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Consumption and Living Standards in Early Modern Rural Households

Probate Evidence from Southern Sweden, c. 1680-1860*

Marcus Falk[1]

Abstract

This paper presents new estimates of the material livings standards among the rural population in southern Sweden from the 1680's up to 1865. Utilizing a newly constructed database of circa 1800 probate inventories from the benchmark periods 1680-1720, 1780-85, and 1860-65, we analyse the development of consumption patterns for rural households. We find that that all rural households, no matter their socio-economic status, diversified their composition of consumption goods with a special focus towards increased comfort, rather than household reproduction, during the second half of the eighteenth century. The most visible change was in the diversification of cooking- and dining-ware, which corresponds to a contemporary rebuilding of peasant homes to include purpose-built kitchens. This diversification and increase in comfortable consumption furthermore correspond with a diversification of household production strategies during a period of stagnant, of even decreasing, economic growth before the Swedish economic catch-up of the nineteenth century. This suggests that changes in consumption during the period were a conscious decision, likely made possible by increasing access to credit and inter-regional markets.

Keywords: Early modern history; Early modern Sweden; Material history; Consumption; Industrious Revolution

JEL-code: N3

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1. Introduction and purpose of paper

The development of material living standards among the common population of Europe during the early modern period remains, despite decades of research, a still debated topic among historians of the period. Reconstructed wage series, data on agricultural production, and even aggregated data on GDP largely suggests the period as one of economic decline or stagnation, with generally increased costs of respectable living compared to wages and continuously declining standards of living for most households (Allen 1992; Malanima 2010). Despite this, less aggregated data on household living conditions, such as contemporary descriptions or probate records, suggests clear long-term improvements of household material living standards (Bovenkerk & Fertig 2022; Mas Ferrer 2020; Weatherill 1998). One of the probably most influential attempts to bridge this apparent paradox is Jan de Vries' 2008 industrious revolution theory. While deceptively simple, the theory appears to hold for the relatively highly urban northwest-European economic core regions of southern England and the Low Countries (Malanima & Pinchera 2012; van Nederveen Meerkerk 2008). It has however not been accepted without critique, especially when applied on the more rural European peripheries where most historians argue that increasing industriousness, if present at all, was rather a necessity for households to uphold respectable living standards in the face of increasing costs and falling incomes (Allen & Weisdorf 2011; Gary & Olsson 2020; Horrel et al. 2021; Ogilvie 2010).

Early modern Sweden, situated firmly on the periphery and with excellent micro-data for the late seventeenth century and onward, can contribute well to our understanding of the mechanisms of rural industriousness. Research on the economic development in Sweden during the early modern period almost exclusively points to the eighteenth century as an economically stagnant period, with low levels of economic growth mostly counteracted by an increase in population growth after the end of the "Great power" era and almost a century of constant war in 1718; both GDP and grain production per capita appears to remain at semi-constant levels throughout most of the century, and data on wage labour suggests a general increase in the costs of (respectable) living relative to income (Edvinsson 2009, 2013; Gary & Olsson 2020; Olsson & Svensson 2010; Schön & Krantz 2015). Economic growth, according to the common narrative, accelerates first after 1780 – especially in the fertile southern Sweden with the repeals of several trade regulations in the decades around 1800 – when GDP per capita starts to see a rather dramatic rise. The increase in agricultural output during the nineteenth century to a large extent supersedes the growth seen in the more

developed agricultures in England and Netherlands, leading to an economic "catching up" of Sweden compared to the North-west European leaders of the period (Hallberg et al. 2022; Olsson & Svensson 2010).

The goal of the paper is to complement this bleak macro-narrative of, especially, eighteenth century economic development with micro-data on household material living standard gathered from probate records, as well as to give further insights into the correlation between household consumption and the broader trends of industriousness and economic growth. To this end we have constructed a new dataset consisting of circa 1800 probate records from southern Sweden, with extensive and detailed information on household wealth and material composition. Based on the general macro-economic development we should be able to expect the main expansion in rural household consumption, and consequent significant improvements in material living standards, to be visible first during the nineteenth century, after the technological and institutional improvements in production has caught up with the eighteenth-century population increase after circa 1780 (Andersson Palm 2012; af Forsell 1833; Linde 2012; Linde & Andersson Palm 2012; Lindström 2008). The analysed probate records, however, suggest differently, and we can see a clear increase in household consumption already in the eighteenth century, well before the structural improvements of the economy during the last decades of the century. This earlier increase in household consumption challenges the more established narrative of the eighteenth century as a period of either stagnating or declining household living standards, and is likely a consequence of the diversification household production that rural households underwent during the eighteenth century, which increased household reliance on markets for reproduction (Falk, Bengtsson, & Olsson TBP). With this increased reliance likely followed greater access to markets, both in the form of money and credit, which together with the eighteenth-century introduction of the consumer revolution to southern Sweden – with its introduction of a whole new stock of cheaper, fashionable consumer goods, as well as a whole new culture of consumption centred on comfort rather than conspicuousness (McCants 2008; North 2008; Smith 2002; de Vries 2008) – greatly reduced the earlier barriers to consumption for rural non-elite groups.

2. Early modern Europe; increasing industriousness and changing consumption patterns

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw a consumer revolution spread throughout Europe with the widespread introduction, and popularization, of new types of comfort goods: These goods – such as cushioned chairs and sofas, specialized tea- and gaming-tables, and colonial hot drinks such as tea and coffee – over the course of the period completely changed daily life in the regions in which they became available, and to a large extent reshaped the home from a place solely for the purpose of household reproduction to a place of comfort and leisure (McCants 2008; Overton et al. 2004; Shammas 1990). The demand for these new goods, according to de Vries' influential Industrious Revolution theory (2008), further led the early modern household to completely restructure how they allocated household resources: By shifting household production away from reproductive work towards market production, mainly through specialization, the early modern household were able to increase productivity, and their incomes, through intensification of labour rather than technical improvement, which would later become the driving force for the subsequent industrial revolution.

This increased industriousness, as de Vries terms it, allowed the early modern household to acquire these new comfort goods only accessible through the market, and in turn helped drive the European economy towards modern economic growth through an increase in productivity. Recent research on industriousness in the north-European periphery, however, suggests that, while a possible increase in household productivity is observable, it was likely driven by increased costs of living and shifting international demands for production rather than demand for new goods only available through the market (Gary & Olsson 2020; Hutchison 2014).

Despite these reservations on the driving economic force behind industriousness, it appears clear that it even in the more peripheral regions the increased productiveness went hand in hand with a similar increase in household consumption. Bovenkerk and Fertig (2022) finds, in their study of north-western Germany, a connection between proto-industry and new consumption patterns through the closer connection between households and inter-regional markets. A similar conclusion is drawn by Hutchison (2014) for Norway, where the increased access to consumer goods appears to have been a consequence of Norwegian rural households' increased production for inter-regional markets, rather than a driving force for it. For Sweden, studies on early modern rural consumption appear to confirm the corelation between the presence of consumer goods and access to inter-regional markets for rural

consumers (Ahlberger 1996; Ulväng 2021). However, no clear correlation has yet been identified between the changes in household production patterns during the period and the introduction of new consumption patterns, apart from the finding that, among the expanding crofter population of the late eighteenth century, a clear trend towards proletarianization appears to have had little impact on the consumption capabilities of these household (Bengtsson & Svensson 2020).

The new goods and consumer habits associated with the consumer revolution appears to have first been introduced among the urban genteel classes in the city of Paris, in England, and the Low Countries during the seventeenth century, and from there they spread both outwards, geographically, and downward in the socio-economic order. Among the urban gentility most of the goods featured in the consumer revolution – such as tea- and coffee-ware, tables and table-cloth, new utensils for cooking and dining, and even the many new cloth materials – were central for the emerging sociability culture, chief of which was the 'social visit' in which especially tea, coffee, and food played a central role (Andersson 2009; Brown 2020; Crowley 2001; North 2008; Stobart & Rothery 2016). For the rural populace, the 'social visit,' and all the goods and traditions associated with it, was less important as the social space for interaction remained the public places, such as church or the market, rather than the home (Ulväng 2021).

Being on the European periphery, it should be expected that there is a slight lag in time between these new consumption habits being first introduced in England and the Netherlands and them reaching Sweden. Furthermore, since most of the new goods and consumer habits associated with the consumer revolution were an urban phenomenon their diffusion among the rural populace, especially the poorer, should have taken even longer. While any exact dates for when the new consumer habits associated with the consumer revolution finally became wide-spread in Sweden is difficult to pinpoint, it is clear that by mid eighteenth century they had found traction among the Swedish urban elite (Andersson 2009; Brown 2020), and by the second half of the century among rural elite groups in regions with good access to interregional markets (Ulväng 2021). Despite being geographically close to both the coast and the continent, Scania lacked major international ports during most of the analysed period – the city of Malmö being a very minor exception in the shadow of the much more important Gothenburg circa 240km to the north – and even when it opened up to markets in the late eighteenth century most of its produce was shipped to other parts of Sweden rather than abroad (Olsson & Svensson 2010). As such, most of the, in this study, analysed region lacked easy access to interregional markets, making it even harder to predict

when the new consumption goods and habits should have been introduced to the general populace.

3. Empirical strategy and sources

3.1. Sources and sampling

In the new national law that was introduced in 1734 – chapter IX §1 of the inheritance code[2] – it became mandatory to draw up a probate inventory for a household upon the death of either of its heads. These inventories were to include movable and immovable possessions, as well as both in- and outgoing debts, in order to facilitate the division of the estate between heirs and the payment of creditors. While most studies using probate records have investigated the post-1734 period, due to the ample availability of material, it has long been known that there also exist inventories from before 1734, which have mainly been used in studies of towns and cities in the seventeenth century (G. Andersson 2009 on Arboga; E.I. Andersson 2017 on Stockholm).

Three regions in southern Sweden were identified with ample presence of pre-1734 probate records, from which circa 600 probate records were excerpted for each of the periods 1680-1720, 1780-85, and 1860-65 (see Table1.). The regions represent a diverse set of geographical and economic characteristics; from the fertile, rich, and fairly densely populated fields of Malmöhus in the south-westernmost part of the country to the more forested and poorer regions in Kristiantad and southern Halland. The relative diversity regarding both population levels – the further south the more densely populated are the analysed regions (af Forsell 1833; Linde 2012; Linde & Palm 2014; Palm 2012) – and geographical characteristics allows for a broad analysis of the regional economies and how they correlate with consumption patterns. A similar geographical spread for each period was pursued in order to gain a representative sample – however, it was often not possible due to the lower number of probate records available for the first period.

