Changing boundaries, defending boundaries

gender relations in the Swedish Armed Forces

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The Swedish Armed Forces is in the midst of a thorough transformation, from an invasion-based defence that guards the Swedish borders to an international defence organization. This transformation is occurring at a time when international resolutions demand gender equality within the Armed Forces. When Swedish soldiers go abroad to take part in peacekeeping operations around the globe, they are therefore not necessarily men. They are not necessarily military officers, either.

This study analyses what these transformations mean for gender relations and for occupational relations between civilian and military personnel within the Swedish Armed Forces. It shows how the focus on international peacekeeping not only challenges but also reproduces established ways of doing gender and occupational boundaries in military practices. Based on interviews and ethnographic methods, it provides a multifaceted account of gender relations in the Swedish military.