presenting women in a way that does not follow the social norm of what the women is capable of. To trace the gender symbolism in the Swedish armed forces television commercials, one can divide the commercials in three categories of ways of breaking the social norms of what it means to be a soldiers: physical strength of women, promotion of women, and dangerous situations for women.

The gender structure is more of how the division of labour works between genders within an organisation (Harding, 1986: 18). So in this process the Swedish armed forces choice of actual division of labour between the genders is in focus. To know how the division of labour is between the genders one might argue that I need to study it in reality, or interview the employees. But this thesis does not seek to investigate the process from the individual's point of view, it seeks to investigate it from the organisations point of view. Therefore this thesis will investigate how the Swedish armed forces tries to portray how the division of labour is through their commercials instead. To trace the gender structuralism in the Swedish armed forces television commercials, one can divide the commercials in three categories of how the Swedish armed forces tries to portray the division of labour: Mixed rank of women, expected performance of women, representation of women.

The individual gender stands for what the individual thinks for him or herself. What the individual believes and portrays about the gender (Harding, 1986: 18). So this process is concerned with how the Swedish armed forces promotion of women effects an individual's perception of what it means to be a soldier. Therefore in this thesis, this process is focused on how the Swedish armed forces attracts female individuals to their organisation by showing them how they fit into the organisation through their commercials. To trace the individual

gender in the Swedish armed forces television commercials, one can divide the commercials in two categories of how the Swedish armed forces tries to affect the individual woman's attitude towards the organisation: Stereotypic looks of women, and stereotypic acts of women.

Harding argues that the critics often fail to see the importance of focusing on the gender symbolism process and gender structure process as well when trying to make the gender individual process equal in an organisation, and that the fallacy in those two is the reason why there is a small number of women in specific organisations. Not until the "emotional labour", concerning household and child care are considered important for all men, will the "intellectual and manual labour", concerning public life and work be important for all women. The most recommendations for women are also to give up some of their gender identity for the masculine version, without recommending the same "degendering" for men. Harding claims that there are critics who also think that one could strip away all the negative aspects of both femininity and masculinity and remain with aspects as positive cores that are politically and morally symmetrical. But what they do not think of is that femininity and masculinity are not easy to combine, because femininity are structured to absorb everything that is not masculine and approve of submission to the masculine, therefore gender is something that is asymmetrical within the human idea, the structural organisation and the individual behaviour and identity (Harding, 1998).

This theory explains that one can effect gender equality in all these three processes. Therefore this theory will help us see the Swedish armed forces promotion of women in order to attract them in all the levels. This theory will help us see if they have more focus in one process than another, or if they are not active at all in any of them.



**Table 1. Analytical framework – gender process theory.**

How does the Swedish armed forces promote women in order to attract them to their organisation?	Harding's gender process theory	Swedish armed forces research questions
<b>Symbolic process</b> <i>-Physical strength of women</i> <i>-Promotion of women</i> <i>-Dangerous situations for women</i>	Effect gender equality in terms of norms, prejudice and stereotypes.	How does the Swedish armed forces break the social norms of what is means to be a soldier?
<b>Structural process</b> <i>-Mixed rank of women</i> <i>-Expected performance of women</i> <i>-Representation of women</i>	Effect gender equality in terms of division of labour.	How do the Swedish armed forces try to present the division of labour as gender equal?
<b>Individual process</b> <i>-Stereotypic looks of women</i> <i>-Stereotypic acts of women</i>	Effect individual gender perception.	How does the Swedish armed forces try to affect women's attitude towards the organisation?

## **4. Specified aim and research question**

The aim of this thesis is to analyse how the Swedish armed forces promote women in order to attract them to their organisation. This by using Sandra Harding's gender process theory in three different levels, the symbolic, concerning breaking norms and prejudice, the structural, concerning presenting the division of labour as gender equal, and the individual, concerning trying to affect women's attitude towards the organisation.

Specifically the questions asked are:

How does the Swedish armed forces break the social norms of what it means to be a soldier?

How does the Swedish armed forces try to present the division of labour as gender equal?

How does the Swedish armed forces try to affect women's attitude towards the organisation?

## **5. Research design and methods for gathering and analysing data**

The method used is a single case study and descriptive research design with the aim to investigate how the Swedish armed forces promote women in order to attract them to their organisation. The case of the Swedish armed forces is selected based on the common critics against women representation and gender equality attitude of national militaries. It is therefore interesting to study the Swedish armed forces since they are very open that they want their organisation to be more gender equal in all of their activities. Through content analysis, this thesis will explore the Swedish armed forces television commercials to investigate in what ways they promote women to their organisation. With the use of Harding's gender process theory of three gender processes I will be able to identify how the Swedish armed forces are trying to make their organisation more gender equal.

For the analytical part a qualitative method together with a quantitative method will be used. With a descriptive approach I will identify how they promote and attract women in the symbolic, structural and individual process. The method of analysis is therefore based on Harding's gender process theory and is supported by the analytical framework presented in the theory chapter.

### **5.1. Single case study and descriptive design**

The research design of this thesis will be the descriptive design together with the single case study. This thesis will examine how the Swedish armed forces promote women in order to attract them to their organisation. To answer such a descriptive question one should describe the characteristics of something or show how it behaves or works. The descriptive research design often uses case studies to be able to give a fuller understanding of a situation, event or process (Halperin and Heath, 2012: 173). Therefore this thesis will describe how the Swedish armed forces promote women and how they through this attract women to their organisation as a single case study. When the investigator wants to do a descriptive case study, it is important to use a descriptive theory that the investigator can use throughout the study (Berg, 2004). I could for example have used an explanatory research design, but then the result would have been a full explanation of why the Swedish armed forces promotes women, and why the women gets attracted to the organisation. But that is not the aim of this thesis, because to be able to investigate why they want to promote women, it is good to know how

they promote women first, therefore I chose to use the descriptive research design. Because when the description is done, it is easier to do an explanation of the situation afterwards.

