Change and continuity in mercenary armies: Central Europe, 1650-1750

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The second half of the seventeenth century saw significant changes in the structures of the most important military organizations on the European continent. Collectively, these changes are commonly labelled as the introduction of standing armies. These changes certainly had a deep impact on the terms as well as the conditions of military labour. However, it needs to be discussed whether these developments should be understood as a categorical transformation, putting military labour in a typological framework of its own, or whether it would be more appropriate to stress the aspects of continuity and to embed these aspects of change in a more evolutionary interpretative framework. This chapter will argue that several changes of particular importance altered the face of military labour so that it hardly could be equated with the classical era of mercenaries in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Nevertheless, the components were still tied to various traditions and did not constitute a completely innovative system that could be compared with the later transformations initiated by the French Revolution – though even the revolutionaries, of course, could not avoid being based on existing forms of military institutions.

In accordance with the objectives of the Fighting for a Living project, this chapter will initially outline the current state of research. Particular attention will be given to the modes of recruitment, which not only can be considered crucial criteria for categorizing the type of military labour but which also developed significant variations during the era under discussion here. The second part of the chapter will discuss and reassess the empirical findings in the framework of some more general categories related to the typology and dynamics of military labour.

The most obvious expression of these changes was not inevitably connected with the principles of standing armies and consisted simply of significant growth in the size of many armies. At the forefront of these developments was the French army, which established new levels for the military strength of a leading power within the European concert. Some figures will illustrate the extent of growth. Of course, it is impossible to determine exact numbers; due to the lack of sources as well as discrepancies between normative prescriptions, a limited range of records, and the
presumed reality, the numbers are the result of more or less rough estimates and ongoing discussions. Therefore they cannot offer more than an impression of the quantitative aspect of armies.

During the Thirty Years War, France may have mobilized at the most around 125,000 troops, desperately exploiting all resources. Several decades later, around 1695, the strength of the French army may have peaked at close to 340,000 troops.\textsuperscript{1} A comparison of peacetime statistics is no less informative. At the beginning of the seventeenth century the French king was already keeping a few thousand men under arms. However, around 1680 – admittedly only in a short peacetime interlude in France's struggle for hegemony – the army probably consisted of around 150,000 soldiers, significantly more than during the Thirty Years War only four decades before.

These numbers certainly give some impression of the strength of the most powerful army during this period. However, during the eighteenth century, one may say that obtaining or retaining the status of a leading power required the maintenance of more than 100,000 soldiers in peacetime and the mobilization of at least 150,000 soldiers during war. Such were the levels of mobilization attained by the rulers of Austria\textsuperscript{2} and Prussia\textsuperscript{3} during the Silesian Wars in the middle of the eighteenth century, representing a significant augmentation of their strength compared to the first half of the seventeenth century. Though the figures still oscillated within a certain range and tended to grow, these benchmarks were not exceeded significantly until the levée en masse of the French Revolution marked another quantum increase in levels of mobilization.

To get an idea of the overall level of military mobilization in central Europe, one would have to include the forces of several medium-sized powers, including the Netherlands\textsuperscript{4} and some Italian states, as well as some princely

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\textsuperscript{1} Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siècle*, pp. 41-58, includes some critical reflections on the relationship between the numbers derived from several archived lists and the real strength of the armies in the field. The precision of the methodology employed should cause some concern about comparing these numbers with other, less carefully derived figures.


\textsuperscript{4} Van Nimwegen, *The Dutch Army and the Military Revolutions*; for a very basic overview, including some overall figures, see van Nimwegen, “The Transformation of Army Organisation in Early-Modern Western Europe”, pp. 172-178.
territories within the Holy Roman Empire, such as Bavaria, Hesse-Cassel, or Saxony. However, the relationship between the strength of the army and the total population (the so-called military participation ratio) also varied markedly. France benefited from the extent of its territories and the size of its population, which resulted, according to estimations of the time, in a ratio of the army's strength in relation to the whole population of around 1 to 140. In contrast, Prussian military strength was based on a territory not half as big as France with an even smaller population density, so that the ratio was around 1 to 32. In the second half of the eighteenth century even this was exceeded by the military of Hesse-Cassel, reaching a ratio of 1 soldier to 15 civilians. Of course, these figures are hard to verify and raise some difficulties of interpretation, which cannot be fully investigated here.

Observations: recruitment

As a result of these developments the demand for recruits increased dramatically. Indeed, the growth in absolute numbers was exacerbated by the continuous need for replacements in order to maintain the permanent existence of the armies. To be sure, the need for fresh recruits was unceasing, but reached significant peaks when rulers decided to start a military build-up, when new troops were raised in anticipation of a military confrontation or, even worse, when during war the losses had to be replaced as quickly

5 Numbers can be found in Wilson, German Armies; mostly, however, they do not relate to general strengths but to wartime strength of territorial contingents deployed as auxiliaries or parts of the composite Reichsarmee. It is noteworthy that even some of the rather autonomous imperial cities maintained their own military, which will not be included here, due to their small numbers and special circumstances; see Schwark, Lübecks Stadtmitlär im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert; Kraus, Das Militärszen der Reichsstadt Augsburg; Ehlers, Die Wehrverfassung der Stadt Hamburg im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert.

6 Ingrao, The Hessian Mercenary State; see Taylor, Indentured to Liberty; for a recent overview, though focused on early seventeenth-century militia, but with far-reaching considerations, see Gräf, “Landesdefension oder ‘Fundamentalmilitarisierung’?”

7 Kroll, Soldaten im 18. Jahrhundert zwischen Friedensalltag und Kriegserfahrung; for a compilation of several older figures on the Saxon army, see pp. 70-73.


9 The numbers are based on a list from the end of the eighteenth century, which can be found in Johann Georg Krünitz, Oeconomische Encyclopaedie, L (Berlin, 1790) (http://www.kruenitz.uni-trier.de/), pp. 746-755; the list, as part of the entry “Kriegs-Heer”, covers all of Europe, including a large number of territories of the Holy Roman Empire, and relates numbers of army strength to the population.
as possible. Therefore the business of recruitment met challenges of a new dimension, too. In fact, methods of recruitment changed significantly.

The most important mode of recruitment remained voluntary enlistment. This had been a well-established practice since mercenary service had become dominant in the later Middle Ages and had marginalized the feudal military service of the nobility. A significant aspect of this practice had been the fact that it did not really matter where the mercenaries came from. At one time, in the first half of the sixteenth century, the most reputable soldiers originated in Switzerland or, in the case of the so-called Landsknechte, from the south-western region of the Holy Roman Empire. Other mercenaries, such as the Irish and the Scots, came from peripheral regions of Europe, while still other elements of the armies, even in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, were also recruited either in the ruler’s territories or simply around the theatre of war. Such a composition gave parts of the armies a significant multi-cultural appearance.

On the other hand, the growth of the armies and, probably even more importantly, their enduring institutionalization in peacetime implied a stronger focus on the state’s own population. While precise comparisons are difficult to determine and have to take account of differing local circumstances, the importance of foreign recruits seemingly decreased in armies such as the French or the Austrian, where they dropped as a proportion of the total to below 20 per cent. Recruiting beyond the state’s borders, however, continued to be a common practice. In this respect, France maintained a special relationship with the Swiss cantons by extending traditional treaties that provided fixed numbers of Swiss recruits for

10 Mallett, Mercenaries and Their Masters; Redlich, The German Military Enterpriser and His Work Force.
11 However, exclusive contracts mostly tied Swiss recruitment to French service; see as an overview Bodin, Les Suisses au service de la France. Swiss research on mercenary services is mostly focused on its social impact in Switzerland itself; see several contributions in Fuhrer et al., Schweizer in “Fremden Diesnten”, though it mostly refers to older works, and Gente ferocissima; Küng, Glanz und Elend der Söldner; Bührer, Der Zürcher Solddienst des 18. Jahrhunderts; Schaufelberger, “Von der Kriegsgeschichte zur Militärgeschichte”; Schaufelberger, Der alte Schweizer und sein Krieg. Many authors also still refer to Peyer, “Die wirtschaftliche Bedeutung der fremden Dienste für die Schweiz”.
12 Baumann, Landsknechte.
13 Stradling, The Spanish Monarchy and Irish Mercenaries; Murtagh, “Irish Soldiers Abroad, 1600-1800”; O’Reilly, “The Irish Mercenary Tradition in the 1600s”.
14 Miller, Swords for Hire; several contributions in Murdoch, Scotland and the Thirty Years War.
16 Duffy, The Army of Maria Theresa, p. 47.
the French army, hired by the local authorities in Switzerland themselves. The Swiss were organized in separate units, which were retained during the entire eighteenth century, and they remained loyal until the last ones were massacred defending the French king against the Parisian revolutionaries in front of the Tuileries on 10 August 1792.

Even the individual enlistment of foreigners remained possible in the French army. The Austrian army profited from some scattered Habsburg possessions in southern Germany where recruiters had easy access to minor territories in the region. Along with Switzerland, the highly fragmented political landscape in southern Germany had provided one of Europe’s most important soldier-markets since the heyday of the Landsknechte. This was even more important for Prussia when it entered the league of Europe’s leading powers in the first half of the eighteenth century. Due to its relatively small population, the Prussian military build-up depended to a considerable extent on foreign recruitment. The proportion of recruits from beyond the borders of Prussia may have accounted for around one-third of the army, and Frederick the Great even tried to increase their numbers. Although the standing armies tended to become more homogeneous than before – further evidence for this will be discussed below – and since different armies had to deal with different conditions, recruitment continued to disregard the origins of the recruits. The concern with the quantity of recruits overrode any other considerations.

This was all the more true since growing armies altered the conditions of recruitment in another important regard. As far as we know, recruitment did not meet serious problems during the heyday of mercenaries in the sixteenth century. Things changed during the seventeenth century, starting with the Thirty Years War, and these were later enforced by the

17 A very close-up and colourful view of the everyday business of foreign recruitment in a southern German imperial city is offered by Schüssler, “Das Werbewesen in der Reichsstadt Heilbronn”; unfortunately only very few carbon copies of this work exist. The subject is covered fundamentally by Wilson, “The Politics of Military Recruitment in Eighteenth-Century Germany”. See also, from a more juridical perspective, von Rosenberg, Soldatenwerbung und militärisches Durchzugsrecht im Zeitalter des Absolutismus: for concrete examples, see pp. 104ff., 134ff; Heuel, Werbungen in der Reichsstadt Köln 1700-1750.
changes outlined above. Obviously, it became more and more difficult to motivate enough volunteers to join the army; at least, historians have revealed an increasing number of complaints about recruitment abuses in the records.\(^{21}\) In fact, recruitment involving the use or threat of violence, or the condemnation of delinquents to military service, seemed to become characteristic of this period of military history.