[2] *Sveriges Rikes Lag, Gillad och antagen på Riksdagen åhr 1734. Ärfde Balken, chapter IX, §1.*

Table 1. *Composition of the dataset.*

		N		
Country	District	c. 1680-720	1780-85	1860-65
Halland		**200**	**200**	**200**
	Halmstad	120	155	163
	Tönnersjö[a]	23	9	2
	Hök	57	36	35
Malmöhus		**143**	**234**	**234**
	Oxie	63	64	64
	Skytts	34	34	34
	Frosta	8	35	35
	Vemmenhög	24	34	34
	Rönneberg	6	34	34
	Bara	8	33	33
Kristianstad		**150**	**212**	**318**
	Norra Åsbo	48	35	35
	Södra Åsbo	47	66	111
	Västra Göinge	5	0	0
	Östra Göinge	25	50	61
	Bjäre	25	61	111
Total		**493**	**646**	**752**

Note: [a]Pobates from Tönnersjö district were all sampled from the volumes of probates for Halmstad. The number of probate inventories collected from each county and district (Härad) for every period. Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

Due to data restrictions only smaller selections of the chosen regions could be analysed, which brings up the issue of how representable this selection is *vis-à-vis* their respective *counties*. One way of checking this is to compare the agricultural conditions of the regions, i.e. harvests, cattle ownership, and population density.[3] While this is a very rough and imprecise estimate, given the highly agrarian nature of the economy at the time a lower population density should indicate slightly higher living standards due to more available land per household, if assuming an even soil quality throughout the county. Comparing these variables, we can conclude that the sampled regions present a mixed representability: The sampled Malmöhus regions – the majority of them in the fertile field regions – appears to be significantly wealthier than the rest of the county, while the sampled Kristianstad regions are poorer, in both cases with signs of a convergence during the early nineteenth century. The sampled Halland regions appears to be wealthier in 1750, but has converged with the rest of the county already by 1810.

[3] See Appendix Table A10.

The three periods chosen for analysis all correlate roughly with broader political and economic trends in early modern Sweden. The 1720's see the transition from Sweden's autocratic imperial period to the so-called "age of freedom" or parliamentary rule. Decades of semi-constant war and unprecedented centralization should mean that the period captures a relatively impoverished and exploited countryside. This period is also the longest analysed period, stretching back to circa 1680, even 1670 in some areas, due to low number of surviving probate records from this period relative to the latter two periods. For this period, we sampled more or less all the preserved probate records fulfilling a few basic criteria of representability and comparability.[4]

The second period, 1780-85, correlates with the end of the so-called "Age of Liberty" through royal coup in 1772. It corresponds with the beginning of a period of institutional change and economic improvements at the end of the century; a period of acceleration of the agrarian revolution, beginning mid-century, as well as declining taxes on farmers, and supposedly growing living standards (Olsson & Svensson 2010). The third period, 1860-65, lies just at the cusp of industrialization towards the end of the early modern period. We should expect that the importance of the agrarian economy by this period have subsided, with an increased importance for trade and a greater division of labour.

Due to the lack of any conscious inherent order in the collected volumes of probate records – the early modern clerks would simply compile them as they arrived to the district courts – no further randomization was made for the sampling. Furthermore, the relative scarcity of the material before the nineteenth century often meant that entire years' worth of regional probate records was included in the collection which made any further selective sampling unnecessary.

The impact of wealth bias on the representativeness of probate records remains a major discussion in historical research: Before it became obligatory by law to draw up probate records upon death in 1734, probates would mainly be drawn either when the division of estate was contested and one or more of the heirs would bring the matter to court, or when the deceased died with debts that would need to be settled through the selling of parts of the estate. Even after the law change, however, the actual probate frequency appears

[4] Only probate records presenting itemized and valued lists of household possessions were included in the sampling; those which only contained the final sum of the probated household or lacked individual valuation of items were disregarded. Due to the very detailed nature of Swedish probate records, however, this number remained very low for every period and region. Some further probate records were discarded over the course of collecting due to lacking readability, either because of damage to the document making the writing illegible or the binding making it impossible to properly read important values.

to remain low for most regions: While the number of probated individuals does increase over time, in many regions it exceeds 50% of deceased first during the nineteenth century. Mostly, it appears to be either the propertyless or near-propertyless that are excluded from the probate records, such as paupers, vagrants, or those too poor to leave an estate to divide (Kuuse 1974; Lindgren 2002; Markkanen 1978). With the low probate rate before 1734 it is further likely that this sample includes a generally wealthier subsection of the population, which adds a level of uncertainty regarding the representation of the material and comparability with later periods including a larger share of relatively poorer households. For this study, however, this bias is beneficial: Since the completely propertyless consumes next to nothing, no matter the period, their inclusion would add little to an analysis of consumption; furthermore, the development that is identified for the eighteenth century is only reinforced if the sample for the first period contains a relatively wealthier sample of households.

3.2. Coding and interpreting the probate records

The smallest economic unit for production, consumption, and taxation during the early modern period was the household, rather than the individual, with its members contributing to a shared pool of resources and labour opportunities (Ågren [ed] 2017; Overton et al 2004; de Vries 2008). This view is apparent in the probates through the items listed by the officials in charge of drawing up the records: apart from the strictly personal belongings of the deceased, such as clothes and jewellery, records of either spouses list the shared belongings of the household. This includes everything from furniture to tools, cattle, grain, and even debts and credits held by the household. As such, every probated individual has been analysed as representative of a household, rather than of themselves as individuals.[5]

Apart from the base information about the deceased necessary for identification, detailed information on the composition and value of both the household movable and immovable goods were collected. For the purpose of this particular study, information on the ownership of several different types of consumption goods were of particular interest: Traditional value-holding status objects of gold, silver, and pewter, commonly held by households both as storage of value – as they generally did not degrade and could easily be resold – and as status objects (Shammas 1990; Weatherill 1988); breakable and more easily

[5] Due to the semi-random sampling the database for the two latter periods, 1780-85 and 1860-65, consists of almost perfectly 50% probated men and women each, meaning that the impact of gender differences on ownership of the few actual personal items that were recognised, such as clothes and jewellery, can still be studied.

replaceable fashion-sensitive goods, such as glass, porcelain, and earthenware, which increased in both popularity and availability throughout Europe in the eighteenth century (de Vries 2008; Brown 2020); textiles, both linen, bedlinen, and clothes; objects associated with the consumption of colonial goods – i.e. tea, coffee, and tobacco – such as pipes, tea-pots, and coffee-kettles (Ahlberger 1996; Weatherill 1988; de Vries 2008); as well as the new specialized furniture that were introduced during especially the eighteenth century symptomatic of the so-called comfort revolution, such as cushioned sofas, tea- and gaming-tables, iron stoves, paintings, and clocks (Brown 2020; Crowley 2001; de Vries 2008).

By collecting information on such a diverse set of objects we can not only create a comprehensive image of the early modern household's material wealth, but also identify shifting patterns over time as the composition of objects owned changes between the period, both in absolute numbers and relative value. This approach to study early modern consumption is by no means new; both Weatherill (1988) and Shammas (1990) made extensive use of probate inventories for their studies of early modern consumption in Britain, both in the towns and on the countryside, and de Vries (2008) based large parts of his theory on industriousness on evidence from Dutch probates. For the Swedish context studies of probate records have a long tradition in studies of both consumption and production, but has mainly been utilized for smaller, local studies: Either of regions already decided to be of special interest, due to tradition of certain crafts, such as Wiking Faria's (2009) study of the agrarian revolution in Halland; or with proximity to certain trading centres, such as Ahlberger's (1996) study of consumption in and around the port city of Gothenburg and Maria Ulväng's (2021) study of Härjedalen in northern Sweden; or of local elites, such as Gudrun Andersson's (2009) study of the burgher elite in the town of Arboga.

3.3. The issue of value nominations

With the study being concerned about changes in consumption patterns over a period spanning roughly 200 years, we quickly face the issue of comparing values between the different periods: Inflation over the period is difficult to calculate given the unprecise nature of consumer price indexes, invariably leading to sometimes extreme overestimations of wealth in the earlier periods (Bengtsson & Svensson 2020). Furthermore, the period spans two monetary reforms: a major one which completely overhauled the entire currency system in 1775, scrapping the then current bi-metallic system in favour for a single, silver-based

currency;[6] and then a switch to a decimal currency in 1855, which once again consolidating the then fractured currency system (Heckscher 1936).

To check for the impact of potential price changes over the period, especially over the eighteenth century during which period we will see the most drastic development, a relative price index was set up for a selection of common household goods to analyse changes in value between 1720 and 1785. This price index, based on values taken from the analysed probate records, allows us to check whether changes in household goods composition might be due to simple changes in the values of these goods – if a consumer good becomes significantly cheaper the reluctancy of household to acquire it decreases – or due to cultural shifts – as should be the case if the good becomes more common despite constant, or even higher, price. For further information see Appendix B.

3.4. The issue of age at death

One of the main issues with probate records as a source for household material wealth is that they only represent a single snapshot in the life of the household, often at the very end. The material living standard fluctuates greatly during the household life cycle: higher costs of living not offset by increased production during the early years of the households as small children are raised, to a spike in production capacity as the children mature and can join in household production together with the wife, followed by a sharp decrease in material living standards as the couple ages and dowries are paid to children setting up households of their own (Horrell et al. 2021). Old age in the early modern period would usually lead to a sharp decrease in material standard as the productivity of the household declined with the reduced capacity of its heads, as well as the gifting and selling of goods and assets to pay for dowries for children setting up households of their own.

Unfortunately, Swedish probate records do not record the age of the deceased, and other sources, such as parish-records and regional censuses, are patchy at best for the earlier periods due to the fickle nature of source survivability. Using the surviving parish registers the age at death of only 16,5% of all sampled individuals could be identified for 1680-1720, as compared to 77,2% and 93,7% for the 1780-85 and 1860-65 periods. To still identify the possible impact of age at death a ‘relative household age’ proxy was constructed, based on

[6] Up until the monetary reform of 1775 Sweden utilized a bi-metallic double-coin system of copper- and silver-coins, valued differently – albeit with the same internal denominations – and non-interchangeable in daily transactions. All the probate inventories in the sample are consistently valued in silver coins.

the legal age of the children of the deceased – information which is consistently present in probate records.[7] Based on both age at death and this relative household age proxy it seems likely that, at least during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, an absolute majority of all probated individuals would have died either early or at the economic peak of the household life cycle, which should reduce the age bias of the sample for the first two analysed periods. The nineteenth century, on the other hand, appears to have seen an aging population, with a greater share of probated individuals belonging to old and less economically strong households.

