
*The Dissolution of the Swedish Estates, 1700—1865**

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I. THE PROBLEM.

During the 17th century, Swedish society was dominated by the four Estates represented in the Parliament (*Riksdag*): the nobility, the clergy, the burghers, and the peasants. Both within and outside the *Riksdag*, the distinctions between the Estates were quite sharp. Citizens who did not belong to one of the Estates could not play any significant political, economic or social role. The nobility dominated the military and civil bureaucracy and possessed nearly all privileged land (*frälsejord*), which comprised, after 1680, around a third of all the land in Sweden proper. The clergy dominated spiritual and cultural life, including education.

By the middle of the 19th century the situation was quite different. The nobility shared leading bureaucratic positions with non-noble officers and civil servants, and a great many of the noble manors and other privileged landed property had been inherited by or sold to commoners, often peasants. In cultural life, secularization was strong, and the clergy did not dominate education in the

* The English text has been revised by Mr. Neil Tomkinson, of Uppsala.

same way as before. When the four Estates resolved, in 1865, to abolish themselves and to introduce a Riksdag consisting of two chambers, this concluded a long social process.

The aim of this paper is to follow this process from period to period and, as far as possible, to measure the changes in the bureaucracy, the army, the navy, the market for land, the marriage market, and higher education. Attention is concentrated upon the higher Estates and upon Sweden within its present frontiers. The situation in Finland, a Swedish possession lost in 1809, will be treated only occasionally. The Baltic and German provinces belonging to Sweden up to 1719-21 or 1815 are not included at all.

II. THE TERMINOLOGY.

The *nobility* included mainly those families which had been introduced into the House of the Nobility (*Riddarhuset*). Apart from them, there were a few families which had been ennobled by the King but for some reason not introduced. They are here regarded as noble. Foreign noble immigrants who did not enjoy Swedish noble privileges are in principle regarded as commoners. The *clergy* included priests and university and school teachers who were ordained. The *burghers* consisted mainly of merchants, manufacturers, and artisans, and some other persons with burghership (*burskap*), but also of some mayors and other borough administrators (*magistratspersoner*), who were not burghers themselves but were eligible for membership of the Estate of the Burghers. The *peasants* consisted of three different kinds of owners or tenants of assessment units of land (*mantal*): freehold farmers, tenants of crown land, and tenants of noble land. Only the two first groups were eligible to belong to the Estate of the Peasants.

Outside the four Estates there were both *persons of standing* (*ståndspersoner*) and a large number of proletarians; only the former group plays a role in this paper. The Swedish word *ståndsperson* is a translation of the German *Standesperson*. It was used in Sweden as early as 1616 and was soon restricted in meaning to

all persons of some social reputation or standing («gentlemen»). Ordinarily it embraced noblemen, clergymen, and also the majority of the burghers. Sometimes it meant only those persons of standing who did not belong to any Estate. Here this special group is called *non-noble persons of standing* (*ofrälse ståndspersoner*). Non-noble civil servants, officers, wealthy landowners and tenants, ironmasters, publishers, journalists, doctors, teachers outside the clergy, organists and others are here included in this group.

III. THE NUMBER OF PERSONS OF STANDING.

Sweden has a very long demographic tradition. From 1749 there is an unbroken series of statistics, which also contain a great deal of social data. Although not all the figures are reliable, it is

TABLE 1
THE NUMBER OF PERSONS OF STANDING IN DIFFERENT CATEGORIES
IN THE PERIOD 1751-1855, ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Year	Number			% of the total population		
	Nobility	Clergy	Non-noble persons of standing	Nobility	Clergy	Non-noble persons of standing
1751 ^a	9,208	15,651	36,225	0.51	0.87	2.01
1772 ^b	9,716	15,388	39,631	0.49	0.77	1.98
1805	9,458	14,992	68,730	0.39	0.62	2.85
1830	10,458	14,153 ^c	70,091	0.36	0.49	2.43
1855	11,742	15,362	79,441	0.32	0.42	2.18

^a Except the garrison of Stockholm and the city of Karlskrona (small numbers).

^b Except Karlskrona. For three regions, the figures are missing. They have been completed from adjacent years.

^c University and secondary-school teachers who were not ordained (around 1,000 persons) are numbered among the clergy in 1751, 1772 and 1805, but among the non-noble persons of standing in 1830 and 1855.

Sources: Tables of population (*folkmängdstabeller*), Statistiska Centralbyrån, Stockholm; *Kongl. Tabell-commissionens underdaniga berättelse till Kongl. Maj:ts ... åren 1826-1830* (Stockholm 1833); *Ådrög till Sveriges officiella statistik*, Ny Förlag, A.1:3 (Stockholm 1857), p. XLI.

possible to sketch a general outline of the numerical development of different social groups.

In the middle of the 18th century the number of the nobility was around 9,000 persons, corresponding to 0.5% of the total

population (Table 1). That was a higher proportion than in the United Kingdom of Denmark and Norway but much lower than in many other European countries (more than 5% in Spain and Poland, around 5% in Hungary, around 2% in France and Russia).¹ This proportion later slowly decreased, mainly as a consequence of the rather low birth rate. In 1855 the nobility comprised around 12,000 persons, which was 0.5% of the total population. The noblemen were much more numerous in Stockholm (1.7% in 1751) and some other large cities than in the countryside. Their second strongest position was in the provinces around Stockholm (0.7% in 1751), whereas they were extremely few in the northern parts of Sweden (0.1%).

The number of the *clergy* (with families), according to the official statistics, was between 15,000 and 16,000 both in 1751 and in 1855, which meant a reduction of the percentage from 0.9 to 0.4. Some teachers without ordination are, however, included in the former total, but not in the latter. The number of the clerical offices did not increase as rapidly as the total population. The geographical variations were rather small.

The *non-noble persons of standing* were rather difficult to distinguish from other groups, and in the official statistics there are several incongruous fluctuations. The general picture is, however, quite clear. The group comprised in the 1750's, as in the 1850's, some 2% of the population or a little more. It did not grow faster than the total population, but compared with the nobility and the clergy, the development was favourable. In Stockholm (9% in 1751, 12% in 1855) and in some other cities the proportion was much higher than in other parts of the country. For the rest, the geographical variations were not very large. The difference between the provinces around Stockholm (2.3% in 1751) and the northern parts of Sweden (1.8%), for instance, was rather small.

This numerical development cannot be regarded as dramatic. But the re-adjustment in the proportion between the stagnating

¹ See various articles in the volume entitled *The European Nobility in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by A. Goodwin (London 1953).

numbers of the nobility and clergy and the increasing number of non-noble persons of standing — a change that was greater in the central provinces than in the more peripheral ones — had some impact upon the stability of contemporary society.

IV. NOBLE AND NON-NOBLE CIVIL SERVANTS.

1. *Higher civil servants.*

As one of the privileges which the Estates enjoyed in the 17th century, the nobility was guaranteed a monopoly of the higher civil and military posts. In the royal declaration of 1672 Charles XI (1660-97) enumerated these posts. After the death of Charles XII (1697-1718) and the introduction of a new constitution, giving great power to the four Estates during the «age of freedom» (1718-72), the monopoly was partly disputed. The result was that in practice all posts with the rank of colonel or higher were reserved for the nobility. On the civil side that meant that the secretaries of state (*riksråd*), the presidents of all collegiums and higher courts, the governors (*landshövdingar*), the under-secretaries of state (*statssekreterare*), and some other highly placed civil servants had to be noblemen, by birth or after ennoblement, whereas the vice-presidents, the counsellors of the Royal Chancery, of the higher courts and of the central collegiums (*kansliråd*, *hovrättsråd*, *krigsråd*, *kammarråd*, etc.), for instance, could be commoners. This principle was observed until 1789, when Gustavus III (1771-92), after a struggle with the nobility, limited their prerogatives. The Council of State (*riksrådet*) was dissolved and replaced by loosely organized Cabinets (*konseljer*), membership of which was open to commoners. The judicial functions of the Council of State were taken over by a Supreme Court, with six noblemen and six commoners as members. The presidents were still noblemen, but from 1800 some commoners were appointed governors. After the deposition of Gustavus IV (1792-1809) and the introduction of a new constitution, all noble privileges in the administration were abolished. The membership of the Supreme Court, however, retained the same proportion (six

noblemen and six commoners) until 1845. After that, there was a large majority of commoners in the Court.

This is the legal background. The purpose of this paper is to determine the real distribution of noble, ennobled and non-noble higher civil servants. Every office-holder in classes 1-38 in the official ranking list is regarded as a higher civil servant. These servants are divided into four groups:

(i) « The group of presidents » (classes 1-11): secretaries of state, presidents, governors, members of the Supreme Court, under-secretaries of state, and their equals;

(ii) « The group of counsellors » (classes 14-21): counsellors of the Royal Chancery, of the higher courts, of the central collegiums, secretaries of the Court of Appeal (*revisionssekreterare*), « law-men » (*lagmän*, provincial judges), and their equals;

(iii) « The group of assessors » (classes 31-36): assessors of the higher courts and of the central collegiums, some commissioners (*kommissarier*), and their equals;

TABLE 2

NOBLE, ENNOBLED AND NON-NOBLE HIGHER CIVIL SERVANTS, 1700-1865

Year	Absolute number												% I-IV						
	Group I			Group II			Group III			Group IV			I-IV	Total	H	E	C		
	H	E	C	H	E	C	H	E	C	H	E	C							
1700	26	11	—	13	17	—	8	36	16	9	37	56	56	101	72	229	24.5	44.1	31.4
1718	39	11	—	22	33	10	17	24	26	19	11	67	97	79	103	279	34.8	28.3	36.9
1729	43	14	—	25	36	—	18	23	14	23	20	70	109	93	84	286	38.1	32.5	29.4
1750	42	14	—	37	28	12	22	11	39	32	2	76	133	55	127	315	42.2	17.5	40.3
1772	47	10	1	49	26	34	32	6	39	43	9	159	171	51	253	475	36.0	10.7	53.3
1792	40	10	11	36	19	42	26	7	85	33	10	190	135	46	328	509	26.5	9.0	64.5
1809	38	15	11	36	14	63	30	1	85	27	4	206	131	34	365	530	24.7	6.4	68.9
1840	43	15	18	26	2	74	23	1	74	26	4	199	118	22	365	505	23.4	4.3	72.3
1865	38	6	39	27	1	87	18	—	67	41	—	196	124	7	389	520	23.9	1.3	74.8

(H = hereditary nobility. E = ennobled. C = commoner, non-noble.)

Note: For the division into groups see above. The offices and the sources (calendars, rolls, lits, etc.) are enumerated in S. CARLSSON, *Standssambälle och standspersoner*, new ed., Lund (C. W. K. Gleerup) 1973, Table 8.

(iv) « The group of secretaries » (class 37-38): lower secretaries, prosecutors (*advokatfiskaler*), accountants of the collegiums (*kamrerare*), district judges (*häradshövdingar*), and their equals.

Table 2 is based on these principles. It shows that, in 1700, 25% of the higher civil servants were noblemen by birth, whereas 44% were ennobled and 31% were commoners. The high percentage of ennobled persons — the highest during the whole period 1700-1865 — was a consequence of the exceptionally frequent ennoblements of the 1680's and 1690's. The ennobled office-holders were especially numerous in group III. In group I the hereditary noblemen were predominant. In group II there was a slight majority of ennobled persons; no commoner belonged to this group. In group IV there was a majority of commoners.

