This is the accepted version of a chapter published in Schlösser und Herrenhäuser der Ostseeregion: Bausteine einer europäischen Kulturlandschaft.

Citation for the original published chapter:

Ulväng, G. (2017)
Manor-house building and economic growth in Sweden in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
In: Kilian Heck, Sabine Bock and Jana Olschewski (ed.), Schlösser und Herrenhäuser der Ostseeregion: Bausteine einer europäischen Kulturlandschaft (pp. 41-68).
Schwerin: Thomas Helms Verlag

N.B. When citing this work, cite the original published chapter.

Permanent link to this version:
http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-324454
The Swedish manor has been an object of scientific interest for more than 100 years. Thanks to the art historians we have today a good knowledge on manorial architecture, interior design and garden design and how it had changed over time. Economic historians and geographists have contributed with studies on manorial economy and geography, and ethnologists with studies on manorial lifestyle.

In my research I have strived to combine earlier research from different disciplines in order to understand the connections between the changes in architecture and design and the changes in manorial economy. I argue that there was a clear connection between how the buildings were designed and spatially located, on the one hand, and the estate’s management, the organisation of labour, household structures and economic cycles, on the other.

This article is divided into three parts. First I will briefly discuss Swedish economic and social developments during the 18th and 19th centuries. In these two centuries Sweden underwent some dramatic changes, not the least through an agrarian revolution, resulting in increased agrarian

1 I am very grateful to Associate professor Sofia Murhem, Professor Göran Rydén and Dr Christina Wedén for valuable comments on the manuscripts.


productivity and a redistribution of land and capital. I will then proceed, in a second part, with a discussion on how the manors changed during the period. These manors, often belonging to the nobility, played an important part in the agrarian transformation. Sweden, in contrast to popular belief, was in parts dominated by feudal estates, and at the beginning of the 18th century the nobility owned about a third of all land in Sweden. This was, however, a period of contradictions. On the one hand, the nobility gradually lost many of their privileges, often to the benefit for the bourgeoisie and freehold farmers; the prerogative for the nobility to own manors and to uphold higher offices was abolished. On the other hand, rapid economic growth, the expansion of international trade and a supply of cheap labour made it easier for the manors to remain centres for social life, amusements and visits. In addition, the period was also characterised by considerable changes in how the estates were managed, something which might have contributed to the design and layout of the manor houses. In a third part, I will concentrate on this latter aspect, of the changing of manor houses and the surroundings seen over 200 years from an economic and social point of view.

**Sweden during the 18th and 19th century**

The first decades of the 18th century were unusually hard in Sweden. In 1721 the country was finally at peace, after almost 150 years of unending wars, with among others Russia, Denmark and the Netherlands, and lost parts of its empire. Crop failures and pests had hit the population hard, and in addition, the people had suffered from an extraordinary high pressure from taxes. The rulers had kept the nobility and gentry in a good mode by numerous donations of land, land exempted from tax.

After the peace with Russia, signed in 1721 at Nystad, the country gradually recovered and population began to grow. Taxes were also lowered and agrarian productivity began to increase. A long lasting peace and a comparatively political stability, where the parliament rule instead of a sovereign, also contributed. The following two centuries are characterised by a steady economic growth, where farming played the major role, in a similar fashion as seen in other places in Western Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries. Between 1750 and 1860 Swedish population grew from 1.8 million to 3.5 million. The production of foodstuffs grew even faster, due to land reclamation, enclosure movement, mechanization and breeding of livestock.
Manor-house building and economic growth in Sweden in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

A clear sign of this positive development is that Sweden, after many decades depending on imported grain, became a net exporter of grain. The growing agricultural output also meant that other parts of the economy could be supplied with labour and foodstuffs, as well as increasing general demand. This, in turn, can be viewed as an important spur for the development that was to come, with an industrial revolution, with mechanization, division of labour, etc., urbanization and an even more rapid economic growth.