This thesis will use Harding's gender process theory, which is a theory describing how gender equality can be affected in three different processes. Since Harding's gender process theory is descriptive and I seek to describe a single case, descriptive research design is the obvious choice of research design. This thesis will also have an analytical framework that clarifies how the case will be studied.

Halperin and Heath (2012) tell us that a comparative research design is perhaps the most commonly used in research about politics, this because in one way everything is comparable. They also tell us that a comparative design is often used when looking into a country's or organisation's behaviour over time or between regions (Halperin and Heath, 2012: 172). And since this thesis investigates how the Swedish armed forces promote women in order to attract them, which is the organisation's behaviour, one might argue that the comparative design might be a suitable design. But the goal of this thesis is not to compare the Swedish armed forces promotion of women in order to attract them to another organisation, or to compare the Swedish armed forces attempts to attract women to their organisation over time. If the aim was to compare the organisation's efforts to another organisation or to compare the organisation over time instead, the comparative design would be the most suitable design. But this thesis simply wants to know how the Swedish armed forces promote women in order to attract them to their organisation in order to be more gender equal. Thereby is the single case study a more suitable choice than the comparative study.

## **5.2. Gathering data from commercials and theory**

The used data in this thesis is from the Swedish armed forces, from their user page on YouTube and the timespan is 2010-2016. For the theory, I used the theorist's original book from 1986 to get a legitimate understanding of what the theory means. This since the use of secondary sources can add details not always obvious in the primary source (Berg, 2004).

When collecting data it is important to keep the validity and reliability at a high level. The validity is how the data is relevant to what you are going to study, and reliability is to how much you can rely on the data and the source (Pierce, 2008: 83). To the extent of gender equality promotion in the Swedish armed forces, there are many sources strong of validity and reliability. The validity is strong in the gathered data, since the Swedish armed forces television commercials is what the organisation focuses a lot on for their recruitment. Since

they put a lot of thought into their commercials and the commercials often get great response from the audience, the commercials are good and relevant data to investigate. This thesis investigates how the Swedish armed forces promote women in order to attract them to their organisation. It is thereby relevant to investigate their television commercials, since the television commercials reach society fast. Television commercials is a tool to attract customers to a company, and also recruitment to organisations. So to give strong validity to this thesis, the data from the Swedish armed forces television commercials is the obvious choice.

The reliability is strong because the data used is data created by the Swedish armed forces themselves. Therefore will the data investigated be truthful and representative of what the Swedish armed forces stand for. YouTube videos could of course be questioned in terms of reliability, but since the television commercials in the gathered data are only from the Swedish armed forces own user page, it is videos that the Swedish armed forces have consciously posted. It was also the only source I could find that collected almost all television commercials in the same place. I know that there are a few more television commercials aired than posted on their user page on YouTube. But to keep the reliability and validity strong, I have chosen to not include them, since it could be misleading. One might argue that all the television commercials aired should be included in this thesis. But since this thesis seeks to investigate how the Swedish armed forces themselves promote women, I argue that it is therefore most suitable to only investigate the commercials that the Swedish armed forces have posted themselves. I also argue that it is important to investigate the commercials from the same source to keep the reliability strong and prevent fallacy in the result. The few television commercials that are not included in the gathered data will not affect the result, since it is mainly data created earlier than my chosen sample and will most certainly still follow the organisations attitude.

One might think that the use of single case study can hurt the validity since it is not so general (Halperin and Heath 2012: 172), but in this thesis I do not seek to make a general investigation that can be applied and compared between different organisation or between different times, I only seek to investigate how the one case (the Swedish armed forces) have chosen to promote women in order to attract them to their organisation by using Harding's gender process theory. This because the military is often criticised of not promoting women and not wanting to attract them, so that the Swedish armed forces actually do promote women

and wants to attract women to be able to develop their organisation is something that needs to be lid up.

### **5.3. Content analysis**

The categorisation of promoting women through Harding's gender process theory, does not already exist in the scientific literature. Therefore this thesis will identify the three gender processes, the symbolic, concerning breaking social norms and prejudice, the structural, concerning presenting the division of labour as gender equal, and the individual, concerning trying to affect women's attitude towards the organisation, using the analytical framework presented in the theoretical chapter. One might argue that in the structural process it would be better to analyse whether the division of labour actually is gender equal in reality and not just analyse what the Swedish armed forces want to present it as. But to be able to investigate how the division of labour is in reality, one has to either interview the employees or study the division of labour on location, which would be very similar to the research already made where other scholars have asked employed at the Swedish armed forces what their attitude against women in the organisation is. Therefore it was more interesting for this study to investigate how the Swedish armed forces themselves wants to portray the division of labour between the genders, because I claim that this reflects how they want the division of labour to be. In the individual process, the same question could occur, where one could claim that it would be better to ask the employed how they get effected by the way the Swedish armed forces promotes and wants to attract women. But this kind of research as stated in the literature review, already exists, there are many scholars investigating how the men and women in the military actually feel, think and experience. This thesis wants to investigate the organisations attempt to attract women through promoting them, and thus it is more appropriate to study how the Swedish armed forces tries to affect the female individual to attract them to their organisation.

When analysing the data, this thesis will use content analysis with a qualitative and quantitative method. Content analysis can also be called textual analysis, which means analysing texts, ideas, pictures, themes, etc. it is an analysis of what the data contents (Pierce, 2004: 263). Therefore I argue that this is the type of analysis that is most suitable for this thesis, since this thesis will explore what is already promoted about women by the Swedish armed forces in forms of texts, pictures, commercials and themes. The reason why I will not use discourse analysis is that it presumes that everything has an underlying meaning and is not simply descriptive (Pierce, 2004: 242). The goal of this thesis is to describe how the Swedish

armed forces promote women in order to attract them to the organisation by applying Harding's gender process theory, and not to evaluate what the meaning the promotion and attraction of women have for this organisation. It is not either to explore how the Swedish armed forces' promotion and attraction of women actually have affected our society, therefore discourse analysis is not the analysis of data that is most appropriate for this thesis.