Some corrections or nuancing of this image are certainly necessary. First of all, one has to consider a certain bias inherent within the primary sources. While abuses were very likely to initiate resistance and formal complaints, and therefore the production of archival sources, a routine performed without opposition tends to be invisible to the historian. Accordingly, it is impossible to obtain a definitive record of the relative proportions of voluntary and enforced enlistment.\(^{22}\) Certainly the assumption that armies worked with large percentages of forced recruits seems to be unrealistic, though one should not underestimate either the impact of military discipline even on forced soldiers, which will be discussed below, nor the range of possible motivations for truly voluntary enlistments.

Secondly, involuntary enlistment took very different forms. Of course, a large number of examples of forced recruitment exist. For example, many of them concern Prussian recruitment in the duchy of Mecklenburg in the first half of the eighteenth century.\(^{23}\) Obviously the Prussian military profited from internal struggles in the duchy and from its defencelessness against its already rather powerful neighbour. Typically, however, most of these examples took place during the period in which the Prussian king, Frederick William I, the so-called Soldatenkönig, implemented a strong military build-up by doubling the number of Prussian soldiers, so these examples cannot be considered representative of the usual practice of Prussian recruitment in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries without broader


\(^{22}\) See Pröve, *Stehendes Heer und städtische Gesellschaft im 18. Jahrhundert*, pp. 42f.; in addition to some reports on recruitment abuses, Pröve offers data for one regiment, comparing the number of recruits during two peacetime decades with the number of official complaints in the local records, which suggests a ratio of only 5 per cent of irregular recruitments; of course, the example is small and the number of complaints might not be complete.

\(^{23}\) See von Schultz, *Die preußischen Werbungen unter Friedrich Wilhelm I. und Friedrich dem Großen*. 
research. The same thing seems to be true for the use of military service as a means of social discipline by forcing vagrants and delinquents into the army. Although there were examples for this in continental armies, and although such examples severely damaged the image of the military in public discourse, these practices did not contribute significantly to recruitment overall.

On the other hand, involuntary enlistment did not always involve the use of violence. It seems to have been far more widespread for young men to be lured into military service by tricks and traps. For example, some signed up in taverns after being plied with alcohol; others were dazzled by unfulfilled promises or high, one-off payments for enlistment; while yet others accepted gifts only to be told subsequently that these represented a signing-on fee and that they were now enlisted. Moreover, even when there was no trickery involved, we should recognize that many men probably went into the army because of poverty or to escape some acute economic crisis. Although volunteers in a formal sense, they did not join the military with real enthusiasm. Therefore, even considering that forcible impressment probably did not represent the norm, non-violent enlistments should not automatically be regarded as being wholly unforced. In any event, the great efforts made by governments to recruit soldiers and the undeniable abuses that this involved underline the fact that the growth of military organizations strained the reservoir of potential recruits and pushed the traditional methods of recruitment to their limits.

In response, rulers tried to expand or to develop alternative ways of recruiting. The options, however, were rather limited, too. Leading powers with large resources at their disposal could participate in what was later

24 See Kroll, Soldaten im 18. Jahrhundert zwischen Friedensalltag und Kriegserfahrung, pp. 95-98; Burschel, Söldner im Nordwestdeutschland des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts, pp. 94f. Sikora, Disziplin und Desertion, pp. 229-232, also refers to some critics of the time, who were worried about the bad influence of such recruits on discipline and the reputation of the military. For some reflections on the juridical debate, see Fichte, Die Begründung des Militärdienstverhältnisses, pp. 129-135. In a literal sense, defectors from the opposing army were considered offenders, too, but their incorporation into one’s own army was quite a common practice.


called the soldier-trade. Britain was the most important client, but France and others also took part in this practice. In short, minor princes, mostly from the Holy Roman Empire, provided troops in exchange for money or so-called subsidies. This practice gained a bad reputation in the late eighteenth century when German princes abandoned their subjects to an uncertain fate by sending them overseas, seemingly motivated by financial interests alone. It attracted even more criticism as such soldiers, perceived as victims of tyrannical arbitrariness, were engaged to fight in the American Revolution.

In fact, this way of increasing military power was already widespread in the seventeenth century. From a more formal view, such treaties can be considered a sort of alliance between rather unequal partners. While from the perspective of the major power, the business of recruitment could in a way be farmed out, the minor partner could hope to defend its own interests by gaining the support of a major player. In the late seventeenth century even Prussia, not yet a major player, transferred its own troops to foreign command in exchange for subsidies. The impressive enlargement of the Prussian army under Frederick William I was mostly motivated by experiences of dependency and unfulfilled promises.

In the context of the subject to be discussed here, the so-called soldier-trade further developed pre-existing mechanisms for foreign recruitment, but exacerbated the need for recruits on the part of the contractor. Even for the client it did not offer a principal solution since this option could only be used for a certain time, usually in case of crisis or war. Typically it was more attractive for Britain than for the continental states because these troops could not contribute to the permanent strength of a standing army. Thus, the soldier-trade did not constitute a new principle of recruitment: it merely exported the problems inherent within the existing system by outsourcing them to others.

The only human resource rulers could unquestionably mobilize came from the population of their own territories. Intensifying recruitment therefore inevitably focused on the domestic population and accordingly contributed to the increasingly homogeneous composition of armies. In general, mobilization of the domestic population was undertaken in two ways. One approach

27 See, for this and the following paragraph, a recent summary and discussion of a long debate, with much further reading, Wilson, “The German ‘Soldier Trade’ of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries”; the most recent contribution, focusing on the everyday life of hired soldiers, is Huck, Soldaten gegen Nordamerika.

was to involve local authorities in the struggle for voluntary enlistments, either by supporting the recruiting officers or by obliging the authorities to deliver recruits themselves. Experiences with this option seem to have been variable. When required to meet target numbers of recruits, civil officials tended to avoid confrontations with the local elites by focusing on vagrants, delinquents, or any outsiders regardless of their physical condition. However, it did not necessarily provide the military with capable soldiers; this could generally be better achieved by leaving recruitment in the hands of those officers who would have to deal with the recruits afterwards.

In addition to these alterations to the established recruiting system, several rulers tried to make use of the personal obligation of their subjects to perform military service. From a typological point of view this policy must be understood as being completely different from voluntary enlistment. From a historical point of view this policy could connect with old but rather vague traditions. The duty of collective resistance against aggressors was deeply rooted in European societies, but it had not only been whittled down to times of emergency, but was also based on a much smaller geographical unit than the whole territory, linked as it was to local feudal structures and to urban or rural municipalities. In the case of a general levy decreed by the ruler to defend the whole territory, a rather mixed type of military force could emerge from these structures. In addition to the noblemen following their feudal obligations, there were rural levies from the noble lands as well as from the ruler’s personal estates, organized by the villages and court districts, together with contingents from the fortified towns, based on their own local defence systems. These towns gained a special strategic importance due to their walls, often connected with a certain degree of political and military autonomy. The participation of townsmen in defence of their municipalities, though not generally of much military significance, can be traced into the seventeenth and even eighteenth centuries.

29 For Austria, see Hochedlinger, "Rekrutierung - Militarisierung - Modernisierung", pp. 342-345.
30 The importance of the armed services in German cities has recently been stressed, though focusing more on public order and civic mentalities than on military functions, by Tlusty, The Martial Ethic in Early Modern Germany.
31 Since local military customs in the countryside are widely unexplored, the edition of a late-medieval finding of law might be worth taking a look at; see Franz, Quellen zur Geschichte des deutschen Bauernstandes im Mittelalter, pp. 592-596.
32 A very good example of such complexity of military structures, combined with an edition of many archival sources, is offered by Schennach, Ritter, Landsknecht, Aufgebot.
33 Of course, sieges as a crucial part of early modern warfare were mostly carried out by permanent or occasional garrison troops as part of the territorial army. On the role of the inhabitants of a fortified city and their relationship to the garrison troops, see Hohrath, "Der Bürger im Krieg
Such local military organizations are usually called militias. We lack the detailed studies that would allow us to construct a comprehensive overview of the role of militias, although enough is known to establish that they were of varying military value. Nevertheless, for many early modern contemporaries the idea of militia service gained a special importance, with military philosophers such as Machiavelli associating it with the much-acclaimed ideal of a republican military force, based on the duty performed by free citizens and seemingly prefigured in the ancient Roman Republic.34 In the English debates of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the concept of militia was counterposed to the much criticized standing armies.35 In Germany during the same period, the term “militia” was frequently ill defined, and could even designate the military as a whole. In the light of such divergent terminological usage, I should emphasize that in this chapter “militia” will be used as an analytical category, denoting a kind of non-professional military service, based on common duties, performed only on demand, and therefore, in an analytical sense, opposed in principle to the characteristics of standing professional armies.

It is important to note, however, that in certain regions a new type of permanent, though non-professional military service emerged several decades before the establishment of standing armies. Around 1600, threatened by the Eighty Years’ War and the increasing tensions within the Holy Roman Empire, some minor princes and counts of the empire started taking precautionary measures to prepare their territories for military defence. And while they lacked the necessary resources to hire significant numbers of mercenaries, they tried to organize regular military training for a large number of their subjects who were selected in their communities according to prescribed ratios. Although the participants retained their civil status and remained within their localities, they were integrated into a loose organization, e.g., by dividing them into several companies, which were assigned to certain captains. From time to time, generally on Sundays, they were convoked for some basic military training, especially in the use of guns.

34 See Metzger, Die Milizarmee im klassischen Republikanismus.
35 See Schwoerer, No Standing Armies.
Obviously, these formations still met some crucial criteria for militias, according to the definition given above. The participants served as non-professionals, performed common duties, and, in a certain sense, still served only occasionally. However, at least two basic changes are no less obvious. Military service within these structures was no longer limited to times of emergency. In fact, such militias established a kind of periodic military service in peacetime even several decades before standing armies emerged. Secondly, the legal framework was renewed. In contrast to earlier levies the new militias, most often called Landesdefensionen (territorial defence forces), were not composed of different contingents but formed – at least in principle and ignoring the practice of privileges and exemptions – a homogeneous organization which did not systematically differentiate between subjects of the ruler, subjects of the noble landlords, and urban inhabitants. Unlike earlier municipal militias, which more or less kept the idea of municipal autonomy and military self-defence, based – at least theoretically – on a reciprocal military obligation of the citizens, the Landesdefensionen were exclusively bound to serve the rulers’ policies. Their emergence can therefore be interpreted as enforcing the state-building process, because they helped to establish a monopoly of violence and reinforced a trend towards the equalization of the status of the ruler’s subjects at the cost of former noble and municipal privileges. Of course, one has to be aware of the diffuse realities that lay behind such theoretical abstractions, but the further changes to be discussed below will confirm the general thrust of developments.