The Swedish agrarian revolution had certain special characteristics, but followed the general pattern; a growing population required foodstuff, especially grain, with increasing prices followed by land reclamation. More people could be sustained in farming, which in turn lead to increasing wages and wealth, which, in turn, increased the demand for other goods, such as timber, brick, glass and iron for constructing, together with textiles, furniture, clothes and more exclusive foodstuff for the home and lifestyle.5

The high proportion of freehold farmers was of importance to the Swedish development, farmers who owned their own land and thus dared to invest in it. In the beginning of the 18th century, they owned about one third of all land, and by the end of the 19th century, this proportion had increased to almost half of all land. Farmers benefited from a new tax system, inaugurated at the end of the 17th century, based on the taxpaying power of the farm at that particular time. The large reclamation of land meant that relative tax pressure was reduced. This created a surplus that could be invested in land and consumption.6

The increased demand also meant an enhanced social division of labour, partly as a growing regional specialization, with towns becoming more dependent upon trade and manufacturing (from having earlier been sustained in parts by farming), while the countryside came to develop the production of raw material, such as timber, flax, hops, etc., or specialized in crafts like fabrics, clocks or furniture. Partly this also constituted a new division of labour between households, where the farmers became primary producers, while the landless to a greater extent became seasonal workers and craftsmen.7

The downside of this process became a social division of the population in the countryside. The number of squires and farmers remained the same, while the number of landless quadrupled, but in general, everyone became better off, and there were less famines, lower child mortality and longer life expectancy.8

An important aspect in this development was Sweden’s gradual integration into the international trade. In the middle of the 18th century, large parts of the world were involved in the exchange of goods; mass production and cheap labour, including the use of slaves, made international trade a possibility. Sweden had been an important exporter of iron for centuries and an importer of salt, grain and textiles. This exchange was now widened to include exports of herring, grain and forestry products, while fabrics, sugar, coffee and tea flowed into the country. An East-Indian company was

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created with the sole purpose of importing tea for the European market, using china for ballast.⁹

In Sweden both the agrarian revolution and the increased foreign trade were the outcome of a co-operation between the state and private initiatives. The state was well aware of the fact that a large population meant a growing income from taxes, which in turn was needed for keeping a strong army capable of defending, and if possible, enlarging the realm.¹⁰ This was increasingly important when states around Europe, including Russia, grew stronger. In the long run, Sweden could not compete with their neighbouring powerful states, and in the beginning of the 19th century it had to give up Finland and Pomerania.

During the 18th century, the state also introduced village statutes, legislated on enclosures and founded agricultural institutes. Manufactories were subsidized, roads were improved, grain trade was liberalized and city tolls were repealed. The guild system was abolished in the cities 1847 and in 1864 freedom of business was introduced.¹¹

Decisions concerning laws and legislation were usually made by the parliament. The power of the parliament varied over time, depending on the present king’s level of ambitions, but in general, the parliament was very influential. Four estates were represented; the nobility, the clergy, the burghers and the freehold farmers.¹² When the burghers and farmers became more wealthy, they also became more involved in parliament and supported reforms, which benefited their interests. Quite often, the kings gained support from the farmers, as both parties were interested in limiting the power of the nobility.¹³

At the middle of the 19th century, the Swedish economy had been growing constantly for about a hundred years, and a society had came into existence with a surplus of agricultural products, a population with growing

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¹² In this article I use the term freehold farmers for those farmers/peasants who owned their own land, which could be inherited, leveraged and sold by their owners.

¹³ A famous example is when king Gustavus III pushed through the right for freehold farmers to buy tax exempt land in the parliament 1789, Carl-Johan Gadd: Den agrara revolutionen (footnote 5), p. 201.
purchasing power, simple industries with technical knowledge, production of iron, a good supply of wood and, not the least, a large number of landless people willing to move to the cities and factories. Sweden was thus able to step into the century of industrialization.