When analysing, the data will be categorized in three processes of Harding's gender process theory, which will each be divided in sub-categories again. First, the symbolic process, which will include how the Swedish armed forces break the social norms and prejudice of what it means to be a soldier. This process will be divided into three categories of different ways that the Swedish armed forces choose to break the social norms of what it means to be a soldier. The categories are: physical strength of women, promotion of women, and dangerous situations for women.

Second, the structural process, which will analyse how the Swedish armed forces try to present the organisation's division of labour as gender equal. This process will be divided into three categories of how the Swedish armed forces can portray that the division of labour is more gender equal. The categories are: Mixed rank of women, expected performance of women, representation of women.

Third the individual process, which will see how the Swedish armed forces try to affect women's attitude towards the organisation. This process will be divided into two categories of how they try to affect women's attitude against the organisation by showing stereotypic looks and acts of women. The categories are: stereotypic looks of women<sup>1</sup>, and stereotypic acts of women<sup>2</sup>.

These three processes will in the conclusion show how the Swedish armed forces promotes women, and in what process the organisation is most active. It will not be a comparison between the three processes of which one is better or worse. Only a description of how the process is fulfilled or not fulfilled and if I can see a pattern of how one affects the other.

Harding's gender process theory has been presented in the theoretical chapter, this thesis will use the theory to answer the question of how the Swedish armed forces promotes women in order to attract them to their organisation. One might argue that media representation theory

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<sup>1</sup> Such as long hair, colourful hair and make-up. Also dresses and high heels can be added into this stereotype.

<sup>2</sup> Such as working at jobs that are very stereotypic for women. Also other things that are typical for women to do can be added in this stereotype.

would be more profitable for this thesis, since this thesis investigates in some way how women are represented by the Swedish armed forces. But media representation theory is more of a discourse analysis of what meaning the representation of women in media have for our society. While this thesis will be a content analysis, only analysing the content of the commercials and using it to describe how the Swedish armed forces promote women. The content of the commercials will not be analysed in what way the representation of women in the commercials actually affects the women, by explaining the theory behind the affect, only analysing if there is a promotion of women that can affect. Therefore by using Harding's descriptive gender process theory, it will be clearer how the Swedish armed forces try to promote women in order to attract them. The gender norms presented in the theory chapter will not be used as a theory, only as an underlying clarification of the gender norms that have structured our society into believing that women are not fitted in the military.

This thesis will use both qualitative method and quantitative method when analysing the data. The quantitative method is often used when taking what is said or showed and put it into numbers. The qualitative method is often used when you interpret what is said or showed (Bernard, 2011). This thesis will use quantitative method when counting how many times women appear in the Swedish armed forces television commercials, together with how the women are portrayed at the time they appear. The qualitative method will be used when analysing how the women are promoted when they appear in the television commercials. Therefore this thesis in some way uses qualitative analysis on quantitative data (Bernard, 2011). The data will be found under the sixth chapter called Harding's theory in two charts, one showing if a women appear in the commercials and if they are civil or in uniform, and one showing how many times the commercials use women with stereotypic characteristics.



## **6. Harding's theory: the Swedish armed forces promotion of women in order to attract them**

The Swedish armed forces are one of Sweden's biggest organisations with 20 000 employees, every year the organisation gets a budget from the government on around 40 billion Swedish crowns. The supreme command of the Swedish armed forces is Micael Bydén, and the authority is responsible for Sweden's military defence. They have the ability to armed combat and there are no other authority with similar mission in Sweden. It is the government who decides what missions the Swedish armed forces have and how they operate. The Swedish armed forces has four main tasks (Försvarsmakten c, 2016).

- If Sweden's borders are violated, the Swedish armed forces shall reject the violating part from Swedish territories.
- If Sweden gets infested by a foreign power, the Swedish armed forces shall defend the country and reject the attacker.
- In catastrophes, such as floods and storms, the Swedish armed forces shall help with different support efforts.
- The Swedish armed forces are also tasked to work for peace and safety on a global level. This is done by sending troops to peacekeeping and peace enforcing operations around the globe (Försvarsmakten c, 2016).

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how the Swedish armed forces promote women in order to attract women to their organisation, this study will use Sandra Harding's theory that gender equality is present in three different processes. This thesis will investigate how the Swedish armed forces commercials are active within those three. This thesis will answer the following questions: (1) How does the Swedish armed forces break the social norms of what it means to be a soldier? (2) How does the Swedish armed forces try to present the division of labour as gender equal? (3) How does the Swedish armed forces try to affect women's attitude towards the organisation?

In this thesis I have recognised that there is scholarships aiming at the history of women in military, and on today's sexual harassment. The scholarships also aim at what the men within the Swedish armed forces think of women in their organisation and on the women's experience of working for the Swedish armed forces. However, as stated in the literature

review, there is a gap in scholarships investigating how the Swedish armed forces themselves promote women and gender equality in order to attract women to their organisation. The Swedish armed forces already have a good reputation about gender equality and are known for the organisations former changes to let more women in, therefore it is interesting to investigate from the organisational view how they promote women.

Since this thesis uses Sandra Harding's theory it will be possible to see if the Swedish armed forces promote and try to attract women in all three gender processes. First, there will be a description of the television commercials. Second, there will be a description of how the Swedish armed forces is active in trying to break social norms and prejudice of what it means to be a soldier in the symbolic process. Followed by the structural process, thus how they portray that the division of labour is gender equal. And fourth, how the Swedish armed forces try to affect women's attitude towards the organisation in the individual process. It seems like the Swedish armed forces have identified that the lack of women's interest in joining the organisation has its roots in these three processes.

## **6.1 Swedish armed forces television commercials**

The Swedish armed forces have published 40 commercials at their YouTube-channel that have aired on national television during the years as the following matrix shows.<sup>3</sup> So there were 12.5 percent of the commercials that did not have people in them. In the rest, 50 percent of the commercials had women and 37.5 percent had not. Among the commercials with people but with no women in them, 40 percent had men in uniform and 60 percent had only civil men. In the commercials with women in it, the percentage was reversed, 60 percent had women in uniform and 40 percent had only civil women. When comparing the commercials that had soldiers in uniform, only 33.3 percent were without any women and 66.7 percent of the commercials had at least one women in soldier uniform. In all commercials showing women, they all have women stereotypic characteristics, with a result of 100 percent (YouTube, 2016). These numbers show that the Swedish armed forces by majority want to show women in soldier uniforms in their commercials since at least 2010.