During the rest of Charles XII's reign the number of ennoblements was lower than before 1700. The percentage of ennobled higher civil servants decreased also from 44% in 1700 to 28% in 1718, whereas the proportions of hereditary noblemen and commoners increased. After a judicial reform some commoners were appointed «law-men», which explains the non-noble element in group II in 1718. The non-noble expansion, from 31% to 37% among all higher civil servants, is to be regarded mainly as a consequence of less frequent ennoblements. At any rate, the connection between high posts in the civil service and membership of the nobility was weaker in 1718 than in 1700.

For a commoner it was, in theory, quite possible to advance, via ennoblement, to the top posts in the administration. But very few succeeded, and those who did were not descended from the peasantry but from the clergy, the burghers and the non-noble persons of standing. Generally speaking, a civil servant who was a nobleman by birth had a considerable advantage in that he embarked on his career much earlier than his non-noble colleague. During the first half of the 18th century the median age of a newly appointed noble assessor was about 35, whereas his non-noble or ennobled counterpart had to wait until he was about 45 or slightly younger. There was the same difference on the next level: the newly appointed noble counsellor was 45 or a little less, whereas the median age of his non-noble or ennobled colleague was about 55. That meant that many office-holders died or were too old, before they could reach any higher position.

After Charles XII's death it was important for the new regime to gain a foothold in the powerful higher bureaucracy. One of the methods used for this purpose was to ennoble a large number of the leading commoners. Therefore the frequency of the ennoblements was for a short time very high. This was the main reason for the sharp decrease of the percentage of non-noble higher civil servants, from 37% in 1718 to 28% in 1720. The nobility now tried to enlarge its bureaucratic privileges, but did not succeed. In practice, however, the connection between nobility and higher office was very strong, because all members of groups I and II were noblemen. In 1729 the distribution was about the same as in 1720.

After 1727 ennoblements were very few, and the consequence was a decrease in the ennobled element and an increase in the non-noble percentage. In 1750 40% and in 1761 44.5% of all higher civil servants were commoners — or 50% in 1761, if some categories are included which had been raised from lower ranks up to class 38 or higher in the official list of ranks. The hereditary nobility had about the same proportion as before. Thus, the changes were not the result of a real social transformation, but, on the other hand, they cannot be regarded as purely formal. They meant a weakening of the Estates system, because a growing number of important office-holders, especially in group II (no longer entirely noble) and group III (now dominated by commoners), were outside the Estates.

This incongruity was one of the main reasons for the embittered struggles between the Estates in the 1760's. The commoners accused the nobility of prejudice and lust for power. The nobility tried to stop the trend towards social equality, for instance, by resolving in 1762 that no new family was to be introduced in the House of the Nobility, until the number of families had decreased to 800, which would take a very long time. Even those who had received a royal diploma of nobility were not accepted, and they were also refused the high positions reserved for the nobility. This meant that, for the future, no person born a commoner would have any hope of reaching the top of the social scale.

During these violent struggles, the real changes were rather small. Group I was still closed to the commoners; in Table 2 one exception is recorded for 1772, but this refers to a vice-president, whose office was upgraded in the list of ranks after his appointment. In the other groups, especially in group II, the commoners made some progress, and the proportion of them among all the higher civil servants increased slowly from 50% in 1761 to 53% in 1772.

In 1772 the «age of freedom» was ended by a *coup d'état* carried out by Gustavus III. His propaganda was anti-aristocratic, but in practice he co-operated with the nobility. On the other hand, he did not like the decision of 1762 and opened the House of the Nobility again. Many persons, especially royalists, were now ennobled, although not on the same scale as at the beginning of the «age of freedom». Group I was completely closed to commoners, and few of them advanced to group II. On the lower levels, however, the commoners made some progress, so that the proportion of them increased from 53% in 1772 to 57% in 1780. The reactionary tendency of the royal policy in the 1770's did not affect the whole administration.

After 1786 Gustavus III ceased to favour the nobility. Even before this year the tendency towards equalization in the higher administration, which was beyond his control, was stronger than ever before. During the short period from 1780 to 1786, the commoners made considerable progress in group II, and this trend increased during the following six years, when the administrative changes at the top (see above) also encouraged the commoners. In 1792, there was a fairly strong non-noble element in group I, and for all four groups the non-noble percentage was 64%. The ennobled office-holders were fewer than ever before during the century, but the hereditary nobility had also lost ground, especially in the higher groups.

It was remarkable that the earlier age differences between the noble and the non-noble office-holders greatly decreased in the 1780's. The median age for the two categories was, for the moment, almost the same, about 40, as far as the assessors were concerned,

and at the next level the difference (about 45 and 50 respectively) was only about five years instead of ten. After 1792 there was for a few decades a new age gap between the two groups of assessors, but at the higher level the difference continued to be slight. One main reason was probably the growing educational requirements. Academic degrees were more and more necessary, making it more difficult to secure promotion on the basis of birth or connection.

During the period from 1792 to 1800 the commoners made some further progress in all the groups, and they made up 69% of the total at the turn of the century. From 1800 to 1809, the changes were very small. Gustavus IV did not favour the commoners but was very dependent upon the leading bureaucrats, who mainly belonged to ennobled families.

The constitution of 1809 abolished in principle all noble prerogatives within the administration, but in fact the changes were negligible until the 1820's. In 1826 the first non-noble president of a collegium was appointed, in 1828 the first non-noble secretary of state (*statsråd*). During the 1830's the non-noble element grew, especially in group I, and in 1840 72% of all higher civil servants were commoners. In 1865 almost half of the members of group I were commoners, and the hereditary nobility was in the minority. In the lower groups, the changes were small after 1840, and the proportion of non-noble office-holders in all four groups was 75% in 1865. The commoners started their careers at about the same age as their noble colleagues, and almost all posts were accessible to them, even though they had not been ennobled. Only the prime ministers (*justitiestatsministrar*) and the foreign secretaries (*utrikesstatsministrar*) were still always noblemen. The Royal Household (*hovstaten*) and the diplomatic corps are, however, not taken into consideration in this connection; they were dominated by aristocrats all the time.

During the period from 1700 to 1865, the percentage of non-noble office-holders in groups I-II increased from 0 to 64%, and in groups I-IV from 31% to 75%. The changes were much greater on the higher levels than on the lower. An important factor was the decreasing number of ennoblements, but even if the

ennobled office-holders are added to the commoners, the percentage in groups I-II increased greatly (from 42% to 67%). In groups III-IV there were many fluctuations, and in 1865 the hereditary nobility had a greater share than in 1700 (11% in 1700, 18% in 1865). The nobility remained in the civil administration but on the average had to accept a lower rank than before. The equalization meant considerable progress for the sons of non-noble persons of standing. Extremely few higher civil servants were the sons of peasants or proletarians. In the middle of the 19th century, the social recruitment had a structure that did not correspond at all to the composition of the Riksdag.

2. *The lower civil servants.*

Among the lower civil servants (below class 38 of the official list of ranks), there was a very large majority of commoners all the time. If the collegiums, the courts and the other civil-service departments are taken into consideration — with 1,385 office-holders in 1729 and 2,495 in 1865 — the noble element fluctuated between 6.5% in 1729, 7.6% in 1735, 4.5% in 1820, 8.5% in 1840, and 9.5% in 1865. It was strongest in the Chancery, which was, especially in the 18th century, a natural starting-point for young noblemen, whereas it was extremely weak in the post office, the customs organization and in the new departments founded in the middle of the 19th century after the genesis of the railways and the telegraph system. The noble group was greatly reduced during the later part of the 18th century but increased in the 19th century, especially in the 1820's and 1830's, when a growing number of the noble civil servants had to accept humble positions as post-masters, customs officers, and non-combatant officers. Up to 1820, a majority of the noble office-holders belonged to the «higher» categories, but in 1840 and 1865 a large majority was to be found in the «lower» positions. At the same time the noble civil servants were much more widely spread over the country than before. In 1865, the civil administration was no longer dominated by the nobility.

V. NOBLE AND NON-NOBLE ARMY AND NAVY OFFICERS.

Military service was the natural field for the majority of Swedish noblemen. It also carried a higher social status than the civil service. In the official list of ranks, the captain of an ordinary regiment was equal to the assessor of a collegium, and the majority of the officers became captains, whereas only a minority of the civil servants reached the rank of assessor. A military career was much more dependent upon birth than a civil one, but it must be added that commoners had, at least until 1789, much better chances in the Swedish army and navy than in the armed forces of most other European countries.

1. *The army.*

An army roll of 1684, which includes the great majority of Swedish infantry and cavalry officers, shows a slight majority of commoners (52%, Table 3). Almost all the commoners were in the lower ranks. Very few were majors or of higher ranks, especially if the officers who belonged to foreign noble families are discounted.

In 1700 the proportion of non-noble officers was lower — 42%

TABLE 3
NOBLE AND NON-NOBLE ARMY OFFICERS, 1684-1865

Year	All officers					Majors and higher ranks				
	C, B	L	C	Total	% C	C, B	L	C	Total	% C
1684 ^a	34	276	336	646	52.0	13	52	11	76	14.5
1700	88	440	381	909	41.9	31	69	7	107	6.3
1719	175	977	2267	3419	66.3	56	167	78	301	25.9
1729	154	670	966	1790	54.0	78	195	51	324	15.7
1757	164	689	333	1186	28.1	69	81	18	168	10.7
1763	156	797	482	1435	33.6	63	102	21	186	11.3
1793	290	875	623	1788	34.8	99	166	42	307	13.7
1810	273	818	736	1827	40.3	108	224	107	439	24.4
1840	341	769	865	1975	43.8	94	173	105	372	28.2
1865	261	652	1088	2001	54.4	66	146	129	341	37.8

^a Incomplete.

(C, B = counts, barons. L = lower nobility. C = commoners, non-noble.)

Note: All the officers are included who belonged to units whose permanent stations were in Sweden proper.

Sources: A. LEWENHAUPT, *Karl XII:s officerare*, 1-2 (Stockholm 1920-21); A. J. VON HENEL, *Det anno MDCCXXIX florerande Sverige* (Leipzig 1730); contemporary rolls. For details, see S. CARLSSON, *Standssamhälle och standspersoner*, new ed., 1973, Table 15.

if all the Swedish army regiments are included and 35% if one considers only those regiments recorded in the roll of 1684. This change was partly due to the numerous ennoblements in the 1680's and 1690's and partly to a real improvement for the hereditary nobility. In 1700, at the beginning of the Great Northern War, the connection between the higher military posts and membership of the nobility was very strong.

The war created a new situation. The demand for officers grew enormously, and the resources of the nobility were insufficient for recruitment purposes. The number of army officers in the Swedish regiments increased from about 900 in 1700 to around 3,400 in 1719 (immediately after the King's death), and at the same time the number of commoners grew from 400 to 2,300, or from 42% to 66%. In Finland the tendency was the same. Among the higher officers, the proportion of commoners increased from 7% to 26%, but it must be noted that many of the non-noble higher officers belonged to foreign noble families.