3.5. Socio-economic groups

Around 60 unique occupational titles were identified in the probate records, not including the ubiquitous Wife or Widow which were used for almost every woman in the material. Based on the title of the male head (when present), every household was assigned to one of 4 different socio-economic groups. Individuals lacking a noted occupational title in the probate records were counted as peasants, and thus part of group 1.[8]

The socio-economic groups used in the analysis are based upon their position within the early modern estate society, their main means of income and access to land, markets, and other means of production, as well as the social, cultural, and/or economic capital associated with the position.[9] Table 2. shows the composition of the dataset: It is clear that farmers are well-represented, probably even over-represented, in the material while poorer groups, such as the landless and semi-landless, are most certainly under-represented during the earlier periods. However, as the landless and semi-landless population increases drastically towards the end of the eighteenth century (Bengtsson & Svensson 2020), it is difficult to ascertain the extent of this under-representation.

[7] See Appendix C.
[8] Since landed or tenant peasant farmers constituted the norm for rural individuals within the early modern estate society, despite often being vastly outnumbered by the landless or semi-landless, it should be more likely for their titles to be omitted from the records, than those of crofters or rural proletariat who deviated from it.
[9] Economic, social, and cultural capital is understood as per Bourdieu's (1986) theory on capital accumulation and transformation.

Table 2. *Socio-economic composition of the dataset per period.*

	Group descriptor	c. 1680-1720	1780-85	1860-65
1	Farmers and tenant farmers	396	393	300
2	Landless & semi-landless	10	164	271
3	Craftsmen & other skilled workers	7	22	35
4	Rural Elite	70	31	29
	Total	**483**	**610**	**635**

Note: All households present in the sample, divided across four socio-economic groups. At this point a small sub-group of retired households (undantagsmän/-kvinnor) has been excluded from the sample, why the total numbers do not match those presented in Table 3.1.
Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

The by far largest of these groups, group 1, encompasses the main bulk of the rural populace either in possession of, or with access to, farmland. The households of this group are all mainly dependent on the income from agriculture. Due to the high within-group differences, it is further subdivided into three wealth groups based on total household wealth – top, middle, and bottom third. The second group includes, apart from the crofters and landless rural workers (*gathusmän*), also servants (*pigor/drängar*)[10]. This group should encompass the whole of the so-called "unskilled" rural workforce, and while these households are defined by their lack of access to enough land to support a household, they are still mainly reliant on the agricultural economy for household reproduction.

The third group includes titled craftsmen and skilled workers, such as carpenters and bricklayers; characterized by a higher degree of freedom from agricultural production and a larger reliance on market for household reproduction. Their higher degree of market integration should allow them a greater access to both money and credit, increasing their access new consumption goods.

The last group, termed the Rural Elite, includes priests, judges, officers, traders, and the foremen (*inspektor*) of larger rural estates and industries, as well as two headmasters of local schools; individuals of, compared to the rest of the rural population, often immense economic, social, and cultural capital. Often in the possession of economic privileges, such as the right to collect rent, or supported by often generous wages, these individuals possessed almost free access to credit and would be the first to adopt new consumer trends.

[10] Despite often lacking their own homes during most of the period, a large part of servant probate inventories notes some furniture. This becomes even more common for the 1860-65 period when it becomes accepted to stay servant when married. Even so, they remain a very small part of the probated population throughout the period.

4. Results

4.1 Overall trends

In general, there appears to be a clear trend towards more comfortable, or at least more diversified, homes as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries progressed; both in absolute numbers, as well as different types, of household consumer goods increased steadily over the period, as did their share of household total movable wealth.[11] Consumption goods in the analysis is defined as the part of the movable wealth not specifically for the creation of new wealth or reproduction of the household – such as animals, tools, or goods for sale – or for the conservation of wealth over time – such as objects of gold, silver, or pewter, as well as money.[12] The group of consumer goods include such diverse sets of objects such as furniture, dinner- and cookware, textiles of all kinds, paintings and similar types of art, and books, whose main function is to increase comfort and the material living standard of the household[13]

As can be seen in Table 3 below, there is a clear observable material improvement in the furnishment and comfort of non-elite rural households over the eighteenth century, a trend which then accelerates over the following century: The average number of furniture increases sharply to the point where even the median poorest third peasant, as well as semi-landless & landless, household owns at least one piece of crafted, non-chest and non-bed furniture – most often a cupboard or dresser. There is also a significant increase in number of households owning at least one iron stove, signifying warmer and more comfortable homes, as well as clocks, possibly one of the clearest signs of eighteenth-century modernity (Crowley 2001: 143; Weatherill 1988: 180). Clocks, however, are still uncommon in the late eighteenth century, and does not become universal, even among the elite group, before the nineteenth century.

[11] See Appendix Table A5.

[12] Dinnerware, the most common type of objects made of silver and pewter, of course had more uses than just conserving value – such as displays of conspicuous consumption and economic status, as well as practical uses at the dining table (although the presence of cheaper substitutes enhanced their purpose as displays of conspicuousness). This aspect will be further discussed in section 4.3.

[13] Another important function of consumption is also the creation and presentation of self, as well as the creation and reproduction of group identity. These aspects, however, while interesting and worthy of further investigation will not be investigated in this study.

Table 3. *Average number of chosen consumer items.*

	PEASANTS	BOTTOM THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP	MID THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP	TOP THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP	SEMI-LANDLESS & LANDLESS	CRAFTSMEN & SKILLED WORKERS	RURAL ELITE
AVERAGE NUMBER OF FURNITURE							
C. 1680-1720	0,848	0,417	0,667	1,462	0,200	2,143	11,986
1780-85	2,425	1,366	2,115	3,794	1,433	2,636	11,194
1860-65	6,595	2,871	5,789	11,030	3,079	7,657	15,617
AVERAGE NUMBER OF IRON STOVES							
C. 1680-1720	0,167	0,030	0,045	0,424	0,200	0,571	1,686
1780-85	0,681	0,141	0,519	1,382	0,427	0,545	1,532
1860-65	0,945	0,365	0,750	1,720	0,478	0,771	1,379
AVERAGE NUMBER OF CLOCKS							
C. 1680-1720	0,005	0,000	0,000	0,015	0,000	0,000	0,414
1780-85	0,193	0,115	0,168	0,298	0,018	0,227	0,806
1860-65	1,000	0,620	1,040	1,340	0,801	1,171	1,483
AVERAGE NUMBER OF MIRRORS							
C. 1680-1720	0,003	0,000	0,000	0,008	0,000	0,000	0,729
1780-85	0,015	0,008	0,008	0,031	0,037	0,364	1,290
1860-65	0,550	0,140	0,480	1,030	0,173	0,657	2,138

Note: Average number of selected consumer items, per socio-economic group. Average number of furniture is an aggregate of the average number of tables – both common and specialised tables, such as tea- and gaming-tables, – cushioned chairs and sofas, and cupboards, dressers, and shelves. Note that benches and common chairs are not included, and neither are beds or chest, both very common among virtually every household even at the start of the analysed period. Iron stoves include mainly the so-called iron-tile stoves (järnkakelugn) that are common in especially Scanian probates of the time; clocks include both table- and wall-mounted clocks, as well as pocket-watches; and mirrors include wall-mounted mirrors, tables with mirrors, pocket-mirrors, and shaving mirrors. Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

As was the case elsewhere in Europe (Shammas 1990), there is a clear correlation between wealth and ownership of consumer goods; in general, the wealthier the household the more likely it is to own any particular item, and the more individual pieces of any item it generally has. However, unlike in especially England, the one main exception to this trend appears to be the ownership of objects made out of earthenware and glass, which contrary to the trend instead appears to be more common in the households of poor peasants than wealthy ones during the last decades of the eighteenth century, something which will be explored further later in this section. Because of this clear wealth trend, it should be noted that due to the probable source bias for the first period, c.1680-1720 as discussed in section 3.1, this period likely includes a wealthier selection of the population than does the latter two periods. This

means that the increase over the eighteenth century that can be observed in Table 3, especially regarding furniture, is probably even bigger than suggested.

Throughout the analysed period, textiles remained one of the most important household goods – consistently making up around half of the value of the household consumer goods, regardless of socio-economic group. As consumption of textiles kept pace with the general increase in consumer goods, it appears as if the bulk of the increase in textile ownership was in rapidly expanding personal wardrobes; despite decreasing in price relative to other textiles, especially bedlinen which was the other large textile expense,[14] it either remained as large an expense, or a greatly expanded one, as earlier.[15] As clothes appears to have become cheaper during the eighteenth century, people greatly increased both the amount of clothes they owned, and the number of different types of clothes they owned, as exemplified by long lists of differently coloured skirts, blouses, shirts, jackets, pants, coats, and hats in a wide arrange of materials and, likely but not as easy to discern from probate inventories, styles.

The increase in spending on clothes does not appear to have been completely uniform across the sample, however. Up until the second half of the nineteenth century it appears as if women in general spent more on clothes than men. Furthermore, it appears as if young people possessed higher valued wardrobes than older people, a trend especially visible among probated young individuals of either gender either still in the life-cycle servanthood phase or heads of newly founded households, whose inventories usually list extensive, and remarkably expensive, wardrobes. This fluctuates over the period, however, and further, more directed, studies would be required to draw any definite conclusions about this particular aspect.[16]

4.2. Colonial hot drinks

Many historians of the consumer revolution stress the importance the introduction of colonial hot drinks – tea, coffee, and to a lesser extent chocolate – had for the change in north-west European consumption patterns that occurred during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: In the cities they were sold at both coffee houses and road-side stalls and quickly became thing of daily consumption for a majority of the population – coffee with sugar rather

[14] See Appendix Table B1.
[15] See Appendix Table A7.
[16] See Appendix Table A8.

quickly became morning routine for rich and poor alike and completely supplanted the earlier traditions of large breakfasts (de Vries 2008; Shammas 1990; McCants 2008). For the urban genteel classes, the introduction of especially tea into the household consumption ushered in a whole new era of sociability, which saw the place of socializing move from the public to the private with the wide-spread adoption of the so-called social visit (Vickery 2009). Unlike in England and the Low Countries, however, where tea and coffee quickly became staple goods, Sweden saw heavy restrictions on these goods, with consecutive attempts of sumptuary legislation forbidding their consumption over the eighteenth century (Ahlberger 1996; Ulväng 2021).

