

Summaries

Rolf Torstendahl

Curt Weibull — a note

Curt Weibull, who recently died at the age of 105 years, had a great impact on Swedish historiography. In the 1910s and 1920s he worked, in close cooperation with his brother Lauritz, for new methodological rules and new demands on evidencing in historical research. Here are reproduced four letters from him to the author regarding the two brothers' relations to each other and to other historians.

Lennart Andersson Palm

The Structures of Domestic Trade in the Everyday Economy 1622—1810

In the 1970s and 1980s, Swedish researchers such as Eva Österberg and Christer Winberg demonstrated that “modern”, more market influenced or “commercialized” traits in Swedish social life could in many aspects be traced further back in history than historians had previously claimed. However, a more traditional view of alleged characteristics of “the old peasant society” still lingers and would in fact appear to be regaining vitality, since only a minority of Swedish social historians study periods prior to 1750, and since interest in quantitative history seems to be decreasing. It need hardly be pointed out that loosely founded conjectures regarding the social conditions of early modern Sweden are also detrimental to the scholar who employs them as contrasting background or as starting points to later developments. Certain traditional prejudices could in fact be buried once and for all, were some of the very fine Swedish sources from early modern times reviewed or exploited bearing these traditional views in mind. For instance, the records of the Customs House (*tullverket*) provide information not only on the customs duty on foreign trade, but also regarding the receipts from the domestic customs — *lilla tullen* — levied on all commodities brought to the towns and marketplaces in the country. Since virtually all categories of people and commodities were affected, and given that the administrative control apparatus with its fences, toll-gates etc. was uniform during the existence of *lilla tullen* (1622—1810), the sums should be good indicators of a substantial portion of internal trade throughout the period. There are, however, problems which must be resolved, among them the important facts that different tariffs existed at different times, and that some other consumption excises are included in the sums of *lilla tullen* for certain years. Some adjustments need to be made in order to account for the fact that Sweden’s territory expanded during the 17th century, and in order to render the sums comparable over time. In Appendix B, the calculations and adjustments made are depicted in column d, the sums of the customs receipts given according to current tariffs in column e, and column f reveals the sums recalculated to a fixed tariff, i.e. that of 1655, all per year as shown in column a. As the *lilla tullen* amounted to 1/32 of the commodities’ prices in 1655, the value of the custom taxed domestic trade in that year’s prices is given in column f by a multiplication of the sums by 32.

In Diagram 1, the total taxed internal trade is shown for the years 1624—1808. As can be seen in the diagram, certain lacunae remain, since sums have not yet been found for all of the years. The figures from before c. 1640 should be regarded as incommensurable with later figures, since the customs system had most probably not yet assumed a truly effective form. The author contends that the figures from then forward are largely homogeneous. The calculated value of the total domestic trade rose from 7 million *daler silvermynt* at the end of the 17th century to 17 million in the initial years of the nineteenth. This growth was not, however, evenly distributed, with the 1640s, the years around 1730, the early 1760s and some years during the 1780s representing periods of outstanding growth. The all time low of *lilla tullen* occurred in the second decade of the 18th century during the Great Nordic War (1700—1721). No previous or later wars seem to have affected internal trade equally. Two types of trends are depicted in Diagram 2, one of the second degree and one given by a 4 year moving average. The first trend con-

firms the overall longtime growth yet does not reveal any traces of a commercial "take off" in the 18th century, as opposed to what traditional historians have sometimes claimed. The other trend, which undeniably carries more weight, clearly demonstrates the lack of a conspicuous great commencement. A period of stability in trade for some years at the close of the 17th century is evident, and the hastily attained highs of the next century are followed by generally falling short-term trends. The results in Diagram 3, showing the calculated value of domestic trade per capita, may be more interesting. They are based on highly reliable population figures from 1701–1810 and linear interpolation between the figures from 1701 and fairly dependable ones from c.1630, as well as the figures for total domestic trade shown in Diagram 1. The result which indicates that domestic trade per capita was as high at the second half of the 17th century as it was later, even during the first decade of the 19th century, is astonishing and denies widely spread conceptions concerning the development during that period. Per capita taxed trade generally amounted to 4 or 5 daler silvermynt (in 1655 prices). What is the significance of this figure? In 1655, over 260 liters of grain could be purchased, a hodman could be hired for 12,5 days during the summer, or a female weaver for 4 or 5 months in the countryside for that sum. For comparative purposes it may be mentioned that a working person at the time required some 365 liters of grain to satisfy his annual nutritional needs. Diagram 4 depicts trends of the same type as Diagram 2.