The Swedish manor

Before industrialization land was by far the most important source of income, especially for the elite in the society. The production of grain, meat, milk, butter and timber, iron were sources that gave power to the nobility and other elite families and enabled them a lifestyle and a high level of consumption.¹⁴ Within this group there was a great interest to expand production, something which was accentuated from the 16th century with growing demand, due to growing populations, expanding world trade and new trade policies. Intensive management on the estates, enclosure and technological innovations laid the foundation for higher returns that strengthened the elite position in society.¹⁵

As in all European countries, the majority of the Swedish elite was made up by noble families. There was comparatively few of them, only between two and three percent of the population in the 18th and 19th centuries.¹⁶ As in most countries, two categories of nobility existed. One older landed aristocracy, usually earls or baronets, and one group of newly ennobled civil servants, officers and merchants. However, there was no sharp boundary between them, and they often mixed economically, socially and culturally. One of the most important privileges of the nobility was the exclusive right to tax-exempt land (frälsejord). One third of the total Swedish acerage was tax-exempt, but in some parts of southern and central Sweden as much as 80 or 90 percent of the land was in the hands of noble families.¹⁷

The rest of the elite consisted of wealthy burghers and intellectuals, some of them soon to become ennobled, and with the economic development social mobility increased and the elite became increasingly mixed. After

¹⁵ Jonathan Dewald: The European Nobility (footnote 14), pp. 84ff.
¹⁷ Carl Johan Gadd: Den agrara revolutionen (footnote 5), pp. 42–44.
1810, knighting decreased, and the elite thus came to consist of a higher proportion of non-knighted families.\textsuperscript{18}

The solid foundation for the elite's status, and their execution of power was the landed estates. In Sweden the estates often consisted of two separate parts, and in this article I use the terms manor and estate. The manor was in most cases a säteri, a property which was fully excepted from taxes (swedish: ypperligt frälse) and on which the mansion was situated. The manor was also a centre for the owners farming, the demesne. Adjacent to the mansion were barns, stables and cowsheds and other farm buildings. The farming on the manor was managed by a steward with a couple of farmhands and some cottagers (swedish: torpare), landless who lived in small cottages in the outfield on the säteri, and used as overall assistance.

The estate consisted of the tenant farms, partly tax exempted land (swedish: allmänt frälse), and leased by the tenant farmers,\textsuperscript{19} who paid a yearly lease in work, goods and money to the owner of the manor.

\textbf{The manor – a definition}

Before I venture further into the changes in manorial economy and buildings, I will briefly describe my definition of a manor. I have defined six criteria, of which a minimum of four must be fulfilled in order to be defined as a manor.\textsuperscript{20}

1. A manor must be a landed property excepted from taxes – a säteri.
2. A manor must have an estate consisted of tenant farms with tenant farmers paying a lease.
3. A manor must have a differentiated labour force, and the work was overseen by a steward or foreman, and undertaken by farmhands, farm maidens, bond servants and cottagers. There were also special workers such as gardeners, carpenters, footmen and maids.
4. A manor must have a high-class main building with a differentiated order of rooms, such as hall, drawing-room and bed-chambers for the family, as well as servants’ quarters.
5. A manor must have a garden and/or parks.

\textsuperscript{18} Sten Carlsson: Ståndssamhälle och ståndspersoner (footnote 16), pp. 35 and 39.
\textsuperscript{19} I use the term tenant farmers for farmers on the tenant farms who paid their yearly lease in work, money and goods to the owner.
6. A manor must have an owner belonging to the elite, noble or non-noble. Through these six criteria, it is possible to identify what a manor is. The reason why four criteria are enough is that many manors in historic times did not fulfil all the six criteria, but were still considered by their contemporaries as manors. Some manors never had any tenant farms and some of them lacked both main building and park.

Using that definition we can detect between 2,500 and 3,000 manors in Sweden during the 18th and 19th centuries. Most of them were situated in the southern part of the country, in regions characterized by the cultivation of grain. Most manors were also located in what could be seen as the core of Sweden, surrounded by towns and places for iron making.

Most of these manors were comparatively small, and the cultivated area, at the beginning of the 18th century, was between 20 and 60 hectares; on average the manors were 30 hectares in size. Of crucial importance was instead the number of tenant farms dependant to the manor.

The Swedish term *mantal* was a tax measure based on farm size until the early 20th century. Originally a one mantal farm was supposed to support a farmers family, but through land reclamation a mantal in the early 20th century could support several families. In 18th and 19th century central Sweden the average sized farm was one half mantal.

The tenant farms were unevenly distributed between the manors. In the county of Uppsala, near Stockholm, and one of the strongholds for the nobility, around one third of the manors had no estate at all, and another third had estates with lesser than five mantal, meaning around ten tenant farms. Only 15 percent of the manors had estates with more than ten mantal, twenty farms or more. On average, a manor had around eight tenant farms.