While actual tea-leaves and coffee-beans, as perishables, are seldom found in probate records, the drinking of these were during the period surrounded by both social and practical rituals which necessitated specialized objects; from coffee grinders, tea-pots, and coffee kettles necessary for the brewing and preparation of the drinks, to special tea- and coffee-cups, as well as tea-trays and even tea-tables, which played a central part of the social ritual during which these drinks were imbibed (Smith 2002; North 2008). As such, the spread of tea and coffee drinking can be mapped by the occurrence of these objects associated with their consumption in the probate records; chocolate are completely absent from the entirety of the sample, and thus appears to, in southern Sweden at least, have been a, more or less, exclusively urban occurrence.

Unlike in England and the low countries, where it quickly became more or less universal, earlier research suggests that tea-drinking in Sweden up until the twentieth century appears to have been mainly an upper class-habit (Ahlberger 1996: 102). As can be seen in Table 4 below, this trend is wholly supported by the probate evidence. While, almost, completely absence from the homes of peasants and crofters, a substantial part of the rural elite show signs of drinking tea already in the late eighteenth century. The apparent decrease in tea-drinking among these same groups over the following century is likely to do more with their small sample size for this period than any real trend, while the increase in tea-drinking among the peasant group is almost exclusively driven by wealthiest third households, reinforcing the view of tea as an elite drink during the period.

Table 4. *Share of households with tea- and coffee-related objects.*

	PEASANTS	BOTTOM THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP	MID THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP	TOP THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP	SEMI-LANDLESS & LANDLESS	CRAFTSMEN & SKILLED WORKERS	RURAL ELITE
SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH TEA							
C. 1680-1720	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
1780-85	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	14%	52%
1860-65	13%	2%	8%	28%	3%	11%	41%
SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH COFFEE							
C. 1680-1720	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
1780-85	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	32%
1860-65	72%	53%	75%	89%	47%	83%	76%

Note: Share of households with objects related to the drinking and brewing of tea and coffee, such as -cups, -pots, –kettles, and coffee-grinders.
Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

Coffee, on the other hand, quickly became a drink for the common people. Ahlberger (1996) in his study of the consumer revolution in and around the important port city of Gothenburg argues, based on probate evidence, that coffee became a mass consumer goods during the first half of the nineteenth century, driven mainly by increased consumption among the lower classes. Evidence from the southern Sweden probate not only reinforced this view, but further suggests that coffee, apart from just being the drink for the common people, supplanted tea completely as the hot drink of choice for the rural populace as a whole.

Shammas (1990), in her study of British pre-industrial consumption, considers a commodity to be mass-consumed if it is 1) bought by people of varied income levels, and 2) bought more or less regularly. On this basis she considers a goods to be mass consumed if enough of the commodity was imported to "allow 25% of the adult population to use it at least once daily" (ibid.: 78). Using this number as a benchmark, and correlating it to official import statistics and population numbers for the period,[17] coffee can be assumed to have reached mass-consumption levels at the earliest in 1808, even though 1834 is a more likely

[17] Import data for coffee is taken from *Historisk statistik för Sverige. Del 3. Utrikeshandel 1732-1970.* Statistiska Centralbyrån. 1972, and population statistics are taken from *Lund University Macroeconomic and Demographic Database*, as well as *Om Folkmängden i Finland under seklet 1751-1850, (Avtryck ur Historiallinen Arkisto 2.)* Helsingfors: Finska Litterature-sällskapets tryckeri, 1868, for the Finnish part of the kingdom.

benchmark.[18] This dating correlates well with the evidence from the probate records, with both tea- and coffee-related good being more or less completely absent from non-elite households during the 1780-85 period, appearing in any relevant numbers first later during the nineteenth century.

While the rural adoption of tea, appears to have been slow and uneven – a conclusion reinforced by earlier research (Ahlberger 1996; Müller 2004), – coffee consumption appears to have seen an extremely rapid increase during the first half of the nineteenth century: from being completely absent in all but elite households to being more or less universal across the socio-economic spectrum. This was likely spurred by the lifting of the last bans on coffee drinking in the late eighteenth century, which at last made the drink fully legal to consume (Müller 2004).

4.3. Furniture and changing cooking habits

During the first period, up until 1720, apart from textiles the most common household consumer goods were the large iron or bronze cooking pot – the main way of cooking food up until the wide introduction of new stoves in the late eighteenth century (Jacobsson 1985; Weatherill 1988; Wilson 2012), – the chest used to store textiles and valuables, for elite households the bed – which placed centrally in a public room functioned as a status symbol (Andersson 2009: 157), – and a plethora of different barrels and boxes.[19] While these objects remained a significant factor also during the following periods – especially the large cooking pot which remained one of the individually more expensive items in the household – their relative significance diminished as the number of household objects greatly increased during the eighteenth century with the introduction of new, relatively cheap, and fashionable consumer goods.

Looking at the ownership of the new types of furniture that became popular throughout Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we can see a clear increase of these items across the rural population, even though the increase is, of course,

[18] See Appendix, Figure A1. Specific data on tea imports does not appear to exist, but are instead consistently aggregated together with general "East Indian" imports, with estimations being that tea would have made up 60-80% of all east indian trade (Müller 2004). Based solely on these estimations, the import numbers for tea would suggest an earlier date for mass consumption. However, Müller (2004) concludes that only a tenth of this import actually stayed in Sweden, the rest being re-exported to, especially, England. Since research furthermore suggests that the spread of tea-drinking was generally slower than that of coffee-drinking in Sweden (Ahlberger 1996), it should be safe to assume that tea, too, could not have been mass-consumed before 1808, at the earliest.

[19] While barrels, boxes, and similar containers are not necessarily consumer goods, it unfortunately proved impossible to exclude them within the constraints of the data collection.

most visible among the richest groups.[20] The most visible increase was in cupboards, 'common tables' – i.e. tables without any specified use, – and chairs, all of which were present in lower numbers already during the late seventeenth century but saw an increase during the mid eighteenth century. The trend is similar for most of the consumer goods that has been analysed: Over the course of the eighteenth century not only do these new consumption goods become more prolific in the homes of almost every single group but a significantly larger share of households is owning them, indicant of more diversified and, likely, comfortable homes. For example, clocks, one of the staple goods of the new consumer revolution and representative of the new rationality being introduced during the eighteenth century (Crowley 2001; de Vries 2008), goes from almost completely absence among non-elite households to being present in almost 10% of peasant households in the late eighteenth century. However, it takes until the second half of the nineteenth century before many of these items, such as cushioned chairs and mirrors, become common among the non-elite groups the countryside.

One interesting development over the period is the ownership of freestanding cast iron stoves (*järnkakelugn*): Despite being roughly the cost of a good ox,[21] and as such representing a considerable investment for a peasant household, both the share of households owning them and the average number of these iron stoves more than doubled over the course of the eighteenth century. This consumption, however, was not evenly spread but rather appears to have been specifically centred in Scania: during the 1780-85 period only a mere 9% of all analysed probated households in the two Halland counties noted an iron stove, almost all of them within 22 kilometres of the Scanian border, a number that would rise only to 12% in 1860-65.[22] This would further explain the relatively high share of iron stove ownership among the probated semi-landless and landless households (40%), compared to the poorest third peasants (15%), since the absolute majority of the former group for both of the latter periods are from regions in Scania. It is unlikely that this significantly lower number of iron stoves in Halland is solely driven by the region being generally poorer, since comparably wealthy households of all groups in Scania are still more likely to have iron stoves. Instead, it is more likely that this geographical discrepancy was driven either by proximity to iron stove manufacturers – even though Halland is equally close or even closer to the main producer in Huseby Bruk in Småland (Mårtensson 1963), – by the systems of

[20] See Appendix, Tables A2-A4.
[21] Price comparison based on values taken from probate records.
[22] See Appendix Table A1.

distribution – Mårtensson (1963) argues that the spread in Scania was driven by a manor-controlled rentier system, – or by the average size and build of houses in the regions – peasant homes in Scania were already during the seventeenth century being rebuilt with purpose-built kitchen rooms, based on those found in the local manor houses (Jacobsson 1985; Mårtensson 1963). Unlike in homes where the kitchen was placed in a common all-purpose room, this meant that the central oven would be separated from the rest of the house, and despite being constructed so that the heat would spread to adjacent rooms this type of floorplan would incentivize the purchase of free-standing iron stoves to help heat adjacent rooms (Mårtensson 1963:45). The purpose-built kitchen should, however, also have reached Halland in the early nineteenth century (Jacobsson 1985; Svensson 1963), which makes the apparent lack of cast iron stoves in households from this region even in the last analysed period, 1860-65, even more perplexing and deserving of further study.

The increasing spread of tables, chairs, cupboards, and even cast-iron stoves during the second half of the eighteenth century went hand in hand with the introduction of new customs for eating and cooking introduced throughout north-western Europe during the period (Weatherill 1988, 1993; Overton et al 2004; Wilson 2012). This change is further visible in the assortment of cookware found in the probate records: From consisting mainly of the single large iron or brass pot at the beginning of the eighteenth century, at least among the common peasant households, this had expanded at the end of the century to include not only several pots of different shapes and sizes, but also frying pans and other kitchen utensils, such as waffle irons found among the wealthier households. While many of these cookware items, such as the waffle iron, were common among elite households already before the 1720's, this expansion of the range of cookware also among the common population suggests a broader change in both eating and cooking habits. The new cookware and utensils would allow for the cooking of new types of dishes previously restricted from the peasant population due to their reliance on the single pot over the fire, most likely made possible by the aforementioned introduction of purpose-built kitchens. These changes would have entailed a considerable investment for the households over a long period, especially considering that the copper kettles of varying sizes that made up a large part of this investment appears to have increased in cost over the same period.[23]

[23] See Appendix B.

Together with this new cooking-ware also came new dinnerware, a move away from the traditional wooden plates and spoons to plates, bowls, and even platters in more fashionable styles and materials. While this trend appears more or less universal for the entire rural population, and becomes even more pronounced over the following nineteenth century, it takes different forms depending on the wealth of the households, with especially interesting results regarding the materials of the dinnerware.

As can be seen in Table 5 below, objects in materials commonly associated with dinner-ware – pewter, earthenware, glass, and porcelain – go from almost completely absent in non-elite, non-artisanal rural households to becoming more or less ubiquitous during the eighteenth century. Unlike in England, where the peasantry appears to abandon pewter plates in favour for porcelain and earthenware during the eighteenth century (Overton et al. 2004), this is the century when the south-Swedish peasant adopts pewter, going from almost completely absent in all but the wealthiest peasant households to almost universal. While this large increase in pewter is likely partly driven by the sharp drop in value of pewter, especially plates, over the same period, it is also indicative of new dining habits being adopted by the rural population.

