

Parliamentarian and farmer wealth database 1769–1895

The reference when using the database is:

Bengtsson, Erik, Anders Larsson and Mats Olsson (2019), *Parliamentarian and farmer wealth database 1769–1895*, Lund: Department of Economic History.

Making a probate inventory at death was mandatory in Sweden since 1723 to solve debts and distribute the inheritance. These are very good sources for Swedish social and economic history, both because their coverage of all social groups is very good in an international perspective, and because the very great detail in the sense that all types of assets held by the deceased (down to individual forks, plates and pieces of clothing) are included. This means that the probate inventories provide good information both about the wealth of the individual and the possibility to calculate distribution within the population (see Bengtsson et al 2018 for discussion).

In the research project *Dynamic peasants? Agency and inequality in Swedish modernization* (RJ P16-0412: 1), one of the subjects to study was the peasant farmer representatives in the Swedish parliament 1750–1900 based on, among other things, private wealth and region of origin. For this purpose, vital data was collected from MPs' probate inventories and for comparative studies, their voters as reference group (see Bengtsson and Olsson 2018).

The selected parliament sessions during the diet of the four estates (*ståndsriksdagen*) were 1769–70, 1809–10, 1840–41, 1859–60 and 1865–66 and, in addition, the parliament's second chamber in 1895. These were chosen on the basis of two criteria, partly to reflect the development over time, partly because of the political content of these session years in relation to the research project's issues. Among the parliament's 253 second chamber members 1895, representatives from rural environments that were not noble or had professions associated with other trades than farming (most often bourgeoisie or clergy) have been selected, a total of 155 of which probate inventories were found after 144. The data collected is found in the variable list below. The number of MPs per parliament session is shown in Table 1 together with the number of probate inventories found and collected. Lack of inventories can be due to things like fire in the archive or emigration. Note that "All" is lower than the sum because an MP could attend several session years.

Table 1. Peasant parliamentarians' probate inventories collected

	1769-70	1809-10	1840-41	1859-60	1865-66	1895	All
Peasant parliamentarians	143	150	115	111	114	155	722
Probate inventories	79	129	90	97	89	144	583

To compare the MPs' wealth and status with their voters, corresponding data was gathered from other possessed farmers. In order to delimit possessed farmers from property-less people in the countryside, consideration was made that only farmers with active agriculture can be compared to each other. Many farmers, parliamentarians as well as others, had retired and done away with farm properties before death. All MPs were by definition originally possessed farmers, otherwise they would not have been eligible for the peasant

chamber in parliament, but randomly selected probate inventories in the countryside may contain everything from landless to wealthy farmers.

As a selection criterion, the presence in the inventories of a landed and taxed property, together with agricultural tools and draft animals, was chosen. Based on these criteria, the five probate inventories were sought, lying closest in the same archive volume of each parliamentarian who himself fulfilled the same criterion. An exception applies to the parliament session 1809–10, for which inventories were collected according to the same criterion, but five for *all* parliamentarians, which consequently for this year created a larger reference group. For reasons of lack of time, the number was limited for the other years as described above. The parliamentary years chosen to collect reference farmers are 1769–70, 1809–10, 1840–41 and 1865–66. For the parliament in 1895, reference farmers from another database have been used (see Bengtsson et al 2018).

Table 2. Reference farmers' probate inventories collected

	1769-70	1809-10	1840-41	1865-66	All
Parliamentarians with active farms	41	74	67	67	249
Reference peasant farmers	205	645	335	336	1 521

The data files are organised in the following way. The file **Peasant parliamentarians** contains three sheets: 1769–71, 1809–1866 and 1895. Each of the sheets lists all the peasant representatives during its period. So, in the sheet 1809–1866 all the nineteenth century peasant parliamentarians have been listed with name, county, district(s) they represented, and in many cases years of birth and death, together with scores on which parliament sessions they visited.

When probate inventories could not be found, it says “Missing” in the page column. Likewise, when that column is empty no inventory has been collected, but for different reasons in the three sheets: 1769–70 when the MP represented the Finnish part of the Swedish realm, 1809–66 when the MP did not participate in any of the parliament session years collected (see table 1 above), and 1895 when the MP belonged to the nobility or had a non-farmer occupational title and/or represented a city.

The data file **Reference farmers** contains four sheets: 1769–71, 1809–10, 1840–41 and 1865–1866 (compare table 2 above). Each Reg.nr. column number, in most cases unique for five reference farmers, corresponds to a Reg.nr. number among MPs.

Suggestions for corrections and improvements of the database should be sent to Anders.Larsson@ekh.lu.se

References

Bengtsson, Erik & Mats Olsson (2018), *Peasant Aristocrats? Wealth and Social Status of Swedish Farmer Parliamentarians 1769–1895*, Lund Papers in Economic History, no. 175

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Lindwall, Bo & Henrik Mosén (2008), Östgötska bonderiksdagsmän: bondeståndets ledamöter från Östergötland 1600–1866, Lund: Henrik Mosén.

Mårtensson, Ludvig (1937), Förteckning över bondeståndets ledamöter vid riksdagarna 1710–1800, Stockholm: Beckman

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Table 3. Variable list

Variable	Variable	Note
(Riksdag, year)	1769–70	
	1809–10	
	1810	Extra parliament session
	1812	Extra parliament session
	1815	Extra parliament session
	1817–18	Extra parliament session
	1823	
	1828–30	
	1834–35	Extra parliament session
	1840–41	
	1844–45	Extra parliament session
	1847–48	
	1850–51	
	1853–54	
	1856–58	
	1859–60	
	1862–63	
	1865–66	
	1895	
Reg. nr.		Correspondence MP–ref. farmers
County		
District(s) represented		Not used for ref. farmers
Year and day of inventory		
Archive		
Volume		
Page		And/or picture in ArkivDigital
First name		
Surname		
Place of residence		
Residence parish		
Born		
Parish born		
Married		
Never marr.=0, ever marr.=1, wid.=2		
Death date		
Parish of death		Often with reference to church book
Sons		
Daughters		
Title, sons		
Title, sons in law		
Title 1		
Title 2+		
Land tax type		
<i>Mantal</i> , size		

Parish/town		
Farm number/name		
Coin		
(Inventories, value)	Rural real estate	
	Urban real estate	
	Cash	
	Gold & silver	
	Books	
	Books (No.)	
	Active farm (Yes=1)	
	Livestock	
	Liquor equipment	
	Claims, individuals	
	Bank accounts	
	Stocks and shares	
	Gross value	
	Debts	
	Net value	
	Unsecure claims	
Notes 1		
Notes 2		