

TJÄNSTEFOLK

Vardagsliv i underordning
Stockholm 1600–1635

PAUL BORENBERG

Akademisk avhandling för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i historia vid Göteborgs universitet. Försvaras offentligen, med tillstånd av humanistiska fakultetens dekanus, fredagen den 5 juni 2020, klockan 13:00 i sal C350 på Humanisten, Renströmsgatan 6, Göteborg.



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

Abstract

TITLE: Tjänstefolk: vardagsliv i underordning, Stockholm 1600–1635

ENGLISH TITLE: Servants: everyday life in submission, Stockholm 1600–1635

AUTHOR: Paul Borenberg

LANGUAGE: Swedish, with English summary

DEPARTMENT: Department of Historical studies,
University of Gothenburg

ISBN: 978-91-7833-928-0 (PRINT)

ISBN: 978-91-7833-929-7 (PDF)

In early modern Europe, large parts of the young and unmarried population worked as servants in the households of others, until they could marry. The servants were subordinated their master in a patriarchal relationship, encoded in law and religious norms.

While research on the institution of service is mostly focused on the 18th century, this thesis explores the early 17th century, a period for which relatively little is known about the institution of service. The thesis explores the institution of service and the everyday life of the servants in Stockholm 1600–1635.

The thesis shows that the institution of service was well established in the city, with at least one tenth of the city's population consisting of servants. They performed simple tasks, guarding, carrying, fetching, etcetera, that enabled a greater freedom of movement for their masters. The servants also had very little capacity to protest and bring their masters to court for abuse, but rather chose stealing and leaving service. Their social networks consisted mainly of other people in the city who were not masters themselves.

The thesis also shows the differences between the experience of female and male servants. While male servants performed work duties far away from the household, female servants were closely tied to traditional household chores. While male servants were visible in taverns and the streets of the city, female servants' social circles seem more closely tied to the home as well. Lastly, the female servant was more vulnerable to sexual abuse by their masters than the male servants were.

The study therefore describes an institution of service, more informally organised than during the during the 18th century. It gave the servants few obvious opportunities, other than providing a somewhat honourable position, and a platform for socialising with their peers.

KEYWORDS: Servants, Stockholm, Seventeenth Century, Patriarchalism, Household, Social network, Sex, Youth, Work, Gender