The decline in pewter ownership over the nineteenth century is most likely due to changing consumer habits, connected to the increasing availability, as well as lower prices, of European porcelain and locally produced earthenware (de Vries 2008). More interesting is that a greater share of the poorest third of the peasant population owned objects made out of earthenware than the much richer parts of the peasant group in the late eighteenth century. Looking more closely at the types of objects making up this increase mostly confirms that it is likely related to the new dining habits being introduced during the period (Crowley 2001; Shammas 1990).

Actual porcelain – almost exclusively of European origin[24] – appears to be more or less equally distributed among the peasant group during this period, something the region shares in common with the north-Swedish region analysed by Ulväng (2021). Unlike in northern Sweden, however, where Ulväng terms porcelain as the only "class-neutral item" (ibid.: 147), porcelain ownership in southern Sweden at the end of the eighteenth century shows clear signs of class distinction: not only is porcelain significantly more common among the households of the elite group, it is more or less completely absent from the

[24] Only two probated households, both from the 1780-85 period, listed porcelain of east-Asian origin: One wife of an inspector, and one wife of a parish priest, both in the elite group.

households of the semi-landless or landless population. This class distinction appears to be upheld over the following century, where it appears to exist a clear correlation between household wealth and ownership of porcelain.

Table 5. *Share of households with different types of dinnerware.*

	PEASANTS	BOTTOM THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP	MID THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP	TOP THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP	SEMI-LANDLESS & LANDLESS	CRAFTSMEN & SKILLED WORKERS	RURAL ELITE
SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH PEWTER							
C. 1680-1720	8%	2%	2%	14%	0%	43%	89%
1780-85	75%	57%	77%	89%	41%	64%	74%
1860-65	56%	38%	60%	69%	28%	54%	52%
SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH EARTHENWARE							
C. 1680-1720	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	6%
1780-85	15%	21%	15%	8%	5%	5%	26%
1860-65	53%	50%	51%	57%	41%	49%	52%
SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH GLASS							
C. 1680-1720	1%	0%	1%	2%	0%	0%	26%
1780-85	20%	21%	20%	18%	14%	14%	42%
1860-65	71%	47%	73%	94%	48%	63%	76%
SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH PORCELAIN							
C. 1680-1720	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
1780-85	11%	15%	8%	11%	1%	9%	39%
1860-65	73%	45%	81%	92%	46%	74%	83%

Note: Percentage of households from each group that owned objects of either pewter, earthenware, glass, or porcelain.
Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

Earthenware and pewter appear to have filled the same practical function of dinnerware for the peasant group during the late eighteenth century, with pewter being the preferred material for those wealthy enough to afford it. Looking more closely in the probate records from the 1780-85 period at the types of objects that make up the categories *pewter* and *earthenware*, we can clearly see that they are, to a large extent, the same types of objects, only with

radically different prices: plates, cups, serving dishes, and eating utensils are by far the most common types of objects of both pewter and earthenware, with wealthier households preferring the former, more expensive and durable, material.

5. Conclusions

Usually, macro-data analysis of Swedish economic development during the early modern period paints the eighteenth century as a period of economic stagnation, with increased cost of living and population increase that outpaced both the improvements in grain production and the reclamation of land, which due to the partible inheritance structure led to an increasing share of the population over the century not able to subsist solely on agricultural production. First around 1780 would economic growth start, brought forth both by technical – in the form of wide-spread introduction of iron ploughs and potatoes (Gadd 1983) – and institutional improvements, in the form of agricultural shifts and repealing of trade regulations (Olsson & Svensson 2010).

However, probate data from southern Sweden suggests a slightly different narrative. The inventories from the 1780's suggest that the rural population here saw clear signs of increasing consumption and living standards during the eighteenth the century, with an increased diversification of household goods focused mainly towards increased comfort rather than household reproduction, which had been the major consumption pattern at the beginning of the century. This trend is especially clear among the peasant population, where these new consumption patterns had even managed to penetrate the poorest parts of the peasant population. That this shift in consumption appear in the probate data so clearly visible already in the 1780's indicates that the shift towards greater household material living standards must have started sometime mid-century, well before the general improvements in the economy during the last decades of the century should have been visible among the rural population.

Historians on consumption in England and the Low Countries are often quick to raise the important role played by the introduction of tea and coffee for the consumer revolution and the changes in consumption patterns during the eighteenth century. However, on the southern Swedish countryside tea remained a consumption goods for the elite all through the analysed period, with coffee instead becoming the universal drink of the people first during the nineteenth century. The probate evidence for the spread of tea and coffee drinking during the nineteenth century is further reinforced by import data which suggests

that coffee could have become mass consumed commodities no earlier than 1807, and more probably 1834. Thus, we should safely be able to conclude that consumption of colonial hot drinks did not contribute it any real way to the eighteenth century increases in household consumption, unlike what appears to have been the case in both England and the Low Countries (McCants 2008; Smith 2002; de Vries 2008).

Evidence suggests that the new cooking and dining culture that spread throughout north-western Europe during the eighteenth century also reached the peasant groups in southern Sweden, with peasants diversifying their cooking and eating utensils to match. Unlike the eighteenth-century trend in England and the Low Countries, however, where cheap and fashion-sensitive earthenware replaced pewter as the main type of dinnerware (Overton et al. 2004), the trend among the southern Swedish peasants appears to have been to have eating and serving utensils in pewter rather than porcelain and earthenware. The latter two appears to have mainly been the option for the poorest peasants, whereas wealthier households preferred to have plates and serving dishes of pewter. It is likely that the re-building trend in Scania during the seventeenth and eighteenth century – which saw the introduction of purpose-build kitchens, inspired by those found in elite manor houses (Mårtensson 1963) – into the peasant homes further incentivised the adoption of many of the new consumption patterns introduced during the eighteenth century. This would especially be the case for those new consumption trends relating to eating and cooking, as well as, possibly, the increased ownership of cast-iron stoves.

The eighteenth century did not only see an increase in the consumption of new cooking- and dinnerware, but in almost every type of new consumer goods, such as furniture, iron stoves, and clocks. These new consumer goods became significantly more common among rural households during the eighteenth century; a trend which continued and increased through the nineteenth century during which period we further see a large increase in the consumption of cushioned chairs –both sofas as well as clad and cushioned dining chairs, – specialized tables – such as tea- and gaming-tables, – and mirrors. Furthermore, declining prices of textiles during the period led to a greatly increasing stock of tablecloths, bedlinen, drapes, and wardrobes, even while the relative value of the textile stock remained constant. The main consequence of these changes would have been more diversified and comfortable homes; rural homes during the mid-nineteenth century would have been both warmer and brighter than 150 years earlier, with more comfortable places to sit, more textiles covering tables and windows, as well as with the capability of supplying more diversified daily meals.

With almost every single consumption good analysed, the consumption patterns and level of material living standard of southern eighteenth-century Swedish peasants appear to have been roughly a century behind their English counterparts from comparable regions[25] (Overton et al. 2004; Shammas 1990). With Sweden being on the European periphery this type of time lag is expected, and is further roughly in line with the time it takes for the so-called consumer revolution, after its emergence among fashionable society in Paris and London during the early seventeenth century (Smith 2002), to reach the upper echelons of Swedish society in Stockholm (Brown 2020). The only consumer good where the Swedish peasants appear to be somewhat in par with their English counterparts during the eighteenth century appears to be in the ownership of books.[26]

Correlating these new consumption patterns with the changes in household production strategies, it appears as if the increase in consumer goods during the eighteenth century goes hand in hand with the diversification of household production seen during the same period. The main barrier for the adoption of the new consumer goods and habits that were introduced during the eighteenth century appears to have been access to the markets where these could be acquired (Bovenkerk & Fertig 2022; Hutchison 2014; Overton et al 2004; Ulväng 2021); both access to money or credit with which to purchase these goods, and access to the wider inter-regional markets which would supply many of these goods. As in both north-western Germany (Bovenkerk and Fertig 2022) and rural Norway (Hutchison 2014), the increased market reliance that appears to have been central to the diversification of the peasant household economy during the late eighteenth century likely led to increased consumption simply through the virtue of bringing these households into closer contact with markets where these new goods could be acquired and habits be adopted; by increasing access to money and credit, and by connecting the regions in which these households lived to inter-regional markets through the increased movement of goods. The increasing marketisation of Swedish society during the nineteenth century then continued to spur consumption by further eroding the barriers between consumers and markets.

The correlation between production and consumption requires further study to completely disentangle, such as the impact from distance to markets, or how rural market integration during the eighteenth century more specifically effected household access to

[25] Overton et al compares two English counties, Cornwall and Kent, of which Kent – being a mainly agricultural region with easy access to inter-regional markets – is more comparable to southern Sweden than Cornwall – a mining region on the English periphery.
[26] See Appendix Table A9.

money and credit. The probate data from southern Sweden appears to suggest that the increased consumption and changes in consumption patterns seen during the century was a consequence of the changes in household production strategies rather than a driving force behind it: The diversification of production that rural households underwent was likely a risk-averse strategy adopted to counteract the decreasing ability to sustain a household on agriculture alone (Falk, Bengtsson, & Olsson TBP). As such it is likely that the changes in consumption patterns followed this diversification of incomes by way of increased access to markets. The only type of consumer goods that appear to counter this interpretation are those related to food culture, especially cooking- and dinnerware. The adoption new consumption patterns associated with eating were possibly driven by peasant emulation of the cooking and eating habits of elite groups, and represents a conscious decision by the rural households to improve their living standards through consumption; a decision that likely helped drive the transformation of the rural home during the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

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Appendix A

Table A1. *Ownership of consumption objects, share of all households with:*

		-1720	**1780-85**	**1860-65**
Halland				
	Value objects	22%	72%	57%
	Gold	7%	1%	5%
	Silver	16%	26%	40%
	Pewter	18%	68%	41%
	Money	8%	10%	34%
	Porcelain, glass, earthenware	5%	34%	77%
	Porcelain	0%	17%	59%
	Glass	4%	30%	61%
	Earthenware	1%	32%	68%
	Tea objects	0%	3%	8%
	Coffee objects	0%	2%	56%
	Tobacco objects	1%	1%	11%
	Specialty tables	3%	1%	3%
	Cushioned chairs	7%	11%	52%
	Iron Stoves	5%	9%	12%
	Clocks	5%	24%	73%
	Mirrors	6%	2%	20%
	Art	9%	2%	18%
	Books	8%	24%	75%
Malmöhus				
	Value objects	37%	69%	65%
	Gold	4%	4%	10%
	Silver	25%	36%	45%
	Pewter	34%	64%	38%
	Money	11%	12%	19%
	Porcelain, glass, earthenware	5%	14%	79%
	Porcelain	0%	7%	68%
	Glass	5%	10%	70%
	Earthenware	1%	4%	44%
	Tea objects	1%	4%	7%
	Coffee objects	0%	2%	62%
	Tobacco objects	0%	6%	23%
	Specialty tables	2%	5%	25%