After the conclusion of peace in 1719-21, the nobility tried to modify their privileges in order to prevent further non-noble expansion. This attempt did not succeed, but in fact the nobility had the situation under control: the highest positions (colonels and higher ranks) were still reserved for noblemen, and the noble commander-in-chief had a strong influence on the recruitment of the officer corps. Since it was impossible in peace time to retain all the officers returning from the war or from captivity in Russia, all posts were placed at the disposal of the government. Some officers, primarily the higher ranks, regained their posts, while others were placed as non-commissioned officers (*underofficerare*) or on the «expectants» list and others got pensions. In this situation, the commoners had the poorest qualifications and the worst chances of protecting their interests. In 1729, 70% of the «expectants» were commoners. The total number of army officers, including 453 «expectants», decreased from 3,400 in 1719 to 1,800 in 1729, and the proportion of non-noble officers was reduced from 66% to 54% (among the higher officers from 26% to 16%). The change was partly a consequence of the numerous ennoble-

ments in the period 1719-27, but it was mainly due to a real discrimination against commoners.

There were great differences between the branches of the army. The life guards were almost entirely recruited from the nobility, and in the cavalry there was in 1729 a slight noble majority. The largest non-noble element was to be found in the artillery (68%). Obviously, the commoners were favoured by high educational requirements, whereas the old family traditions prevailed in regiments with low educational requirements. Geographically, the nobility was stronger in the central provinces (32% commoners in the provinces around Stockholm) than in the outlying provinces (64% in northern Sweden), which was natural, considering the general structural differences. Finland, with 51% commoners in 1728, was close to the Swedish average.²

After 1729 the total number of officers continued to decrease, as did the proportion of non-noble officers. In 1757 the number of army officers was about 1,200, and only 28% were commoners (11% of the higher officers). As many as 40% of the higher officers were counts or barons. The concentration of non-noble officers in the artillery and the engineers was still greater than in 1729. In the Prussian and French armies, where the commoners were few in the 18th century, there was the same difference between the artillery, the engineers and the other regiments.³ The total number of Swedish non-noble army officers was reduced from around 2,300 in 1719 to around 330 in 1757. In 1719, this category was a true social class, but in 1757 it was just a small restricted group with very small prospects of promotion. Growing discontent, especially within the Estate of the Burghers, may also be noted at this time.

A slight improvement for the commoners occurred, however, in the period from 1757 to 1762, when Sweden participated in the Seven Years War. As in Prussia, this gave rise to a growing

² K. WIRILANDER, *Officerskåren i Finland under 1700-talet* (Stockholm 1954), p. 249.

³ K. DEMETER, *Das deutsche Offizierkorps in Gesellschaft und Staat 1650-1945*, 2. Aufl. (Frankfurt am M. 1962), pp. 2 and 15; P. VIOLLET, *Le roi et ses ministres pendant les trois derniers siècles de la monarchie* (Paris 1912), p. 378; ELINOR G. BARBER, *The bourgeoisie in 18th Century France* (Princeton 1955), pp. 119 and 122.

demand for officers, which favoured the commoners. The total number of officers increased from around 1,200 in 1757 to around 1,400 in 1763, and the proportion of non-noble officers from 28% to 34%. In the higher ranks, however, the changes were very small, and after 1763 the proportion of non-noble officers was again reduced at all levels; the same thing happened in Prussia.⁴ In 1780, about 22% of all army officers were commoners (no complete army roll has been preserved from this period, but the proportion can be estimated fairly accurately). Gustavus III favoured the nobles and as late as 1785, shortly before his break with the nobility, he was considering abolishing the non-noble element. The Elector Charles Theodore of Pfalz-Bavaria presented a similar project in 1778.⁵

In fact there was a change in Sweden around 1780. Between 1780 and 1788, there was a slight improvement for the commoners, who were favoured by the growing demand for officers during the war against Russia (1788-90). In 1793 the total number of army officers was around 1,800, of whom 35% (14% of the higher officers) were commoners. The differences between the regiments were about the same as before, with a majority of non-noble officers in the artillery (55%) and the engineers (58%), whereas the cavalry (26%) was dominated by noblemen, and the life guards (0%) were more aristocratic than ever.

From 1805 to 1810, Sweden was at war again, and, as before, this had some influence on the social composition of the officer corps, although the changes this time were slight. The number of officers, which decreased slightly between 1793 and 1805, grew again in the period 1805-1810 (from 1,700 to 1,800) and the proportion of non-noble officers increased from 35% in 1793 and 37% in 1805 to 40% in 1810. This time the change among the higher officers (24% were commoners in 1810) was a little more significant than in the 1780's. But it was still almost impossible for a commoner, even if he had been ennobled, to become a colonel in the «indelta» (unenlisted) cavalry or infantry. For the son of

⁴ O. HINTZE in *Historische Zeitschrift* 112 (1914), pp. 515 f.; A. GOODWIN in *The European Nobility*, p. 91; K. DEMETER, *op. cit.*, pp. 3 f.

⁵ K. DEMETER, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

a peasant or a proletarian, it was almost impossible to become an army officer at all.

The progress of the non-noble officers continued until 1813 (47% commoners), but from 1813 to 1850 the situation was very stable. The proportion of non-noble officers was even a little lower in 1840 (44%) and 1850 (46%) than in 1813.

Between 1850 and 1865, there was a real change. The total number of army officers grew slowly, from around 1,900 to 2,000. Nevertheless the proportion of noble officers decreased. In 1865, 54% of all army officers were commoners, which was the highest percentage since the 1720's, and this was in a time of permanent peace. Among the higher officers the proportion (38%) was the highest ever recorded. The old traditions were not broken but rather much weakened. One reason was, obviously, a growing interest in the army among the burghers and non-noble persons of standing during the national-liberal, anti-Russian era in the 1850's and 1860's. From the 1810's to the 1860's there was about the same proportion of non-noble officers in Sweden, Prussia and Saxony, whereas Bavaria had a higher proportion all the time. In the Bavarian army there were also some officers who were sons of peasants and servants, whereas there were none among the Prussian officers.⁶ In Sweden there were very few.

In Sweden the differences between the regiments were still quite marked. The engineers (78%) and the artillery (61%) had the highest proportion of non-noble officers and the Svea life guards (5%) and the cavalry (36%) the lowest. In Prussia the high proportion of non-noble officers in the artillery was criticized and modified.⁷ The regional differences in Sweden were much the same as before. However, a real change is to be noted for the most southerly province, Skåne. In 1729, the percentage of non-noble persons among the «indelta» officers in this province (58%) had been above the national average (47%); many of the old noble families had left Skåne after it had been transferred from Danish to Swedish possession, in 1658. The military posts were then, to

⁶ K. DEMETER, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 17 ff., 26, 30 f., and 37.

⁷ K. DEMETER, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

a large extent, taken over by persons coming from the old Swedish provinces, both noblemen and commoners. Later, the nobility of Skåne was gradually assimilated into Swedish society, and in 1865 the percentage of non-noble officers among the «indelta» officers was lower in Skåne (43%) than in Sweden as a whole (53%), and even lower than in the old aristocratic provinces in central Sweden (46%).

2. *The navy.*

In the navy the non-noble element was always stronger than in the army. The navy was comparable with the artillery and the engineers, where the educational requirements were higher than in the cavalry and the infantry. The same difference between naval and army officers has been noted in England in the 18th century, and the explanation is the same: «It was more difficult to handle a ship than a regiment».⁸ Consequently a capable naval officer of non-noble family had relatively good prospects of promotion.

TABLE 4
NOBLE AND NON-NOBLE NAVAL OFFICERS, 1700-1865

Year	C, B	I.	C	Total	% C	% C in the army
1700	13	40	56	109	51.4	41.9
1719	13	95	315	423	74.5	66.3
1729	12	60	115	187	61.5	54.0
1757	15	110	103	228	45.2	28.1
1763	21	131	113	265	42.6	33.6
1793	24	91	247	362	68.2	34.8
1813	26	98	288	412	69.9	46.7
1841	20	76	244	340	71.8	43.8 (1840)
1865	28	63	198	289	68.5	54.4

(C, B = counts, barons. I. = lower nobility. C = commoners, non-noble.)

Sources: A. LEWENHAUPT, *Karl XII:s officerare*, 1-2; A. J. VON HENEL, *Det anno MDCCXXXIX flörande Sverige*; Hj. BÖRJESON, *Biografiska anteckningar om örlogsflottans officerare 1700-1799* (Stockholm 1942); contemporary rolls.

Otherwise, the tendencies were about the same as in the army. During the Great Northern War the proportion of non-noble officers increased greatly (from 51% in 1700 to 74% in 1719) and then decreased, the lowest point being recorded in 1763

⁸ H. J. HABAKKUK in *The European Nobility*, p. 13.

(43%). The Pomeranian War (1757-62) did not influence the social structure (Table 4). Then the proportion increased again (72% in 1841), after which a slight reduction followed (to 68% in 1865). The most important changes occurred in the period from 1780 to 1793. Commoners had much better chances of reaching the top posts than in the army.

3. *Concluding remarks.*

If the numbers of army and navy officers are totalled, it can be calculated that at the beginning of the 18th century about every tenth noble was an officer, so that more than half of the nobility earned their livelihoods, wholly or partly, in the military service. At the end of Charles XII's reign, every sixth noble was an officer; almost every family was involved in military service. After this time the military involvement diminished. In 1865, every twelfth noble was an officer. The proportion of noblemen in the civil and the military services changed slightly, so that their predominance in the military was weakened a little. Both in civil and in military administration the average proportion of noblemen was gradually reduced. The nobility kept its character as an Estate of bureaucrats, but its influence and status decreased.

VI. THE TRANSFER OF LAND FROM THE NOBILITY TO NON-NOBLE OWNERS.

1. *The sources.*

In Sweden, land was divided into three categories: *skattejord*, owned by the cultivators, mostly peasants; *kronojord*, owned by the State; and *frälsejord*, which was originally owned by noblemen and favoured by tax privileges. The noble monopoly was, however, gradually eliminated, both legally and in practice.

The real changes can be measured only by using the term *mantal* or *hemman*. One *mantal* was originally a whole farm, but very early the majority of the farms were divided into smaller farmsteads of 1/2, 1/4, 1/8 *mantal* etc., and the size of the *mantal* was often reduced, for instance, from 1 to 3/4 *mantal*, in order to

lower the taxes directly imposed on it. The connection between the number of *mantal* or the fractions of a *mantal* and the real value was often tenuous in the 18th and 19th centuries, but, when large figures are used, they reflect the general trend. When statistics based on *mantal* are compared with statistics based on the purchase prices, for instance, there is always a reasonable similarity.

The owners of the *frälsejord* were normally registered in the provincial *jordböcker* (registers of landed property). Sometimes it is possible to compare these books with other sources. The result is that the *jordböcker* are almost always quite reliable, although some delays in registration often occurred.

2. *The frälsemantal (the quantity of land owned by the nobility).*

After the great reduction of land in noble possession in the 1680's, the *frälsemantal* was constant in principle: if a nobleman bought *skattejord*, the quality of the land was unchanged, and if *frälsejord* was taken over by a commoner, its privileged character was not lost. So, in principle, the number of *frälsehemman* was the same from one period to another, namely, around 22,000 (35% of all Swedish *hemman*). 6,600 *hemman* belonged to the category of *ypperligt* (the best) *frälse* (with manors and farmsteads immediately surrounding them which had special privileges) and 15,300 *hemman* to the category of *allmänt* (general) *frälse* (mainly smaller, scattered farmsteads, with limited privileges).