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<sup>3</sup> One of the commercials did not seem like a real television commercial so I placed that one as inconclusive and therefore in the group with the commercials that had no people in them.

**Table 2. Men and women in the Swedish armed forces television commercials**

Year	Commercial with women, but civil.	Commercial with no women, but civil men.	Commercial with women in soldier uniform.	Commercial with no women, but men in soldier uniform.	Commercial without people. (inconclusive)
2010			2	1	
2011			1	1	(1)
2012		4			4
2013	5	3	1		
2014			4	3	
2015	3	1	4	1	
2016		1			
<b>Total:</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>% Total:</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>22.5%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>
% without counting the commercials with no people.	~23%	~26%	~34%	~17%	
% only women	40%	-	60%	-	
% only men	-	60%	-	40%	

Source: (Youtube, 2016)

In this part I will present and describe the television commercials published on the Swedish armed forces user page on YouTube. I will sort them by year and go through them roughly just so the overall message of what the campaign of that specific year is about. Also there will be some extra observations added that could be made when watching them.

In the early commercials of 2010 that have women in soldier uniform in them, we get thrown into a situation where the air force spots a threat on the radar, followed by the stressful situation where the soldiers has to respond fast. We see both men and women in soldier uniform preparing to answer the attack, and then they suddenly freeze and look into the camera. The text “Now we are waiting on your opinion about our work – if you have what it takes to have one”<sup>4</sup> appears, followed by a text saying that you should go in to the Swedish armed forces homepage and give your opinion on them. The other commercial is similar but with a big fire breaking out in the woods, the men and women in soldier uniform are rushing to help the fire department take control over the fire. But just as they are in front of the fire, they all freeze and look into the camera with the same text as before. The third commercial that year is similar too but with a pirate scenario where pirates are on their way of hijacking a boat and men soldiers are on their way of stopping them. In these commercials, the women are a bit camouflaged and do not stick out from the crowd so much, but they still make sure to do some close ups on the face of the women in uniform (YouTube, 2016).

The 2011 commercials are focused on making a point about how the real military is not like it is portrayed in the movies. The commercial with women in uniforms, shows a dramatic scene of the navy where helicopters storms through bombs falling from the skies, and navy seals appearing from the water and running through the woods. This together with dramatic music and a voice saying “We can´t offer you an epic opening scene, which models pose like marines, we can´t offer you the opportunity to suddenly rise out of the water holding some weird futuristic weapon, we can´t offer you some top secret hit and run mission in unknown territory, we can´t offer you ridiculously dramatic music playing in the background, or even my cool American voice...”(YouTube, 2016). And then they change to Swedish soldiers running on an obstacle course in the snow, where a man in uniform loses his balance and falls. This is followed by that a male and female soldier run back to help him and the male says: “But we can offer you our reality, an education that leads to employment, where you can do a

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<sup>4</sup> Original: ”Nu väntar vi på din åsikt om vårt arbete – Om du har det som krävs för att ha en”(Youtube, 2016,”Försvarsmaktens sida – reklamfilmer).

difference... for real”<sup>5</sup> (YouTube, 2016). Afterwards a text appears that tells people to recruit as soldiers and sailors. In this commercial, they make it clear that it is a female soldier that runs back to help the man that fell. This is clear since she has her hair in a long blond braid. Another version of this commercial that was published the same year is similar but starts with a dramatic space mission and ends with two Swedish male soldiers trying to disarm a bomb in the snow (YouTube, 2016).

In 2012 the commercials were mostly without any people in them, and when there were people in them, it was only civil men. The commercials were mainly aiming at two campaigns, the first one was the “Who cares?”<sup>6</sup>-campaign, where they pictured for example woods and wrote that during the following summer, 250 people will get lost in the Swedish woods. Then the text “Who cares?” appeared, followed by a text telling people to apply for the basic military education. Similar commercials with landmines in Afghanistan was also aired that year. There was also another commercial filming a man trapped within a small room with only a chair in it, followed by the text “This person will be trapped in here until someone takes over for him”... “Who cares?”<sup>7</sup> (YouTube, 2016). The other campaign was the “Everything will be alright”<sup>8</sup>-campaign which showed different catastrophes, such as floods, storms and wars. The commercial had a Swedish song in the background throughout the commercial about how everything will be alright, then everything stops, and the text “Will everything always be alright?”<sup>9</sup> shows up. This is followed by a text of encouragement to apply to the basic military education (YouTube, 2016).

The commercials of 2013 was also dominated by two different campaigns but with mostly civil people in them. The first campaign was the “What are you doing?”-campaign, where they presented both men and women acting out different unnecessary internet phenomenon. It was a woman taking a picture of her food, and a man blowing up a giant balloon and then tries to fit himself in it while filming himself, and a man pushing around a pile of magazines

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<sup>5</sup> Original: “We can´t offer you an epic opening scene, which models pose like marines, we can´t offer you the opportunity to suddenly rise out of the water holding some weird futuristic weapon, we can´t offer you some top secret hit and run mission in unknown territory, we can´t offer you ridiculously dramatic music playing in the background, or even my cool American voice...” “Men vi kan erbjuda dig vår verklighet, en utbildning som leder till ett jobb där du kan göra skillnad...på riktigt” (Youtube, 2016, ”Försvarens sida – reklamfilmer”).

<sup>6</sup> Original: ”Vem bryr sig?” (Youtube, 2016, ”Försvarens sida – reklamfilmer”).

<sup>7</sup> Original: ”Den här personen kommer vara instängd här tills någon löser av honom.” ”Vem bryr sig?” (Youtube, 2016, ”Försvarens sida – reklamfilmer”).

<sup>8</sup> Original: ”Allt ordnar sig” (Youtube, 2016, ”Försvarens sida – reklamfilmer”).

