Adolescents' Impact on Family Economy in Sweden: During the First Decades of the Twentieth Century

Dan Bäcklund¹ and Kristina Lilja¹

Journal of Family History
1-21

© 2018 The Author(s)

Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/0363199018787562

journals.sagepub.com/home/jfh

Abstract

Adolescents' income contributions to working-class families decreased between the 1910s and the 1930s in Sweden. This was significant for adolescents' right to self-determination. By using household budget surveys, this article shows that at the time of the Great Depression, working adolescents paid less at home than had been common at the beginning of the twentieth century. Youth unemployment is one explanation, although it was also a consequence of children keeping more of their earnings for themselves. This development led to rising costs for having children and is interpreted as an aspect of the trade-off between quantity and quality of children.

Keywords

working-class adolescents, contribution habits, quality of children, household budget surveys, self-determination, interwar years, household welfare, youth unemployment

Many studies have shown that the income contributions of children were of vital importance for the household economy of workers during industrialization. These contributions declined in the leading industrial countries at the turn of the twentieth century, and by the middle of the century, they were of less significance. This was a result of at least three lines of long-term development: (1) the percentage of children in the workforce decreased as a result of legislation and increasing investments in secondary education; (2) incomes increased more slowly for working children than for adult workers; and (3) parents' claims on economic contributions by children were lowered.¹ In this article, the focus is on points 2 and 3 above as well as on children aged fourteen to twenty years (henceforth called adolescents).²

It was common that very young children worked in factories during the first phase of industrialization.³ This changed during the latter half of the nineteenth century as a result of new technology used in industrial production, child labor legislation, and laws concerning compulsory schooling.⁴ As a consequence, children younger than fourteen years became less common in the workforce.

¹ Department of Economic History, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden

Corresponding Author:

Kristina Lilja, Department of Economic History, Uppsala University, Box 513, S-751 20 Uppsala, Sweden.

Email: kristina.lilja@ekhist.uu.se

Furthermore, a separate child labor market, mostly in the service sector, was created.⁵ Children no longer entered directly into the industrial labor market and they were seldom found in the new modern industries. Instead, they were confined to “a marginalized children’s labor market” with lower wages.⁶

Despite this development, older children’s earnings were still of great significance for working-class families at the end of the nineteenth century. Thanks to these contributions, family incomes could be preserved when male breadwinners’ earnings began to fall at approximately forty years of age.⁷ While young children were detrimental to the family economy of low-income workers and increased the risk of poverty, income from adolescents and adult children made it possible for these workers to attain economic surpluses for saving.⁸ They could be seen as an economic asset to the family.⁹ A prerequisite was, of course, that children were working and not pursuing secondary education. In the latter case, they had a negative impact on savings.¹⁰ As the percentages of children in secondary schools increased during the first decades of the twentieth century, the net costs for having them were raised and this became an economic incentive for birth control. Lower economic contributions from working children to parents would have had a similar effect.¹¹

In the early twentieth century, children normally handed over all of their earnings to the parents.¹² In some countries, for example, the Netherlands, this habit seems to have remained unchanged at least up until World War II. In return, children received some pocket money.¹³ In other Western European countries, such as England and Sweden, habits changed gradually during the first half of the twentieth century, as adolescents were allowed to keep some earnings for themselves. In interwar England, children aged fourteen to eighteen turned over between 70 and 95 percent of their earnings to their parents, while those older than eighteen contributed only 20–50 percent.¹⁴ This means that the latter kept rather large sums for their own consumption. Fowler concluded “that a distinctive teenage culture, based largely upon access to commercialized leisure and the conspicuous consumption of leisure products and services aimed at the young, was in evidence in British towns and cities by the 1930s.”¹⁵ In Sweden, too, it appears as though few youths handed over their total income to their parents during the 1930s. According to Franzén, recollections from the interwar years indicate that adolescents normally contributed just 60–80 percent of their income. Variations were large between families, however.¹⁶ In the United States, habits also seemed to have changed. According to a study by Moehling, the household budget survey in 1917–1919 indicates that working children, especially girls, were allowed to spend more money on consumption for their own purposes, that is, clothing.¹⁷ Porter Benson shows a similar development in the United States as in England during the interwar years concerning children’s contributions to the household economy and leisure consumption.¹⁸

The overview above indicates that economic contributions from working children became of less importance for the household economy in many leading industrial countries during the first decades of the twentieth century. According to the so-called luxury axiom, the cause may have been increasing household welfare.¹⁹ Adolescents were still aware that their entry into the labor market was important for family economic needs, but this understanding was in conflict with their wishes to keep their own spending money. The growth of a youth culture aimed at the consumption of amusements and leisure activities probably made this conflict even more apparent. As parents received higher real incomes, they could allow adolescents more freedom to dispose of their own earnings. Obviously, this must have affected their impact on the family economy in a negative way, but little is known about this since there have been no systematic studies of contributions in relation to the costs of having adolescents.

The purpose of this article is to analyze how and explain why children’s contributions to family income decreased during the first decades of the twentieth century and how this affected the net costs for having children in general. The cost of having working adolescents is especially significant. This is a case study of low-income earners in Sweden. Sweden seems to be an interesting case as the

country underwent a rapid industrial development during the first half of the twentieth century. It was also one of the leading countries concerning the establishment of a welfare state, including economic support for families with children. A further advantage is that three comprehensive budget surveys were conducted during the period 1913–1933, so it is possible to identify when habits changed more precisely.

In the following section, the method and sources are described. Thereafter, an overview of economic developments in Sweden and the labor market for adolescents during the first decades of the twentieth century is presented. This is followed by a study of adolescents' economic contributions to working-class households. It shows that working adolescents paid less at home in the 1930s than in the 1910s. In the last section, the influence of youth unemployment and changing contribution habits are examined, followed by concluding remarks.

Method and Sources

The primary sources are household budget surveys collected by the National Board of Health and Welfare in Sweden for 1913/1914 and 1933.²⁰ The former survey has been chosen because it was the first nationwide investigation of urban living costs. Two more budget surveys in urban environments were carried out during the interwar years in 1923 and 1933. To capture as many of the changes as possible during the interwar period, the survey of 1933 was considered appropriate. This is despite the problem of unusually high unemployment levels at this time, which also affected young workers.²¹

The board sent out printed books of household accounts to be filled out weekly by workers and lower-grade officials in towns and smaller urban places all over Sweden. Only married couples were included in these surveys. Normally, heads of households were aged twenty-one to sixty. A majority were aged between thirty-one and forty, as the focus was on families with young children. The board registered 1,355 books for 1913/1914 and 1,245 for 1933.²² Here, accounts for 628 blue-collar workers and 280 officials from 8 larger towns were used for the study of 1913/1914. For 1933, 527 blue-collar workers and 519 officials were included. Between one-fifth and one-third of the households had adolescents living at home. This means that the number of observations is large enough to make comparisons possible between the two groups of workers as well as between the two investigated years.²³ As lower-grade civil servants normally had higher and more stable wages than blue-collar workers, one can assume that they were less dependent on economic contributions from children.

Using these household budget surveys, it is possible to discern yearly incomes for different family members and yearly household expenditures for different purposes, for example, food, clothing, rent, and insurance. The surveys also reported individual data concerning the age and sex of all household members and occupations for those earning income. Income and expenditures were to be accounted for in detail, weekly, for one year. The weekly reports permit a detailed study of household economic activity. As this research method is very time-consuming, it was only used for 1933. The purpose was to obtain more precise information about adolescents' occupations, employment, and weekly contributions. One drawback is that the data only reveal the economic contributions from children and not their incomes. Furthermore, contributions from all children in a family were reported as lump sums. To be able to discern how much each adolescent paid at home, families with only one child between fourteen and twenty, and no adult children, were selected for the study of contributors.