Some of these organizations, e.g. in Saxony or in the Electoral Palatinate, in Bavaria, or even in Brandenburg-Prussia, were maintained or resurrected even after the end of the Thirty Years War, though these minor territories started to build up permanent forces too. An even more striking

36 For an overview, see Schnitter, Volk und Landesdefension.
38 Naumann, Das kursächsische Defensionswerk (1613 bis 1709); Kroll, Soldaten im 18. Jahrhundert zwischen Friedensalltag und Kriegserfahrung, pp. 125-129.
39 Bezzel, Geschichte des kurbayerischen Heeres.
40 Würdinger, “Die bayerischen Landfahnen vom Jahre 1651-1705”;
41 Lampe, “Der Milizgedanke und seine Durchführung in Brandenburg-Preußen”, pp. 105-132 (only available as a carbon copy); Göse, “Die brandenburgisch-preußische Landmiliz”. See also, in regard to the duchy of Prussia, later East Prussia, Marwitz, Staatsräson und Landesdefension.
example for the relevance of militia forces within the framework of standing armies emerged in France. Here, local militias endured into the eighteenth century, providing, for example, soldiers to guard the coasts and borders. However, in 1688 the establishment of a Royal Militia was decreed. This step in fact created a new type of militia by transforming the principle of local military service into a countrywide organization at the disposal of the king.42 Varying numbers of militiamen could be called up by changing the quotas that each village had to supply; men from adjacent villages were put together in companies; officers were assigned to oversee regular training on Sundays and holidays. In case of war, they formed provincial regiments which were put under the command of the army. These units were expected to support the army in different ways with up to tens of thousands of men, a small but not insignificant number. The involuntary involvement of the population during the bellicose reign of Louis XIV, however, also provoked resistance; service with the militia was perceived as a “blood tax” on poor people. During the eighteenth century the militia underwent a change of fortune and was dissolved for many years, but never lost its bad reputation. From a more general perspective it nevertheless lent the French military system a kind of hybrid character (Lynn) by founding its recruitment on two very distinct principles.

Certainly the military value of militia units was limited, and it in fact diminished in comparison to the increasing efficiency of permanently maintained troops. Nevertheless, militias or levies were still employed, even during the heyday of linear warfare in the middle of the eighteenth century.43 At the very least they seem to have been reasonably effective as defence forces for fortified places or against marauders. Thus, in comparison

42 See, for example, Lynn, Giant of the Grand Siècle, pp. 371-393; Corvisier, L’armée française de la fin du XVIIe siècle au ministère de Choiseul, I, pp. 111-119, 197-231; Girard, Racolage et milice (1701-1715); Henret, Les milices et les troupes provinciales.
43 Many militia activities are reported, though not yet systematically explored, from Moravia and Silesia, the main theatres of the Silesian Wars; they are mentioned in the multi-volume works of the official historiography, published by the Prussian General Staff, as well as the Austrian. See Großer Generalstab, Die Kriege Friedrich des Großen, I.3, pp. 98f., 101, 108, 118, 140, 161, 178, 286f., 313, II.1, 77f., 101, 220f., 222f., II.2, 90f., 139, II.3, 136, 143, 179, (and on Saxon militias) 194, 202, 220, III.8, 3, 34f., 52, 85, 212; corresponding information can be found in Kriegsgeschichtliche Abteilung des K. und k. Kriegs-Archivs, Kriege unter der Regierung der Kaiserin-Königin Maria Theresia. Of course, there are also many hints about the lack of efficiency of militias. Striking is the chaos caused by Hessian militiamen during the Battle of Sandershausen in 1758: they were positioned in the middle of the battle order, became disoriented, panicked, and fired on everyone, friend or foe. See Savory, His Britannic Majesty’s Army in Germany during the Seven Years War, pp. 96ff.
to the standing troops, the militias usually played only an auxiliary role. For example, they could serve as guards, thus relieving the army of some duties during wartime.

It seems that the most important auxiliary function was to provide reinforcements for the army, as a pool for voluntary engagement in one way or another. In practice, the distinctions between these two types of military organization could become blurred.\textsuperscript{44} Sometimes militia units were used directly to support the army in the field and were more or less integrated, and sometimes rulers called for direct levies to fill the ranks of the standing units. Their traditional duty, formerly restricted to cases of necessity, rooted in local contexts, therefore tended to be transformed, step by step, into a resource for permanent military efforts at the unrestricted disposal of the ruler. Of course, one should add the stories of resistance against such measures.

In the Holy Roman Empire these developments were also reflected in the discourse on public law in the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{45} The crucial point was whether the subjects could be forced into military service beyond those instances of acute necessity, which was out of the question. From the cabinet’s point of view the differences between voluntary enlistment and impressment were less theoretical than practical. Obviously, standing units were preferred to militias because of their greater military effectiveness. Enforcing an obligation on subjects to serve in the militias, on the other hand, was not only an easy way of recruiting, but also a cheap one, and this was crucial. Militias did not generate as many costs as standing armies; even when subjects were forced to enter the permanent units and therefore came to be paid regularly, nevertheless the initial costs of recruitment and especially the premiums for engagement (which were considerable) had been saved.

Furthermore, it is worth discussing the way in which particular problems of recruitment were solved in Prussia mostly during the second decade of the eighteenth century, not least because some contemporaries considered this solution to offer an example to be followed. In comparison to the practices outlined above, it might be astonishing to see that the Prussian military build-up started with a seemingly contrary action. Although Prussia had

\textsuperscript{44} For an overview, see Sikora, \textit{Disziplin und Desertion}, pp. 238-243.

\textsuperscript{45} Fichte, \textit{Die Begründung des Militärdienstverhältnisses}, pp. 136-182; Sikora, \textit{Disziplin und Desertion}, pp. 236-238; one of the most sophisticated contributions, though clearly situational, in opposition to recruitments in Württemberg, is [Moser], \textit{Abhandlung von Noethigung derer Unterthanen zu regulären Kriegs-Diensten}. 
a militia at its disposal at the beginning of the eighteenth century, it was dissolved by Frederick William I soon after he acceded to the throne. His action reflected a typical problem concerning recruitment: the existence of rivalry. The militia constrained recruitment to the standing army because the members of the militia enjoyed the privilege of being exempt from the reach of the recruiting officers. From this point of view, the abolition of the militia should have facilitated more or less voluntary enlistment because the king exclusively favoured the expansion of the standing army.

Yet frictions and rivalries continued, no longer between militia and army, but between the different regiments of the army, which competed to find recruits from within the ruler’s territories. What would come to constitute the distinguishing characteristics of the Prussian system of recruitment did not emerge as the result of an intentional plan, but were developed piecemeal as solutions for particular problems. They can be summarized under three headings. First, the regiments tried to lay claim to potential future recruits to prevent other regiments from taking them. Therefore, at an early stage they started to put the names of young boys in the area around their garrisons onto lists, which were intended to reserve the individuals for service with the local regiment. Secondly, to avoid further conflicts, the central government started to draw boundary lines between the regiments and ended up creating recruiting districts, or so-called Kantone, from which the name Kantonsystem was derived. Once the system was elaborated, these cantons comprised a certain number of households to assure that every regiment had similar opportunities for recruitment. Within these cantons, the future recruits were already systematically registered by the army during their childhood, a task which was subsequently carried out with the help of local civil officials.

Since the enlargement of the army absorbed many domestic recruits, the more so since they were picked out in such a systematic way, the economic advantages threatened to turn into disadvantages. The price was the loss of

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46 In fact, he did so less than two weeks after the death of his father. In 1718, Frederick William even forbade the use of the word “militia”, insisting his troops be called “regiments” or “soldiers”. Obviously the king was very keen on marking the difference: Frauenholz, Das Heerwesen in der Zeit des Absolutismus, pp. 194, 231f.

47 As a useful outline of the Kantonsystem’s development, see Jany, “Die Kantonverfassung Friedrich Wilhelms I.”; the most recent contribution to its exploration is Winter, Untertanengeist durch Militärpflicht? (on its emergence see specifically pp. 39-97). For an overview of the influential debate on the social impact of the Kantonsystem and comparisons with other practices of domestic recruitment in German territories, see Wilson, “Social Militarization in Eighteenth-Century Germany”. Some documents can be found in Frauenholz, Das Heerwesen in der Zeit des Absolutismus.
civilians labour force and tax revenue. This could partly be compensated for by intensifying foreign recruitment, but this was rather costly. It could be mitigated in detail by excluding certain professions from being recruited, based on regional and economic factors. The most important way out of this dilemma, however, was to furlough the domestic soldiers, the _Kantonisten_, for most of the year. In fact, during peacetime, they were obliged to join the troops only for two months in spring for exercises and manoeuvres. This was the third main characteristic of the _Kantonsystem_.

If the parallel existence of standing units and militias may be perceived as a hybrid military organization, the _Kantonsystem_ was an even more bastardized form of recruitment. In its final stage it looked, in regard to the _Kantonisten_, very similar to a militia. Unlike in the _Landesdefensionen_, however, regular training did not take place in the civilian environment in the form of afternoon exercises, but was concentrated into a few weeks on the garrisons’ drill grounds; therefore, for most of the year, the soldiers lived a real civilian life in peacetime (if we disregard some complications in the details). Nevertheless, they were not organized in a separate institution from the army, but were mixed in with the mercenaries and formed the fundamental basis of a standing army, in respect of its numbers as well as presumably with regard to its mentality, though the latter is rather difficult to discern.