His Excellency Carl De Geer was the wealthiest person in Sweden in the beginning of the 19th century. He owned ten ironworks, ten manors and about 300 tenant farms, with a total area of over 100,000 hectares.

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A nobility in change
The role of the Swedish nobility changed during the 18th and 19th centuries, as it did in Western Europe in general. In many countries they were challenged by commoners, rising in society through involvement in trade and state administration, and through marriage and purchase they could take over manors.\textsuperscript{24} In many countries, there was also pressure from further below, as peasants began to claim their right to land.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{24} Jonathan Dewald: The European Nobility (footnote 14), p. 188.

\textsuperscript{25} David Cannandine: The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy. New Haven 1990, p. 113.
In Sweden research has foremost highlighted how commoners began to acquire tax-exempt land (frälsejord), during the 1700-and 1800’s. Professor Sten Carlsson has shown that the exclusive rights to land for the nobility, practically meant something else already in the 1700’s. As early as 1723, non-noble persons of rank were allowed to own tax-exempt land. In 1789, all non-knighted, including farmers, gained the right to frälsejord and in 1810 also to manors. In the mid-1800’s nearly half of the tax-exempt land was in the hands of commoners, something Carlsson saw as a major contributor to the reduced power of the nobility. This is however not entirely true, because many noble and non-noble persons of rank simultaneously bought land from the free holding farmers. Thus a lot of the estates could survive and flourish. It should be noted that this transition to an open land market was appreciated by many noble families, especially those who e.g. had inherited land, but were living in the towns, and with no interest in farming. When they sold their land they benefited from the higher prices on land. When the elite to an increasing extent became non-knighted, ownership of manors followed. In 1870, it is estimated that only around 60 percent of

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26 Sten Carlsson: Ståndssamhälle och ståndspersoner (footnote 16), pp. 275 ff.
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Manors were owned by noble families, 30 percent by non noble persons of rank and the remaining ten by freehold farmers.\(^{29}\)

The freeholders were, as mentioned, those who gained most from the agrarian revolution, and already at the end of the 18th century, they started to purchase the smaller manors. Some peasant families continued to run them as they had ran their freeholds, with family members as the main work force, while others became squires, with everything that went with it. Their sons were sent to military schools and universities and their daughters married into burgher or noble families.\(^{30}\)

Especially during the 18th century, many new manors were built, particularly around the towns. Here, as in many other European countries, the towns became increasingly vital for the economic, social and political life. Since long, earls and baronets had town houses or apartments, to be close to the court, parliament, central administration and the social life that went with it. The new manors were built by civil servants or wealthy merchants and craftsmen.\(^{31}\) The improved roads meant that you could live in the country, and still have rapid access to the towns.\(^{32}\)

More noble families choose in towns instead of in the country, which can partly explain why they left the manors.\(^{33}\) But there were additional reasons as well. One seems to have been that it was increasingly difficult for the noble families to transfer their land to the next generation. More children survived, partly due to the decreased infant mortality, at the same time as land prices kept rising, which made it more difficult for one child to buy out the others. It is probably no coincidence, that the inaugurations of entailed estates, where one child inherited it all, became more common during the 18th century.\(^{34}\)


\(^{34}\) Göran Ulväng: Herrgårdarnas historia (footnote 21), p. 140.
The Swedish manor in change

As already mentioned, the period from 1700 to 1870 was an era of strong agricultural growth in Europe. The more intense management of the manors took different forms depending on the countries’ legislation, the relationship between rulers, nobles and peasants, as well as the natural geographical conditions. In Britain, for example, a capitalist agriculture was developed where landlords were rentiers, while leaseholders became capitalist farmers.\(^{35}\) In Schleswig the production was concentrated to the manors and subordinate farms with intensive production of cereal and milk, managed with married farmhands and -maids as labor.\(^{36}\)

In Sweden the shift towards a more intensive management came during the second half of the 18th century. Until then most manors was driven mainly with the help of the day labourers of the tenant farmers. Manors without estates were usually managed with farmhands and cottagers, or leased to a non-noble person of rank or a farmer. In the light of the rising demand, particularly grain, the reclamation of land intensified. In the cereal regions the arable land doubled or tripled in area, while in the woodlands the land could expand up to ten times.\(^{37}\)