To measure adolescents' impacts on the family economy, the focus was on how much their contribution to family income increased savings and how much the costs of having an adolescent decreased family savings. Concerning the economic effect of having younger children (zero to six and seven to thirteen years), a similar method was used, and it was assumed that those children made

no income contributions. Savings were considered as the net result for the household economy. In the study, they were defined as total income minus total expenditures. The budget surveys registered insurance premiums as expenditures, despite having the characteristics as savings. To correct for this inaccuracy, premiums were added to savings.

Families who managed to keep these household accounts can be presumed to have been more interested in bookkeeping than the average working-class household. They were also probably thrifter. Furthermore, they had higher incomes than the average Swedish worker. For blue-collar workers, the difference was approximately 18 percent in 1913/1914 and 11 percent in 1933.²⁴ In the survey of 1933, the board excluded those who were unemployed for more than four weeks. This means that those chosen for the survey had more stable incomes than the average worker in this year when the unemployment rate was over 20 percent.²⁵ The conclusion is that the household budget surveys primarily represented the economic elite of Swedish workers. Consequently, families included in the surveys were less dependent on children's economic contributions than blue-collar households in general. Another problem is that adolescents aged fourteen to fifteen years were overrepresented in the budget surveys. Obviously, this affected contributions in a negative way.²⁶ Estimates concerning the determinants of children's contributions were used to form an idea of how much an average-aged adolescent in a working-class family, with mean income, paid at home (see Appendix).

Sweden during the First Decades of the Twentieth Century

After circa forty years of initial industrialization, the breakthrough for Swedish industrial society accelerated from the 1890s onward. From then on until 1950, economic growth was faster in Sweden than in most other industrialized countries. Industrial production surpassed agricultural production in the 1900s, and urban industries became more important than they had been previously. The rapid growth of the service sector contributed to increasing urban employment. In the 1930s, one out of two Swedes was living in urban areas.²⁷ At the end of this decade, the total Swedish population was 6.3 million, which meant an increase by just over 20 percent since the turn of the century.²⁸

Sweden was not actively involved in World War I, but the economy was highly affected by international trade conditions during and after the war. A deep deflation crisis hit Sweden at the beginning of the 1920s. Unemployment for blue-collar workers rose to 25 percent and was only partly reduced later on in the decade. The Great Depression followed in the early 1930s, and unemployment once more increased to high levels. The depression was of a comparatively short duration in Sweden mainly because of structural transformation initiated in the 1920s, favorable export conditions, and expansionary fiscal policy. From 1933, economic growth accelerated again and unemployment fell to approximately 10 percent: the same level as before the depression.²⁹

Industrialization and emigration led to rapidly increasing wages from 1880 onward. In 1910, real wages for blue-collar workers were at approximately the same level in Sweden as in Britain.³⁰ They were much lower than wages for lower-grade officials. In 1913, privately employed male salaried workers earned on average 66 percent more than male blue-collar workers. This difference decreased during the interwar years as wages for salaried employees stagnated (Figure 1). Incomes for children were considerably lower than for adults. In 1913, an under-aged worker got approximately 40 percent and an errand boy received approximately 25 percent of the yearly earnings for male blue-collar workers.³¹ However, yearly wages developed in approximately the same way for under-aged and adult workers between 1913 and 1933, meaning that real earnings for under-aged workers were about 30 percent higher during the latter year (Figure 1). This was also true for the large group of adolescents who were occupied as errand boys.³² One may notice that wages for under-aged workers decreased more than for adult workers in the beginning of the 1920s as well

Figure 1. Real yearly wages for male blue-collar workers, under-aged (below eighteen years) workers and salaried employees in Sweden 1913–1939. Index 1913 = 100. Blue-collar workers = workers in manufacturing industry and handicraft, and so on. Salaried employees = office staff, shop assistants, and so on. Data for salaried employees are missing for 1914–1916. Source: SOS, *Lönestatistik årsbok för Sverige 1934* (Stockholm, 1935), and SOS, *Lönestatistik årsbok för Sverige 1939* (Stockholm, 1941).

as in the beginning of the 1930s. This indicates that adolescents were hit harder than adults in times of depression. A closer look at this salient feature will be done in the section about the labor market for youths, which follows below.

Higher wages meant increasing economic surpluses and rising living standards. The household budget survey in 1913/1914 showed that food accounted for, on average, 48 percent of blue-collar workers' total household expenditures. The corresponding figure for lower-grade officials was 42 percent. By 1933, these shares had fallen to 37 and 33 percent, respectively.³³ This development meant that families on average became less dependent on children's earnings. On the other hand, the situation was more difficult for families with unemployed male breadwinners, as these families probably were highly dependent on extra incomes.

The Swedish political system was also deeply transformed during the first decades of the twentieth century. Universal suffrage for men was established in 1909 and likewise for women in 1918, which meant that all Swedes who were twenty-three years and older received the right to vote in general elections. Furthermore, parliamentarism was instituted in 1917. As a consequence, Sweden had a democratic system from about 1920. Henceforth, demands for social welfare reforms increased. A universal, though rudimentary, pension system had been introduced already in 1914, and in 1919 a decision was made to shorten the workday to eight hours. In the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, remedies against unemployment were intensely debated. This resulted in a new unemployment policy in 1933 based on the idea that the government should counteract mass unemployment by more actively using fiscal instruments.³⁴

At the beginning of the 1930s, the question concerning the costs for having children arose as well. The background was the falling birth rates since the late nineteenth century, resulting in a very low natural increase rate from 1920 onward, which was lower than rates among comparable economies in Western Europe.³⁵ In the beginning of the 1930s, this situation was deemed a social problem by the economists Alva and Gunnar Myrdal. They feared that there would be a decreasing population and a surplus of elderly in the near future. A social program was suggested, focused on (economic) support to families with young children and children in school.³⁶ Their recommendations largely influenced Swedish social policies from the 1930s onward.

Table 1. Numbers and Percentage Practicing a Profession, Fifteen to Twenty Years, Distributed According to Branch of Industry, 1920 and 1940.

	Crafts and Manufacturing	Trade and Transport	Public Service	Domestic Work	Total	Number
1920						
Females	36.7	26.4	4.5	32.4	100	70,136
Males	70.5	25.0	4.4	0	100	109,691
1940						
Females	30.2	30.5	8.3	31.0	100	114,451
Males	62.5	29.7	7.8	0	100	121,650

Note: Unmarried workers only, agriculture excluded.
Source: Census of population 1920, part V (Statistical Sweden, SCB), table 10; Census of population 1940, Part III (Statistical Sweden, SCB), table 24.

The Labor Market for Adolescents

Labor market conditions for adolescents were, of course, very important for the possibilities to earn an income and contribute to the household economy. Little has been written about this for Sweden during the period 1900–1940. Results from the censuses of the population between 1920 and 1940 give some ideas about the situation and are summarized in Table 1. The agricultural sector is excluded in the summary, as the aim is to show occupations among urban working adolescents. The table shows that the number of working adolescents, especially females, increased between 1920 and 1940. Most boys aged fifteen to twenty years were occupied in crafts and manufacturing industries. This was also common among girls, although domestic service was another important occupation for them. Between 1920 and 1940, the share of the industrial sector decreased while the share of trade and transport as well as public service increased. This development is in line with the assertions that there was a sort of shift from industrial work to work in the service sector during the interwar years. It also indicates that a special labor market for youths was established. It should be observed, however, that more adolescents aged fifteen to twenty were occupied in crafts and manufacturing industries than in the service sector during the whole interwar period.