It should also not be overlooked that the intention behind the _Kantonsystem_ was not to enforce obligatory military service on all potential _Kantonisten_, but rather to serve as a tool for the regiments to simply refill their ranks according to their current needs. After all, it did not emerge as an improvement of former militias, but as an optimization of regimental recruitment, which originally was based on individual volunteering. The _Kantonsystem_ was therefore most precisely characterized as “legalizing a system of forced domestic recruitment” (“rechtliche Fixierung der inländischen Zwangswerbung”), a definition that includes the assumption that genuine voluntary enlistment turned into a rather coercive practice as the Prussian army doubled in size under Frederick William I. As a result, however, the system turned violence into a predictable obligation – that is to say, physical force into legal force – and provided continuous reinforcements for the army. Therefore, it seemingly offered exemplary solutions for


49 Von Schmoller, _Umrisse und Untersuchungen zur Verfassungs-, Verwaltungs- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte besonders des Preußischen Staates_, p. 278.
typical structural problems of the time and inspired similar efforts in other territories, such as Hesse-Cassel and Austria.50

One should add that the implementation of the *Kantonsystem* in particular as well as militias in general had to take account of the local distribution of power since feudal structures were still of great importance in parts of central Europe. This was especially true in regard to the so-called *Gutsherrschaft* in parts of Brandenburg, where peasants were subject to a rigorous form of serfdom. However, turning them into *Kantonisten* also implied that they had been (at least partially) transferred from the jurisdiction of their landlords to the jurisdiction of the military. Although they may be said to have been doubly unfree, there are also hints that the rivalry of two authorities could strengthen their position in conflicts with their landlords. Therefore, the consequences of compulsory service in pre-modern societies may possibly turn out to be rather complex, though this cannot be discussed in detail here.

Looking at the composition of armies during the course of these transformations, but also considering the early modern period as a whole, requires at least two additional points to be made. First, most observations, including those outlined above, deal with the bulk of the army, which was constituted by the infantry. However, the cavalry continued to play an important role on the battlefield as well forming a not insignificant element of the forces. Although this aspect is neglected by historical research, it nevertheless seems that the recruiting of cavalrymen could usually be maintained by way of voluntary enlistment, and the system did not face the problems encountered with the recruitment of infantrymen. This was probably linked to the cavalry’s higher reputation and possibly also with a less exhausting kind of service. Whatever the case, the cavalry did not necessitate the utilization of any new methods of recruitment.

This is also true, albeit for different reasons, with regard to specialist units with more technical functions, such as the artillery. Although their importance on the battlefield increased, they still formed only small units

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with long-serving soldiers, so that the need for recruits was rather limited and had no relevant impact on the principles of military organization.\textsuperscript{51}

The same does not apply, however, to the role of the nobility. Military service was an essential part of the nobility’s collective identity and legitimacy. That did not mean that the glorified traditions of martial endeavour and chivalry aligned with military practice at the end of the seventeenth century. Nor did it mean that every nobleman actually joined the army. In fact, the Prussian king Frederick William I, once again, not only forced his subjects into military service, but also expected the noble houses of his territory to send at least one son into the army, an expectation that was occasionally enforced with all the means at his disposal.\textsuperscript{52} The military service of the domestic nobility should have facilitated control either over the army or over the nobility itself. For many noblemen, in Prussia as elsewhere, a period of military service, even if only for a limited number of years, still constituted a meaningful and indisputable part of their biography and an honourable way to earn a living, at least in a symbolic sense, since the income of many officerships did not cover the costs of keeping up noble appearances, which therefore must have been paid for out of the family fortune.

In terms of the army’s composition, the military service of the nobility represented a third constituent of military service alongside voluntary enlistment and the obligation of the subjects. The service of the nobles was based on a framework of cultural values and traditions\textsuperscript{53} from which ordinary soldiers were excluded and, although the noble members of the military comprised only a minority of the military personnel, their importance was enhanced by the fact that they almost exclusively occupied the officerships. This reflected their privileged position in the society of orders, and the transference of these principles into the military inevitably led to a fundamental separation between the officers and the ordinary men with regard to reputation, rank, and mentality. This, however, also corresponded to the latter’s everyday experience in civilian life.

Of course, it has to be admitted that not every officer was of noble origin. This was especially true for the technical branches of the army; first of all the artillery, where the need for specialist knowledge made the service less attractive for nobles. This notwithstanding, even in the infantry and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[51] See, for example, Duffy, \textit{The Army of Maria Theresa}, p. 108.
\item[52] Büsch, \textit{Militärsystem und Sozialleben im alten Preußen}, pp. 79-83; Göse, “Zwischen Garnison und Rittergut”.
\item[53] Some general observations can be found in Sikora, \textit{Disziplin und Desertion}, pp. 343-350.
\end{footnotes}
cavalry there was some opportunity for military careers to be pursued by non-noble soldiers who distinguished themselves. However, until the era of revolution and reform these cases continued to be individual exceptions, albeit with some fluctuations over time. Periods of extended warfare, above all the Thirty Years War, favoured such careers while the perpetuation of the military organization even tended to stabilize the connection between social and military hierarchy. Additionally it should be noted that climbers from the lower ranks were mostly ennobled as they rose up the military hierarchy. In a certain sense they adjusted to prevailing socio-cultural norms.

By contrast with the common soldiers, no structural changes have been detected with regard to noble entrants to the army as a result of the introduction of standing armies. The pressure exercised by the king of Prussia does not seem to be representative. The transformation of the military into a permanent organization, however, changed the framework for all levels of military service. To complete the outline of the whole process this dimension has to be added to the discussion around recruitment. It certainly also influenced the motivation of possible recruits.

Observations: conditions

First of all, the permanence of the military allowed for the period of military service to be significantly extended. Wholesale demobilizations at the end of a war were reduced step by step, although all states, even in the eighteenth century, still continued to make use of the short-term formation and disbandment of units. On the whole, however, armies started to offer options for lifelong careers, or at least a livelihood, though the changes should not be exaggerated. Long periods of armed conflict, especially the Thirty Years War, prolonged in France by the Franco-Spanish War, required long-term service which had not actually been desired for its own sake at this time. The introduction of standing armies, however, not only institutionalized long-term service, but also established peacetime military service as a common practice for many thousands of military employees.

54 See Kaiser, “Ist er vom Adel?”
55 The ongoing practice of army reductions even after 1648 has been emphasized by Kroener, “Der Krieg hat ein Loch ...”.
56 A recently presented example is Nowosadtko, Stehendes Heer im Ständestaat, pp. 159-178.
It should be stressed, on the one hand, that this did not mean that a lifelong military occupation became the norm. Of course, the military authorities tried to keep their soldiers in service as long as possible. This was a traditional source of friction between military commanders and the soldiers because,\textsuperscript{58} during wartime, the authorities had always tried to compel the soldiers to serve until the end of the conflict. In peacetime standing armies, the circumstances were far less dramatic, but long-term service was still in the interests of the authorities because it kept military experience and skills in the army and saved the cost and effort of recruitment. They therefore tried to impose long-term service as the only option; for example, in Prussia and Bavaria voluntary enlistment was in principle unlimited. There is some evidence from the eighteenth century that in fact soldiers increasingly tended to spend their whole professional life serving in one army.

On the other hand, this situation was not in the interests of potential recruits. There is evidence that most soldiers preferred to serve for a limited time and that there was room for negotiation over the length of service in some circumstances.\textsuperscript{59} Whether recruitment was being carried out in peacetime or in wartime obviously made a difference. During the Silesian Wars and the Seven Years War, Bavaria quickly resorted to contracts limiting military service to no more than three years just to get soldiers to sign on at all.\textsuperscript{60} Subsequent disagreements over the contract and date of dismissal resulted in conflict and desertions.

Alongside the introduction of a standing army, payment and subsistence had to be permanently provided, which proved a major challenge for state bureaucracies and especially for their treasuries, as well as being a major factor in changing the character of soldiers’ working conditions. In fact, the authorities managed the challenge by pragmatically developing mixed systems, which varied from time to time and from territory to territory, but which typically comprised a number of components. Such expedients had to some extent been prefigured during the Thirty Years War when they had developed as a result of the circumstances which mostly did not allow regular payment.

\textsuperscript{58} Redlich, 	extit{The German Military Enterpriser and His Work Force}, p. 218; Sikora, 	extit{Disziplin und Desertion}, pp. 193-196.

\textsuperscript{59} Once again, see Nowosadtko, 	extit{Stehendes Heer im Ständestaat}, pp. 180-185; Pröve, 	extit{Stehendes Heer und städtische Gesellschaft im 18. Jahrhundert}, pp. 88-94.

\textsuperscript{60} Staundinger, 	extit{Geschichte des kurpfälzischen Heeres unter Kurfürst Karl Albrecht - Kaiser Karl VII. - und Kurfürst Max III. Joseph 1726-1777}, I, pp. 240f.
Of course, a monthly payment continued to form the core of remuneration. While the pay of the mercenaries, at least its nominal level, had been relatively stable during the sixteenth century, some fluctuation can be observed during the second half of the seventeenth century, probably because of the conditions of the recruitment market. As a whole the nominal level of the monthly pay tended to decrease by up to 50 per cent, although precise comparisons are difficult to draw.\textsuperscript{61}

One element in the soldier’s monetary compensation was the premium, or signing-on bounty, paid as a reward for voluntary enlistment, and this did increase in importance. Originally recruits had received a certain sum to cover the costs of travelling from the place of recruitment to the place where the recruits were mustered. Later on, this payment changed its function and became a very flexible device that recruiters used to compete with one another.\textsuperscript{62} Of course, the premium was designed to overcome a potential recruit’s immediate concerns and to obscure the conditions of long-term service, and certainly its value to the recruit was negligible in the context of an extended period of soldiering. Nevertheless, the premium might well have weighed heavily with some potential recruits as they sought to evaluate the benefits and risks of signing on. On the whole, it is clear that the military authorities focused their efforts on the act of enlistment. Once recruited, the men were subjected to the judicial consequences of their contract and oath\textsuperscript{63} and the constraints of the institution. In this sense, premiums, as well as forced recruitments, compensated for a lack of supply, which was partly caused by poor salaries, which, for their part, resulted from the costs of standing armies.

The monetary payment did not cover all the soldier’s needs. He required clothes and weapons, food, quarters, and some everyday commodities. In contrast to previous practice, clothes and weapons were usually delivered by the authorities. This was, incidentally, the reason why clothing became more and more “uniform”, since it was ordered in large quantities and increasingly prescribed in detail.\textsuperscript{64} In some armies and in some periods, however, the

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{64} Hohrath, “Uniform”; deep insights into the material culture of an eighteenth-century army, with plenty of illustrations, are now provided by Hohrath, \textit{Friedrich der Große und die Uniformierung der preußischen Armee}.
\end{thebibliography}
cost of the equipment was deducted from soldiers’ pay. There were similar options to ensure the nourishment of the soldiers. Sometimes the soldiers had to use their pay to buy food on the open market; at other times basic foodstuffs were delivered to the army. In this case, sometimes the food was free and at times it was deducted from the soldier’s pay. Finally, in many territories, lodging was still provided by the civilian population, since the construction of barracks, as in France, remained the exception rather than the rule, and the soldiers were allocated to private households. Commodities that the soldiers could demand in many cases included wood, wax, salt, pepper, and vinegar. It seems to have been a widespread practice to shift the delivery of these items to the hosts, which could be considered a kind of tax. In some regions the hosts even had to serve the food for the soldiers.