The reclamation of land on the manors was to a degree performed by the tenant farmers and cottagers. It was though difficult to make them work harder. If they were forced, there was a risk that they would mismanage their farms and cottages instead, with decreasing rent as a result.\(^{38}\) It was also very difficult for the owners to buy more farms, and thereby increase the amount of tenant farmers on the estates. Many of the farms sold on the open market at this time, was bought by free holding farmers.\(^{39}\)

Instead the owners began to increase the demesne by incorporating the tenant farms which lay in the vicinity of the manor. By doing so, the owners increased the control over the production. The tenant farmers often had to walk long distances to work at the manor fields and did not care too much about their own fields either. By evicting them and replace


\(^{38}\) Ibidem, p. 212.

\(^{39}\) Ibidem, pp. 202–204.
them with farmhands, efficiency improved radically. The farmhands lived at the manor, and were managed by a foreman or a steward.\textsuperscript{40}

The increased income on the manors at this time, together with the low prices on labour, made it possible to employ more qualified personnel. Beside more stewards and foremen it became more common with blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers and foresters on the manors. Gardeners, for instance, where rare on smaller manors in the early 1800’s but in the end of the century every manor had one. This coincided with the growing interest for gardening in Sweden.\textsuperscript{41}

The breakthrough for the manorial capitalistic farming took place between 1820 and 1860, a time with crop failures, economic recession, and

\footnotetext[40]{Mats Olsson: Storgodsdrift (footnote 3), pp. 350 ff.}
\footnotetext[41]{Åsa Ahrland: Den osynliga handen. Trädgårdsnästaren i 1700-talets Sverige. Stockholm 2006.}
rising wages on labour. This meant that the average area farmed on a manor increased from 30 to 200 hectares in the end of the 19th century. Some manors expanded their farmed land from 50 to 500 hectares.


\[\text{43} \] Jens Möller: Godsen och den agrara revolutionen (footnote 3); Mats Olsson: Storgodsdrift (footnote 3); Göran Ulväng: Herrgårdarna historia (footnote 21), p. 78.
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Capitalistic farming became most common on manors with small estates in the cereal regions. In the end of the 19th century there were hardly any tenant farmers left at all. Only in manors with very large and scattered estates, or those which were located in the woodlands, where it was difficult to rationalize the production, tenant farms came to exist beside the demesne. The rent, however, was usually converted to monetary leases.

The expanded demesne, with bigger fields and fewer ditches, facilitated for mechanization and cultivation of crops. The manors became suppliers of cereal, milk, butter and timber for the growing cities.

**The household**

I argue that the transformation to the manorial capitalistic farming also can be understood as a result of changes in the labour organization on Swedish manors. Most manors were, as mentioned above, small, and the owners household was small as well.

An average manor household around 1750 consisted of the squire, his wife, their children, a valet and a housekeeper, two or three farm maidens and two or three farmhands, all together only 10 to 14 persons. The farm maidens and the farmhands were unmarried and lived with the owner family or close by. Some of the farm maidens worked in the house and others in the stables, where they cared for the cows, pigs and hens. The farmhands cared for the horses and oxen.

As mentioned above, the need for more farmhands increased when farming expanded in the late 18th century. When farmhands had to be employed instead, the average number grew from two or three to eight or nine, on average around six. Some manors had 20 or even 30 farmhands. They all had to be kept within the manor household, and be given food and clothes. Such large household became difficult to run, with a lot of work for the owners wife, who was responsible for the running of the household.

This is perhaps one of the most important reasons why the manors started to employ married farmhands instead. Thus, the employees had to

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45 Ulf Jonsson: Godsens förändring (footnote 42), pp. 11 ff.
47 Göran Ulväng: Jordbruk, hushåll och bebyggelse på Sjöö (footnote 44), pp. 117 f.
make their own households, and take responsibility for their own cooking and mending of clothes, from a yearly ration of money and goods. This was also a result of the social differentiation that took place. There were many young men and women, who never would get the opportunity to run their own farm, but instead had to make their living on the manors. From the point of the owner, this was a beneficial development. It meant that you could employ farmhands who were providers, and thus more compliant and hard-working. And it made the burden of the owner’s wife easier. She could now focus more on social and cultural tasks. The manor households now decreased and in the end of the 19th century, they consisted only of the family and a couple of house servants.