A shortcoming of the censuses is that the level of employment or underemployment is not shown. For those occupied in the manufacturing industry, more reliable data regarding employment are available. It is based on yearly reports from industrial workplaces with approximately five employees or more, which means that crafts and small-scale industries were excluded. Workers under the age of eighteen were reported separately. This makes studies of yearly variations possible regarding the number of employed. According to Figure 2, industrial employment for these young workers was relatively high and increased somewhat during the 1910s. In the beginning of the 1920s, employment decreased by one-third. This means that they were hit harder than adult workers by the deflation crisis, which is also evident in the diagram showing under-aged workers as a percentage of the total industrial workforce. The development of yearly wages (Figure 1) further indicates that the crisis affected them more negatively than adult workers. Recovery from the deflation crisis was slow and the number of employed under-aged workers never reached the prewar level during the 1920s. The main explanation was rapid industrial rationalization.³⁷ A second interwar economic crisis hit Sweden in the beginning of the 1930s. Once again, the number of industrial workers under eighteen fell. The bottom was reached in 1933. This crisis too led to a fall in their share of total industrial workers (Figure 2) as well as wages lagging behind those of adult workers (Figure 1). During the remaining part of the 1930s, a recovery followed and at the end of the decade the number of under-aged workers was higher than ever before during the interwar years. It was mostly the

Figure 2. Under-aged (below eighteen years) industrial workers, yearly mean numbers (left axis) and as percentage of total industrial workforce in Sweden (right axis), 1910–1939. Data based on yearly reports from industrial workplaces with at least approximately five employees. Source: *Sociala Meddelanden 1910–1941* (Statistical Sweden, SCB).

employment of female workers that increased during the 1930s. Despite this recovery, a falling share of under-aged industrial workers in manufacturing industry was the long-term development. This continued a process that started in Sweden at least as early as in the 1870s, when these workers had made up approximately 20 percent of total industrial workforce.³⁸

It is important to observe that the levels of unemployment differed greatly between 1913/1914 and 1933 (Figure 2). The former time frame seems to have been rather normal, while the latter year was an extreme. It is most probable that adolescents earned less in 1933 than normally during the 1920s and the 1930s. Youth unemployment was probably not a great problem in Sweden before the 1920s.³⁹ In any case, it did not receive attention until the middle of the decade. An investigation of unemployment in 1927 revealed that workers below the age of eighteen made up a considerably greater proportion of the unemployed than in the beginning of the twentieth century.⁴⁰ Most likely, adolescents aged eighteen to twenty were struck even harder.⁴¹ It was explained as an effect of the difficulties for adolescents to move from a labor market for youths to the labor market for adults. Many occupations for youths, for example, as errand boys and similar casual occupations, were unqualified and these “blind-alley jobs” did not give enough skills for adult jobs. Instead, adolescents became caught in insecure terms of employment and seasonal work. Vocational training was recommended as a remedy against unemployment, but it was not extended until the 1940s.⁴² Instead, the problems with youth unemployment during the depression were handled by public relief work and privately by the families.⁴³ After the depression, employment increased also in the service sector and the number of errand boys or girls almost doubled between 1934 and 1938.⁴⁴

Adolescents' Contributions to Family Income and the Impact on Family Savings

According to the household budget surveys, the male breadwinner system dominated in Swedish towns during the first half of the twentieth century. On average, main male income constituted approximately 85 percent of total family income, and extra male income another 3–4 percent, in 1913/1914 as well as in 1933. Wives' incomes were on average very small, and children contributed with 2–3 percent (Table 2). Other household incomes were, for example, letting rooms, receiving sick leave, and getting payments in kind.⁴⁵ Children began to contribute to family income when the husband was around forty years (blue-collar workers) and forty-five years (lower-grade officials), respectively. Contributions were generally larger when the husbands were older.⁴⁶ As mentioned

Table 2. Average Percentage of Household Income Contributed by Children, 1913–1948.

	1913/1914		1923		1933		1948
	Blue-collar Workers	Lower-grade Officials	Blue-collar Workers	Lower-grade Officials	Blue-collar Workers	Lower-grade Officials	Blue-collar Workers/Lower-grade Officials
Children's contributions	3.5	2.2	4.3	1.9	2.0	1.2	1.4 ^a

Source: SOS, *Levnadskostnaderna*, 1921, 39* (* is a mark for some pages in the source); SOS, *Levnadskostnaderna i städer*, 1929, 32; SOS, *Levnadsvillkor*, 1938, 44; and SOS, *Levnadskostnaderna i tätortshushåll 1948* (Stockholm, 1953), 41.

^aOnly families with children.

Table 3. Percentage of Family Income Contributed by Children in Five European Countries^a 1889–1890, Sweden 1913/1914, and Sweden 1933.

Age, Husband	Europe 1889/1890 ^a	Sweden 1913/1914		Sweden 1933	
		Blue-collar Workers	Lower-grade Officials	Blue-collar Workers	Lower-grade Officials
31–40	6	1	0	1	0
41–50	32	8	7	4	2
51–60	42	14	13	8	2

Source: Haines, “The life cycle,” 1985, 49; SOS, *Levnadskostnaderna*, 1921; and SOS, *Levnadsvillkor*, 1938.

^aBritain, France, Germany, Belgium, and Switzerland.

earlier, the budget surveys reported only contributions to the household economy and not children’s income. This implies that they sometimes kept part of the income for themselves, but a more exact amount is not elucidated. The official reports of the budget surveys only discuss this topic in 1923, when it is noted that a majority of the children handed over their total income to the parents, while the rest just paid for board and lodging.⁴⁷

Children’s contributions were larger for blue-collar workers than for lower-grade officials (Table 2). This reflects, among other things, that the latter had higher incomes and more often sent children to some sort of secondary education. Blue-collar workers earned less and were more dependent on children’s incomes. As mentioned before, families with young children dominated in the Swedish budget surveys. This explains why the average percentages in Table 2 are quite low. They do not seem exceptionally low, however. An estimate based on a budget survey of Finnish workers in 1928, who at this time had considerably lower wages than Swedish workers, shows that children contributed 6.1 percent.⁴⁸ Generally, contributions in Sweden appear to have become a smaller share of household income in the 1930s and the 1940s (Table 2). In 1948, the figure concerns only families with children, while families without children were also included in the earlier years.

In Table 3, children’s contributions to family income are compared with Haines’s figures for five Western European countries in 1889/1890 (Sweden not included). It is important to note that neither the survey in 1889/1890 nor the Swedish surveys in 1913/1914 and 1933 are representative for workers in general.⁴⁹ This makes comparisons rather inexact, but some interesting differences seem relevant to comment on. It appears as though children were much less important for family income in Sweden already in the 1910s compared to what Haines found in his study (Table 3). Contributions in 1913/1914 were only 10–15 percent for blue-collar workers older than forty years, while levels in 1889/1890 were 30–40 percent. In the 1930s, income contributions in Sweden were only a few

percent. One explanation is, of course, that secondary education became more common; another is the diminishing number of children. According to data for 1889/1890, workers aged forty to forty-nine had on average 4.0 children. In the budget survey for Sweden 1913/1914, the corresponding figure was 2.9 and in 1933, it was 2.1. This obviously influenced the numbers of working children and consequently income contributions. An estimate based on mean income (contribution) per child indicates that numbers were only approximately half as high in 1913/1914 as in 1889/1890.⁵⁰ Using the number of working children in 1889/1890, contributions from children in 1913/1914 can be estimated to have increased to 17 percent for workers aged forty-one to fifty and to 24 percent for workers aged fifty-one to sixty. This shows that a decreasing number of working children was important but also that a third explanation was that children earned (or at least contributed) less in 1913/1914. The cause may be that children in the survey seldom were industrial workers. The budget survey 1913/1914 reports that children's income mainly consisted of payments for work as errand boys and similar occupations.⁵¹ As they had lower wages than under-aged industrial workers, this may explain why contributions per child were lower than in 1889/1890 when industrial work dominated. However, a closer look at the data for 1913/1914 reveals that the percentage contributed might have been lower as well. Out of total eleven adolescents aged eighteen to twenty, only one girl and one boy paid more at home than did those aged fifteen to seventeen. This indicates that the former may have kept some of their earnings, as they can be assumed to have had higher incomes. Perhaps the abovementioned habit of paying just for board and lodging was established among older adolescents in Sweden already before World War I.