The geographical distribution of the *frälsemantal* was very uneven. Around Stockholm the majority of the farms were *frälse*. In some of the old Danish provinces (Skåne and Halland) the *frälse* comprised about half of the land. In the other parts of Svealand and Götaland (central and southern Sweden), the proportion was 25-40%, with many local fluctuations. On the island of Gotland and in northern Sweden, there were no *frälsehemman* at all, with some special exceptions. If the number of *frälsehemman* is compared with the number of noblemen, Skåne and Halland had the highest frequency, and the provinces around Stockholm also exceeded the national average. In eastern Svealand (around Stockholm) the noblemen were numerous and wealthy, in the middle

of Svealand rather few and fairly wealthy, in northern Götaland numerous and mostly poor, in Skåne few and wealthy, in south-eastern Götaland and western Sweden few and poor, and in northern Sweden very few and very poor, as far as *frälsejord* was concerned.

In Sweden as a whole, the nobility (0.5% of the population) owned one-third of the land. Before 1789, this was not an exceptional disproportion. In Prussia, Spain and Lombardy, for instance, the proportion of land in noble possession was even higher. In France, on the other hand, it was lower than in Sweden.⁹

3. *The Carolean era.*

Charles XI greatly reduced the amount of land belonging to the nobility, but he did not undermine the fundamental connection between the nobility and land privileges. On the contrary, he tried to prevent *frälsejord* passing into the ownership of commoners. Above all he wished to preserve the nobility's exclusive ownership of manors. It was, however, possible to avoid the regulations, for instance, by mortgaging land instead of selling it. It sometimes happened, too, that *frälsejord* was acquired by commoners by purchase, inheritance, donation or exchange.

In 1717, a survey was made by Charles XII of all *frälsejord* possessed by commoners. The State needed money and here the government saw an opportunity to impose a tax on land which had enjoyed some tax privileges without an indisputable right. The survey was interrupted by the King's death, but many of the reports have been preserved. From these reports and from some supplementary sources, it is possible to reconstruct the situation in 1718. At that time some 7% of all *frälsehemman* were in non-noble possession. The percentage was lower among the manors (3%) than among the smaller farmsteads (8%). More than half of this land belonged to non-noble persons of standing, whereas the clergy and the burghers had a smaller share. The peasants were very poorly represented (Table 5).

⁹ See various articles in *The European Nobility*. Compare also H. ROSENBERG, *Bureaucracy, Aristocracy and Autocracy: The Prussian Experience 1660-1815* (Cambridge, Mass. 1958), esp. pp. 218 ff.

The geographical distribution was uneven. In the central Swedish provinces and in Skåne the non-noble percentages were low (between 1% and 7%), whereas they were higher in some parts of Götaland (between 4% and 13%). The highest proportions were to be found in Halland (14%) and in Bohuslän (21%), two provinces that up to 1645 and 1658 respectively had belonged to the United Kingdom of Denmark and Norway. In these provinces the non-nobles had gained their possession in the 17th century, but elsewhere the most important changes seem to have occurred after 1700. This is at any rate true of the manors in some provinces, where it has been possible to make a more detailed investigation. One important reason for the changes was the war: many noble officers were absent from their manors for a long time, some in captivity, and many were killed. Under these circumstances it was often very hard for the families to keep their land. In many cases, widows or unmarried women who were left alone married commoners, and in this way their manors were lost to the nobility.

4. *The «age of freedom».*

After Charles XII's death, there was no question of imposing a special tax on *frälsejord* in the possession of commoners. The new regime tried to handle the problem more simply. In the privileges of the nobility, drawn up in 1719, it was decided that commoners would not be allowed to purchase *frälsejord* and that those

TABLE 5
FRÄLSEJORD (PRIVILEGED LAND) IN NON-NOBLE POSSESSION, 1718-1825

Year	Ypperligt frälse (manors), c. 6,000 mantal					Allmänt frälse (smaller, scattered farmsteads), c. 15,300 mantal					Total frälse % C
	% Cl	St	Bg	P	Total C	% Cl	St	Bg	P	Total C	
1718	0.3	2.6	0.3	0.0	3.2	1.6	4.8	1.3	0.4	8.1	6.7
1772	0.5	4.7	2.4	0.1	7.7	3.9	8.9	5.6	1.6	20.0	16.3
1809	0.4	8.9	4.0	1.9	15.2	2.4	11.6	5.4	14.5	33.9	28.4
1825	0.5	11.5	5.5	3.5	21.0	2.0	13.0	4.0	24.5	43.5	37.0

(Cl = clergy. St = non-noble persons of standing. Bg = burghers. P = peasants.
C = commoners, non-noble.)

Note: The figures for some regions are missing for 1809 and 1825. The margins of uncertainty on the national level are, however, rather small.

Sources: Reports by the governors 1718, Högste ombudsmannens arkiv, Riksarkivet, Stockholm; *jordböcker* in Riksarkivet and Kammarkollegiet, Stockholm, and in Landsarkivet, Lund.

who already owned such land would be obliged to sell it. At the same time many of the non-noble landowners were ennobled, which diminished the total non-noble possession of land.

This reactionary policy did not succeed. In the privileges of 1723 a compromise was reached, in which the social situation of the time was accepted. It was decided that the manors would in principle be preserved for the nobility, although exceptions could be made for especially deserving persons. Those who already had manors were allowed to keep them, but, if they sold them, they had to give the first option to noblemen. Beyond this, the « co-equals » of the nobility », the clergymen and the burghers were allowed to acquire and possess « one or two » *frälsehemman* (not manors). The peasants were still excluded.

If these conditions had been strictly applied, there would have been very slight changes during the following decades. In fact it became impossible to stop the social equalization. The noblemen's attempts to « stretch » the formulation of « one or two » were, for instance, fruitless.

An investigation of the *jordböcker* shows that the proportion of land in non-noble possession grew from 7% in 1718 to 16% in 1772; this proportion was always much higher for the smaller farmsteads (20% in 1772) than for the manors (8%). The non-noble persons of standing still predominated over the clergymen and the burghers but not as much as in 1718. The peasants were still few, but, in spite of the legal prohibition, their share of land grew considerably, as far as the smaller farmsteads were concerned. The majority of these peasants probably mortgaged their land, but in practice they were owners. The progress of the non-noble landowners was greater during the later part of the « age of freedom » than during the first few decades.

The geographical distribution was still very uneven. In the central provinces the proportion of non-noble landowners was small, especially in Södermanland (3%), the most aristocratic of all the Swedish provinces. Several big merchant families in Stockholm, however, acquired manors around the capital and some were ennobled. In many parts of Götaland, the non-noble landowners

made great progress (the proportion was sometimes around 30%), and here the clergy played an important role. In the western provinces, the merchants of Gothenburg bought a large number of both manors and smaller farmsteads. Here the peasants made most of their acquisitions. In Värmland (western Svealand) the non-noble ironmasters were especially important. In Skåne (around 7%) the nobility still had the situation very much under control. Generally speaking, progress was much greater in poor areas than in fertile ones. The nobility gave up much outlying and unproductive land but retained its central and most lucrative properties. In Götaland, a fair number of noble families were more or less *déclassé* and were sometimes even proletarianized.

5. *The Gustavian era.*

The reactionary tendency of Gustavus III's policy during the earlier years of his reign did not have any visible influence on the land market. The non-noble possessors of *frälsejord* increased strongly in the 1770's and 1780's. In 1789, there was an important legal change. As a consequence of his break with the nobility, Gustavus III decreed that all groups, even the peasants, were to be allowed to buy *frälsejord*, except *ypperligt frälse*. Since the peasants had already in many cases become owners of such land, the reform was mainly a confirmation of the actual state of affairs. However, it became easier than before for the *frälsebönder* to purchase their farmsteads from the owners (mostly noblemen).

There are now some gaps in the *jordböcker*, as regards the names of the landowners, but it is quite possible to reconstruct the general trend. Around 1809, at the end of the Gustavian era, the proportion of the *frälsejord* in non-noble possession was something like 28%, compared with 16% in 1772. This proportion was still much lower for the manors (15%) than for the small farmsteads (34%). The distribution among the commoners had changed greatly. The clergy were now in a weaker position than in 1772, while the burghers had ceased to make any progress. The non-noble persons of standing had advanced a great deal, but the real « winners » were the peasants. In spite of the prohibition,

a fair number of peasants were now owners or mortgagees of manors, and they possessed around 14% of the smaller farmsteads.

The geographical distribution was now less uneven than before. In eastern Svealand, many manors and smaller farmsteads were sold to wealthy burghers of Stockholm. Also several civil servants became landowners in this part of the country. Some transfers of ownership were the consequence of marriages between young aristocratic women and rich commoners.

Whereas the peasants still played a modest role in Svealand, they were now very active in large parts of Götaland, where in many cases more than half of the non-noble land was in their hands. Also in the aristocratic province of Skåne, the peasants acquired a fair number of small farmsteads, whereas the other non-noble groups had very small shares in this part of the country.

The peasants improved their positions as landowners in another way also. Since the beginning of the 18th century, it had been possible for peasants and others to buy farms belonging to the State (*kronohemman*) and turn them into freehold farms (*skattehemman*); the purchase conditions were on the whole very favourable. These purchases (*skatteköp*) were prohibited by Gustavus III in 1773 but allowed again in 1789. Originally a fairly large number of the purchases were made by persons of standing, even noblemen, but after 1789 the peasants were predominant. Between 1701 and 1723, 3,500 *hemman* were bought in this way, in the period 1724-73, 7,100 *hemman*, and in the period 1790-1815, 3,500 *hemman*. Of these, 1,100, 5,400 and 3,000 *hemman* respectively were purchased by peasants, mainly those who cultivated the farmsteads.¹⁰ The number of freehold peasants was consequently growing rapidly in two different ways. This process was to prove very important for Swedish social development.

6. *The period from 1809 to 1865.*

After Gustavus IV's deposition in 1809, the *Riksdag* was summoned. A new constitution was passed, and intensive discussion started. The peasants demanded full equality in taxation.

¹⁰ See E. F. HECKSCHER in *Ekonomisk Tidskrift*, 1944, pp. 103 ff.

They did not succeed in securing it, but some reforms were carried through. Here it should be noted that all citizens had, from 1810, full equality as regarded the right to own *ypperlig frälsejord*. This decision was not revolutionary, since already around 15% of this land was in non-noble possession (although often formally mortgaged). But the legal opportunities were now improved.

In 1825, *jordböcker* were kept in all the provinces. Unfortunately, they do not always inform us about the owners of the *frälsehemman*, but the general picture is quite clear. The proportion of non-noble land was now higher than ever before — something like 37%. There was still a large difference between the manors (21%) and the smaller farmsteads (44%). The clergy had about the same number of *frälsehemman* as in 1809, whereas the number belonging to the burghers was evidently decreasing and a certain increase for the non-noble persons of standing was visible. The real expansion, as in the decades before 1809, was recorded for the peasants, whose share was almost doubled. There was still a difference between Svealand, where the non-noble persons of standing made some further progress, and Götaland, where the majority of the purchasers were peasants. In many areas, more than half of the general *frälsehemman* (smaller farmsteads) were owned by peasants.

For the period from 1825 to 1865 there are no *jordböcker*. However, it is possible to follow the general development from topographical works and official statistics concerning changes on the land market, although there the *frälsejord* is not distinguished from other sorts of land.