Thus, the income of the soldiers was a mix of money and non-cash benefits.\textsuperscript{65} It is difficult to evaluate the totals, but it seems reasonable to suggest that the level of the soldiers’ income was comparable with the earnings of day-labourers or clerks on the lowest level. This may have allowed at best a modest, but stable living, though some documents also reveal complaints of poor conditions. These were also reflected in the regulations restricting the soldier’s right to marry. Such restrictions were designed to limit the number of dependent women and children in armies, with their associated costs.\textsuperscript{66} For a minority of soldiers things could turn for the better since wages grew significantly as they climbed the hierarchy of ranks. Common soldiers could supplement their income by taking on additional overtime shifts within the military, and also by offering their labour on the civilian market or by selling simple products.\textsuperscript{67} Many of them, for example, were former journeymen. So even non-military components can be added to a diversified set of income sources and benefits, which on the whole ensured the livelihood of the soldiers.

The non-military aspect of the soldier’s occupation directs the focus to the form of military service itself. Customary peacetime functions consisted of guard duty and sometimes possibly small missions to maintain public order, since the authorities did not yet have the large numbers of personnel required

\textsuperscript{65} These paragraphs are a summary of the findings of Burschel, Söldner im Nordwestdeutschland des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts, pp. 188-192; Redlich, The German Military Enterpriser and His Work Force, II, pp. 236-258.

\textsuperscript{66} Much deeper insight on this subject can be found in Engelen, Soldatenfrauen in Preußen; on the regulations, see pp. 41-68.

\textsuperscript{67} Nowosadtko, Stehendes Heer im Ständestaat, pp. 234-241; Kroll, Soldaten im 18. Jahrhundert zwischen Friedensalltag und Kriegserfahrung, pp. 286-289; Pröve, Stehendes Heer und städtische Gesellschaft im 18. Jahrhundert, pp. 252-266, also discusses illegal incomes.
to enforce the civil law. However, these functions could be fulfilled by a small fraction of the soldiers recruited into the burgeoning standing armies. In fact soldiers of these armies enjoyed a lot of time unoccupied by military duties, as their additional earnings indicated. They fulfilled their military function, at least partly, by their simple presence and availability. Of course, the maintenance of their fighting abilities was part of their everyday life as well.

This military training corresponded to the principles of so-called linear warfare which took its more or less final shape towards the end of the seventeenth century. The collective formations of the soldiers had changed over decades from large squares to broad but thin lines only four or three men deep. Since trained infantrymen deployed in such a fashion presented a powerful defensive formation, the extra numbers recruited into armies could be used to broaden the formation, with the option of outflanking the adversary. For the majority of soldiers the objectives of military training derived from this formation although the enduring importance of the cavalry and the growing importance of the artillery should not be denied.

It is well known and obvious even from this very short description that this kind of warfare did not call for outstanding dexterity and flexibility on the part of the soldiers. The main issue was to ensure that they were obedient and acted in a co-ordinated way. The major skills required were the use of the musket and collective movements of the whole body of troops. The handling of the musket was broken down into a certain number of distinct movements which were linked to specific commands. Contemporary military authors loved to illustrate this technique by presenting image sequences which in a certain sense prefigured modern instruction manuals by representing standardized operations. This dissection of the required movements seemingly facilitated teaching the recruits the use of muskets, which in fact required a complex sequence of manoeuvres since they were still one-shot muzzle loaders. Additionally, the fragmentation allowed progress in co-ordinating the action of the troops. By dividing a single operation into a series of discrete movements, the operation could be reconstructed as a collective action. Even more delicate was the challenge of moving many thousands of men on the battlefield in the described way, when the front of an army could span several kilometres. This not

69 Lyn, Battle, pp. 111-125.
70 Sikora, “Die Mechanisierung des Kriegers”; see also Wellmann, “Hand und Leib, Arbeiten und Üben”.

only required strict discipline to keep the soldiers in line but, in advance of this, long columns of marching soldiers also had to be deployed and transformed into a line, ideally without considerable gaps opening up and sections overlapping, all the while taking account of the conditions on the battlefield and the actions of the adversaries.

To keep control over the troops according to these principles and under such circumstances, peacetime training seemingly was inevitable and must therefore be considered a crucial precondition for linear warfare. Of course, there were some differences between chronological periods and armies with regard to the intensity of the training, which ranged from one or two times a week up to daily exercises in the later Prussian army, albeit still limited to the morning.71 Training for collective movements was done in small units since the performance of large-scale manoeuvres required considerable effort and these were reduced to, at best, annual events, which may have become spectacular affairs attracting members of the court and foreign observers.72 Certainly it must be admitted that the theory in books and even the practice on the parade ground did not exactly represent the reality of the battlefield, something which will not be discussed at this juncture. On the other hand, however, regular training not only implied something like an employment scheme for the soldiers and an attempt to control future battles, but also a certain military mentality.

This elaborate method of military training, which became well known as drill, can be traced back to the end of the sixteenth century, when the military leaders of the Dutch revolt tried to increase the efficiency of their military forces in their struggle against the superior Spanish army. Their reforms were inspired not only by military experience, but also by contemporary philosophy and the ideas of military authors of late antiquity.73 Therefore, they propagated not only certain details of military tactics and training, but also the ethical ideals of the perfect soldier, which were integrated into a renewed concept of military discipline. While losing some of its sophistication, the idea of discipline remained a key concept in the debates of military authors. It was substantiated not only in the image sequences mentioned above, but also in

71 All details of Prussian military training, at least as they were intended to be fulfilled, can be derived from regulations which covered the entire spectrum of military duties and are mostly available as reprints; the most important are Reglement vor die Königl. Preußische Infanterie [...] (Potsdam, 1726, repr. Osnabrück, 1968) and, Reglement vor die Königl. Preußische Infanterie [...] (Berlin, 1943, repr. Osnabrück, 1976).
various ways in which weapon-handling was dealt with in the growing number of military manuals, which tended to increase the number of individual movements soldiers were expected to perform and commands they had to obey. They shaped an image of soldiers as subject to a rather mechanical ideal of training and fighting. Beyond the pure rationale of combat efficiency, the whole appearance of the soldiers was expected to reflect the qualities of discipline and obedience that imbued their whole being.

Once again it should be stressed that the reality of the parade ground probably looked much more prosaic than theories and manuals suggest, but without doubt the introduction of standing armies created the conditions for a significantly higher level of control over the soldiers. This control was expressed through more than just regular drills. It became manifest in a certain weakening of the soldiers’ rights as well. In contrast to the mercenaries in the armies of the sixteenth century, who had cultivated some elements of corporate autonomy and representation based on their self-conception as contractual partners, members of the standing armies were increasingly subject to the one-sided duties confirmed by their oaths and subordinated to a military justice that was handled by academically trained jurists in the interests of and according to the guidelines of the rulers. As one example, it has been observed that, starting with the Dutch reformers, the soldiers were confronted with demands to carry out construction work on entrenchments and fortifications. Although the real extent of such work cannot be quantified, the claim marks a significant change, since such duties were strongly resisted during the heyday of mercenary business as incompatible with the honour of the warriors. The increase in control in the seventeenth century was also reflected in the intensified use of written means of registration and periodic inventory. Even the distribution of uniform clothing can be regarded as a symbolic expression of increasing control as it reduced the opportunity for individual expression and even eccentricity, which seems to have been quite typical of the older mercenary tradition.

74 Kleinschmidt, Tyrocinium Militare.
75 Baumann, Landsknechte, pp. 92-130; Möller, Das Regiment der Landsknechte, pp. 52-112.
77 See, for France, the insight in the vast possible quantity of data from the French records provided by Corvisier, Les contrôles des troupes de l’Ancien Régime. Almost all Prussian lists were lost during the Second World War, but even a single example can give an impression of the intensity of documentation; see (with photographic reproductions of the lists) Hanne (introduction), Rangirrolle, Listen und Extracte ... von Saldern Infanterie Regiment Anno 1771.
78 Rogg, “Zerhauen und zerschnitten, nachadelichen Sitten”, including reflections on the interdependence between military clothing, civilian clothing, and the progress of military discipline. For a number of visual examples, see Rogg, Landsknechte und Reisläufer.
Seemingly, the military turned out to be that element of the population that was best controlled and most disciplined by the authorities, with the exception of prisoners. However, a mere listing of those factors that drove the move towards the implementation of ever more restrictive discipline should not lead us to believe that the military was transformed into a frictionless machine (not an arbitrary metaphor, but one which became common at least during the eighteenth century).\(^7\) Although it is almost impossible to compare the level of insubordination and refusal, abuse, and disorder over time and changing conditions, at least the manifestations of refusal seem to have changed their profile. While mutinies apparently caught much attention and reflected the structures typical of the classic mercenary armies,\(^8\) they mostly disappeared from around the middle of the seventeenth century or were at least reduced to minor and exceptional incidents. This might have been the combined result of several factors: the increase in control and the decrease in collective advocacy of common interests, but also the stabilization of maintenance and payment which, though the sums were still rather poor, nevertheless probably prevented discontent and resistance.

On the other hand, desertion started to attract much more attention and effort.\(^9\) To be sure, soldiers had deserted in the preceding period, too, perhaps in significant numbers, but the phenomenon remained relatively invisible to historians, since even contemporary authorities did not or were not able to focus on this subject. From the second half of the seventeenth century, however, desertion was especially addressed in an increasing number of edicts and decrees. It became more precisely defined in these edicts and in the juridical debate, and in Germany even the word started to become established as a technical term.\(^2\) The growing tendency of authorities to categorize, list, and archive thus provides the historian with more abundant documentation of the phenomenon which, although often fragmentary, allows a more complete picture to be established than for earlier periods.

\(^7\) See Sikora, *Disziplin und Desertion*, pp. 45f.; for the parallels between the military discourse and the discourse on state politics, see Stollberg-Rilinger, *Der Staat als Maschine*.


\(^9\) See Sikora, *Disziplin und Desertion*; on desertion before the era of standing armies, see the contributions from Reinhard Baumann, Michael Kaiser and Peter Burschel in Bröckling and Sikora, *Armeen und ihre Deserteure*; for a different viewpoint, see Muth, *Flucht aus dem militärischen Alltag*.