The 18th century manor

The 17th century had witnessed an intense building activity at the manors around the kingdom, especially during the period 1650 to 1680, when noble families had received vast donations of land from the king. Before that period only a handful manors were provided with houses of some magnificence. Counts and barons invested large sums of money and work in their manors, replacing old houses of timber with brick stone
palaces, designed in Italian or French baroque style. The surroundings were provided with symmetrical gardens and long avenues, symbolizing the power of the noble families in society and in the region.\textsuperscript{48}

A majority of the early 18\textsuperscript{th} century manors had small main buildings made from timber, and many of them had a resemblance to the houses built by the freehold farmers. However, the mansions differed from the farmers dwellings, by being painted in red and had sometime the owners family weapon placed above the entrance. The French baroque, with its symmetrical shape, was the ideal, but hard to fulfill on these smaller manors.

The farms were divided into two parts: the Court yard (mangård), where the mansion, wings and storehouses were situated, and the stables (ladugård), where horses, cows, oxen, sheep and pigs lived and the unthreshed grain was kept. The stables were often built around a quad. The occasional building such as horse stable for riding horses, garner and gardener’s cottage were scattered between the court yard and the stables.

The court yard consisted of the mansion and a couple of wings with a kitchen and rooms for the farmhands, farm maidens and guests.

\textsuperscript{48} Fredric Bedoire: Guldålder (footnote 2).
The main building at Höja manor, Gryta parish, Uppland county, in the early 20th century. The building was erected in the year 1711 and is typical for the period. The roof, a gable roof with a vertical part in the middle, called a säteri roof, was very common on Swedish mansions between 1660 and 1740. Photo: Wallin 1928, Nordiska museet, Herrgårdsundersökningen 210 k.n.

The design of the main building at Bjelkesta manor, Giresta parish, Uppland county. The house was built in 1705 and probably designed by the famous Swedish architect Nicodemus Tessin the younger. It had a typical symmetrical layout with a dining room in the centre with a suite on each side, one for the squire and one for the wife, each consisting of a drawing room, a bedroom and a cabinet. By the vestibule there were two smaller suits for grown up children or guests.
Sometimes there were also horse stables, a pig house and a turkey house. The mansion was often rather small, with only six or eight rooms, but if possibly built in the French style, totally symmetric with a vestibule and hall in the centre, with drawing-rooms and bed-chambers on the sides.

At the end of the 18th century, after the first period of economic growth, Swedish manor owners were finally able to actually adopt the French baroque. The court yard and the garden were symmetrically shaped, with an avenue leading up to the manor. As pointed out earlier, gardeners became common during this period, which made it possible to maintain gardens for pleasure, not only for subsistence.

The stables were usually kept in the same place, for practical reasons as it was close to the fields. Often, the stables were placed in front of the main building and near the avenue, which was handy as the gentry could avoid the view of charts, labour and animals. However, the farm buildings had become much larger than they had been before, mirroring
the increased farming land area, as well as the size of the livestock, and a more pronounced irregularity can also be detected in the shape and structure of the farm buildings.

The court yard, however, kept its symmetry, and also became cleaner, as horses and pigs were moved to the stables. Overall the houses in the court yard became larger and of better quality, as a result of the increasing wealth. The foundation of the houses was improved by better explosives technology, the timber walls were covered in wainscot or plaster, painted in bright colours, and the roofs were provided with boards or tiles instead of turf or straw. The new buildings were also provided with cellars for storing food.49

The kitchen, previously often in the main building, was also moved to one of the wing buildings. It had to serve both the family and the employees in the growing manor house household, and was in operation almost round the clock. Hence, the family avoided running, noise and kitchen smells and the presence of servants. Instead, food was brought into the main building and served in the dining room. The farmhands had their meals in the kitchen or in an adjacent room.50 To have two kitchens, one for the family and one for the farmhands, seems to have been unusual, probably because of the costs of having two sets of kitchen personnel and equipment.51

On average, the main building had ten to twelve rooms, and was thus considerably larger than before, and built in the French style, if possibly made of brick stone. Many owners though, preferred timber houses because they were easier to heat during winter and had less problems with dampness during the spring and autumn.52 Many of them were built in two floors, with room for storage and servants on the first floor, while the family lived on the second floor. The family quarters were extended with more drawing rooms and bed rooms, mirroring the increased possibility for social life and amusement. The rooms were equipped with efficient tiled stoves instead of open fire places, which improved the climate of the rooms.