On this basis it can be concluded that the social transformation on the land market continued all the time. In 1845, the nobility owned around 20% of all the land, and probably a little more than 50% of all the *frälsejord*. The peasants possessed around 60% of all the land and probably about 25% of the *frälsejord*. The rest was mainly in the hands of non-noble persons of standing; smaller proportions belonged to the clergymen and the burghers. In the aristocratic province of Södermanland, the nobility had about 50% of all the land and in some northern provinces less

than 1%. In the latter provinces, the peasants owned more than 90% and in Södermanland only around 30%. More than half of the wealthiest landowners lived in eastern Svealand or Skåne. In 1865, the proportion of *frälsejord* owned by the nobility seems to have been reduced to something like 40%, compared with around 30% for the clergy, the burghers and the non-noble persons of standing together, and 30% for the peasants. Now the nobility had also lost a considerable part of its possessions in the most fertile provinces, although many estates were entailed. After 1810, the foundation of new entailed estates (*fideikommiss*) was forbidden, but the old entailed estates were still protected by law.

It should be remembered that in 1865 the possession of land was not as important as it had been, since nascent industrialization had created new ways of building up capital. But the nobility did not play any important role in Swedish industrialization. Consequently, the decrease in their share in the ownership of landed property meant a real pauperization of the Swedish nobility.

VII. MARRIAGES BETWEEN NOBLES AND COMMONERS.

In 1622, marriages between nobles and commoners were prohibited in principle. Nevertheless, if such marriages were arranged, the children lost all the rights of nobility, including the right to inherit *frälsejord*. It was, however, possible for the government (the King) to allow exemptions. The fundamental prohibition was valid until 1723.

The great genealogical work edited by G. Elgenstierna on the Swedish noble families introduced into the House of the Nobility permits a fairly exact investigation of the real circumstances, although it should be remembered that some *mésalliances* were not registered at all. In the period 1680-1719, it was very exceptional for a male or female member of the higher nobility (counts or barons) to marry a commoner (Table 6). When such a marriage occurred, it caused a great sensation and was regarded as a scandal.

In the lower nobility, the situation was different. During this period, a growing number of noblemen married non-noble women,

TABLE 6

MARRIAGES BETWEEN NOBLEMEN (NOBLEWOMEN)
AND COMMONERS, 1680-1869

Decade of marriage	Counts, barons			Lower nobility			Total nobility			Married during the decade		Women per 100 men
	All	No.	% C	All	No.	% C	All	No.	% C	Noble- men	Noble- women	
1680-89	143	—	—	750	184	24.5	893	184	20.6	385	510	133
1690-99	132	3	2.3	795	237	29.8	927	240	25.9	394	533	135
1700-09	119	6	5.0	763	333	43.6	882	339	38.4	334	548	164
1710-19	210	12	5.7	1140	534	46.8	1350	546	40.4	512	838	164
1720-29	231	15	6.5	1266	484	38.2	1497	499	33.3	660	837	127
1730-39	183	12	6.6	945	400	42.3	1128	412	36.5	519	609	117
1740-49	233	31	13.3	1050	487	46.4	1283	518	40.4	613	670	109
1750-59	243	26	10.7	1213	553	45.6	1456	579	39.8	666	790	119
1760-69	242	24	9.9	1252	565	45.1	1494	589	39.4	718	776	108
1770-79	262	43	16.4	1126	564	50.1	1388	607	43.7	685	703	103
1780-89	256	34	13.3	1039	521	50.1	1295	555	42.9	661	634	96
1790-99	291	58	19.9	1063	547	51.5	1354	605	44.7	681	673	99
1800-09	248	47	19.0	988	551	55.8	1236	598	48.4	613	623	102
1810-19	303	69	22.8	1089	615	56.5	1392	684	49.1	732	660	90
1820-29	296	89	30.1	954	593	62.2	1250	682	54.6	672	578	86
1830-39	295	87	29.5	918	608	66.2	1213	695	57.3	675	538	80
1840-49	305	104	34.1	931	666	71.5	1236	770	62.3	652	504	90
1850-59	396	144	36.4	1024	737	72.0	1420	881	62.0	747	673	90
1860-69	319	140	43.9	997	723	72.5	1316	863	65.6	739	577	78

(C = commoners, non-noble.)

Sources: G. ELGENSTIERN, *Den introducerade svenska adelns ättartavlor*, 1-9 (Stockholm 1925-36); B. SCHLEGEL and C. A. KLINGSPO, *Den med sködebref förlånade men ej a riddarhuset introducerade svenska adelns ättar-tejlor* (Stockholm 1875).

mainly from the higher non-noble classes. In the 1680's the proportion of such marriages was 13% and in the 1710's 28%. Although the royal permission was sometimes given, many marriages were undoubtedly contracted without such permission. The prescribed penalties seem to have become fairly obsolete.

In the 1680's and 1690's there was a large surplus of women among the Swedish nobility, partly due to the losses of men in the war with Denmark in the 1670's. As far as the newly married population was concerned, the ratio was 3 men to 4 women. During the Great Northern War, in which a great number of noblemen were killed, the ratio was 5 to 8. Consequently an increasing number of noblewomen had to marry commoners. In the 1680's, one-third of the newly married women among the lower nobility had commoners as their husbands, and in the 1710's the proportion was 59%. Since many of the wives belonged to the landed

families, this constituted a serious threat to the land privileges of the nobility.

In the *Riksdag* of 1719, when the nobility tried to introduce a reactionary policy, it was stated that children born of these «mixed» marriages would lose all the rights of nobility, including the right to inherit *frälsejord*; even if a noblewoman married a non-noble «co-equal» with royal permission, she would have to sell off her *frälsejord*. However, these regulations were abolished in 1720, and in 1723 almost all prohibitions and penalties were annulled; a noblewoman who married a commoner without royal permission and without her closest relative's consent was still forced to sell off her manors, but this regulation became obsolete immediately.

At the beginning of the 1720's, thousands of noblemen returned to their estates from the war or from captivity, and this caused a change on the marriage market — the surplus of women was reduced, and it was easier than before for the noblewoman to find a noble consort. The percentage of «mixed» marriages decreased among the lower noblewomen from 59% in the 1710's to 45% in the 1720's, and for the nobility as a whole the corresponding figures were 40% and 33% respectively.

After this temporary setback, the egalitarian tendencies began to prevail again. There were many fluctuations from decade to decade, but in general the percentage of «mixed» marriages gradually increased. In the 1860's, 66% of all noble marriages were «mixed», and now rather high figures were also recorded for the counts and barons. It is also evident that a growing number of the members of the lower nobility married consorts belonging to the peasantry. This was mostly a consequence of a *déclassement* within the nobility itself.

The proportion of «mixed» marriages was probably higher in Sweden than in many other countries. In Prussia, for instance, it seems to have been very low.¹¹

¹¹ F. L. CARSTEN in *Problèmes de stratification sociale* (publ. par R. Mousnier, Paris 1968), p. 171; R. KOSELLECK, *Preussen zwischen Reform und Revolution* (Stuttgart 1967), pp. 107 ff.

As always, large geographical differences were apparent in Sweden. They were, however, less important in the middle of the 18th century than a hundred years later. During the period 1740-1759, the northern provinces, where nobles were few, had the highest «mixed» percentage (52%), and northern Götland, which had a much greater density of noblemen, had the lowest (24%). Stockholm (45%) had a greater proportion than the majority of the rural provinces (national average 35%); in the capital it was relatively easy for a nobleman to find a non-noble bride of acceptable social status. Generally speaking, the bureaucrats in the Estate of the Nobility were more closely connected with the commoners through their marriages than was the landed nobility.

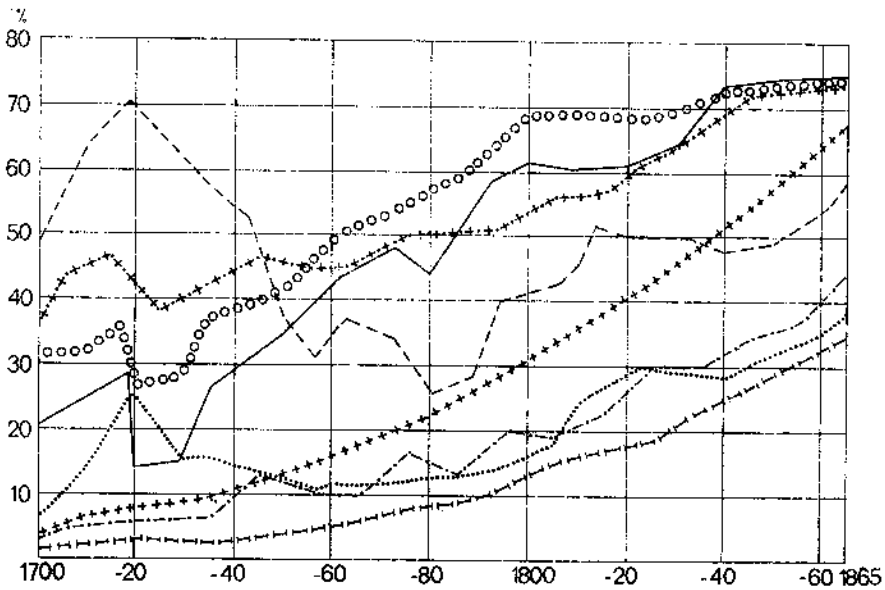
A hundred years later (1840-1859) the picture was somewhat different. The northern provinces still had the highest percentage (69%), but northern Götaland (58%), with its numerous and often poor nobility, no longer had the lowest percentage, and Stockholm had the same percentage as the country as a whole (64%). The lowest percentages were now to be found in the most aristocratic regions, eastern Svealand (53%) and Skåne (54%). The poor rural nobility had lost much of its exclusivity, and in several parts of Götaland many noblemen were proletarianized and married peasant girls. The main distinction was not between the bureaucratic and the landed families but between those urban and rural families who had kept their old status and those who had lost it.

In sections IV-VII, the decline of the nobility and the rise of the commoners have been measured in different ways. An attempt has been made to find a correlation between the different trends in the form of a diagram. It is possible to establish such a correlation. The diagram shows, for instance, that the series of percentages referring to the non-noble higher civil servants is similar to that referring to «mixed» marriages of the lower nobility. Another resemblance is apparent between the percentages of non-noble higher army officers, of manors owned by commoners, and of the «mixed» marriages of the higher nobility. These connections are significant of some general trends in the process of equalization.

VIII. THE SOCIAL ORIGINS OF RECRUITMENT AND MARRIAGE AMONG THE CLERGY.

The position of the clergy in traditional Swedish society was mainly based upon factors that cannot be measured in statistical terms. Some attitudes and relationships can, however, be investigated mathematically. Some observations have been made on the number of the clergy, their purchases of *frälsejord*, and their marriages with the nobility. Now two other problems will be treated:

THE EQUALIZATION OF THE SWEDISH ESTATES, 1700-1865



the social recruitment of the clergy and the secularization of higher education.