\(^2\) Sikora, *Disziplin und Desertion*, pp. 54f.
The motives for desertion must be regarded as diverse, but certainly enforced enlistment, violent modes of training and disciplining, and controversies over the conditions of service played a major role during peacetime. Of course, the reasons and motives for desertion took a much more existential shape during wartime, due to considerable physical exertion, poor weather conditions, the lack of maintenance, and disintegration caused by military defeats. But even then, at least, mutinies remained an exception.

Therefore, on the whole, the intensified focus on desertion does not just indicate friction and considerable differences between the ideal of discipline and control and the realities of garrison life and campaigns. Alongside this, desertion must partly be interpreted as a reaction to, and an unintended result of, an increasing level of control and coercion. Thirdly, however, the efforts to record and to prevent desertion themselves reflect the increasing efficiency of control. In this sense the shift from mutinies to desertions can also be labelled as the individualization, isolation, and marginalization of refusal.

In summary, the introduction of standing armies significantly changed the conditions of military service and the appearance of the soldiers. The permanence of the organization even during peacetime transformed military service into a reliable long-term, if not lifelong, occupation which, paradoxically, meant that fighting was not the only job undertaken by soldiers. Continuous training ensured a higher level of fighting skills, although these skills consisted of rather simple, mechanical manual operations. One should also note the significantly higher level of regulation, control, and discipline, which were accompanied by a greater use of coercion and internal violence. To situate the period 1650-1750 and the central European experience within the broader framework of military labour, however, requires some further discussion of basic issues, not least recruitment, for the method of recruitment profoundly influenced the basic constitution of the military.

General discussion: structures of recruitment

As outlined above, recruitment changed its shape, too. Since the concept of mercenary service seems to be inevitably connected with the principle of free contracting, the growing importance both of forced enlistment and of part-time soldiers such as militiamen or Kantonisten may indicate a possible discrepancy and the need for a reassessment of our typological categorization. On the one hand, one must stress the increasingly hybrid character of the processes of recruitment as a pronounced feature of this
stage of the development. It is characteristic mainly because it indicates a crisis in the customary modes of recruitment, as described above.

On the other hand, soldiers serving on the basis of a contract still formed the backbone of the armies. Of course, the increasing number of soldiers who were forced into a contract partly changed the face of military service and violated the principles of voluntary enlistment. However, it is hardly possible to define the forced soldiers as a new and distinctive type of military service. First of all, it is impossible to quantify precisely that proportion of the soldiers who really had volunteered, for whatever reason, how many of them had been duped, and how many had been forced into the army by other means. The number of involuntary soldiers, however defined, was probably significant, but there is no basis for the assumption that they were dominant. Rather, and more importantly, one has to assume that, beyond the ideal types of voluntary enlistments and enlistments forced by physical violence, the distinctions between voluntary and involuntary were quite fluid.

At least, the military authorities did not draw any distinction and dealt with all the contracted soldiers according to the terms of contract or, in practice, according to their own view of those terms. The one-sided interpretation of military duties imposed by the authorities could add yet another aspect of force to the conditions of service from which all soldiers suffered in the same way. On the other hand, the authorities did not order or even legalize forced recruitments. However, they were widely tolerated. At most, authorities exceptionally intervened when forced recruitments caused too much dissent. Jurists who considered the issue dealt very cautiously with it. At least, the number of scholars who critically discussed the validity of a contract concluded by force gradually grew. The crucial point was that the authorities insisted on high numbers of recruits with no respect to the actual supply on the labour market.

Therefore, more or less inevitably, force and violence were adopted by the recruiting officers in times of exceptional demand. It was a means for them to deal with low supply, to compete with other recruiters, and to fulfil the demands of their superiors. This might have happened within or beyond the borders of the territory and therefore still resulted in individual contracts without systematic recourse to any general obligations of the subjects. Obviously, these practices introduced more force into the military organizations and, in this sense, might be seen in parallel to the increasing importance

of military drill. They emerged gradually as an unpremeditated corollary of armies’ growth and, in a formal sense, still harked back to the character of voluntary enlistment, ending up in an individual contract. Therefore it seems reasonable to address these practices as an extreme or maybe even corrupted variety within the framework of individual engagement, at least intended to be voluntary. Since they were not systematically introduced, were without legal basis, and had no definite characteristics, they can hardly be analysed as a distinctive and discrete alternative principle.

In contrast, this was definitely the case with regard to the militias. Their importance may be discussed in an even broader context, as possible forerunners of the military draft. For example, André Corvisier unhesitatingly considered the establishment of the Royal Militia in 1688 as the start of the draft in France.84 Of course, the Prussian Kantonsystem has also been discussed in regard to the emergence of the draft. Though a certain continuity cannot be denied – and was even emphasized by Prussian reformers at the beginning of the nineteenth century85 – one should be aware that the system was not intended to impose military service generally across the board but to serve as a tool for a selective supplementation of the regiments. Moreover, like other militia organizations, it was embedded in a pre-modern society, and accordingly included a long list of exemptions from service as a Kantonist due to collective privileges or for economic reasons. Thus, these organizations were far from implementing a general and equal duty with all its socio-political implications.

Even from a more pragmatic perspective one has to keep in mind that, in the framework of the standing armies, the militias’ functions remained mostly subsidiary to those of the units of long-term professional soldiers. In most territories, militiamen, numerically, formed only a small or at least the smaller proportion of the military. Although militia units were used on the battlefield, alongside the line regiments, large-scale warfare was based on the standing professional army. When militias were used as pools for recruitment, they simply turned into a more refined option for the reinforcement of the standing armies.

The example of the Prussian Kantonsystem stands out as an exception since the call-up of peasants established a semi-professional – or, in regard

84 Corvisier, “Les transformations de l’armée au XVIIe siècle”, p. 90. For a recent contribution to this debate, see Hippler, Citizens, Soldiers and National Armies, which includes considerations on the Royal Militia, pp. 18-23.
85 For a discussion on tradition and innovation in regard to the Prussian military reforms, see Sikora, “Militarisierung und Zivilisierung”, pp. 172-178; Winter, “Kontinuität oder Neuanfang?”
to their absence for the most part of the year, somewhat like a “quarter”-professional – structure as a pillar of the state’s military strength. From its emergence, however, this system can be traced back to pragmatic solutions avoiding the abuses of voluntary enlistment and did not emerge from the militias. As mentioned above, the Prussian militias were dissolved even before the establishment of the Kanton system, since they weakened the number of potential recruits for the recruiters. It is also remarkable that, later on, the Prussian officials still fell back on the militias in times of urgent necessity. During the Seven Years War in particular, regional militias were raised. As local and regional defence forces they simply performed the traditional function of militias. In relation to the standing armies they served as an emergency stopgap if troops were absent and provided, in practice, hardly any real support for the army. The burden of strategic warfare was exclusively shouldered by the permanent units including the Kantonisten.

To sum up, standing armies of this period should still be considered as being dominated by the principle of individual enlistment, intended to be voluntary. If this argument is accepted, one can describe military service in this period as mostly characterized by free and commodified forms of labour. In fact, this points to a basic similarity with the preceding forms of mercenary service since this may be considered as the major manifestation of commodified military labour. As has been pointed out, not all military service was of this kind, and the principle of free and commodified labour was to some degree adulterated by the growing use of impressment, the incorporation of militiamen into the professional forces, and the hybrid type of Kantonisten.

Nevertheless, the essence of mercenary service still was far from eroded altogether. Whether to still call these organizations mercenary armies or not depends upon one’s point of view: whether one wants to stress that the changes around 1500 and around 1800 were much more deeply rooted and categorical than the changes around 1700, or whether one wants to privilege the differences that have been outlined on the preceding pages. The author would tend to stress the continuity of mercenary service; although obviously significant and profound changes of military organizations took place during the period under discussion, they cannot be simply described as a disappearance of mercenary structures. The change emerged and proceeded within a framework dominated by paid military service.

87 For broader argumentation on the characteristics of mercenary service and its significance in regard to early modern military structures, see Sikora, “Söldner”.
It should be noted, however, that the concept of the mercenary, although the term is well established in common and scientific language, raises some problems. From the beginning of the early modern period, since the days of Machiavelli, mercenaries were the object not only of military discourse, but also of political and moral attributions. This was exacerbated from the perspective of observers looking back from the nineteenth century, who condemned mercenary service as a fundamental contradiction to the basic values of the nation-state. Even nowadays the debate on mercenaries depends not only on objective analysis, but also on political outlook. For example, modern juridical definitions of mercenaries in fact exclude such institutions as the French and Spanish Foreign Legions which, according to widespread understanding, are otherwise perceived as typical examples of mercenary units; the criteria of these definitions are also difficult to apply to an unequivocal classification of private military companies. Therefore, the term “mercenary service” must be used with caution and reflection.

Since the ideological components of mercenary definitions complicate the analytical use of the concept, the definition should be reduced to its crucial formal feature, which is the individual contract as the basis of a – at least intentional – free and commodified type of military labour. In this sense, the concept of mercenary service still seems the most adequate category for use in characterization and analysis of the dominating structure of military service in the eighteenth century. Thus, to discuss the transitions of mercenary armies, one has to revert to a lower level of structural characteristics, just to gain slightly more sophisticated arguments. Such arguments can be determined from the common characteristics that usually are associated with the concept of mercenary service.

**General discussion: factors of cohesion**

One such characteristic seems to be the general understanding that mercenaries are basically defined by the fact that they were foreigners in relation to their engagement. The category of foreigner raises problems when used

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in the context of the early modern period. For example, the Spanish army fighting against the Dutch Revolt, several decades before the era discussed here, was composed of a significant portion of Dutch soldiers, who accordingly fought in their own homeland and for their legitimate ruling authority. On the other hand, they were in a rather ambiguous position since they could also be viewed as foreign members of a foreign army. Other examples from the Thirty Years’ War, chosen at random, reveal the predominantly regional character of voluntary enlistment, or mercenary engagement, depending on the place where the recruitment was undertaken. This could mean that large numbers of a ruler’s subjects joined up when the ruler or his army commander decided to initiate recruitment within or close to the ruler’s territory.