As mentioned earlier, the primary data of the budget surveys reported children's contributions as lump sums. To get individual data, families with only one child aged fourteen to twenty, and no older children, were studied.⁵² For blue-collar workers, Table 4 shows that circa two-thirds of all adolescents paid income contributions in 1913/1914. Almost all contributed from the age of fifteen. This confirms that few children in this socioeconomic group attended secondary education before World War I. In 1933, the proportion of families with contributions from adolescents was considerably smaller. This was also the case for lower-grade officials during both years. One reason for this is that education after elementary school became more common during the interwar years and generally was more frequent among officials than among blue-collar workers. In the beginning of the 1930s, approximately, 30 percent of blue-collar workers' children participated in some sort of education after elementary school, while the corresponding figure was 65 percent for lower-grade officials. This was at least 10 percentage points more for both groups than in the beginning of the 1920s.⁵³ Another reason that fewer children contributed in 1933 was youth unemployment, mentioned above. This problem will be discussed more in detail later in this article.

The two surveys indicate that providing contributions was approximately as common among sons in both occupational groups (Table 4). This is in contrast to the situation for daughters. In the working class, they contributed almost as often as sons, while relatively few daughters of lower-grade officials paid at home. It is tempting to believe that the explanation is that these girls more often than boys attended secondary schools, but educational data for Sweden do not confirm this.⁵⁴ Further, a narrow reading of the budget survey data reveals that girls aged fourteen to sixteen accounted for the difference observed.⁵⁵ Daughters of lower-grade officials seem to have entered the labor market later than other groups of adolescents. Perhaps these households could afford to allow their daughters to stay at home a couple of years after finishing elementary school, thereby being kept away from the potential moral risks of working life.

Table 4 also shows that mean contributions from sons generally were larger than from daughters. A similar gender difference seems to have been common in other countries too.⁵⁶ For blue-collar workers in Sweden, the relation between contributions from girls and boys, respectively, seems to have been around .6 (Table 4). This probably reflected wage differences as it corresponded rather

Table 4. Number of Children in Different Ages with and without Contributions to Family Income, Respectively, Mean Contributions in 1933 Prices.

Age, Children	Blue-collar Workers				Lower-grade Officials			
	1913/1914		1933		1913/1914		1933	
	With	Without	With	Without	With	Without	With	Without
14	14	15	15	14	4	8	12	22
15	17	1	10	18	3	4	11	22
16	1	3	5	6	3	4	7	13
17	2	1	6	8	1	0	6	5
18	4	1	1	5	1	1	3	5
19	6	1	1	1	2	1	1	3
20	4	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
Total 14–20	48	23	39	52	14	18	41	71
Contributions/adolescent								
14–20, SEK	245		105		136		97	
Female, SEK	190 (N = 35)		69 (N = 48)		71 (N = 16)		51 (N = 52)	
Male, SEK	298 (N = 36)		145 (N = 43)		201 (N = 16)		134 (N = 62)	
Contributions/contributor								
14–20, SEK	362		244		311		256	
Female, SEK	266 (N = 25)		183 (N = 18)		377 (N = 3)		223 (N = 12)	
Male, SEK	467 (N = 23)		297 (N = 21)		293 (N = 11)		269 (N = 31)	

Note: Deflated according to prices in R. Edvinsson and J. Söderberg, "The Evolution of Swedish Consumer Prices, 1290–2008," in *Exchange Rates, Prices, and Wages, 1277–2008*, ed. R. Edvinsson, T. Jacobsson, and D. Waldenström (Stockholm, 2010), 447. Only families with one child fourteen to twenty years and no children over twenty-one included.

Source: SOS, *Levnadskostnaderna*, 1921; SOS, *Levnadsvillkor*, 1938.

well to the wage relation between adult females and males in industrial work.⁵⁷ To some extent, it also corresponded to disparities in consumption levels between boys and girls.⁵⁸

To more thoroughly analyze how adolescents affected the household economy, savings for families that had no adult children (over twenty-one years) were studied. A regression model with total savings as the dependent variable was used. Savings were defined as income minus expenditure plus union dues and fees for insurances. Independent variables were income for the husband, wife, children, and from other sources, respectively. Further, the husband's age, age squared, and the numbers of children in different ages were included. Children were separated into three age groups, zero to six years (preschool age), seven to thirteen years (school age), and fourteen to twenty years (adolescents). Dummies for towns (1913/1914) and dummies for the cost of living zone and town size (1933), respectively, were used as controllers. Separate regressions were done for the two years and for the two occupational groups.

Table 5 shows that a rather large part of children's contributions to family income resulted in increased total savings. For blue-collar workers, the level was 16–21 percent. For lower-grade officials, the coefficient was at the same level but not significant in 1913/1914, while it was very large in 1933. The latter indicates that contributions were of little importance for consumption in these relatively well-to-do households. While contributions increased savings, expenditures for adolescents decreased savings by 50 SEK or more, as can be seen by the coefficients for children aged fourteen to twenty. The coefficient was more negative than for younger children, though it also for children at school age was significant in most cases. These results seem likely as consumption of food and clothing among other things, increased with age. It is noticeable that the youngest children (zero to six years) had no significant impact on total savings, though the coefficient was negative. On the

Table 5. Determinants of Total Savings for, Respectively, Blue-collar Workers and Lower-grade Officials 1913/1914 and 1933, in 1933 Prices.

	Blue-collar Workers		Lower-grade Officials	
	1913/1914	1933	1913/1914	1933
Constant	−152	−1.198***	83	−1.363***
SE	169	384	306	516
Income husband	0.156***	0.219***	0.155***	0.216***
SE	0.016	0.025	0.020	0.027
Income wife	0.214***	0.015	0.232***	0.159**
SE	0.046	0.064	0.065	0.073
Children's contribution	0.210***	0.163*	0.139	0.457***
SE	0.049	0.085	0.098	0.152
Income other sources	0.135***	0.496***	0.126**	0.704***
SE	0.032	0.052	0.050	0.051
Age husband	−2.02	37.7**	−14.2	50.9**
SE	8.60	18.1	15.8	24.8
(Age husband) ²	0.030	−0.528**	0.177	−0.731**
SE	0.107	0.210	0.193	0.299
Children 0–6 years	−7.92	9.9	−14.8	−9.4
SE	7.54	23.0	12.9	29.4
Children 7–13 years	−50.1***	−34.6*	−16.1	−76.0***
SE	7.71	18.0	14.6	23.7
Children 14–20 years	−57.6***	−52.0*	−68.9*	−142.0***
SE	17.3	31.3	35.9	36.5
Dummies for towns	Yes		Yes	
Dummies for cost-of-living zone and town size		Yes		Yes
Number	603	510	270	503
R ²	0.23	0.32	0.21	0.38
F	12.15	15.19	5.51	18.94

Note: Deflated according to prices in Edvinsson and Söderberg, *The Evolution of Swedish Consumer Prices*, 447. Households with children over twenty-one years excluded.

Source: SOS, *Levnadskostnaderna*, 1921; SOS, *Levnadsvillkor*, 1938.

* $p < .10$.