Every Swedish diocese has one or two *herdaminnen* (biographical collections giving factual information and descriptions of all the diocesan clergymen, sometimes excluding those who never achieved any permanent position). Some of these *herdaminnen* are excellent, others more or less defective. Here 10 of the 12 old Swedish dioceses are taken into consideration. It can be calculated that in 1680 around 40% of all clergymen were the sons of clergymen; the exact percentage is a little uncertain because of the rather large element of «unknown» fathers, the great majority of them laymen, due to the fact that the families of the clergy were well known to the authors of the *herdaminnen* (Table 7). The

TABLE 7
CLERGYMEN IN THE MAJORITY OF THE SWEDISH DIOCESES, 1680-1860:
THE FATHER'S AND FATHER-IN-LAW'S ESTATE

Year	The father's Estate						Total	% Cl	The father-in-law's Estate						Total	% Cl	Un-married
	N	Cl	St	Bg	P	U			N	Cl	St	Bg	P	U			
1680	—	652	93	129	474	537	1885	34.6	11	843	114	111	36	564	1679	50.2	206
1710	1	845	161	234	513	300	2054	41.1	36	983	213	150	29	359	1770	55.5	284
1740	4	1038	296	275	617	125	2355	44.1	47	1104	294	161	25	266	1897	58.2	458
1770	5	1118	489	354	676	68	2710	41.3	78	1045	389	214	35	194	1955	53.5	755
1800	10	958	491	454	652	35	2600	36.8	86	863	463	208	53	172	1845	46.8	755
1830	21	851	505	443	789	15	2624	32.4	86	707	539	278	72	148	1830	38.6	794
1860	25	763	470	369	646	8	2281	33.5	98	639	581	309	78	79	1784	35.8	497

(N = nobility. Cl = clergy. St = non-noble persons of standing. Bg = burghers. P = peasants. U = unknown Estate.)

Note: The table includes all dioceses except those of Uppsala and Gothenburg. The city of Stockholm (in the arch-diocese of Uppsala) is included. For clergymen married more than once, the actual or the latest marriage is taken into account. Widowers' marriages are included.

Sources: Different *herdaminnen*. For the details, see S. CARLSSON, *Standssambälle och standspersoner*, new ed., 1973, Table 43.

percentage grew slightly before 1740, when it was around 45%, but it decreased later on, to 32% in 1830 and 33% in 1860. For the clergymen's wives, the changes were greater: until 1740, around 60% were the daughters of clergymen, but in 1860 only 36%. It was characteristic of traditional Swedish society that those clergymen — normally around 30% of the total number — who came from the peasantry avoided choosing their brides from their

original social milieu. Instead, they very often married daughters of clergymen, so that many of the old family traditions were continued on the female side of the family. By such marriages many poor young clergymen improved their social status. It was, in general, more difficult for the son of a peasant to reach the higher positions within the Church than for the son of a clergyman. Among the Swedish bishops in the period 1700-1865, no less than 67% were the sons of clergymen and only 8% the sons of peasants. There was a similar distribution among the deans and among the clerical members of the Riksdag.

The decrease in the recruitment of the clergy from their own families did not lead to any democratization. The percentage of the sons of peasants was about the same all the time. The numbers were completed by the burghers and the non-noble persons of standing; very few clergymen were noblemen. Among the wives, there was a noble element, which was larger in the 19th century than before, but the most important increase here is also noted for the burghers and the non-noble persons of standing. The percentage of the daughters of peasants was low all the time (around 5%). The greatest degree of social mobility was to be found in Norrland and the central parts of Götaland, whereas Svealand, Gotland and Skåne had a narrower basis of recruitment.

Summing up, the figures reflect a social process, which gradually diminished the gap between the clergy and the other middle-class groups, including the lower nobility.

IX. THE SOCIAL ORIGINS AND CAREERS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.

Nothing undermined the position of the clergy as an Estate more seriously than the secularization of higher education. This important process can be traced by means of statistical investigations of the university students' social recruitment and careers. The main sources here are the printed rolls of the student *nations* of Uppsala and Lund; almost every university student belonged to a *nation*, depending on which province or diocese he came from.

From the 1760's there are also some contemporary official statistics. The material has some defects, especially as far as Uppsala is concerned, but the general trends are quite apparent.

During the Carolean era and even in the 1720's, about 55% of all students became clergymen, whereas around 20% entered the civil administration and around 5% — more during the Great Northern War — became army officers. The universities were to a great extent seminaries for the clergy, although it must be remembered that the majority of future clergymen received a relatively wide education in the humanities; many were also secondary-school teachers before they obtained permanent positions as clergymen.

Around 1730, this system began to change. A growing number of the university students became civil servants, teachers — with no direct contact with the Church — doctors, business men, etc. The predominance of the clergy disappeared, and in the 1850's and 1860's only some 20% of the students entered the Church. The changes were concentrated mainly in three periods: 1730-1760, 1780-1800, and 1820-1860. These chronological fluctuations corresponded with the social changes in the civil administration. The growing demand for skilled professional men educated in law, medicine, arts and sciences threatened the traditional employment of both the nobility and the clergy.

There were always considerable differences between different areas of the country. The ecclesiastical element was strongest in rural and non-aristocratic regions, such as Norrland, Gotland and eastern Småland, whereas it was weakest in urban and aristocratic areas, such as Stockholm and Skåne.

The social origins also changed from time to time. The general trend was towards a rather sharp decrease in the clerical element. Between the 1680's and the 1720's, some 40% of the university students were the sons of clergymen. From the 1730's onwards, this proportion began to decrease, and in the 1860's it was less than 20%. There is also an apparent concentration in certain decades, that is in 1750-1760, 1780-1800, 1810-1830, and 1850-1870. The picture is a little more complicated than that for careers,

partly because a growing number of the sons of clergymen remained laymen.

Only a small number of students were noblemen. Until the end of the 18th century, this group preferred to remain outside the *nations*, but around 1790 they abandoned their prejudices against social contact with commoners. If all students are taken into consideration, the noble element constituted around 10%, both in the middle of the 18th century and a hundred years later. Then it fell to 6% in the 1860's.

The proportion of the non-noble persons of standing was less than 20% in the 1720's. Then it grew to about 33% in the middle of the 19th century. For the sons of burghers, there was a smaller increase from around 15% in the 1720's to a little more than 20% in the 1860's.

The sons of peasants, the *bondestudenter* — a classical type in Swedish social history — constituted at the beginning of the 18th century about 20% of all students. Compared with the total numbers of the peasantry and the proletarians (around 95% of the population), this percentage was low, but it was probably the highest in Europe, higher even than in the other Scandinavian countries.¹² After 1720 it grew slightly but was reduced during the latter part of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century. Around 1850, it was 17% in Lund and only 10% in Uppsala. Then it grew again to 25% and 15% respectively in the 1860's. One reason for the decline was secularization, since a large number of these students entered the Church. The expansion in the 1850's and 1860's may be regarded as a consequence of the introduction

¹² In Finland 15-20% during the later half of the 18th century, but less than 10% in the middle of the 19th century; in Norway 5% during the first half of the 19th century; in Denmark around 2% as late as the 1850's; in Russia 2% in 1897. See H. WARIS in *Historiallinen Arkisto* 1940, pp. 258 ff.; S. E. ÅSTRÖM, *Ständssambälle och universitet* (Helsingfors 1950), p. 148; INGRID SEMMINGSEN and E. JUTIKKALA in *Ständssambällets upplösning i Norden* (Åbo 1954), pp. 73 ff., 139; H. PALMSTRÖM in *Statsökonomisk Tidskrift* 1935, pp. 161 ff.; D. MANNSÅKER, *Det norske presteskäpet i det 19. hundreåret* (Oslo 1954), p. 198; A. JENSEN and NINA BANG in *Nationalökonomisk Tidskrift* 1900, p. 415, and 1901, p. 5; H. SETON-WATSON, *The Russian Empire, 1801-1917* (Oxford 1967), p. 478. At the Universities of Heidelberg, Göttingen and Tübingen, the proportion, according to the printed rolls, seems to have been around 1% during the first half of the 19th century, at the University of Kiel something like 6%.

of the compulsory primary-school system in 1842 but may also be connected with the general economic, social and political expansion of the peasantry in these decades.

The social recruitment of the university students differed from province to province. In the 18th century, there were especially large gaps between the old Swedish rural areas and the earlier Danish-Norwegian provinces (Skåne, Blekinge, Halland, Bohuslän), where the peasants were still in a much weaker position than in other parts of the country. The gap was, however, gradually closed and in the middle of the 19th century the differences were small.

The majority of the peasant students gained low social positions as clergymen or laymen. The leading cultural positions were, with very few exceptions, taken by men from the higher social groups, especially the clergy. Higher cultural life in Sweden before 1865 was mainly a middle-class product.

X. FROM THE ESTATES TO THE SOCIAL CLASSES: A CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY.

1. *The Estates at the end of the 17th century.*

Charles XI largely reduced the noble land-holdings, but he was not an enemy of the privilege system. He tried through numerous ennoblements, to establish a strong connection between the nobility and leading social positions. This did not please the old aristocracy, but favoured the nobility as an Estate. In fact, the ennobled families were very rapidly assimilated into their new milieu. Many purchased or inherited *frälsejord*. Of the 247 families ennobled in the period 1680-99 and still living in Sweden in 1718, at least 154 owned land in 1718, and at least 22 of the other 93 families acquired land before 1740. Almost all of the new noblemen were the sons of clergymen, burghers or non-noble persons of standing. Members of the new families married noblewomen to about the same extent as the members of the old families in the lower nobility.

Thus, there was at the end of the 17th century a sharp distinction between the noble families and the commoners. Noblemen were *both* office-holders *and* landowners, whereas the commoners

were *either* only office-holders (clergymen, civil servants, army and navy officers), only landowners (peasants) *or* only merchants or artisans (burghers).

The Lutheran Church held a strong position in this society. The majority of clergymen were sons or sons-in-law of clergymen (or both), and most university students became clergymen. Cultural life was dominated by the clergy and the nobility, many of whom belonged to the ennobled bureaucracy.

2. *Equalization during the Great Northern War (1700-18).*

The tremendous demand for officers during the Great Northern War had a great impact on social development. A large number of commoners — many of them foreigners — became officers, and two-thirds of the army officers were commoners in 1718. In the civil administration the changes were slighter. Some manors and other *frälsehemman* were transferred to commoners by purchase or inheritance. Most women belonging to the lower nobility married commoners — a consequence of the growing surplus of women in the nobility. Cultural life outside the Church was not dominated by noblemen as before. The positions of the Church and the clergy however remained intact.

The strong tendency towards social equalization during this period was entirely due to the war. The government did not attack privilege and sometimes pressed the commoners hard in order to secure higher taxes. This was the background of the inquiries into the number of *frälsehemman* owned by commoners in 1717. This equalizing tendency was, however, very important for the future, since it made a breach in the Estates-orientated system.

3. *The reinforcement of the privileges system (1719-30).*

In 1719 the four Estates were summoned, and a new constitution was passed. The « age of freedom » began. There was now considerable anxiety among those civil servants who had reached high posts but were still outside the four Estates. Some of them asked for parliamentary rights. As a group, they failed to secure their aims, but many of the individuals were ennobled. The mass

ennoblements in the years from 1719 to 1727, on the whole, helped to restore the balance in Swedish society, although their immediate purpose was more personal. The new families were not as easily assimilated as those who had been ennobled in the 1680's and 1690's. But the majority (at least 86 out of 148) became landed proprietors before 1750. Their social background was exclusive. Most of the new noblemen married noblewomen, but the percentage of « mixed » marriages was a little higher among these families than among the older families of the lower nobility.

The old families could accept some new families but were not prepared to renounce their privileged posts. At the *Riksdag* of 1719, the nobility tried to put the clock back and to nullify the progress made by the commoners. This move succeeded only temporarily. At the *Riksdag* of 1723, legislation was passed that confirmed the intrusion, for instance, on the land market, while preventing further non-noble expansion.