49 Göran Ulväng: Hus och gård i förändring (footnote 32), pp. 122 f.
51 Two kitchens occurred only in the biggest manors, as at Sjöö manor in Holm parish, Uppland, Göran Ulväng: Jordbruk, hushåll och bebyggelse på Sjöö (footnote 44), p. 129.
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Ryda manor, Nysättra parish, Uppland county, in 1778. Drawing by Gustaf af Sillén. Many of the manors were situated in the cereal regions where the ongoing land reclamation led to a shortage of pastures, which in turn led to increased grazing in the woodlands. As seen on this drawing there are no trees in the woodlands behind the mansion, just junipers. The only trees left are those in the small landscape garden surrounding the main building. In the foreground of the drawing, the meadows, which after the haymaking were used for grazing. Nationalmuseum, Sweden, NMH 30/1924.

The mansion at Stora Bärby manor, Giresta parish, Uppland county, was erected in 1775. The building was a one storey house with the family quarters situated in the south. As can be seen the house was built in a French rococo style with the dining room in the centre, and with the wife’s suit, to the east, with a big drawing room, a bed room and a cabinet, while the husband’s suit in the west were smaller. The servants room were situated on the north side and in the attics. A novelty was the corridors for the servants.
Capitalistic farming and the manor

The typical mid-19th century manor was a product of the transition to capitalistic farming and expanded demesne. The manors were now dominated by large conglomerations of outbuildings. New construction methods could be used, thanks to the rich access to iron, wood and concrete stemming from the industrial revolution, and thus, building could be constructed larger and more efficiently. It was impossible to find room for all the new buildings in the old site, and hence, the symmetry of the arrangements was broken.\footnote{Göran Ulväng: Hus och gård i förändring (footnote 32), pp. 106–121.}

The transfer to capitalistic farming where servants had their own household contributed to this development. Servants with their own household needed not to live close to the manor house kitchen in the wing, but could be situated wherever most practical, often close to production. Special dwellings for workers were built close to the stables, each for two, three, four or more families.\footnote{Ibidem, p. 112.}

The manors thus became more irregularly shaped, as buildings were erected wherever it was enough space for them. This in turn most likely also contributed to dissolving of the symmetrical ideal, which came to be increasingly contested; the ideal now to be the cultivated landscape and
the Palladian villa. Around the court yard landscaped parks were laid out, often in an already existing meadow or pastures close to the manor house, and still used for harvesting or grassing, but enriched by walking paths, arbours and follies.

When the workers had their own household and placed in workers dwellings, it also meant that it was possible to break up the symmetry of the court yard. The wings could be demolished, and the kitchen was moved into the main building, since it now only served the family and house staff. In the end of the 19th century, many manor houses were situated as villas surrounded by a landscaped park, functioning as a barrier to farming and the employees.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{55} Ibidem, pp. 126–128.
Finally, the main building. Until about 1870, they became increasingly larger, now having approximately 14 to 18 rooms. There were multiple halls, drawing-rooms and parlours for social life. The owners' wife now had more leisure time for visits, when the household had become smaller. The husband and wife now lived in a suite with adjoining nursery. The houses were clearly divided into family rooms on the one hand, and servants' quarters and kitchen/pantry on the other, a result of an increasing social differentiation in society at large. The servants now moved about invisibly, through special service corridors and stairs. 56

But we need to keep in mind that for most owners, such houses could only be fully used in summer. During the winter, heating costs were so high, that only three to five rooms were used for living. At the larger manor houses, made from stone, it was not unusual for the family to live in a timber wing, which would be easier to heat. We know from several manors that drawing-rooms and parlours were used during winter for storing grain! 57

**Manor-house building and economic growth**

It is important to point out, that the renewal of the main buildings and their surroundings mainly took place during certain periods, i.e. periods of strong economic growth: 1750 to 1775, 1800 to 1825 and 1850 to 1875. In between, construction work was less frequent.