** $p < .05$.

*** $p < .01$.

other hand, having young children might have led to higher extra costs than indicated by Table 5, as it could have meant that the wife no longer could continue work in the ordinary labor market. According to the budget surveys, this loss of income affected only few families. In blue-collar workers' households, just one-half of all wives without children had labor income. The proportion was nearly as high for wives with children aged zero to six in 1913/1914, while it was only a third in 1933. Data for lower-grade officials show similar results. This indicates that the real costs for having young children were relatively low.

What about adolescents? How did they affect savings? Table 4 shows that their average contributions were too low to cover their extra costs. This was true even for blue-collar workers in 1913/1914. While an adolescent aged fourteen to twenty, via income contributions, increased savings by on average 51 SEK (245×0.210), extra costs for this adolescent decreased savings by 58 SEK (Tables 4 and 5). Net costs were considerably larger in 1933, when contributions were smaller and less than 50 percent of adolescents contributed. For lower-grade officials, having adolescents led to net costs (negative savings) in 1913/1914 as well as in 1933.

Figure 3. Income contributions from children, in 1933 prices. Households with only one child, fifteen to twenty years, (a) 1913/1914 and (b) 1933. Deflated according to prices in Edvinsson and Söderberg, *The Evolution of Swedish Consumer Prices*, 447. Source: SOS, *Levnadskostnaderna*, 1921; SOS, *Levnadsvillkor*, 1938.

As shown in the Method and Sources section above, blue-collar households participating in the budget surveys had higher incomes than Swedish workers on average. This means that contributions from children probably were less urgently needed and smaller than for the average working-class household. Another factor that influenced the contributions negatively was that younger adolescents (aged fourteen–fifteen) were overrepresented in the budget surveys (Table 4). While there were no systematic age differences in contributions per adolescent in the ages fifteen to twenty, those aged fourteen contributed considerably less than older adolescents.

To correct for the effects of this imbalance, a separate study was made for blue-collar workers with incomes approximately similar to the average for Swedish workers and with no overrepresentation of fourteen-year-olds (Appendix). It must be emphasized that this only forms the basis of a very rough estimate. It shows a considerably more positive outcome for 1913/1914 than the one presented above. Instead of decreasing savings, adolescents increased them by 22 SEK. In 1933, the corresponding figure was a decrease of savings by 33 SEK. This means that adolescents in general still could be described as some sort of economic asset for blue-collar workers in 1913/1914. But it is perhaps more to the point to emphasize that they were not able to compensate for their extra costs during the school age (children aged seven to thirteen, Appendix). This means that the sum of children's effect on household savings was negative at least until they became adults. Consequently, economic incentives existed for birth control and small families even before World War I. This became even more obvious in the following decades, and in 1933 not even working adolescents covered their costs for board and lodging at home (Appendix).

Youth Unemployment or New Contribution Habits?

The level of amounts given to the parents (Table 4) indicates that adolescents either worked less in 1933 than in 1913/1914, probably as a consequence of unemployment and/or that they kept more earnings for themselves. In Figure 3a and b, contributions from separate children aged fifteen to twenty are compared for 1913/1914 and 1933. In the comparison, blue-collar workers and lower-grade officials are treated together, as working (contributing) children paid rather similar amounts.⁵⁹

Table 6. Part of Estimated Income Contributed and Extent of Employment, Adolescents fourteen to twenty, 1933.

Part of Income, Contributed (Percent)	Work Full Time, 81–100 Percent	Work Major Part, 51–80 Percent	Work Minor Part, 21–50 Percent	Work a Few Weeks, 1–20 Percent
81–100	11	2	2	9
51–80	4	0	0	3
21–50	5	1	2	1
1–20	2	0	0	1

Note: Total number of adolescents is less than in Figure 4 as weekly reports were missing for some households.

Source: *The Household Budget Survey, 1933* (Socialstyrelsens hushållsundersökning år 1933).

As can be seen, there are great differences between the two surveys. In 1913/1914, a majority paid more than 300 SEK (in 1933 prices). This was likely all or most of their earnings. Income for an under-aged worker at this time was on average 485 SEK and errand boys earned circa 375 SEK.⁶⁰ Only a few, fifteen out of forty-four, paid less than 300 SEK. Although wages were higher in 1933, small contributions dominated (twenty-nine out of fifty-three), while a minority paid more than 300 SEK. Income data show that under-aged workers in Sweden earned on average 970 SEK in 1933 and that wages for errand boys were between 600 and 900 SEK a year.⁶¹ Figure 3b shows that very few (five out of fifty-three) handed over more than 600 SEK to the household. How important were youth unemployment or underemployment and changing habits, respectively, in explaining the fall in payments at home since 1913/1914? To be sure, it seems not to have been an effect of different age structures in 1913/1914 and in 1933, as data show that contributions were relatively equal irrespective of age (fifteen–twenty years). Male adolescents were somewhat more represented in 1933.⁶² As males generally paid more than females (Table 4), this bias ought to have increased the number with large contributions.

As mentioned earlier, wage data (Figure 1) as well as the numbers of employed under-aged industrial workers (Figure 2) indicate that many adolescents were hit by unemployment in the beginning of the 1930s, especially in 1933. In manufacturing, the number of workers below eighteen fell by 30 percent between 1930 and 1933, which gives a rough idea of unemployment rates. Errand boys and similar kinds of helpers with very precarious conditions for employment were probably at least as stricken by joblessness as industrial workers. Narratives also confirm that casual work was especially common for youths during the Great Depression.⁶³ This gives a much more dismal image of the earning possibilities for adolescents than the one presented in a contemporary official report. According to it, the unemployment rate for youths was just 14 percent in November 1933. This figure, however, relates only to juveniles applying for assistance, and one might assume that joblessness was actually much higher. In the report, it was supposed that many adolescents did not apply for unemployment assistance as they still were living at home and were supposed to be their parents' economic responsibility.⁶⁴

To get more information about the causes of low contributions, weekly reports from the households included in the budget survey in 1933 were studied. They were available for forty-three out of those fifty-three households, included in Figure 3b. The reports give information about occupations for working adolescents, their weekly contributions, and approximate data for the number of weeks worked. Unfortunately, wage data are mostly missing. Instead, weekly earnings were approximately estimated by using occupational information with regard to average remunerations for these kinds of jobs. This means that results should be seen as rather imprecise.

There were great variations between contributing adolescents regarding working hours as well as in percentages of income paid at home. In general, Table 6 confirms that casual work was very prevalent. About 40 percent worked less than half of the year. Most of these paid less than 300 SEK.

Only one-fourth of the adolescents worked the whole year and paid all or most of their earnings to the household (Table 6). This group corresponds roughly to those paying more than 500 SEK according to Figure 3b. Another fourth also contributed most of their income to the households, although they were employed just a few weeks a year. Perhaps most interesting, however, are the eight youngsters who worked during the whole or major part of the year but only paid a minor part or almost nothing of their income to the household. These cases confirm that the habits of working children had changed a lot since the beginning of the century. To pay all or most of one's earnings to the household was no longer a generally accepted moral obligation. On the contrary, the level of contributions seems to have been a result of negotiations within families and with very different outcomes.⁶⁵ Something also worth noticing is that the data reveal no significant differences between how great a part of earnings daughters and sons paid at home. This strengthens the earlier assumption that wage differences explain why sons contributed more than daughters.

For those not contributing at all, weekly reports for sixty out of eighty-eight families were checked. Secondary schooling was observed for only one-fifth of this group, a figure that was similar for blue-collar workers and lower-grade officials. This may reflect underreporting for the latter category, as research on school attendance has shown much higher figures for this group.⁶⁶ A majority, thirty-eight out of sixty households, provided no information at all concerning their children's occupation. A number of them were probably unemployed, though this was reported in only two cases. It is notable that at least five of the sixty youngsters not contributing at home were working during the whole year or part of it. One of these, a nineteen-year-old girl, working as a hospital orderly, earned 450 SEK during the year. Her father noted, somewhat displeased, that she paid nothing at home but spent all her income on clothes.⁶⁷ Obviously, he did not consider his daughter as an "economic asset" for the household.