	Cushioned chairs	14%	4%	6%
	Iron stoves	58%	71%	77%
	Clocks	11%	10%	75%
	Mirrors	12%	6%	41%
	Art	6%	1%	21%
	Books	8%	13%	68%
Kristianstad				
	Value objects	25%	74%	65%
	Gold	4%	2%	7%
	Silver	20%	33%	42%
	Pewter	17%	64%	52%
	Money	13%	9%	26%
	Porcelain, glass, earthenware	3%	20%	69%
	Porcelain	0%	9%	58%
	Glass	3%	25%	54%
	Earthenware	3%	5%	45%
	Tea objects	0%	7%	12%
	Coffee objects	0%	2%	67%
	Tobacco objects	0%	8%	15%
	Specialty tables	3%	4%	15%
	Cushioned chairs	5%	7%	6%
	Iron stoves	11%	47%	57%
	Clocks	1%	15%	73%
	Mirrors	6%	8%	19%
	Art	3%	0%	23%
	Books	3%	27%	73%

Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

Table A2. *Average number of specific consumer items per household*

	Peasants	Bottom third peasant wealth group	Mid third peasant wealth group	Top third peasant wealth group	Semi-landless & Landless	Craftsmen & skilled workers	Rural elite
Average number of non-spec. tables							
c. 1680-1720	0,293	0,121	0,152	0,606	0,000	0,857	4,643
1780-85	0,641	0,122	0,382	1,420	0,390	1,000	3,226
1860-65	2,908	1,221	2,429	4,980	1,316	3,714	5,893
Average number of spec. tables							
c. 1680-1720	0,005	0,000	0,008	0,008	0,000	0,000	0,200
1780-85	0,005	0,000	0,000	0,015	0,024	0,182	0,774
1860-65	0,247	0,030	0,130	0,580	0,044	0,343	1,103
Average number of cushioned chairs							
c. 1680-1720	0,008	0,000	0,023	0,000	0,000	0,000	3,271
1780-85	0,069	0,076	0,061	0,069	0,067	0,091	3,903
1860-65	0,610	0,230	0,460	1,140	0,144	0,800	3,345
Average number of cupboards							
c. 1680-1720	0,543	0,295	0,485	0,848	0,200	1,286	3,871
1780-85	1,710	1,168	1,672	2,290	0,951	1,364	3,290
1860-65	2,830	1,390	2,770	4,330	1,574	2,800	5,276
Average number of iron stoves							
c. 1680-1720	0,167	0,030	0,045	0,424	0,200	0,571	1,686
1780-85	0,681	0,141	0,519	1,382	0,427	0,545	1,532
1860-65	0,945	0,365	0,750	1,720	0,478	0,771	1,379
Average number of clocks							
c. 1680-1720	0,005	0,000	0,000	0,015	0,000	0,000	0,414
1780-85	0,193	0,115	0,168	0,298	0,018	0,227	0,806
1860-65	1,000	0,620	1,040	1,340	0,801	1,171	1,483
Average number of mirrors							
c. 1680-1720	0,003	0,000	0,000	0,008	0,000	0,000	0,729
1780-85	0,015	0,008	0,008	0,031	0,037	0,364	1,290
1860-65	0,550	0,140	0,480	1,030	0,173	0,657	2,138

Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

Table A3. *Share of households with consumer items per household, per socio-economic group*

	Peasants	Bottom third peasant wealth group	Mid third peasant wealth group	Top third peasant wealth group	Semi-landless & Landless	Craftsmen & skilled workers	Rural elite
Share of households with non-spec. tables							
c. 1680-1720	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
1780-85	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
1860-65	2	1	2	5	1	2	3
Share of households with spec. tables							
c. 1680-1720	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1780-85	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1860-65	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Share of households with cushioned chairs							
c. 1680-1720	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
1780-85	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1860-65	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Share of households with cupboards							
c. 1680-1720	0	0	0	1	0	1	3
1780-85	2	1	2	2	1	1	2
1860-65	2	1	2,5	4	1	3	3
Share of households with iron stoves							
c. 1680-1720	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
1780-85	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
1860-65	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
Share of households with clocks							
c. 1680-1720	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1780-85	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
1860-65	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Share of households with mirrors							
c. 1680-1720	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1780-85	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1860-65	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

Table A4. *Share of households owning certain consumer goods, per socio-economic group*

	Peasants	Bottom third peasant wealth group	Mid third peasant wealth group	Top third peasant wealth group	Semi-landless & Landless	Craftsmen & skilled workers	Rural elite	
Share of households with non-spec. tables								
c. 1680-1720	20%	11%	13%	37%	0%	57%	89%	
1780-85	36%	8%	31%	69%	29%	59%	74%	
1860-65	84%	64%	88%	99%	70%	97%	97%	
Share of households with spec. tables								
c. 1680-1720	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	16%	
1780-85	1%	0%	0%	2%	2%	9%	32%	
1860-65	18%	3%	12%	39%	4%	31%	38%	
Share of households with cushioned chairs								
c. 1680-1720	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	53%	
1780-85	5%	7%	5%	4%	4%	5%	45%	
1860-65	22%	22%	21%	22%	13%	20%	41%	
Share of households with cupboards								
c. 1680-1720	38%	23%	33%	58%	20%	71%	90%	
1780-85	79%	62%	83%	93%	59%	73%	81%	
1860-65	84%	70%	87%	95%	71%	86%	93%	
Share of households with iron stoves								
c. 1680-1720	14%	3%	5%	36%	10%	57%	64%	
1780-85	48%	15%	48%	81%	40%	41%	55%	
1860-65	59%	34%	61%	82%	44%	57%	66%	
Share of households with clocks								
c. 1680-1720	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	34%	
1780-85	19%	11%	17%	29%	2%	23%	55%	
1860-65	81%	57%	91%	95%	63%	80%	76%	
Share of households with mirrors								
c. 1680-1720	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	41%	
1780-85	2%	1%	1%	3%	4%	23%	48%	
1860-65	34%	14%	31%	56%	16%	46%	72%	

Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

Table A5. *Composition of movable wealth, per socio-economic group & per period*

		Production	Consumption	Value objects	Money
Peasants	c. 1680-1720	79%	19%	1%	1%
	1780-85	63%	33%	2%	2%
	1860-85	50%	46%	1%	2%
Bottom third peasant wealth group	1680-1720	79%	19%	1%	0%
	1780-85	61%	35%	2%	2%
	1860-65	34%	62%	2%	1%
Mid third peasant wealth group	c. 1680-1720	82%	17%	0%	0%
	1780-85	65%	32%	0%	2%
	1860-65	52%	45%	2%	1%
Top third peasant wealth group	1680-1720	76%	21%	2%	2%
	1780-85	63%	31%	3%	3%
	1860-65	65%	31%	3%	1%
Semi-landless & Landless	c. 1680-1720	68%	32%	0%	0%
	1780-85	38%	56%	2%	5%
	1860-85	24%	71%	1%	3%
Craftsmen & skilled workers	c. 1680-1720	61%	30%	3%	6%
	1780-85	30%	62%	5%	4%
	1860-85	25%	69%	5%	2%
Rural elite	c. 1680-1720	38%	39%	18%	5%
	1780-85	36%	50%	9%	3%
	1860-85	22%	68%	6%	4%

Note: The value of the movable wealth is defined as the total household wealth excluding buildings, land, credit, and other financial as well as semi-financial assets, such as stocks, money in the bank, church seats, and similar. Production is the total value of all household items specifically for household reproduction and creation of new value, such as animals, tools, goods for sale, and grain. Consumption is the total value of all household consumer items, such as furniture, textiles, cooking- & dinnerware, and books. Value objects are all objects of precious metals, such as gold and silver, as well as pewter, whose purpose could be as storages of value over time. Money is the total value of all coins and bills in the household. Due to the nature of the coding, consumption also includes the plethora of barrels and boxes for storage found in probate inventories. However, while numerous, their value is in general pretty negligible and have very little effect on the general trend observed.
Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

Table A6. *Value of all value objects as share of movable wealth, if owning value objects*

	PEASANTS	BOTTOM THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP	MID THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP	TOP THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP	SEMI-LANDLESS & LANDLESS	CRAFTSMEN & SKILLED WORKERS	RURAL ELITE
C. 1680-1720	5%	4%	5%	5%	0%	6%	20%
1780-85	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	7%	11%
1860-65	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%	6%	7%

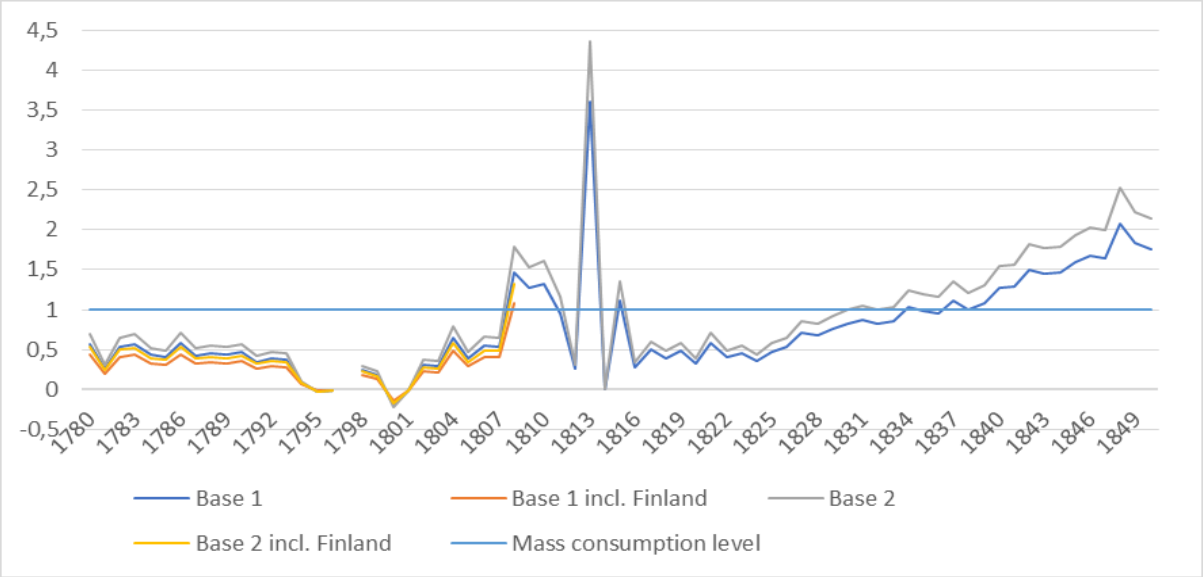
Note: The combined value of all objects in gold, silver, and pewter as share of average total value of movable wealth, only including households with at least one value object in probate inventory. Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