<sup>9</sup> Original: ”Ordnar det sig verkligen alltid?” (Youtube, 2016, ”Försvarens sida – reklamfilmer”).

and tries to lay them in the perfect way. In the middle of it the text “What are you doing?”<sup>10</sup> pops up, then stating how people should apply to the basic military education instead (YouTube, 2016). The other campaign was named “It is much to handle right now”<sup>11</sup> and presented different newscasts where both female and male news anchors talked about bombs, storms and attacks. Then without changing the seriousness or rhythm in their voice they start talking about what the people in front of the television probably are thinking about or doing instead of caring about what the news anchor actually are saying. Then a text appears that states that it is much to handle, and with an encouragement to apply to the Swedish armed forces anyway if you want to make a real difference (YouTube, 2016). There is also a commercial which mixes filming from preparations for a floorball match and soldiers preparing for going out in the field. In this commercial there are female soldiers presented in all different situations, all from holding a gun, to doing pushups (YouTube, 2016).

The 2014 commercials have a majority of female soldiers in them. The campaign “Like any other job. Almost”<sup>12</sup> presents filming of a soldier’s day with the soldier explaining it, sounding like a stereotypic other job. But together with the filming, there is another reality with running in the woods, eating by a bonfire, etc. Later in 2014 their commercials showed women describing their day on a very female stereotypic job such as teacher, dentist and preschool teacher. Then the picture fluctuates to the same women as a soldier describing the day there instead, followed by an encouragement to work part-time as a soldier. (YouTube, 2016). Since these commercials have women’s voices talking and very stereotypic women as lead roles, it is clear that those commercials are aimed at women.

The commercials of 2015 show short filming of 1-2 seconds mixed, where both male and female soldiers are doing their different duties as soldiers. Therefore the women in the video have very stereotypic characteristics so that people can quickly see that it is women. The women are stereotypic by having strongly coloured long hair or longer braids. The other kind of the commercials this year show young women in regular situations as training coach for children sports where the children win the game, or as a guest at a birthday when suddenly the man celebrated catches on fire by the candles on the cake and the girl extinguishes it. Then a text appears that says “Are you an officer without knowing it?”<sup>13</sup> followed by the encouragement to apply to the Swedish armed forces (YouTube, 2016). The 2016

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<sup>10</sup> Original: “Vad håller du på med?” (Youtube, 2016, “Försvarmaktens sida – reklamfilmer”).

<sup>11</sup> Original: “Det är mycket nu” (Youtube, 2016, “Försvarmaktens sida – reklamfilmer”).

<sup>12</sup> Original: “Som vilket annat jobb som helst. Nästan.” (Youtube, 2016, “Försvarmaktens sida – reklamfilmer”).

<sup>13</sup> Original: “Är du officer utan att veta om det?” (Youtube, 2016, “Försvarmaktens sida – reklamfilmer”).

commercials have focused on the Swedish armed forces new training program available for the public and have both men and women in it performing the exercises in the training program (YouTube, 2016).

## **6.2 The symbolic process**

In this process, I am going to look at the promotion of new gender norms under three headings: physical strength of women, promotion of women and dangerous situations of women, as presented in the analytical framework. The commercials will therefore be presented in order of the headings and not in chronological order of publication. So when investigating how the Swedish armed forces promote women in order to attract them to their organisation in the symbolic process, the question is (1) How does the Swedish armed forces break the social norms of what it means to be a soldier?

### *6.2.1 Physical strength of women*

In the 2011 commercials there is a dramatic movie scene of what the military looks like in exaggerated situations, and these movie scenes can sometimes help the social norm that women do not have the physical strength to be a soldier in these dramatic situations. But when then showing that it is not like it seems in the movies, it sort of breaks the social norms. There are not so many women present in this commercial but the Swedish armed forces still choose to break a social norm when the only woman in the commercial is clearly pictured. This is when she as a female soldier runs back to help the male soldier who is out of breath and balance. Even if this particular thing is over in a few seconds they are still very important seconds where the viewer gets to see a woman helping a weaker man, which goes straight against the common social norm that men stand for physical strength and women for weakness as seen in the theoretical chapter.

In the first part of the 2014 commercials in the “Like any other job. Almost.”-campaign there are both men and women talking about their day at work, and they all make it sound like a stereotypic regular job. But when seeing the filming it is clear that the things they say are true but maybe not like the audience envisioned it. This since the lunch is around a bonfire, and the swim in the afternoon, is a marine jumping of a boat etc. This commercial is in some way similar to the Australian “Havas”-campaign, where the women said what they wanted to do and the commercial gave a military example of it. What I claim is interesting with the Swedish armed forces commercial is that it gives the impression that this is a special job for anyone applying, not only special for women. Therefore it tries to show that it is a non-

stereotypic job for anyone, independent of gender, which could be good when trying to break the social norm that men have the elements to be soldiers and women have not, as stated in the theory chapter.

The second part of the commercials in 2014 “Like any other job. Almost.”-campaign were really focused on women and connecting them to the soldier profession. Since all commercials that had persons in them starting with pictures from one job and then fluctuated over to the soldier profession were women. Out of three commercials, the Swedish armed forces chose to present women in all of them. But what can be concerning is that these three commercials were also the three commercials that encouraged in the text to recruit as a part-time soldier, and that could send the message that women would not fit for the profession on full-time. But it can also be an intension to show that just because they become soldiers, they do not need to lose their femininity as the norm says in terms of soldiers needing to be strong and brutal. When really breaking it down, the dentist performs her job on a man which implies that she has respect from the man to do the job. The dentist area is also a very sterile area, which can be perceived as that the woman does not need to be dirty in the woods all the time just because she is working for the Swedish armed forces. The preschool teacher could imply that even if you as a woman work in the Swedish armed forces, you do not need to give up child care. In the broker commercial, she is very nice dressed with a very feminine charisma, which shows that if you are a soldier in the Swedish armed forces you can still be feminine. So all these commercials break social norms of what it means to be a soldier and also breaks the “degendering” that is explained with Harding’s theory in chapter three. And of course, concerning that these commercials all promoted working as part-time, could be founded in that women are more likely to join the Swedish armed forces if they could do something else too. This because they could keep all these three things represented in the commercials, but in some way I still argue that this campaign could have shown a male example too.