Although the composition of armies before 1650 obviously was not of purely foreign origin as most definitions of mercenary would imply, it seems that the percentage of homeland recruits increased as a consequence of the establishment of standing armies; above all, as a consequence of increased efforts to raise recruits from the ruler’s own territory. It is true that proportions varied, but nevertheless genuinely foreign recruits remained a significant element of armies. Change, in this respect, was more gradual than is suggested by those who pose a sharp dichotomy between mercenary and standing armies. Indeed, one may argue that although the percentage of domestic recruits grew significantly, this was not the defining characteristic of standing armies since the number of foreigners in their ranks remained relevant. To put it another way, this fact indicates that, in principle, the origin of the soldiers was still largely irrelevant. It would probably be helpful and adequate for analytical purposes to simply omit the criterion of origin for defining mercenary service, at least in regard to the early modern period, but this is not essential for the problems discussed here.

A more significant change may be detected regarding the framework of military labour. Some aspects of this have already been alluded to earlier, and these can be encapsulated in the notion of uniformity. This was literally true concerning military dress, and nearly so for the modes of fighting and the body movements of the soldiers, which were intended to become programmed. Of course, regulations should not be mixed up with the reality on the battlefield, but the impact of military drill should not be underestimated either. Although the mercenaries of previous decades were
supposed to fight as a part of a homogeneous body of soldiers, the personal
drill created a new level of control and discipline.

In a broader sense, a similar argument can be advanced concerning the
relationship between soldiers and military commanders since the soldiers’
earlier options of self-determination and protest, though they should not
be overestimated, were weakened in favour of the total submission of the
soldiers to the disciplinary power of their drill masters, and to a military
justice run in the interests of the military commander. Even the fact of
peacetime service can be interpreted as a factor leading to greater uniform-
ity. Since the actions of mercenaries in the past had been exclusively linked
with the conduct of war, their image, for better or worse, was dominated by
the connotations of fighting and bravery, violence and cruelty, adventure
and misery. The peacetime members of a standing army were much more on
show and to a larger audience than before, but the public perceived them as
guardsmen, as puppets on the strings of commanders, and even as earning
money, employed not only as soldiers, but working with their own hands
in just the same way as many others in town worked. Having a night out
on the town with comrades and enjoying the ensuing debauchery seemed
to be the most singular aspects of a soldier’s life, but social acceptance of
these activities depended largely on one’s point of view.

This certainly must have had consequences for the conception of the
role of the soldiers. Recent research has done much to add to our under-
standing of the public perception and self-perception of the mercenaries
in their heyday in the sixteenth century, most prominently reflected and
certainly idealized in many printed woodcuts, but also documented in
clothes, songs, poems, plays, and (mostly very critical) treatises.91 Comments
from non-soldiers mostly combined criticisms of their idleness, violence,
and immorality with a certain fascination, which seemingly fed into the
self-perception of mercenaries, thereby helping to enhance their status as
an order of outsiders, based on claims of a distinctive honour, autonomy,
and extravagance as well as on superiority and a disdain for civilian life.
Though extremely ambiguous, being a mercenary attracted a lot of attention
and promised, if not esteem, a kind of fearful respect.

No such claims can be asserted on behalf of the members of standing
armies. Most obviously, these soldiers were far less attractive for artists, at
least in the singular. The soldiers were mostly depicted as drilled puppets
or as uniformed masses. Though they were still the object of much moral

91 Huntebrinker, “Fromme Knechte” und “Garteteufel”, pp. 87-173; Rogg, Landsknechte und
criticism, the most prominent attitude beyond this seems to have been pity, due to the poor conditions of life and demeaning discipline. A few memoirs reflect at best a kind of picaresque way of life, but no evidence for keeping the former nimbus of extravagant, though intimidating adventures.\textsuperscript{92}

From an analytical perspective, the changes can probably best be conceived as a quantum leap in professionalization. The possibility of lifelong service, or at least continuous service uninterrupted by peacetime lay-offs, as well as newly rigorous regulation, which should not only be interpreted in the framework of military discipline, but also as a job description, comprising both lists of duties and special skills, contributed to shaping a daily working routine. Thus, the decline of public attention and attraction can also be understood as an aspect of the soldiers’ normalization and integration into civilian society. As a result, the mercenaries of the standing armies achieved a much higher level of professional standards than former mercenaries, who were already commonly perceived as professionals. In partial contrast to this chapter’s emphasis on some crucial continuities, this reshaping of military service has also been taken as an argument to evaluate these changes as a categorical transformation from “mercenary” to “soldier”.\textsuperscript{93} In terms of soldiers’ self-conception, the new standards left space for adopting a kind of professional self-esteem; however, there is only a little evidence for its real relevance. Towards the end of the century, military authorities tried to encourage its emergence by praise and rewards.\textsuperscript{94}

General discussion: making a living

As outlined above, soldiers’ incomes had lost much of their appeal. This is of particular importance since the desire for personal gain is commonly

\textsuperscript{92} Some of the most cited sources of this kind include Bräker, \textit{Lebensgeschichte und Natürliche Ebenehe der Arinem Mannes im Tockenburg}; Seume, \textit{Mein Leben}; Kerler, \textit{Aus dem siebenjährigen Krieg}; Friedrich Laukhards, \textit{vorzeiten Magisters der Philosophie, und jetzt Musketers}.


\textsuperscript{94} A public celebration to acclaim a Saxon non-commissioned officer for fifty years of service is anonymously reported in “Schilderung einer Nationalscene”, \textit{Bellona} (1781), pp. 89–96. Some memoirs can also be understood as an expression of a proud professional self-esteem, for example, those of a former Prussian non-commissioned officer, who had served for fifty-two years: see \textit{Leben und Thaten eines Preußischen Regiments-Tambours}. Certainly an extreme example, but nevertheless striking, is Müller, \textit{Der wohl exercirte Preußische Soldat}, a treatise by a former Prussian musketeer who felt compelled to explain the principles of Prussian military training to the public.
considered the exclusive motivation for mercenary service. Obviously, service as a member of a standing army did not offer much prospect of enrichment. Of course, in former times, the mercenaries’ hope for wealth through booty had been mostly unrealized. As was pointed out above, with regard to material rewards, military service at least offered an alternative option among other occupations at the lower end of the social pyramid. In addition, when one considers the attractiveness of the signing-on bounty and the longer term prospects, there is no reason to deny that the expectation of a poor, but at least reliable livelihood may have swayed those contemplating service. Such considerations weighed all the more heavily when the soldier’s comparatively stable existence is compared to the poor conditions in rural villages, which were always threatened by the risks of fluctuating crop yields. The desire for private gain was, then, most likely a relevant factor in motivating soldiers.

Of course, it is impossible to gain a complete understanding of the soldiers’ motives; this is all the more true when dealing with less obvious assumptions and with the question of whether the introduction of standing armies offered new kinds of collective motivation. There are hints of the importance of a certain *esprit de corps*, which was usually related not to the army as a whole, but to the regiment.\(^9^5\) Of course its effects could have an impact only after recruitment. Certainly, the permanent existence of the units strengthened these effects on a smaller scale by stabilizing peer group structures and, on a larger scale, by grouping together icons of glory and tradition and transforming them into a regimental memorial culture. In fact, this kind of collective identity seems to have been supported by the military authorities and, since it corresponded to the values of noble honour and to the social logic of rank and reputation, it might have been the most typical motivational factor. In a more general sense, it can be considered a special mode of professional self-confidence.

In the light of a growing percentage of native soldiers, it seems reasonable to assume that there was an increasing importance of some kind of patriotism or loyalty to the ruler or at least a certain sense of duty. Probably, the Prussian system favoured the transfer of some provincial or even local identity into the army by keeping *Kantonisten* from the same area.

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together.\textsuperscript{96} However, since there is very little evidence on the thoughts of ordinary soldiers, generalized assumptions about the motivation of soldiers are rather speculative.\textsuperscript{97} At the very least, it can be stated that there is no evidence of widespread enthusiasm for military service or of systematic efforts to appeal to the common people in terms of patriotic loyalty. This became more prominent only in later eighteenth-century discourse, but mostly as a debate among the elites. In summary, although the changing framework of military service undoubtedly influenced soldiers’ motives, it is impossible to gain a reliable insight into these on a larger scale. Of course, one has to expect a certain mix of motives, and probably the changing composition of the armies caused an increasing variety thereof.

**General discussion: military labour and state-building**

Soldiers’ motives, however, may be discussed on a broader horizon since the establishment of standing armies formed one aspect of an even more important process. From the perspective of state-building, standing armies represented the crucial manifestation of state structures themselves. In contrast, these structures definitely lacked the fully developed character of state authority, as long as military power could be exercised by rather autonomous commanders as Wallenstein or Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar, who, according to the work of Fritz Redlich, are usually designated as military enterprisers, or by high-ranking nobles in France, making use of their own kind of autonomy and independence.\textsuperscript{98} However, this is not the place to discuss similarities or differences between figures such as Wallenstein and Condé. Regarding the military, the major challenge of state-building was the integration of more or less autonomous military structures and the marginalization of any form of opposing military organization. In fact, the establishment of standing armies reflected the establishment of a monopoly of violence.

\textsuperscript{96} King Frederick II once wrote in his political testament from 1768 that the Kantonsystem would encourage rivalry between soldiers for a reputation for bravery and that friends and relatives, fighting together, would not leave each other: Dietrich, *Die politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern*, pp. 516f.

\textsuperscript{97} For some reflections on this subject, see Kroll, *Soldaten im 18. Jahrhundert zwischen Friedens- und Kriegserfahrung*, pp. 133-179; Sikora, *Disziplin und Desertion*, pp. 305-325.

\textsuperscript{98} Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siècle*, pp. 284-286; Parrott, *Richelieu’s Army*, pp. 313-365, sees a strong contrast between military enterprisers and the French army, but also gives examples of the crucial role of the high nobility and their networks.
Regarding the military organization itself, the contrast should not be stressed too sharply. The military before 1650 was not a completely private business. Normally, troops were raised at the level of the regiment by licensed colonels, who had capital and networks at their disposal to fulfil organizational work which, at that stage, could not be performed by the ruler’s administration. The licence, however, included, beyond basic regulations, a commitment to the ruler as the only source of legitimate power. Our concept of a military enterpriser would be misleading if military business were to be perceived as totally independent from the framework of legitimate power. The princes simply could not enforce total control. On the other hand, even the structures of the standing armies still provided a certain potential for independent economy, in German armies mostly shifting from the level of regiments to the level of companies, forming the so-called Kompaniewirtschaft. Certainly, colonels and captains could no longer act against the ruler, and most definitely had to act according to a more detailed set of regulations, but the regiments and companies still formed, if not autonomous, then self-contained units, combining training, economy, justice, and command, which were all in the hands of the commanding officers. The regiments and the companies remained a source of considerable income for them. Since all sums for paying, equipping, and maintaining the soldiers went through their hands, based on fixed rates paid by the government, the colonels and captains not only took their own salaries but also benefited from the profits to be made from managing their units, whether these were legal or illicit. For example, probably the most widely practised swindle was receiving money for soldiers who had never existed or who had left the unit as a result of desertion or death.