All in all, the data from the weekly reports in 1933 show that adolescents retained a rather large part of their earnings. Using data for the 103 households more thoroughly studied above, average contributions can be estimated to have been about 60 percent of income earned in 1933.⁶⁸ The result corresponds well to Franzén's findings for Stockholm.⁶⁹ As his study dealt with several years around 1930, not just 1933, the conclusion is that for youths to contribute two-thirds and keep one-third of their income was an approximate average at the time and not some sort of extreme caused by the difficult labor market situation in 1933.

After 1933, employment increased for adolescents (Figure 2) as well as for adult workers. What did this mean when it comes to children's contributions and net costs for having children? Several official reports were written in Sweden during the 1930s and 1940s concerning more or less appropriate remedies against falling birth rates. One recurring statement in these reports was that working adolescents paid less than their share of family expenditures, even in cases when they earned relatively high incomes.⁷⁰ This, the reports claimed, meant that youths and young adults had a higher standard of living than other age-groups of blue-collar workers.⁷¹ It was even asserted that some adolescents were allowed to use all their earnings on amusements and clothes for themselves and paid nothing at home. In the report, this was characterized as a misguided act of generosity on the part of parents.⁷² These remarks make one suspect that those adolescents kept a considerable part of the income increase after 1933 for their own consumption and that having working adolescents led to net costs for the households at the end of the 1930s, as it had done during the depression.

It should also be noted that the 1930s, a decade with new mass consumption goods and an increased supply of places of amusements, have been considered the time of the first breakthrough of a youth culture in Sweden.⁷³ One of the most popular objects for youth consumption was movies, which took on a more youthful profile than before. Other expanding leisure activities were hobbies such as building model aeroplanes and railways, while music, dance, and sport activities also attracted many youths at this time.⁷⁴ Obviously, consumption of this kind required having money to spend, as has been noticed by researchers on youth culture.⁷⁵ How much adolescents spent on the consumption of amusements was the subject of an official report in the early 1940s. It showed that

income from entertainment taxes for movies, dances, and other public amusements was about 30 percent higher in constant prices in 1939 than in 1933.⁷⁶ This should be regarded as a minimum indication of the increase in consumption, as it did not include spending for hobbies, sport activities, or similar things. It was calculated in the report that boys aged nineteen in 1942 on average consumed entertainment and stimulants for 17 SEK/week (1933 prices), while girls spent only 7 SEK a week on these items.⁷⁷ Such high consumption levels were obviously unreachable in 1933, as they would have taken all earnings and even more. However, the consumption of amusements seems to have been well established even in 1933, albeit at a lower level. In one of the weekly reports, this is exemplified by a father reporting that he paid his unemployed son, seventeen years old, 2.50 SEK in a weekly allowance to spend on insurance, cinema, football, and so on.⁷⁸

The interwar years in Sweden probably marked a transition phase in the development of patterns of children's contributions to the household. Up until the beginning of the 1920s, the traditional habit of paying all or most of earnings to the parents seems to have been rather intact, as was indicated by the official report of the budget survey in 1923, referred to earlier.⁷⁹ This perhaps explains why children contributed with more than 4 percent of blue-collar workers' household incomes that year (Table 2), even though the level of youth unemployment seems to have been rather high (Figure 2). In 1933, contributions were half as large, partly as a result of an extremely troublesome employment situation but also as a result of adolescents keeping more of their earnings. According to the official reports mentioned above, this change of habits was not temporary, but part of a long-term development, meaning that adolescents more and more were allowed to dispose of their earnings and make their own economic decisions.

Conclusions

In Sweden, child labor in factories decreased from the 1870s onward, although industrial occupations were still important for adolescents during the interwar years. Up until 1920, this probably had limited effects on employment for juveniles, as a labor market for youths was established in the service sector from the turn of the twentieth century. It was characterized by temporary employment, low wages, and part-time work. As a consequence, the average working adolescent was not able to contribute the same share to family income as before. This led to higher net costs for having children. For urban blue-collar workers with average incomes, estimates based on the household budget survey in 1913/1914 indicate that incomes from children fourteen to twenty still compensated for costs. They did not, however, compensate for costs incurred during earlier childhood, meaning that children in the aggregate no longer were an economic asset but an economic burden for the household. This was even more obvious in 1933, when the estimates showed that the costs for having adolescents were greater than their income contributions. One cause was that secondary education also became more common for working-class children in the interwar years. This meant decreasing shares of adolescents in the workforce. Another very important cause behind the negative outcome in 1933 was high rates of youth unemployment during the Great Depression. These two factors coincided with a third: changing habits concerning economic contributions at home. Before World War I, the norm was to hand over all or most of income to the parents. In the early 1930s, such a norm seems to have no longer been in effect. Shares paid at home varied widely between 100 percent of income and nothing at all for both daughters and sons. The latter in general paid larger sums as they had higher wages. On average, adolescents seem to have contributed approximately two-thirds of their income. In 1933, this was not enough to cover extra costs even for having working adolescents. Although youth unemployment decreased during the remaining part of the 1930s, contributions from working adolescents still seem to have been too low to cover their costs for the households. This was brought up in the public debate and in several official reports concerning remedies against the ongoing fall in the birth rate.

The increasing consumption of amusements and leisure activities was often seen as the cause of falling contributions. Many complaints were made against the expanding commercialized youth culture from the late 1920s onward. Show business, with the help of advertisements, probably put high pressure on adolescents to consume movies, dances, and other such activities. A prerequisite for this consumption was purchasing power. Rising real wages and keeping more for one's own spending made this development possible. Of decisive importance was of course that real incomes and living standards for working-class households increased during the first decades of the twentieth century. This made it possible to allow more children to attend secondary education, but also for families to accept decreasing contributions from working adolescents. The results are in line with research showing that the luxury axiom is an important cause behind the decline in child labor in developing countries.

To allow adolescents to make their own economic decisions may be seen as another way, besides education, to invest in children's quality. It reflected parents' willingness to support their youngsters' independence, and consequently their future qualities as grown-ups in a democratic society. Furthermore, reasons of fairness could motivate this as the children participating in secondary education were generally economically supported by their parents. It seems reasonable that this question of fairness was more urgent in the interwar years than before, as secondary education had become more common among the masses. All in all, this development led to rising net costs for having children, and probably affected birth rates downward. Welfare measures from the 1930s onward were aimed as remedies against this. However, an unforeseen effect may have been that they made it easier for parents to allow adolescents to keep a greater part of their incomes.

Appendix

To study how adolescents affected savings for average blue-collar workers, budget survey households with large incomes were excluded. The method was to calculate mean main incomes for husbands in different segments of the budget surveys and compare the results with the average for Swedish workers according to official wage statistics.⁸⁰ For 1913/1914, the comparison showed a reasonable similarity between mean yearly income for the lowest 50 percent in the budget survey and the Swedish average (1,206 SEK and 1,241 SEK, respectively, in current prices). For 1933, a corresponding similarity was seen between the lowest 75 percent in the budget survey and the country average (mean incomes of 2,552 SEK and 2,612 SEK, respectively, current prices).

Contributions from adolescents were somewhat greater in these lower segments of the budget surveys than shown in Table 4. Adolescents aged fourteen were greatly overrepresented and contributed with considerably less than adolescents aged fifteen to twenty.⁸¹ To compensate for the overrepresentation, a weighted average was estimated by using 1/7 of the average for those aged fourteen and 6/7 of the average for adolescents in ages fifteen and older. The weighted average for 1913/1914 was 315 SEK ($1/7 \times 165 + 6/7 \times 340$). For 1933, it was 123 SEK ($1/7 \times 96 + 6/7 \times 127$).