Manor-house building and economic growth in Sweden in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

We cannot disregard the fact that there had to be cycles in construction work and rebuilding, considering the tear and wear the houses were exposed to. Many mansions were built from timber, and before the 19th century their life-span was short. Swedish official authorities estimated during the 18th century a life-span of on average 50 years for a main building made from timber. It is thus reasonably to assume that the main buildings were regularly replaced.

There is a clear trend towards decreasing renewals. During the first construction boom in the second half of the 18th century, almost 30 percent of the houses were replaced. 50 years later, during the next boom, 20 percent were replaced and during the last, around 1850, only 15. The decreasing construction intensity probably reflects improved houses, which had a longer life-span. Increased wealth, in combination with more industrialized and cheaper production of glass, bricks, roof sheets, etc., caused houses to be more resilient and fire-resistive.

More houses were erected from stone, and the inflammable wood or shingled roofs were replaced by tiles or iron sheets. The foundations of the houses were improved through increased access to bricks and improved explosives technology, leading to higher, more stable and ventilated foundations being build. In addition, the indoor climate was most likely improved by more well-insulated walls and the introduction of the tile

18 | Count Fredric Ulf Bonde, his wife countess Ulrika Lewenhaupt and governess Sara Nyman in the drawing room at Vibyholm castle, in the winter of 1850. »The only room we could live in because of the cold«. Painting by Josef Wilhelm Wallander.
Besides, the need for new and remodeled houses should have decreased over time, as more and more manors were built with better houses. The fact that houses increased in size should also improve the life-span. A larger house could more easily lend itself to adaptations to changing family and household needs, as well as fashion changes, and the need for new buildings thus diminished. Instead remodeling was enough.

**Conclusions**

I have here tried to show why manor house buildings need to be analysed also from economic and social perspectives. I am well aware of the fact, that my findings are based on Swedish manors, which were comparatively small. The owners had to compromise in order to be able to keep their estates and houses. Perhaps the most exciting period is that of 1750 to 1800, when large investments were made in the material culture of the manor houses. About half of all Swedish manor owners built new main buildings during a few decades.

These fluctuations are also interesting from a wider point of view since the periods of intense building must have had an effect on the development in architecture and craftsmanship.

There is perhaps not a coincidence that the most popular and most admired architectural style and furniture design in Sweden today is the late 18th century classicism. When nearly 50 percent of the manor-houses in Sweden were replaced with new ones, it must have given a profound impact on peoples opinion on taste. Those houses, with their proportions, wood paneling and tiles stoves, stood during the entire 19th century and still adorn a large proportion of Swedish manors.
Zusammenfassung | Summary | Sammanfattning


In this article I have showed the importance of analysing manor house buildings and architecture also from an economic and a social perspective. There were close connections between changes in farming, work- and household organisation on the one hand, and changes in the material culture on the other. The changes that took place in manorial architecture during the 18th and 19th centuries are traditionally described as a result of changes in ideals, or the history of ideas, but my standpoint is that these changes also have to be understood as a product of the development in farming and work organisation. The Swedish manors were comparatively small and the owners had to compromise in order to be able to keep their
estates and lifestyle. The difficulties to gain profitability in traditional tenant farming led to a transition to capitalistic farming during the second half of the 18th century, with an eviction of tenant farmers who were replaced by an increased number of farmhands and -maidens on the manors as a result. This in turn led to a change in the household organisation, as farmhands and -maidens, who traditionally had been supported in the manorial household under the supervision of the lady of the manor, now were forced to establish their own households, often by marriage, and were placed to live near the farm buildings. This contributed too, among other things, to the breaking up of the formal French baroque style lay-out of the manors (increased production, bigger farm houses scattered on a larger area, farmhands living adjacent to the farm houses) and a privatisation in the owner’s family (farmhands no longer having to live nearby and the lady of the manor no longer responsible for taking care of the farmhands and could spend more time in socio-cultural activities).