In the 1720's, this aim was realized. The number of non-noble higher civil servants was reduced, mainly as a consequence of the ennoblements. The number of non-noble officers was greatly lowered, when the peace-time structure of the army and the navy was restored; this change hit the commoners harder than the noblemen. The number of « mixed » marriages decreased considerably, partly because the surplus of women was reduced. The changes on the land market were small. Cultural life outside the Church was dominated by noblemen, some of them newly ennobled. The Church and the clergy retained their positions.

4. *The increase in non-noble civil servants and large-scale entrepreneurs (1730-60).*

The reactionary interlude came to an end around 1730. During the three following decades, non-noble persons of standing seem to have grown in number faster than the nobility and clergy. In the higher civil administration, the commoners made good progress, mainly because there were few ennoblements. A commoner could now reach a high post, before it was regarded as necessary to ennoble him. This weakened the connection between the nobi-

lity and the civil administration. On the land market, important changes occurred, mainly in western Sweden and in northern and south-eastern Götaland, where many clergymen, business men, civil servants and officers purchased or inherited *frälsejord*, including manors. The number of «mixed» marriages increased slightly, especially in the bureaucracy but the non-noble element in the army and the navy continued to decrease until the beginning of the Pomeranian War in 1757.

Now the positions of the Church and the clergy were also weakened, although some wealthy clergymen acquired land-holdings. The recruitment of the clergy from their own families was somewhat relaxed, and a growing number of university students entered professions other than the Church. In social, cultural and political discussions, the old privilege system was called into question more often than before.

5. *The counter-attack of the nobility and anxiety among the commoners (1760-72).*

The social picture of the 1760's is complex. In terms of the land market, commoners continued their progress. In the civil administration, the changes were small, except in some posts immediately below the top level. In the army, the nobility advanced again after a short setback during the Pomeranian War (1757-62). The number of «mixed» marriages did not increase. The secularization of the universities was halted for the moment.

The nobility was now more suspicious than before. The decision of 1762 to stop further introductions into the House of the Nobility until the number of families had decreased to 800 was an attempt to arrest social mobility. This caused strong criticism among the commoners and inflamed parliamentary debates. In the period 1765-69, the *Caps*, a faction dominated by commoners, held political power. There is an obvious connection between the «polarization» of Swedish politics and contemporary developments in other countries, such as Denmark, France, the Republic of Geneva, Austria and North America.¹³

¹³ See esp. R. R. PALMER, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution*, 1 (Princeton 1959).

6. *Co-operation between Gustavus III and the nobility (1772-80).*

The royal *coup d'état* of 1772 was proclaimed by Gustavus III to be anti-aristocratic but was, in fact, the beginning of a period of close co-operation between the King and the aristocracy. The House of the Nobility was re-opened, and some families were ennobled. The division of the House into three classes, abolished in 1719, was re-introduced, which was favourable to the higher orders of the Estate. Within the civil administration the nobility dominated the top posts more than ever, whereas commoners advanced on the lower levels. In the army, the percentage of non-noble officers decreased, but increased in the navy. On the land market, the commoners, especially the rich merchants of Stockholm, continued their progress. At the universities there was no secularization. There was a reactionary tendency in the 1770's, which had counterparts in Denmark, Prussia, and France, for instance.¹⁴ But this tendency was not strong.

7. *The rise of the middle class and the emancipation of the peasantry (1780-92).*

The 1780's was a decade of pronounced social change. In the civil administration, the commoners advanced strongly. The large age differences that had existed up to that time between the noblemen and the commoners at all career levels were considerably diminished. The abolition of the Council of State in 1789 and the establishment of the Supreme Court, which included six noblemen and six commoners, was a heavy blow to the aristocracy. In the army and the navy, rapid equalization was taking place even before the outbreak of war with Russia in 1788, and the war hastened this development. In terms of the land market the changes were great, especially after 1789, when the peasants were legally allowed to purchase *frälsehemman* (except manors). The number of «mixed» marriages did not increase, however. The secularization of the universities progressed and the homogeneity of the clergy

¹⁴ Compare O. HINTZE in *Historische Zeitschrift* 112 (1914), pp. 514 ff.; R. R. PALMER, *op. cit.*

was weakened. In political debate anti-aristocratic tendencies were evident.

Historiography has traditionally tended to divide Gustavus III's reign into a « period of reforms » prior to 1783 and a later « period of misfortunes ». This reflects the opinions of the aristocratic opposition but gives a false picture of the real development. The most important reforms during this reign were those of 1789, five months before the outbreak of the French Revolution. For these there are many parallels, for instance, in Denmark, France, Prussia, Austria, and North America.¹⁵

It is significant that the terms *ofrälse ståndsperson* (non-noble person of standing) and *medelklass* (middle class) were, as far as it is known, used for the first time in Swedish in 1792. Before that year the term *medelstånd* (middle Estate) had been used — and was still used at times — but now there was a growing feeling that the Estates system was old-fashioned and that it was more up-to-date to speak about « classes ». During the following years (1793, 1802), some attempts were also made to define the Swedish middle class. The nucleus was the non-nobles of standing, but it also included the rural clergy, the majority of the burghers, and a great many of the lower nobility. The old society of the Estates was slowly changed into a society of classes, so that the distinctions made by privilege were not so important as before, while now general social and economic distinctions were more significant. Gustavus III, who was at heart a friend of the aristocracy, contributed to this development and was himself, willingly or unwillingly, influenced by it.

8. *The final period of a powerful noble bureaucracy (1792-1809).*

In the civil administration, the commoners continued their progress after Gustavus III's death in 1792, but from 1800 the changes were slight. In the army, their progress was very slow, and in the navy there was an almost total stagnation. On the land market, the peasants made the most marked expansion, whereas the middle-class groups purchased little noble land, except in

¹⁵ Compare A. GOODWIN, *op. cit.*; R. R. PALMER, *op. cit.*

eastern Svealand. «Mixed» marriages were about as numerous as before. At the universities, there was about 1800 a further halt in the process of secularization. Political life was dominated by noble bureaucrats, often belonging, to ennobled families. Gustavus IV — a zealous «anti-Jacobin» — was very much dependent upon this group. Many noblemen and clergymen were open enemies of social equality and mobility.

9. *The consolidation of the Estates on a new basis (1809-20).*

The *coup d'état* of 1809 was the work of noble civil servants and officers who were dissatisfied with foreign affairs and the constitution, not with social problems. Some social forces were, it is true, released by the revolution, and many of the new men were in favour of parliamentary and financial reforms. All noble prerogatives in the bureaucracy were abolished, and all groups of commoners were allowed to purchase manors. But no far-reaching changes were carried through. The new regime turned out to be conservative. There were few real changes in the 1810's, as far as the higher civil servants and the officers were concerned. As regarded the land market, the peasants continued their purchases, whereas the middle-class groups expanded rather slowly; a decrease in the burghers' total possession of *frälsejord* was recorded. «Mixed» marriages became more numerous than before among the higher nobility, but not among the lower orders of the Estate. At the universities, changes were insignificant. The leading politician, the Crown Prince [from 1818 King Charles XIV John (Bernadotte)], was, in spite of his humble origin, conservative in social matters. The general tendency in Europe after 1815 was the same.

10. *The emergence of the middle class (1820-40).*

In the 1820's and 1830's, there were considerable changes in the civil administration. On the higher levels the commoners advanced rather strongly. On two occasions, commoners were appointed members of the Council of State (*statsrådet*). Many noblemen had to take low positions which had earlier been

regarded as unacceptable. In the army and the navy, however, the nobility retained its positions, and it was still very hard for a commoner to reach the top. As for land, the changes were great: the nobility sold land to the middle class in eastern Svealand and to the peasants in other provinces. Noblemen lost some of their hegemony also in the most fertile areas. More than half of the noblemen and noblewomen married commoners, and a good many lost all social distinctions. At the universities, a large majority of the students went into professions other than the Church, and the homogeneity of the clergy was weakened. In spite of the still rather conservative attitudes of the government, this period was second only to the 1780's as regarded intense equalization. In political life, the liberal opposition began to gain ground, especially in the years around 1830, as liberal influences from France and Great Britain increased.

11. *The collapse of the Estates (1840-65).*

After 1840, the number of commoners increased rather slowly in the civil administration, except in some senior positions. Many noblemen were still on the lower levels and a good many entered the new fields of railway and telegraph administration. The changes of this period were more important on the military side. In the 1850's, commoners were in the majority among the army officers. A growing number of middle-class men entered a military career during this period of national liberalism. The total number of non-noble persons of standing increased, and a growing number settled in the central provinces. The nobility sold more land than ever to middle-class families, peasants, and companies. Around 1865, the nobility owned about 40% of all *frälsejord*. At the same time, two-thirds of all nobles married commoners. Less than 20% of university students became clergymen. The peasant students (*bondestudenter*) became more numerous than before. Now the movement towards equalization corresponded with government policy, which was predominantly liberal from the middle of the 1840's. Attacks on the old system of Estates became more and more violent, and in 1865 the four Estates decided to abolish

themselves. In 1866, a new *Riksdag* was introduced. It was composed of two chambers and based on joint elections without division into Estates; the franchise was, however, rather limited. This reform was the natural consequence of a deep-rooted social process.

XI. THE RELAXATION OF EXCLUSIVENESS IN THE FOUR ESTATES OF THE «RIKSDAG», 1800-65.

1. *The Estate of the Peasants.*

The members of the Estate of the Peasants were elected by the freehold farmers (*skattebönder*) and the tenants of State land (*kronbönder*). The tenants of noble land (*frälsebönder*) were excluded. During the 18th century, eligibility for membership was mainly limited to «genuine» peasants, who showed no traces of a higher social status, such as the holding of State office, wearing wigs or otherwise appearing to be a person of standing. At the beginning of the 19th century, this exclusiveness was relaxed, although it was still impossible for an active or retired office-holder to be accepted. The *frälsebönder* were still excluded, even though they owned their farmsteads. They did not contribute to the financial support of the members of Parliament during their stays in Stockholm.

However, as a growing proportion of the *frälsebönder* became freeholders, it was seen as both unfair and uneconomical that they should not be included in the elections. The demands for reform came mainly from those provinces, especially in western Sweden, where the new group of peasants was most numerous, whereas, for instance, the representatives of Norrland — which had practically no *frälsejord* — were unaware that a change was convenient or necessary. At several *Riksdag* sessions, the demands were rejected, but in 1834 it was finally decided — in the Estate of the Peasants by a very narrow majority — that these peasants who owned *allmän frälsejord* (smaller farmsteads) should be allowed to take part in the elections and to be elected. After further discussions, those peasants who owned *ypperlig frälsejord* (manors)

were also included, in 1844. These two reforms strengthened the liberal element of the Estate, and also increased the number of peasants who belonged to the group of persons of standing or had some affinity with this group. It should be mentioned that the franchise was graded according to the *mantal*, which favoured the bigger landowners and many of the new voters.