To study how these contributions and costs for adolescents affected household savings, the regression model presented earlier was used. Results were rather similar to those shown in Table 5, but many coefficients were no longer significant, probably because of fewer observations (Table A1). Nevertheless, they were used for a rough estimate of adolescents' impact on savings. It showed that adolescents increased savings by 22 SEK ($315 \times 0.23 - 50$) in 1913/1914 and decreased savings by 33 SEK ($123 \times 0.14 - 50$) in 1933. This means that adolescents still were an economic asset for the average blue-collar household in 1913/1914, but not in 1933. As a matter of fact, in 1933, not even contributing children compensated for extra costs. For them, the weighted average was 278 SEK, which means that contributions increased savings by 39 SEK, while costs for children fourteen to twenty decreased savings by 50 SEK.

Table A1. Determinants of Total Savings for Blue-collar Workers in the Lower-income Segment 1913/1914 and 1933, in 1933 Prices.

	1913/1914	1933
Constant	−201	−1,094**
SE	218	432
Income husband	0.185***	0.211***
SE	0.037	0.048
Income wife	0.209***	−0.018
SE	0.059	0.069
Children's contribution	0.232***	0.143
SE	0.072	0.087
Income other sources	0.162***	0.339***
SE	0.046	0.070
Age husband	−4.7	35.0*
SE	10.8	19.8
(Age husband) ²	0.070	−0.490**
SE	0.131	0.227
Children 0–6 years	7.2	15.5
SE	11.1	26.6
Children 7–13 years	−41.0***	−31.8
SE	11.1	20.6
Children 14–20 years	−49.9*	−49.5
SE	29.5	33.9
Dummies for towns	Yes	
Dummies for cost-of-living zone and town size		Yes
N	298	382
R ²	0.18	0.13
F	4.97	4.33

Note: Deflated according to prices in Edvinsson and Söderberg, *The Evolution of Swedish Consumer Prices*, 447. Households with children over twenty-one years excluded.

Source: SOS, *Levnadskostnaderna*, 1921; SOS, *Levnadsvillkor*, 1938.

* $p < .10$.

** $p < .05$.

*** $p < .01$.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. H. Cunningham, "The Decline of Child Labour: Labour Markets and Family Economies in Europe and North America Since 1830," *Economic History Review* LIII, no. 3 (2000): 409–28; J. Humphries, "Child Labor: Lessons from the Historical Experience of Today's Industrial Economies," *The World Bank Economic Review* 17, no. 2 (2003): 175–96.
2. During the first decades of the twentieth century, children in Sweden were obliged to attend primary school from the age of seven up to the age of fourteen, but they normally quit after the age of twelve. N. O. Bruce, *Den svenska folkskolan och dess uppgifter* (Stockholm, 1935), 52–57. Consequently, children normally had relatively few possibilities to work for income before they were fourteen years old.

3. Humphries, "Child Labor," 2003; E. Schrumpf, "From Full-time to Part-time: Working Children in Norway from the Nineteenth to the Twentieth Century," in *Industrious Children: Work and Childhood in the Nordic Countries*, ed. N. De Coninck-Smith, B. Sandin, and E. Schrumpf (Odense, Denmark, 1997), 47–78; L. Olsson, *Då barn var lönsamma* (Stockholm, 1980).
4. Cunningham, "The Decline of Child Labour," 2000; L. Olsson, "Industrial Capitalism and Child Labour in Sweden 1800–1930," in *Child Labour's Global Past, 1650–2000, International and Comparative Social History*, ed. C. H. Berne (Peter Lang AG, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2011), 303–30.
5. Cunningham, "The Decline of Child Labour," 419; Schrumpf, "From Full-time to Part-time," 60–63.
6. Cunningham, "The Decline of Child Labour," 409.
7. M. R. Haines, "Industrial Work and the Family Life Cycle, 1889–1890," *Research in Economic History* 4 (1979): 289–356; M. R. Haines, "The Life Cycle, Savings, and Demographic Adaptation: Some Historical Evidence for the United States and Europe," in *Gender and the Life Course*, ed. A. S. Rossi (New York: Aldine, 1985), 43–63; R. W. Robinson, "Family Economic Strategies in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-century Indianapolis," *Journal of Family History* 20, no. 1 (1995): 1–22; C. Haber and B. Gratton, *Old Age and the Search for Security: An American Social History* (Indiana University Press, 1994), 72–77.
8. B. S. Rowntree, *Poverty: A Study of Town Life* (London, England, 1901); Haines, "Industrial Work," 1979; Haines, "The Life Cycle," 43–63.
9. Haines, "The Life Cycle," 48.
10. *Ibid.*, 59–60.
11. G. S. Becker, *A Treatise on the Family* (Harvard UP, 1993), 135–53.
12. Cunningham, "The Decline of Child Labour," 422–23.
13. A. de Regt, "Children in the 20th-century Family Economy: From Co-providers to Consumers," *The History of the Family* 9, no. 4 (2004): 371–76.
14. S. Todd, "Breadwinners and Dependence: Working-class Young People in England 1918–1955," *International Review of Social History*, no. 1 (2007): 52, 1, 67. See also B. S. Rowntree, *Poverty and Progress: A Second Social Survey of York* (London, UK, 1942), 27, 78–81.
15. D. Fowler, *The First Teenagers: The Lifestyle of Young Wage-earners in Interwar Britain* (London, UK, 1995), 110.
16. The conclusions are based on just twenty-six recollections from Stockholm. M. Franzén, *Den folkliga staden* (Lund, 1992), 214–32, 397–99.
17. C. M. Moehling, "She Has Suddenly Become Powerful: Youth Employment and Household Decision Making in the Early Twentieth Century," *The Journal of Economic History* 62, no. 2 (2005): 414–38.
18. S. Porter Benson, *Household Accounts: Working-class Family Economies in the Interwar United States* (Cornell UP, 2007), 58–76.
19. A. Dar, N.-H. Blunch, B. Kim, et al., "Participating of Children in Schooling and Labor Activities: A Review of Empirical Studies," (Social Protection Discussion Paper Series, No. 0221, The World Bank, 2002), 8–9, 45–46.
20. SOS, *Levnadskostnaderna i Sverige 1913–1914. Del I. Utredningens huvudresultat* (Stockholm, 1921); SOS, *Levnadsvillkor och hushållsvanor i städer och industriorter omkring år 1933* (Stockholm, 1938).
21. It should be noted that unemployment rates for under-aged workers probably were high also in 1923 (Figure 2).
22. SOS, *Levnadskostnaderna*, 11*; SOS, *Levnadsvillkor*, 13.
23. For blue-collar workers, the number of households with adolescents was 159 in 1913/1914 and 181 in 1933. Corresponding figures for lower-grade officials were 57 in 1913/1914 and 204 in 1933.
24. SOS, *Lönestatistisk årsbok för Sverige 1933* (Stockholm, 1934).
25. SOS, *Levnadsvillkor*, 14.
26. Probably it also somewhat lowered costs for having adolescents. In 1933, the consumption unit for boys aged eleven to fourteen was 0.9 and for those fifteen and older 1.0. SOS, *Levnadsvillkor*, 28.