Table A7. *Share of households with gold and silver, per socio-economic group*

	PEASANTS	BOTTOM THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP	MID THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP	TOP THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP	SEMI-LANDLESS & LANDLESS	CRAFTSMEN & SKILLED WORKERS	RURAL ELITE
SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH GOLD							
C. 1680-1720	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	33%
1780-85	1%	0%	0%	3%	1%	5%	23%
186-65	11%	4%	8%	20%	1%	17%	31%
SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH SILVER							
C. 1680-1720	9%	1%	7%	12%	0%	29%	77%
1780-85	34%	14%	27%	61%	21%	36%	58%
1860-65	52%	26%	54%	75%	24%	43%	66%

Percentage of all households belonging to each group, as well as peasant wealth group, owning at least one object made out of gold and silver. Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

Figure A1. *Mass consumption of coffee, including yearly re-export of coffee*



Note: Mass consumption level = 1 and indicates when coffee imports are large enough to achieve mass consumption. Base 1 is calculated on the estimate of 25% of the national population consuming 5207 pounds of coffee per year in order to consume one cup per day (1/75 pound of coffee per cup and day), while Base 2 is calculated on a more conservative estimate of 4294 pounds per year (1/85 pound per cup and day). Both of these base levels are calculated both excluding and including the population of Finland up until 1808 when it is lost to Russia. Figures for re-export of coffee is only available for the years 1792-1812.
Source: Data on coffee import is taken from Historisk statistik för Sverige. Del 3. Utrikeshandel 1732-1970. Statistiska Centralbyrån. 1972; data on the Swedish population are taken from Lund University Macroeconomic and Demographic Database for Sweden; and on the Finnish population from Om Folkmängden i Finland under seklet 1751-1850, (Avtryck ur Historiallinen Arkisto 2.) Helsingfors: Finska Litterature-sällskapets tryckeri, 1868.

Table A7. *Composition of household textile value, if owning textiles.*

	PEASANTS	BOTTOM THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP	MID THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP	TOP THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP	SEMI-LANDLESS & LANDLESS	CRAFTSMEN & SKILLED WORKERS	RURAL ELITE
BEDLINEN AVERAGE SHARE OF HOUSEHOLD TEXTILE VALUE IF OWNING TEXTILES							
C. 1680-1720	46%	38%	41%	56%	46%	37%	50%
1780-85	45%	41%	49%	46%	33%	32%	39%
1860-65	51%	45%	50%	59%	40%	42%	41%
CLOTHES AVERAGE SHARE OF HOUSEHOLD TEXTILE VALUE IF OWNING TEXTILES							
C. 1680-1720	36%	51%	43%	20%	40%	31%	16%
1780-85	42%	50%	40%	35%	58%	54%	43%
1860-65	42%	49%	42%	34%	57%	49%	43%

Note: The average share of the value of bedlinen and clothes as part of the complete value of household textiles, only including households with textiles in probate inventory. Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

Table A8. *Average value of personal clothes for men and women of different ages.*

		C.1680-1720		1780-85		1860-65	
		Whole sample	**peasants**	**Whole sample**	**peasants**	**Whole sample**	**peasants**
WOMEN	**All**	**22,97**	**16,38**	**10,22**	**9,43**	**45,21**	**56,64**
	Aged <50	**30,32**	**21,80**	**12,21**	**11,86**	**65,10**	**81,54**
	Aged <40	**49,46**	**34,21**	**14,16**	**13,76**	**71,77**	**84,99**
	Aged <30	**32,50**	**32,50**	**15,68**	**15,79**	**77,72**	**94,76**
MEN	**All**	**14,81**	**8,7**	**6,64**	**8,35**	**46,27**	**59,18**
	Aged <50	**11,53**	**10,57**	**8,11**	**11,01**	**57,02**	**80,73**
	Aged <40	**11,25**	**11,25**	**7,95**	**12,06**	**64,33**	**100,96**
	Aged <30	**8,04**	**8,04**	**6,09**	**14,97**	**61,10**	**110,54**

Note: All values are in contemporary denominations, and therefore not comparable between periods. The average value of probated clothes for women and men of different ages for each period, both for the complete sample and for only the peasant group.
Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

Table A9. *Share of households owning books.*

	PEASANTS	**BOTTOM THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP**	**MID THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP**	**TOP THIRD PEASANT WEALTH GROUP**	**SEMI-LANDLESS & LANDLESS**	**CRAFTSMEN & SKILLED WORKERS**	**RURAL ELITE**
SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH AT LEAST ONE BOOK							
C. 1680-1720	1%	0%	2%	2%	0%	14%	40%
1780-85	19%	15%	21%	23%	18%	23%	42%
1860-65	68%	60%	67%	78%	61%	63%	52%
SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH AT LEAST ONE NON-BIBLE, NON-PSALM BOOK							
C. 1680-1720	1%	0%	1%	2%	0%	0%	40%
1780-85	11%	6%	10%	17%	13%	18%	39%
1860-65	62%	60%	67%	76%	54%	63%	52%

Note: While probate records usually specifies if a book was a bible or a psalm-book, in many cases they simply lists 'books' without further specifications as to type or numbers. While it could be assumed that these, too, were either bibles or psalm-books they have been counted as not.
Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

Table A10. *General representability of the sampled regions, 1750-1865.*

		HALLAND: SELECTION	HALLAND: WHOLE	MALMÖHUS: SELECTION	MALMÖHUS: WHOLE	KRISTIANSTAD: SELECTION[E]	KRISTIANSTAD: WHOLE
1750	**Population**	19415	58234	42601	105163	31033	90335
	Seed, barrels	17420	44210	66809	150121	23232	73340
	Hypothetical harvest, barrels	49902	126240	252905	595868	82997	284866
	Cattle equivalents	37202	101338	101345	208368	52793	163594
	Total farm area, barrel-land[a]	19984,99	49122,04	109399,12	166800,84	33399,81	112051,38
	Km² Farm area[b]	98,66	242,50	540,06	823,43	164,88	553,15
	Population density/ km² farm area	196,79	240,14	78,88	127,71	188,21	163,31
1810	**Population**	24049	75594	62507	149892	44761	120547
	Seed, barrels	16544	52814	93079	250510	35445	102409
	Hypothetical harvest, barrels	57133	175820	365621	694388	127325	387955
	Cattle equivalents	35044	92319	108607	214620	62474	165856
	Total farm area, barrel-land	18980	58682	152416	278344	50958	156464
	Km² Farm area[b]	93,70	289,69	752,42	1374,07	251,56	772,40
	Population density/ km² farm area	256,67	260,95	83,07	109,09	177,93	156,07
1860-65	**Population[c]**	39843	110209	110552	239602	78647	199461
	Km² cultivated area[d]	2006,35	4501,44	1947,32	4448,12	2283,33	5430,67
	Population density/ km² cultivated area	19,86	24,48	56,77	53,87	34,44	36,73

Note: [a]Approximated using the same conversion from seed to barrel-land of seeded farmland used by Linde & Andersson Palm for 1810, [b]Converted from Barrel-land. Only includes seeded farmland, [c]Does not include population of towns, [d]Converted from Barrel-land. Includes all cultivated land and forests; town areas are not included, [e]Does not include the district of Västra Göinge; while it is present in the database, only 5 inventories are taken from there, all from the first period.

Source: af Forsell 1833 for population levels for 1750; Linde 2014, and Linde & Andersson Palm 2014 for all other data for the years 1750 & 181; SCB 1864 for population for the year 1860 & SCB 1868 for area for the year 1865

Appendix B, Relative Prices

One of the main issues of properly analysing overarching changes in consumption patterns over large spans of time is the issue of the dual impact of inflation and new technologies making goods cheaper to produce and transport, the latter especially relevant for the late early modern period. While simply counting the number of objects and households owning these objects and conclude that there is an increase in absolute numbers are fairly straight-forward; to assess to what extent this increase might be brought on simply by price differences between the analysed periods are less so. This is especially the case for the Swedish eighteenth century, since the actual available data on price changes for whole the century is lacking.[27]

As stated in section 3.3 *The issue of value nominations*, trying to overcome this issue using the data from the existing consumer price index for the period leads to unsatisfactory conclusions: The results from such an effort suggests that the values for especially the earlier periods, before mid-eighteenth century, likely are calculated too low when compared to later periods. Instead, a *relative price index* has been calculated by comparing the values of a selection of common household goods found in probate records and how they change over the period.

Table B1, below, presents the changes in the average probate values of these selected consumer goods between the two periods 1715-20 and 1780-85 relative to every other good in the selection. A change in value of 100% means that the household good in question retained the same average value, relative to the average value every other good, over the period, whereas a value under 100% indicates that the goods decreased in average value, and vice versa.

Since the estimated change in value is relative to the other goods in the selection, it is sensitive to temporary fluxes in the value of these goods during the period being investigated. One such issue for the current selection is the inclusion of grains, which likely skews the change slightly upwards for the other goods: The period 1718-1720, from which a majority of the sampled households for the first period stem, was a high inflationary period, brought forth by the large scale issuing of emergency coins by Charles XII in his last reigning years, which appears to have affected the price of grain much more severely than all other types of goods. Starting in 1718 the average value of grains increases to 340% of their pre-

[27] The otherwise extensive price series for Sweden set up by Lennart Jöberg (1972) unfortunately starts in 1732.

inflation 1715-1717 values, while the value of all other good only increase to, on average, 161% of their pre-inflation values. While it is unclear exactly how long this inflationary period lasted, in 1734, when the available published price series start, the value of all types of grain appear to be back to roughly their pre-inflation period levels (Jörberg 1972).

In order to calculate for this as well, the relative values were also calculated with the values for grain being adjusted downward to be in line with the average inflation increase for all other goods in the selection.