Further review of the custom receipts in the future may result in a certain degree of revision of the graphs for some periods prior to 1670, but hardly for the rest of the period. More reliable population figures for the 17th century may also to some extent correct the figures behind Diagrams 3 and 4. Yet the main results will most probably stand, namely, that domestic trade in early modern Sweden followed a path with twists and turns, and that no indisputable commercial "take off" can be recognized during the period 1624–1810. The "degree of commercialization" per capita in average seems to have been as high in the 1640s as it was in the period thereafter before at least 1810. Turning points in respect to trade will thus have to be found elsewhere, if indeed there were any.

Jonas Olofsson

**An Institutional Perspective on the Swedish Model
A Few Neglected Aspects**

Research concerning the Swedish model has significantly increased during recent years within a number of various disciplines. The key factor behind this development lies in the stagnation which has characterized the Swedish economy since the 1970s, and the pressure for economic and political change which this has entailed. Central institutions in the Swedish model, including the pursuit of a solidaristic wage policy and the centralized negotiating system, were subjected to significant strain in the absence of a stable economic growth to be distributed. A fair distribution of production and central settlements between the parties on the labor market, which were norms for the interchange on the Swedish labor market, have thus increasingly had to give way to a state-based negotiating policy or decentralized solutions to market questions.

A fundamental premise in this essay is that institutions are of high relevance to, and that they develop and change in relation to, economic development. Within economic and historical research, it has become popular to discuss institutional preconditions to economic growth. On the labor market, the view is that institutions are of particular significance in mitigating the uncertainties of the actors and parties involved, in reducing information costs and in creating a stable social "climate" to facilitate cooperation and other settlements. A popular although not uncontroversial view in this context, has been that the Swedish model's emphasis on full employment and ambitious investments in vocational training constituted a comparative advantage for Swedish trade and industry, since they promoted increased acceptance of changes and technical developments in production.

The author discusses possible explanations for the rise, development and crisis of the Swedish model from a structural analytical interpretation of Swedish economic developments from the 1930s to the 1970s. The economic historians Olle Krantz, Carl-Axel Nilsson and Lennart Schön have distinguished two phases for these years, namely, a period of transformation and a subsequent rationalization phase. The central institutions in the Swedish model developed during the 1930s and concurred with the development of the economic structure during the early postwar decades. The solidaristic wage policy became a crucial element in the rationalization activity which characterized Swedish trade and industry as of the 1950s, and to an even higher degree as of the 1960s. The Rehn-Meidner inspired labor market policy was also necessary in order to resolve the "costs" of growth during these years, namely the stringent demands put on the labor force for mobility and adaptability, in a manner which would avoid unmanageable social conflicts and deadlocks.

When the "harvest years" were exchanged for structural crisis in the 1970s, however, the established labor market institutions proved less functional. Fundamental structural changes in the economy, an increase in the production of services combined with an increasingly heterogeneous labor force impaired the conditions for a model which was in fact based on traditional industrial capitalism, with a homogeneous workforce and a Taylorist work pattern in the private goods-producing sector. One aspect which has been underestimated in research on the Swedish model is the central significance of the train-

ing institutions to a growth-promoting policy during the postwar years. An important item in the Swedish model was the strive after mobility and adaptability on the labor market which was to prevent "bottlenecks" and segmenting. Vocational training in traditional forms and a new type of labor market oriented and adult training, were therefore significant ingredients in the Rehn-Meidner program for high economic growth, low inflation and an even distribution of production. Training can also be studied from the perspective of changes over time in the labor and production process, according to the lines of qualification theory. An important premise for the analysis may be that various phases in economic development place different demands on the labor force. The dual function of training, namely, to provide the labor force with basic technical skills on the one hand, and to facilitate mobility and adaptability on the other, explains why the expansion of vocational training and retraining as of the 1950s and 1960s must be seen as important elements in the structural rationalization of the Swedish economy.

The conclusion entails that a working life history perspective, combined with a macrooriented structural analytical framework, may grant new angles of approach to the development of the Swedish model and to the intricate correlation between economic and institutional change. Such new perspectives could complement the knowledge which we have today on several decisive points.