Only one commercial was published during 2016 and that one is only showing civil people, but has a great proportion of women in it. The women use the training program as successful as the men, therefore it gives the impression that women can be as strong as men and as strong as a soldier needs to be, since it is the Swedish armed forces training program. To add another side line, the commercial also includes all kinds of people to join their training program. Which I claim is a very good thing to also present in the commercials, and since



they present people in all different cultures, shapes and ages, it gives a good feeling that also the Swedish armed forces can be for everyone.

### *6.2.2 Promotion of women*

What is interesting to see in the 2013 commercials in the “What are you doing?”-campaign is that out of four different commercials showing unnecessary internet phenomenon and stupid behaviours, women only do one of these things, and maybe the most harmless one of the four. In the commercial with the woman, she has prepared some food and takes a picture of the food before eating it, but she retakes the photo a couple of times, so even if it is very unnecessary, it is maybe not the most stupid thing. But when looking into the other three, the first one is a man that places some magazines on a table in a room, but does not seem to know exactly how he would like it placed best, so he just moves them around, also here mainly unnecessary. But in the next one there is a man that films himself when he blows up a giant balloon and tries to squeeze himself inside it. And in the last commercial, there is a man that puts Post-its on a window so that it looks like the game “Space invader” monsters. I wonder if the Swedish armed forces intentionally did not present more than one women to act out stupid behaviour, to in some way present women in a better light than men. What is even more interesting is that in the post-it commercial, there is a women walking into the room and sceptically observes the man before slowly walking out of the room again. This could imply that the woman spends her time with better things than the man, and in this case stands for intellectual characteristics.

The 2015 commercials in a continuance of “Like any other job. Almost.”-campaign, but to show that you can have job interviews online with employees at the Swedish armed forces to learn more about what the actual jobs mean. In these commercials the Swedish armed forces present women in seven out of nine of them. In these commercials they are presenting proportionally more men than women, but I argue that it would be wrong of the Swedish armed forces to only present women since that is not a rightful proportion. Also since the commercials aim is to show all the different duties a soldier can have all over the organisation, independent of gender. But there are not many commercials showing the many civil employments that the Swedish armed forces has. The reason for that can be that on the civil side of the organisation the gender equality is much better and there is therefore in no crucial need for promotion. One could still argue that it would be profitable for the organisation to at least show in some way that they also have a civil side to the organisation. What is interesting with these commercials is that there are many women presented as looking

independent within the Swedish armed forces, who are doing their duties successfully. The commercials also show women that interview employees, which implies to the audience that there are women interested in knowing about jobs available at the Swedish armed forces. This breaks the norm that not many women are interested in a profession available at the Swedish armed forces.

### *6.2.3 Dangerous situations of women*

In the 2010 campaign the Swedish armed forces present women in very actionlike situations. They could have as well presented the women only in the safe room where they discover the threat, but they also decided to have women on the frontline by the fire. But even if they still have women on the frontline it is always a great majority of men, which could be seen as following the ancient social norm that women are not fitted for the dangerous situations. But I argue that they present it like that because it is how the division between male and female soldiers looks like today. So there is no need for the Swedish armed forces to give the impression of anything else.

The 2012 commercials are without any female soldier or even female civilian, but the commercials have almost no people at all in them so proportionally it is not as unequal as it first sounds. But when showing civil men, it is in the “Will everything always be alright?”-campaign with pictures of men that in some way participated in the war in a very dangerous situation. This commercial is therefore in line with the norm that women should not participate in dangerous situations.

The 2013 commercials presented women, even if they were mostly civil it is still the presentation that is important. This since the representation is connected to the Swedish armed forces, and as long as the female representation is positive I would argue that the appearance has a positive outcome. Under the “It is much to handle right now”-campaign, the male news anchors were in the middle of a storm, and in a house that has been bombed. But the female news anchor was presented on a roof, together with bomb sirens in the background. This makes the audience feel that in some way the female news anchor is in little more danger than the other two male ones. Which could be good when breaking the social norm that women are not fitted for dangerous situations.

## **6.3 The structural process**

The structural process is concerned with how the division of labour is between the genders. But since this study is about how the Swedish armed forces promote women in order to attract

them through their commercials, this process will focus on how the commercials give the impression that the workload and expectations are equal between the genders. This process will therefore investigate: (2) How does the Swedish armed forces try to present the division of labour as gender equal? So to investigate this process, I will look at the promotion of gender equal division of labour under these headings: Mixed ranks of women, expected performance of women, representation of women.

### *6.3.1 Mixed rank of women*

When looking through the commercials presented in the Swedish armed forces user page on YouTube, the 2010 commercials show women in mixed ranks. At the air force the female soldiers seem to have a higher rank since they sit together with some kind of male commander that together tells the soldiers what they should do (YouTube, 2016). In another commercial it is a fire breaking out and we can clearly see a woman on her way with the other soldiers and later on the frontline of the fire. These commercials give a clear impression for the audience that the Swedish armed forces tries to make the division of labour gender equal, also that there are women in different ranks and that the female soldiers will have the same ease in developing into higher ranks as the male soldiers. More women could be shown of course, but I argue as before that they show that proportion of women because that is the proportion of women working at the Swedish armed forces. And even if it is important to break the social norm that women are not fitted for working as soldiers at higher ranks, it is not preferable to give an unrealistic picture and only show women in the commercials, since this might be misleading and result in dissatisfaction further on.

The 2013 commercials show mostly civil people, the only commercial that year that presents soldiers, also presents female soldiers. First when doing pushups in a corridor and later in the field in the snow dressed in camouflage (YouTube, 2016). This gives the impression that there are active female soldiers in different kinds of ranks in the Swedish armed forces and that the female soldiers responsibility is the same as the one of the male soldiers.