Table B1. *Change in relative prices of selected household goods between the periods 1715-20 and 1780-85.*

Household goods	**Change in value**	**Adjusted with lower 1718-20 prices for grain**
Copper / Bronze pot	124%	115%
Copper kettle, weighing 16+ mark	127%	118%
Copper kettle, weighing 6-15 mark	123%	114%
Copper kettle, weighing 1-5 mark	119%	111%
Irot pot, unspecified size	139%	128%
Iron pot, "larger"	56%	52%
Iron pot, "smaller"	63%	58%
Iron stove	106%	98%
Pewter plate, single	55%	51%
"Dressed bed"	279%	259%
Unspecified cushion	176%	163%
"Overcushion"	152%	141%
"Undercushion" / bedcushion	135%	125%
Regular table	47%	43%
Clocks, wall- or table-mounted	108%	100%
Loom	88%	82%
Working wagon	240%	223%
Rye, per barrel	81%	145%
Barley, per barrel	78%	174%
Oats, per barrel	109%	161%
Horse, age 3-13	233%	216%
Bullock & Oxen	86%	80%
Cow	107%	99%
Average for all goods	**123%**	**124%**
Average for all consumer goods ("Copper / Bronze pot" do "Clocks")	**121%**	**112%**
Average for textiles	**185%**	**172%**
Average for all re-producitve goods (Loom to Cow)	**128%**	**148%**

Source: Probate records from Halland and Malmöhus counties.

This relative price change is calculated in two steps. In the first step the average probated values of the selected household goods were identified from a semi-random selection of 60 probate inventories from each period.[28] In the second step these values were used to create a relative price matrix, where the value of every selected household good relative to every other good were calculated. In table B2 below an excerpt from these matrixes can be seen, where the relative probated value of iron stoves can be seen, together with the final calculation of the change in value over the period: During the period 1715-20, for example, an iron stove on average was worth 3,04 times as much as the largest sized copper kettles, weighing 16 or more mark (1 mark = roughly 0,212kg). During the later period, 1780-85, the value of an iron stove relative to the largest sized copper kettles had decreased slightly, now being worth ”only” 2,6 times as much, meaning that, relative to specifically large copper kettles, the value of iron stoves had decreased to 85% of their 1715-20 probated value.

This relative change between the two periods is then calculated for every household good, as exemplified in table B2, whereafter the average change is calculated to identify how the probated value of the selected goods changed over the period, relative to other goods. In the case on specifically iron stoves, we can see that they in 1780-85, on average, are valued at 106% of their 1715-1720 value, meaning that the relative value of specifically iron stoves remains practically unchanged over the period in question.

[28] For this purpose, 30 inventories each from the more affluent field regions in Malmöhus county and the poorer brush / forest regions in Halland county were selected in the order they were excerpted for the dataset. A later analysis confirms that the regional impact on the probated values appear to be minimal to, almost exclusively, negligible. Furthermore, there were too few households during the 1715-20 period who owned clocks, so the average value of clocks is instead calculated using the full c. 1680-1720 period.

Table B2. *The relative value of iron stoves when compared to the selection of household goods.*

Household goods	Iron stove, 1715-20	Iron stove, 1780-85	Relative change	Adjusted with lower 1718-20 prices for grain
Copper / Bronze pot	3,04	2,60	85%	85%
Copper kettle, weighing 16+ mark	1,61	1,34	83%	83%
Copper kettle, weighing 6-15 mark	3,61	3,11	86%	86%
Copper kettle, weighing 1-5 mark	8,12	7,22	89%	89%
Irot pot, unspecified size	11,01	8,44	77%	77%
Iron pot, "larger"	3,35	6,33	189%	189%
Iron pot, "smaller"	11,03	18,61	169%	169%
Iron stove	1,00	1,00	100%	100%
Pewter plate, single	20,84	40,50	194%	194%
"Dressed bed"	4,06	1,54	38%	38%
Unspecified cushion	6,75	4,07	60%	60%
"Overcushion"	4,38	3,06	70%	70%
"Undercushion" / bedcushion	5,45	4,30	79%	79%
Regular table	9,24	20,99	227%	227%
Clock, wall- or table-mounted	1,62	1,59	98%	98%
Loom	8,24	9,90	120%	120%
Working wagon	8,42	3,72	44%	44%
Rye /barrel	1,32	1,74	131%	68%
Barley /barrel	1,80	2,43	135%	58%
Oats /barrel	4,05	3,92	97%	61%
Horse, age 3-13	1,29	0,59	45%	45%
Bullock & Oxen	1,24	1,53	123%	123%
Cow	1,57	1,53	99%	99%
		Average	**106%**	**98%**

Source: Probate records from Halland and Malmöhus counties.

Literature references:

Jörberg, Lennart. 1972. A History of Prices in Sweden 1732-1914; Volume One. Berlingska Tryckeriet: Lund.

Appendix C, Relative Household Age

Swedish probate records consistently lack information about the age at death of the probated individual, which is necessary not only for determining the level of representation of any probate sample but also for any studies interested in household life cycle impact. While the mandatory introduction to the inventories provides detailed enough information about the deceased so that they can be reliably linked to other sources that does contain this information, such as parish records, this unfortunately becomes less useful the further back in time due to the patchy nature of source survival. As can be seen in table C1 below, while the share of probated individuals for which the age at death could be determined through other sources are high for the last period, at almost 94%, this share rapidly decreases for the earlier two periods, from a decent 77% for the 1780's to a paltry 16,5% for the pre-1720 period.

Table C1. *Share of linked individuals with information on age at death.*

	1680-1720	**1780-85**	**1860-65**
Linked individuals	16,5%	77,2%	93,7%

Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

For most Swedish probate studies this is a minor issue, since most are focused on the post 1750-period from when both probate and parish sources become more numerous. However, for any study utilising earlier material another way of determining age of the deceased must be found: For this purpose, a *Relative Household Age Proxy* has been constructed, which utilizes the fact that while age at death is not noted in the inventory, the legal age of the children of the deceased are. Especially, the probate introduction – since it was a tool for dividing the estate between heirs and creditors – will consistently note whether the children of the deceased are of legal age – for Sweden usually between 16 and 21 during the period[29] - to determine whether they or a guardian takes control of the inheritance. Using this fact, we can then divide all probated individuals into four main groups: Heads of households without any children, of households where all children are minors, with children that are both minors and of legal age, and households where all children are of legal age.

[29] Children of non-legal ages, usually those aged 16-18 or lower, are always noted with their age.

In table C2 below is presented the age of death of all individuals in these proxy groups. Since the mean age at first marriage in Swedish throughout the period in question was around 27-29 for women and 29-34 for men – higher during the seventeenth century and continuously declining (Lundh 1997) – we should logically find very few individuals younger than 50 with children of legal age, since the first child would usually come within the first year of marriage; a conclusion backed up by the evidence.

Table C2. *Age at death of the Relative Household Age Proxy groups*

	NO CHILDREN	MINORS	MINORS AND LEGAL AGE	ALL LEGAL AGE
20-30	52	63	0	0
31-40	31	147	3	0
41-50	34	148	48	3
51-60	36	67	93	60
61+	83	27	103	253
TOTAL	236	452	247	316

Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

Table C3. *Average and median age at death.*

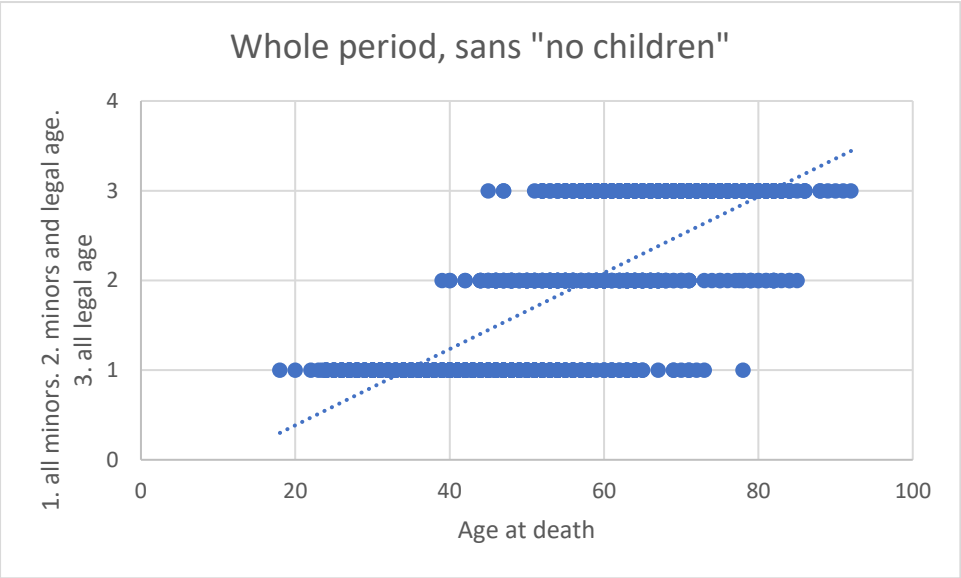
	AVERAGE AGE	MEDIAN AGE
NO CHILDREN	50,47	51
MINORS	42,33	41
MINORS AND LEGAL AGE	59,25	59
ALL LEGAL AGE	69,41	70

Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

As expected, no real conclusions can be drawn about the group of individuals without any children. For every other group, however, as can be seen in both table C2 above and C3 above, there is a clear – and logical – correlation between age of the deceased and the age of the children; the larger the share of the children in the household that are of legal age, the generally older is the head of household. This progression can be further seen in figure C1, below.

If excluding the group without children, the three remaining groups can be mapped loosely onto the household life-cycle model proposed by Horrell et al (2021): Household with all minor children are all mostly in the *young-* and *peak-family* stages, whereas those with a mixed of minor and adult children can mostly be found in the *old-* and *post-family* stages; those with all children of legal age are almost universally in the *old-age* stage of the household life cycle. The fit becomes even better when remembering that the mean age at first marriage was slightly higher in Sweden than in England, for where Horell et al. constructed the model.

Figure C1. *Distribution of Relative Household Age proxy*



Source: Probate inventory database, as discussed in section 3.

While the proxy, as can be seen in Figure C1, is far from perfect, since the full distribution for every proxy group is pretty wide, the general trend makes it useful for drawing general conclusions regarding representability and broad trends. Furthermore, due to the high variation within every group the proxy is the most useful for large datasets where averages become more reliable. For smaller datasets and more detailed studies, the proxy can be finetuned for especially the first two groups – those including at least one child of non-legal age – by noting down the actual age of the child – something which were not done when constructing this proxy.

Literature references:

Horrell, Sara, Jane Humphries, & Jacob Weisdorf. 2021. “Beyond the male breadwinner: Life-cycle living standards of intact and disrupted English working families, 1260-1850”. The Economic History Review, 2022;75: 530-560.

Lundh, Christer. 1997. “The World of Hajnal Revisited. Marriage patterns in Sweden 1650-1990.” Lund Papers in Economic History, No. 60, 1997.

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