With regard to the common soldiers, they suffered much more from the intensified control, as a result of greater surveillance and military discipline, which was discussed above and which can also be interpreted as the outcome of state-building. Of course, as employees, the monopoly of violence

99 This has been recently stressed by Baumann, “Die deutschen Condottieri”. In contrast to warlords such as Wallenstein or Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar during the Thirty Years War, one should also keep in mind the example of the very important Catholic general Johann Tserclaes Count of Tilly, who acted with extraordinary loyalty to and trust in his sovereign, Duke Maximilian of Bavaria: see Kaiser, Politik und Kriegführung, specifically pp. 16-23.

100 Redlich, The German Military Enterpriser and His Work Force, pp. 77-88.

101 John Lynn calls the structures of the French army in the eighteenth century still a “semi-entrepreneurial system”; see Lynn, Battle, pp. 137-139, 361. The term was originally coined by David Parrott, who avoided using it in his recent works in order to stress the differences between French practices and German military enterprisers.
was less relevant for them than the monopoly of employment. However, it is not certain whether they really profited from business competition in former decades and, as already mentioned, competition for recruits still took place in some regions and probably offered more opportunities for negotiation than before. This resulted from supply and demand, not from the fact that the recruiters were no longer enterprisers but government employees. On the other hand, the increased effectiveness of ruling elites and military organizations also resulted in a suspension of the market mechanisms through forced recruitment, as a result of which many impressed soldiers paid a very one-sided, existential price by suffering not only from coercion, but also from war injuries and death. Obviously, the high authorities were less engaged in disciplining such recruiting methods. Therefore, for the soldiers, the changes deriving from the increasing control over the military commanders seem to have been of less importance.

As a result, most observations suggest considering the changes as more gradual than categorical. Summed up, however, the gradual changes resulted in a framework of military service which was substantially different from the preceding period, though mostly based on the same principles. As a common denominator, inevitably rather general and superficial, the different levels of change might be conceptualized as aspects of an ongoing institutionalization and integration of the military as a whole within the framework of state-building. From this perspective, the reduced autonomy of the military commanders and their incorporation in the corps of public servants can be paralleled to the intensified disciplining and uniforming of the common soldiers and their location in the everyday life of the garrison cities.

Despite all the continuities, developments around the establishment of standing armies marked a crucial phase in European military history. Although drill practice had been invented several decades earlier, its implementation as a common European feature created an outstanding attribute of modern military organizations as a whole. Obviously, military obligations imposed on the subjects became increasingly significant, although they had not yet became dominant and still served only subsidiary purposes, mostly to avoid the costs of recruitment. Nonetheless, these practices prepared the way for the development of the draft and seem to characterize this period as a stage of transition in which different principles were combined. However, instead of reducing this era to a prelude not yet determined, it might be more adequate to perceive it as the unfolding of options in the course of emerging state power. Not surprisingly, the reasons and motives for this dynamic process have attracted much scholarly attention. The debate was
significantly shaped by Michael Roberts's concept of a “military revolution”\textsuperscript{102}.

This is not the place to either sum up the whole controversial debate or to reinvent the answers. Some aspects of the debate, however, will help to put the changes in an evolutionary context.

According to the original concept, the military revolution was completed just before the spread of standing armies, but these were still perceived as an outcome of the revolution, flanked by the strengthening and centralization of political power to provide the required resources. The roots of this process were traced back to the tactical reforms at the end of the sixteenth century. The main thesis, therefore, was aimed at the assumption that not only military changes, but also major social and political developments, were initiated by genuine military innovations. These started with a new tactic and in addition were fuelled by the new scale of strategic warfare during the Thirty Years War, characterized by long-range campaigns and the need for numerous occupational forces. This should have resulted in the need for more soldiers.

One may object that the main example, the campaigns of Gustav Adolf, were noteworthy due to the constraints, from the Swedish perspective, of a quasi-overseas theatre of war, and that subsequent wars did not see comparable strategic efforts. On a more general level, it has to be considered that the appetite for a growing number of soldiers may have been motivated by even simpler arguments: since technological means were rather limited in their impact, military superiority normally was achieved by larger armies. From this point of view, the more crucial change must be considered the previous replacement of feudal armies by mercenary armies, the expansion of which was only limited by the need for money, while feudal structures had restricted at least the core of military power to the limited number of more or less obstinate nobles. The further development seems to have been mostly, although certainly not solely, dependent on the government’s increasing possibility to absorb resources.

Certainly, the Dutch reforms implemented an important additional aspect. Originally introduced to compensate for the numerical inferiority of the Dutch forces, the result of the reforms turned out to be a significant

\textsuperscript{102} Roberts, \textit{The Military Revolution, 1560–1660}; since then, the concept of a “military revolution” has been firmly established in academic curricula, but has also been widely and critically discussed and, on the other hand, expanded to other periods and to other parts of the world, so that it has rather lost its significance. Classical critics include Parker, \textit{The Military Revolution}, and Black, \textit{A Military Revolution?} See now Black, \textit{Beyond the Military Revolution}. Other recent publications referring to the catchword include Knox and Murray, \textit{The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300–2050}, and Nimwegen, \textit{The Dutch Army and the Military Revolutions 1588–1688}. 
increase in military effectiveness. After this time, the value of soldiers could be measured not only by their number, but also by the quality of their training. Therefore, preparing the military forces before the start of war became an inevitable prerequisite for military effectiveness and consequently resulted in standing armies. Even then, sheer superiority of numbers did not ensure success on the battlefield, as the remarkable victory of inferior forces, such as the Prussians’ at the battle of Leuthen in 1757, indicates.103 However, such instances did not encourage the king of Prussia or other rulers to reduce their forces by replacing quantity with quality.

A short remark must support the assertion that technological innovation was of less importance, since the seventeenth century saw two major changes. This was the replacement of matchlock guns with flintlock guns, which were easier to handle, and the total abandonment of pikes in favour of the exclusive use of guns, which could be adapted to hand-to-hand combat by the use of the newly invented bayonet. Certainly, the disappearance of the pike marked a watershed of great symbolic meaning since it represented the triumph of gunpowder weapons. This story, however, covers at least two centuries, step by step, and was not completed until the beginning of the eighteenth century.104 It is noteworthy that, during the eighteenth century bayonet attacks – thus the use of the reduced, but much more manageable version of pikes – in fact could become decisive on the battlefield.105 Though it was accompanied by tactical changes, the final abandonment of pikes did not indicate a technological revolution, nor does it offer explanations for the arms race at the end of the seventeenth century.

This seems also to be true in regard to the growing importance of the artillery in the eighteenth century. Due to technological changes, which made cannons more mobile on the battlefield, and the corresponding tactical changes, the artillery’s role was subsequently transformed from a merely subsidiary one to having a crucial, though not yet decisive, importance of its own.106 Although the intensified use of artillery caused considerable losses and suffering, it still did not modify the efforts to produce the highest possible number of soldiers nor did it affect the basic structural characteristics of military service.

103 As a sceptical approach to a rather mystifying event, see Kroener, “Die Geburt eines Mythos – die ‘schiefe Schlachtordnung’”.
104 See, among others, Black, European Warfare 1660-1815, p. 39; Luh, Ancien Régime Warfare and the Military Revolution, p. 139.
106 Ibid., pp. 167-178.
The essential precondition for the quantum leap in army strength was the strengthening of centralized political power and intensified accumulation of resources. The military development reflected, and was closely connected to, a restructuring of governance, pushed forward by the experiences and the results of the Thirty Years War, including a new framework for state rivalry. In different ways, at different moments, and with different degrees of success, but focused on a few decades, rulers profited from the defeat of their enemies, the breaking of opposition, the weakening of participatory elites, the establishment of consensual policies in favour of external competition, and, last but not least, the amelioration of confessional antagonisms. In this sense, it has been suggested that the Thirty Years War enjoys real significance as a state-building war.107

The stabilization of internal hierarchies and administrative structures enabled governments to draw conclusions from the rather improvised handling of warfare during the war, including military strength, tactical innovations, control and efficiency of the military, and discipline of the common soldier – all the aspects discussed above. The ongoing conflicts over hegemony on the continent, the Baltic, and the Balkans compelled all participants to reach comparable levels of operational readiness and accelerated the spread of standing armies. Therefore, they represented both the slowdown of internal rivalries and a certain acceleration of external rivalries. The spending of most resources on the needs of the military pushed the soldiers into the centre of this process. In fact, one may assert that they were the most intensively governed section of the population. It is no wonder that they also became a symbolic medium to express the ruler’s power and sovereignty (and in a certain sense, condensed in parades and guards of honour, they have kept this meaning until today). The quality of change in terms of the political framework can be paralleled, in some way, to the changes in military organization as an essential part of this framework.

However, although the institutionalization of governmental power reached new heights of efficiency and stability, some basic elements stayed the same. The revolution had not yet arrived. Most people were still governed

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107 This point mainly follows the arguments of Black, *A Military Revolution?*, pp. 67-77, including aspects of changes in the sphere of political constitution and the socio-political role of the elites. In this wide sense, the category of state-building wars was elaborated by Burkhardt, *Der Dreißigjährige Krieg, in nuce* on p. 27. This perspective also touches on the debate on the fiscal-military state, which was brought up by Brewer, *The Sinews of Power*. See also Storrs, *The Fiscal-Military State in Eighteenth Century Europe*, and Glete, *War and the State in Early Modern Europe*; however, the complexities of this approach cannot be discussed and included at this point.
by dynasties from the high nobility whose attitudes towards the military forces were not substantially different from those of former monarchs. The augmentation of army strength and the extension of compulsory service resulted from the intensified power of governments to intervene in their citizens’ lives and was not paralleled by a newly defined and founded relationship between subjects and state.

Therefore, it remained a maxim of ruling and of warfare that the soldier’s role was still a functional one based on payment and force. There was a closely connected political implication, namely that these armies were at the disposal of monarchs and ministers, instruments of their ambitions and interests, and deployed within the context of cabinet warfare. To continue the metaphorical framework, the soldiers served as hired or forced construction workers in the building of the state, at best being inhabitants without rights; they were in no way co-proprietors.