When investigating the commercials of 2014 in the “Like any other job. Almost.”-campaign there is a clear representation of women. Those female soldiers also work in all different kinds of duties. The commercials that promote the part-time employment show a female soldier working at something technical, while the second is standing next to a military vehicle, and the third is working with a fire (YouTube, 2016). Even if these duties do not show different ranks within the organisation, it really presents that the female soldiers can

successfully perform all different kinds of duties and are let to do so. The only problem with the 2013 commercials is that they promote these women for working as part-time soldiers. The Swedish armed forces should also have represented a man for this, because now the impression can be that women are more fitted for working as part-time soldiers and men are more fitted for full-time, which results in a not equal division of labour.

### 6.3.2 *Expected performance of women*

In the 2011 commercials there is only one woman presented, but that female soldier runs back to help another male soldier while running on an obstacle course. This portrays that men and women are expected to perform equally, since the men and women are running on the same obstacle course at the same time. It also shows that the difference between if someone thinks that an obstacle course is easy or hard is individual and not depending on gender. This since it is a male soldier who has trouble, and it is both a male and female soldier who run back to help him (YouTube, 2016). The 2012 commercials have no women at all in them and the men presented are not soldiers, therefore it is hard to define how this year's commercials show gender equality at a structural level (YouTube, 2016).

The 2015 commercials also show females doing different kinds of duties as soldiers in the Swedish armed forces, and other commercials show the same duty performed by a man. Therefore the impression is that both men and women are suitable for performing that specific duty (YouTube, 2016). This is crucial when trying to present that the division of labour is gender equal, because even if a women is active at different kinds of duties it may be duties that are more "norm fitted" for women, since it may include less strength. But when they show the same job performed by a man in one of the commercials and by a women in the next, it both shows that the men and women are expected and are doing the same things, and that the labour is moved around between the soldiers, meaning that it is not the same person doing the same things every time.

The only commercial that has already been published for 2016 is a commercial for the Swedish armed forces training program that everybody can download, the commercial shows both men and women performing the exercises. This implies that both men and women can train together with the Swedish armed forces and be successful, and it therefore promotes gender equality at the structural level (YouTube, 2016). This also shows that they expect women to be able to perform as well as men.

### *6.3.3 Representation of women*

The “What are you doing?”-campaign in 2013 is not showing much gender equal division of labour within the Swedish armed forces since the people in the commercials are civil. But they do have one out of four commercials that is about a woman, which is good for the representation of women, and therefore that the representation at least is connected to the Swedish armed forces. Later that year in the “It is much to handle right now”-campaign the women presented are only civil women, one female news anchor together with two male ones just to keep the representation of women up. Even if this is not connected to the division of labour at the Swedish armed forces, it still gives an impression of what kind of division of labour between the genders that the Swedish armed forces want to have (YouTube, 2016).

## **6.4 The individual process**

The individual process in Harding’s theory about gender equality is more focused on the individual gender perception, but in this study I focus on how the Swedish armed forces promote women and gender equality in order to attract more women to their organisation. Therefore this individual process will be more focused on how the Swedish armed forces tries to affect women’s attitude towards their organisation. So the question investigated is: (3) How does the Swedish armed forces try to affect women’s attitude towards the organisation?

The women presented in all commercials have very women stereotypic appearance, such as long, bright coloured hair and make-up on. This is probably because if people see a person’s characteristics in a commercial for a job that they can identify with their own self-image, the person is more likely to be attracted to the job (Ehrhart and Zeigerd, 2005). The Swedish armed forces seem to have identified the same thing as the other militaries in the literature review had, and now want to affect women’s view on the military. So in this process I am going to look at how the Swedish armed forces promote women in order to attract them to their organisation under two headings: stereotypic looks of women and stereotypic acts of women.

### *6.4.1 Stereotypic looks of women*

In the 2010 commercials they have women performing well in very actionlike situations, which shows that the women watching the commercials would also be able to perform well in those situations (YouTube, 2016). It is interesting to see how much makeup the female soldier has in the “fire” commercials, which could be just to state that it is a women. But this could be

very criticized in the feminism discussion about why women must use make-up to be able to be identified as a women.

The 2011 commercials show again clear pictures of stereotypic women which attract the women to the organisation, but also they give a clear attraction for the female viewer when the female soldier runs back to help the male soldier who is out of breath. This since it gives the impression that the female soldier handles the soldier work sometimes even better than the men (YouTube, 2016). But most obvious of all, that short part of the commercial clarifies that women can do it and that women are as good as men in the Swedish armed forces, which attract the women. They also state in the commercials that the real-life military is not like it is in the movies, which could give the impression that the Swedish armed forces are more true and transparent with their work than for example USA, who seems to use the movie characteristics to attract their recruits. This could give the Swedish armed forces more social acceptance and therefore more attraction.

In 2012 the commercials did not include any women at all, therefore the process is hard to apply this year. But the following year of 2013 was a great mix of men and women, all of the women with women stereotypic looks. The commercials showed daily news anchors and daily, very unnecessary internet situations, but still with a majority of men (YouTube, 2016). Since the female news anchor has women stereotypic looks, and is presented in a dangerous surrounding, this could give an attraction for women, because they feel that if she can succeed so could they. But most of all, this kind of commercial attracts the audience because they can identify with that they usually stop caring about what the news anchor says just after a few seconds. So when they realise this with themselves, they identify and get attracted to the Swedish armed forces.

The 2013 commercial that mixed filming from a floorball match and soldiers preparing for the field, showing both men and women. The women are also here with very women stereotypic appearance, such as long blond hair in a ponytail or braid, which makes the women feel that they can perform as successfully as the women in the commercial. This commercial also gives the impression that preparing for the field is not much harder than preparing for a sport match, which could be good for women that believe the social norm that the military is too hard for women (YouTube, 2016).

The 2016 commercial has many women in them, but also here the women have longer hair in ponytail or in a braid. This time they also have person characteristics from all over the world,

the commercial shows for example a women in hijab many times exercising with their training program. This results in that women from all different backgrounds and religions get attracted to the Swedish armed forces (YouTube, 2016). I argue that this is the glimpse of the next step for the Swedish armed forces, where the organisation tries to attract a greater variation of people in terms of background, to break the social norms and prejudice of what it means to be a Swedish soldier.