Even in the 1840's, most members of the Estate of the Peasants desired the abolition of the four Estates, provided that the reform gave the peasants more than a quarter of the parliamentary power. At that time, and even in the 1850's, it was, however, impossible to convince the Estates of the Nobility and the Clergy that they were superfluous, and it was also difficult for the peasants and the burghers to agree to a common policy. While awaiting reform, the peasants brought about, in 1862, a third partial change in their own organization: retired office-holders — but not those still in public service — were included. During the exhaustive debates on this reform, from 1857 to 1862, the members from northern Götaland — a region of rapid social mobility — proved to be more reform-minded than the other peasants, while the strongest resistance still came from the northern provinces.

Thus, the Estate gradually changed from an exclusive to a representative body of non-noble landowners in general, excepting active office-holders. Finally, in 1865 the Estate accepted unanimously the great parliamentary reform which made the peasants much more powerful than before, since they obtained the majority in the Second Chamber.

2. *The Estate of the Burghers.*

In the 1820's, the four Estates discussed a proposal that all non-noble ironmasters, except active office-holders, should be included in the Estate of the Burghers. This reform was accepted in 1830. The debates were, of course, most intense among the burghers themselves. The reform was supported, in the first place, by mayors and other members with legal training and by the wholesale merchants, whereas the retailers and the artisans were, on the whole, more reluctant. These two groups represented the

«genuine» Estate of the Burghers, whose old structure was changed by the introduction of a wealthy middle-class element. The new category of electors was composed of 200-250 people, forming five constituencies with one *riksdagsman* in each. These members of the Estate took, from 1834 onwards, a prominent part in the debates, especially on the liberal wing.

In the 1840's, the Estate of the Burghers was very active in the debates on a change from the old system of Estates to representation based on joint elections. Here the wholesale merchants and the ironmasters were more liberal than the retailers and the artisans; the lawyers (mayors and others), who were very much favoured by the old system, were also conservative on this point.

In 1858, the Estate of the Burghers was reformed, and all entrepreneurs and owners of urban houses were included, except for some proletarian and semi-proletarian groups. Even noblemen were included. This change was supported by the wholesale merchants and the ironmasters and also by the lawyers, who now gained the right to vote, even though they had no burghership. Opposition to the reform, which was weak, came mainly from retailers and artisans. Several thousands of citizens, mainly persons of standing, were in this way included in the Estate. For the «genuine» burghers, the consequences were disastrous. The Estate was now changed into a Third Estate in the continental sense. In 1865, there were five noblemen in the Estate but only two artisans. In 1865, noble ironmasters also became eligible.

To such a body, joint elections must have appeared more natural than the old corporative system. In 1865, the Estate of the Burghers accepted the new two-chamber system by 60 votes to 5.

3. *The Estate of the Clergy.*

In 1823, the Estate of the Clergy was opened to university professors, including those outside the faculties of theology, and non-noble members of the Academy of Sciences (*Vetenskapsakademien*). In this way, some prominent personalities became members of the Estate.

There had for centuries been a strong connection between the clergy and secondary-school teachers. If the latter wished to take up ordinary posts in the Church — which normally involved a considerable financial improvement — their years of service were counted double, which was a great advantage. However, this system was abolished in 1849, in spite of strong opposition, especially from the bishops, most of whom subscribed to a « neo-humanistic » ideology and were eager to emphasize the cultural tasks of the clergy, whereas many of the lower clergy stressed the religious aspects. The bishops were also in favour of special representation in the Estate of the Clergy for the secondary-school teachers and so co-operated with the lower clergy from liberal dioceses, while representatives of more conservative dioceses, especially in the north, opposed the reform. It was never carried through.

In the 1840's, most of the Estate defended the old corporative system of representation. A minority, however, desired the introduction of joint elections. This minority was recruited from the lower ranks of the Estate.

During the debates on the new representative system, in 1863 and 1865, the majority of the Estate was conservative. In 1865, the clergy did not dare, however, to oppose the reform without the support of the nobility. After the positive decision of the noblemen, the Estate of the Clergy accepted the reform without voting. But actually only 27 members were in favour of the change, while 30 were against it. Among the bishops, there was a strong conservative majority. Those provinces, especially in northern Götaland, where social mobility was most intensive, were, generally speaking, represented by the most liberal clergymen. Many of these men thought that the spiritual activities of the Church would benefit from the loss of its political responsibilities.

4. *The House of the Nobility,*

Since the members who attended the sessions of the House of the Nobility were often very numerous and only a small minority declared its opinions openly, it is hard to investigate the connec-

tion between social structure and political attitudes. But some observations are possible.

It is, for instance, possible to draw up a list of 34 noblemen who in 1800 favoured the abolition of the noble monopoly of manor ownerships (*ypperlig frälsejord*). This group was mainly recruited from the non-bureaucratic members of the Estate, both from the big landowners and from noblemen of the «middle-class type».

During the *Riksdag* of 1840, the controversies between the conservative and the opposition noblemen were sharp. There were 85 conservative members of the House involved in debates, as against 93 opposition members. The result was, again, that a group of landed proprietors and aristocrats co-operated with a group of «middle-class noblemen». The government was mainly supported by the bureaucracy in the capital, which was greatly over-represented among the members present. The clearest distinction was, however, between the old and the young noblemen. To the older generation, Charles XIV John (Bernadotte) was a strong personality, the memory of whose great achievements in the period 1812-14 was still fresh. To the young noblemen, he was mainly a traditional conservative ruler who did not understand the problems of a new age.

In the final debates in 1865 on the representative system, an exceptionally large number were actively involved. The reform was passed by a slight majority (361 votes to 294). If all the known facts are taken into consideration, 109 noblemen can be identified as advocates of the reform — in many cases reluctantly — and 236 as antagonists, so that about 80% of the 317 members present whose attitudes are unknown must have voted in favour. On this basis it can be concluded that a large majority of the counts and about half of the barons voted against the reform, while a clear majority of the lower noblemen were in favour. The «middle-class» element supported the reform strongly, whereas the «upper-class» nobility was divided. The non-landed category was much more in favour of the reform than were the landed proprietors. The civilians voted mainly «Yes»; the military

men were split. The differences between the generations were slight; among the youngest there was, however, a large majority of votes in favour. The noblemen from Stockholm and from the outlying provinces in the north, west and south-east were in favour of the reform, while the noblemen from the still aristocratic provinces around Stockholm were opposed. In Skåne the distribution of votes for and against seems to have been even; many of the noblemen from this province changed their minds very late in favour of the reform. Generally speaking, there was a strong connection between political attitude and social background. The House of the Nobility was not the natural political home of a great many of those who supported the abolition of the old system. They had more in common with the non-noble middle-class groups than with the old aristocracy and the rural gentry.

XII. THE IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES OF THE PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

As early as 1862, a great reform was introduced in local government, in which all corporative principles were abolished; the right to vote was wide but was graded according to property and income. In 1863, the first elections were held for the new provincial councils (*landsting*) and city councils (*stadsfullmäktige*). These elections gave some idea of the future social structure of a *Riksdag* based on joint constituencies. The nobility still had a strong position, especially in the aristocratic provinces around Stockholm. Almost half of the noblemen elected were counts or barons. A considerable decline of power was recorded, for the clergy, while the burghers were better represented. Of the burghers elected to the provincial councils, however, the majority were lawyers and rural merchants, and the minority urban merchants; no artisan was elected. In the city councils, at least those of Stockholm and Gothenburg, the « genuine » burghers retained their old positions more successfully.

The « winning » groups were the non-noble persons of standing and the peasants, with 30% and 39% respectively of the

seats on the provincial councils; the non-nobles of standing were also fairly numerous in the city councils of Stockholm and Gothenburg. As for the peasants, the traditional regional differences were apparent. The extremes were Södermanland, with only 3 peasants among the 38 members of the council, and Jämtland (northern Sweden), with 19 out of 21.

In 1866, the first elections to the new *Riksdag* were held. In the First Chamber, which had strict conditions for eligibility, there was a majority of noblemen (78 out of 125). More than a third of the members (42) were counts or barons. This chamber was much more aristocratic than the old House of the Nobility. Even in the Second Chamber there were nobles (20 out of 190). The clergymen were very few in both chambers (4+8); the burghers were a little more numerous (6+22), but only two of them were artisans. The non-noble persons of standing took about a third of all the seats in the new *Riksdag* (37+65). The peasants had no chance of being elected to the First Chamber but took about 40% of the seats in the Second Chamber (75); they later gained the majority. Regional differences were about the same as in the provincial councils, although the gap between the extremes was not so wide.

The new *Riksdag* could hardly be described as more democratic than the old one. But, as far as the number of seats was concerned, there had been some changes for the middle class, favouring the non-noble persons of standing. The composition of the new *Riksdag* did not, however, favour the middle class, which took up an intermediate position between the aristocracy in the First Chamber and the peasantry in the Second Chamber. Some categories in the old *Riksdag* — poor clergymen, artisans and peasants — did not fulfil the new conditions for the franchise. A significant aspect of the reform of 1866 was the stress placed upon ownership of land or house. The incipient industrialization of Sweden made no great impact on the conditions. The reform was more conservative than the corresponding reforms in, for instance, Denmark in 1849, Great Britain in 1867, and the North German Confederation in 1867.

XIII. CONCLUDING REMARKS.

In the present inquiry different explanations — political, economic and ideological — have been used to interpret the transformation of the traditional Swedish system of Estates into a society of classes. Among political factors, legislation should be mentioned first. In most cases, legislation only confirmed a social development that was already under way, and sometimes it stimulated this process. The reforms of 1789 are an example.

Ennoblements and the practice in making appointments sometimes played a role, for instance, in the 1720's and the 1770's, when the government tried to strengthen the privilege system. But the consequences were only temporary.

The wars were more important, especially the Great Northern War. All the wars during the period were defensive, and the result was always the same: the promotion of non-nobles was facilitated, especially among the officers.

Economic development also encouraged equalization, since the majority of the commercial and industrial entrepreneurs, the ironmasters, city merchants, and industrial captains of the 19th century, were commoners. However, most of the social changes took place within the traditional agrarian framework. The expansion of the peasantry corresponded with an agrarian process that diminished the gap between the larger and the smaller landowners.

Ideological influences came from other countries, in particular from western Europe. The secularization of higher education was an international phenomenon, which weakened not only the clergy but also the nobility, due to the growing output of well-trained professional men.

Sweden was a relatively homogeneous country. There were, however, many regional differences. In aristocratic provinces, such as Södermanland, Uppland and Skåne, the social development differed from that in provinces with a numerous but poor nobility, such as Småland and Västergötland, or in regions with very few noblemen, such as Norrland.

Besides the factors mentioned, which explain the movement

towards equalization during certain periods and in certain regions, there were also some constant factors, for instance, the tendency to re-grouping that is to be found in every society. Not all noblemen were capable of maintaining their traditional social level, and the ennoblements were not sufficient for the effective recruitment of new noblemen. The higher the educational requirements, the easier it was for commoners to advance in, for instance, the higher administration, cultural life, the new industries, the navy, the artillery, and the engineers. The low frequency of marriages and the late founding of families also made it difficult for the nobility to keep its quantitative positions. On the other hand, many poor noblemen had so many sons that it was impossible to give them all a suitable education.

There was too a connection between foreign policy and social equalization. Sweden's decline as a great power in European politics limited the administrative and military tasks of a privileged class. Many international parallels may be drawn here, for instance, with Denmark after 1660, with France in various periods, and with Germany after 1918. The Swedish middle class was a product not only of economic factors but also of a long political process, which followed a pattern dictated by the change from a dominant Baltic power into a small peaceful state in the northern corner of Europe.