27. L. Schön, *Sweden's Road to Modernity: An Economic History* (Lund, 2010), 117, 187–91; L. Nilsson, *Den urbana transitionen: Tätorter i svensk samhällsomvandling 1800–1980* (Stockholm, 1989), 129.
28. *Historical Statistics of Sweden Part 1: Population, Second Edition. 1720–1967* (Statistical Sweden/SCB, 1969).
29. Schön, *Sweden's Road*, 296–303.
30. K. H. O'Rourke and J. G. Williamsson, "Open Economy Forces and Late Nineteenth Century Swedish Catch-up: A Quantitative Accounting," *Scandinavian Economic History Review* XLIII, no. 2 (1995): 179.
31. SOS, *Lönestatistisk årsbok*, 1934.
32. *Ibid.*, 75.
33. SOS, *Levnadskostnaderna i städer och industriorter omkring år 1923* (Stockholm, 1929), 44*; SOS, *Levnadsvillkor*, 57.
34. L. Schön, *An Economic History of Modern Sweden* (London, UK, 2012), 175, 189, 209–10.
35. B. R. Mitchell, *European Historical Statistics* (Aylesbury, 1975).
36. A. Myrdal and G. Myrdal, *Kris i befolkningsfrågan* (Stockholm, 1934).
37. Sociala meddelanden 1927:3 (Statistical Sweden/SCB), 214.
38. BiSOS D, *Fabriker och manufaktur 1858–1910* (Statistical Sweden/SCB, 1912).
39. SOU 1931:20, *Arbetslöshetens omfattning, karaktär och orsaker* (Stockholm, 1931), 104. See also P. Håkansson, *Ungdomsarbetslösheten: om övergångsregimer, institutionell förändring och social kapital* (Lund, Sweden, 2011) 133–38.
40. SOU 1931:20, *Arbetslöshetens omfattning*, 103.
41. SOU 1934:11, *Utredning angående åtgärder för bekämpande av ungdomsarbetslösheten* (Stockholm, 1934), 13.
42. Sociala Meddelanden 1927:3, 215–16; J. Olofsson, *Svensk yrkesutbildning: vägval i internationell belysning* (Stockholm: SNS, 2005), 84–90.
43. L. Schröder, *Springpojkar och språngbrädor: om orsaker till åtgärder mot ungdomars arbetslöshet* (Uppsala, Sweden, 1991), 43.
44. In 1934, the numbers of errand boys/girls were 3,201/659 and in 1938 they were 5,113/1,368, respectively. SOS, *Lönestatistisk årsbok*, 49; SOS, *Lönestatistisk årsbok för Sverige 1938* (Stockholm, 1940), 70.
45. For example, SOS, *Levnadskostnaderna i städer*, 39*; SOS, *Levnadsvillkor*, 44.
46. SOS, *Levnadskostnaderna*, 1921; SOS, *Levnadsvillkor*, 1938.
47. SOS, *Levnadskostnaderna i städer*, 32.
48. S. Saaritsa and A. Kaihovaara, "Good for Girls or Bad for Boys? Schooling, Social Inequality and Intra-household Allocation in Early Twentieth Century Finland," *Cliometrica* (2016), 10, 1, table 3.
49. Haines, "The Life Cycle," 293–95.
50. For workers aged forty-one to fifty, the number of working children was 1.35 in 1889/1890 and 0.63 in 1913/1914. Corresponding figures for workers aged fifty-one to sixty were 1.80 and 1.08, respectively. The figures are based on data in Haines, "Industrial Work," 328–29, SOS, *Levnadskostnaderna i städer*, 1929, and SOS, *Levnadsvillkor*, 1938.
51. SOS, *Levnadskostnaderna i städer*, 39*.
52. Budget survey data confirmed that few children aged thirteen contributed to family income, probably as they still were in school during part of the year.
53. R. Erikson and J. O. Jonsson, *Ursprung och utbildning: Social snedrekrytering till högre studier* (SOU 1993:85), 153.
54. For lower-grade officials, the percentage attending some kind of secondary education was somewhat lower for females than males. Erikson and Jonsson, *Ursprung och utbildning*, 153.
55. In 1913/1914, two of the fourteen girls aged fourteen to sixteen contributed at home. The corresponding figure for 1933 was seven of the forty-one.
56. Saaritsa and Kaihovaara, "Good for Girls," 80–81; S. Todd, "Breadwinners and Dependence," 65–66.

57. The ratio between wages for females and males was .5–.6 during the 1910s and 1920s. Sociala meddelanden 1927:1, 24. Data for gender differences in wages for under-aged workers are lacking.
58. According to the consumption unit scales in the budget surveys, expenditures for girls aged fifteen to twenty were 80–95 percent of expenditures for boys. SOS, *Levnadskostnaderna*, 17*; SOS, *Levnadsvillkor*, 28.
59. The correlations between contributions and occupational groups were not significant.
60. Errand boys earned circa 7.50 SEK a week. The assumption was work during fifty weeks per year. SOS, *Lönestatistik årsbok*, 1934, 75. Wages in 1933 prices. As Stockholm was not included in the survey 1913/1914, data for “other urban places” were used.
61. The weekly wage was between twelve and eighteen SEK. SOS, *Lönestatistik årsbok*, 1934, 46, 75.
62. In 1913/1914, twenty-three girls and twenty-one boys contributed, while only eighteen girls but thirty-five boys contributed in 1933.
63. Franzén, *Den folkliga staden*, 232.
64. SOU 1934:11, *Utredning angående åtgärder*, 11.
65. Weekly reports for 1933 reveal that some youths aged nineteen and older paid for board and lodging at home. They were not included as family members in the household accounts and were treated as boarders in the bookkeeping. This indicates that they controlled their own economy with or without parents’ permission.
66. Erikson and Jonsson, *Ursprung och utbildning*, 153.
67. Weekly report number 2202. *The Household Budget Survey* (Stockholm City Archive, 1933).
68. Mean values for the four groups of income contributions were multiplied with the number of observations in each group (Table 6). This was divided by forty-eight observations, as those five working adolescents not contributing at all were also included.
69. See Franzén, *Den folkliga staden*, 214–32.
70. SOU 1938:57, *Slutbetänkande avgivet av befolkningskommissionen* (Stockholm, 1938), 46.
71. SOU 1936:14, *Betänkande angående dels planmässigt sparande och dels statliga bostättningslån* (Stockholm, 1936), 7–9.
72. SOU 1938:19, *Yttrande med socialaetiska synpunkter på befolkningsfrågan* (Stockholm, 1938), 33.
73. Franzén, *Den folkliga staden*, 232–46, 362–66. The hectic life of pleasure was debated in the Parliament already from the late 1920s. Franzén, *Den folkliga staden*, 53.
74. M. Franzén, *Från flygdröm till swingscen: Ungdom och modernitet på 1930-talet* (Lund, Sweden, 1998).
75. Franzén, *Från flygdröm till swingscen*, for example, 53.
76. SOU 1945:22, *Ungdomen och nöjeslivet* (Stockholm, 1945), 107.
77. SOU 1945:22, *Ungdomen och nöjeslivet*, 72–73.
78. Weekly report number 2239.
79. SOS, *Levnadskostnaderna*, 32.
80. SOS, *Lönestatistik årsbok*, 1934.
81. In 1913/1914, those aged fourteen contributed 165 SEK and those aged fifteen to twenty 340 SEK. The corresponding figures for 1933 were 96 SEK and 127 SEK.

Author Biographies

Dan Bäcklund is an associate professors at the University of Uppsala, Department of Economic History. Dan share the interest for family history, and have for some years done research regarding families’ economic strategies and the life cycle. Focus has been on savings and the impact of having children. With Kristina Lilja, Dan have published in *Financial History Review*, *The History of the Family*, and *European Review of Economic History*. At the moment Dan is writing on a book on living conditions of working-class families in Sweden during industrialization.

Kristina Lilja is an associate professors at the University of Uppsala, Department of Economic History. Kristina share the interest for family history, and have for some years done research regarding families' economic strategies and the life cycle. Focus has been on savings and the impact of having children. With Dan Bäcklund, Kristina have published in *Financial History Review*, *The History of the Family*, and *European Review of Economic History*. At the moment Kristina is writing on a book on living conditions of working-class families in Sweden during industrialization.