#### *6.4.2 Stereotypic acts of women*

The commercials in the “What are you doing?”-campaign of 2013 could much likely make a lot of people, which perform these unnecessary internet situations, interested in the Swedish armed forces. Then it is good that there are both men and women performing these identifying situations since a woman is more likely to identify with a stereotypic woman. It is interesting that the Swedish armed forces still use a very women stereotypic act for the woman, such as taking a photo of her food. The Swedish armed forces show a woman to promote her, but place her directly in a women “folder” of necessary things. So in the same way the organisation is promoting women, they are still contributing to that the problem consists from the beginning.

The commercials of 2014 show women in very women stereotypic professions that they combine with working as a part-time soldier (YouTube, 2016). The professions represented were dentist, broker and preschool teacher, which also covers a very big group of professions in general for people having those kind of jobs. But what concerns me is as stated before that the commercials about the part-time soldier only include women, this will of course make the women feel that working part-time as a soldier might suit them. But it can also be interpreted as that women are only fitted for working part-time as a soldier, and not full-time. So even if this commercial is good, it can also make the women doubt herself in terms of working full-time.

The commercials of 2015 present many women but since the commercials are showing very short flickering videos of ca 1-2 seconds, it is women with very stereotypic characteristics that appear. The reason is probably because the audience has to comprehend that it is a women in only 1-2 seconds, therefore it is needed for the characteristics of the women to be very clear (YouTube, 2016). What is also interesting about the 2014 commercial saying “Like any other job. Almost.” and the 2015 commercial saying “Are you an officer without knowing it?” (YouTube, 2016), is that they both state that being a soldier is not much harder than any other

job. They show women in women stereotypic professions, such as working with children, and then they imply that the Swedish armed forces are almost like any other job and that a women working with children could be an officer without knowing it. This gives the women watching the commercial the impression that the job that is socially suitable for women are almost the same or as good as the job performed in the Swedish armed forces.



## 7. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate how the Swedish armed forces promote women in order to attract them to their organisation. Analysing the television commercials and identify Harding's three gender processes within these. The specific research questions were: (1) How does the Swedish armed forces break the social norms of what it means to be a soldier? (2) How does the Swedish armed forces try to present the division of labour as gender equal? (3) How does the Swedish armed forces try to affect women's attitude towards the organisation?

The data collected from the Swedish armed forces user page on YouTube has shown that the organisation tries to attract women through all three processes of gender equality. The symbolic, by breaking social norms of what it means to be a soldier, through showing women in dangerous situations and strong positions. The structural, by showing gender equal division of labour, through presenting women in different ranks, and presenting both men and women executing the same task. And the individual, by trying to affect women's attitude towards the Swedish armed forces, by showing stereotypic women and giving examples of how the soldier life is fitted for women. But in the structural process the gender equality could be clearer with more women at commander positions. The use of stereotypic women could also hurt the gender equality in the symbolic level, since stereotypes are built on social norms. So it would be preferable to not use the stereotypes in every commercial.

The Swedish armed forces try to attract women a lot by representing them in the television commercials, with stereotypic characteristics so that many women can identify them with their own self-image. This makes the Swedish armed forces commercials very active in the individual process of promoting gender equality. But I argue that the Swedish armed forces could use less stereotypes for the individual process, to not go against the symbolic process with social norms as much. I claim that the Swedish armed forces are most active in the symbolic process, where they often present women in norm-breaking situations. When the Swedish armed forces break the social norms about what it means to be a soldier, they also can attract the women that before thought that it was not fitted for them, since the norms and prejudice are the first step in Harding's gender equality process, it is legitimate that the Swedish armed forces has placed their focus here.

Prior scholars have acknowledged, as seen in the literature review, that there have been women in the military through history, and that women in the military often become victims for sexual harassment. There are also scholars who have studied what the men in the Swedish

armed forces think about their women colleagues, together with research about a women's experience in the Swedish armed forces. Other scholars have investigated different military recruitment strategies from USA, Canada, Australia and United Kingdom to compare them, and therefore have they also studied their attitude toward attracting more women to their organisation. But there is, as stated, a gap of scholarships investigating how the Swedish armed forces are promoting women in order to attract them to their organisation. To be able to study their promotion of women, a categorizing of Harding's gender process theory was needed. And by doing so, this thesis have helped fill the gap.

This thesis has showed how the Swedish armed forces promote women in order to attract them through their television commercials by using Harding's gender process theory. This thesis has recognised that the Swedish armed forces try to attract women to their organisation by promoting women and gender equality in the symbolic process. This by breaking the social norms and prejudice of what it means to be a soldier and showing women in dangerous and actionlike situations, together with showing female soldiers helping male soldiers. In the structural process, the Swedish armed forces commercials are showing that the division of labour are quite gender equal by placing female soldiers at frontlines, and showing women in different ranks and duties. In the individual process, the Swedish armed forces show how they use women stereotypic characteristics that attracts women to the Swedish armed forces. The women stereotypic characteristics are used 100 percent of the times, together with many implications that suggest that both men and women are able to perform successfully. So this thesis shows that the Swedish armed forces actually promote and attract women more than originally thought, when breaking down their data, it seems like they really had a purpose behind most of it. But the affect that this gender equality promotion has is not only on women's attraction to the organisation. I argue that when an organisation as big as the Swedish armed forces takes such a clear stand in the gender discussion, the whole society gets positively affected. Even if the organisation is not perfect in all points it is still a great step forward that the Swedish armed forces so openly promote and want to attract women.

This thesis results in further questions where a comparative study can be made between the Swedish armed forces attitude against women now in comparison to when the military education was mandatory. Or a study of the relation between the television commercials and the number of women applying for basic military education. It would be interesting to see how the Swedish armed forces promote women actually gets different results.

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UNIVERSITY WEST

School of Business, Economics and IT

Division of Law, Economics, Statistics and Politics

SE - 461 86 TROLLHÄTTAN

SWEDEN

Phone +46 (0) 520 22 30 00

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