AGEING IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

Elderly men and women in urban Sweden
1830–1930
Ann-Kristin Högman

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Cover picture: "Gott-Maria." Maria Nilsson sold candy at the market in the town of Sundsvall around 1910–1920. When she was in her 80s she had an accident as she broke her leg but continued her business when she had recovered. The customers could leave their baskets in her care, while they were shopping. Museum of the town of Sundsvall.
Abstract

This study deals with the impact of industrialisation and urbanisation on the living conditions of aged men and women. By studying labour force participation, savings and pensions, the role of the family, and the extent of dependency of aged men and women from a gender and class perspective, continuities and changes between pre-industrial and industrial times are examined. The main focus is placed on the situation of elderly persons living in the town of Sundsvall between 1830 and 1930. This town became the commercial centre of one of the largest saw-mill districts in the world at the end of the nineteenth century. The residence patterns of old men and women in Sundsvall are also compared with those in two other Swedish industrialised urban areas; the capital Stockholm and the textile centre Norrköping.

According to modernisation theorists, industrialisation and urbanisation led to an increase in dependency in old age, due to weakening family ties and unemployment. This study shows the complexity of the issue. It is true that some sources reveal a declining proportion of men participating in the labour force at the very end of the period of observation, but this was primarily due to the introduction of the national pension system in 1914. On the other hand, other records show a stability or even an increasing proportion of elderly men and women in the labour market.

By contrast with previous studies of the residence patterns of aged persons, this dissertation shows a very high percentage of elderly women living alone in all three urban areas selected for study. However, this was not solely a sign of isolation, since the vast majority of those elderly living in households of their own had children residing in the vicinity. Furthermore, many old men and women shared households with their children, although this pattern was less common among the working class. The role of offspring appears to have been important both in pre-industrial and industrial times. The residence patterns of the urban elderly were probably influenced by traditional rural living arrangements, to the extent that old couples and their married children often lived close to each other but usually maintained households of their own. Old parents and their adult children might have preferred to live in separate households instead of crowding in with each other.

The unmarried elderly were probably most affected by the transformations taking place at the end of the nineteenth century. A considerable number of them migrated late in life, leaving all their relatives behind. Therefore, they became highly vulnerable. Unmarried men tended to be more exposed to the dangers of urban life. They probably experienced tougher working conditions, had weaker social networks, and could not manage on their own to the same extent as women. Therefore, a larger proportion of men than women ended up in the workhouse.

Keywords: class, demography, family, gender, labour force participation, living arrangements, modernisation, Norrköping, old age, poor relief, Stockholm, Sundsvall.
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— VI —
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I. Introduction

In 1838, at the age of 74, Anna Loo applied for permission to enter the poorhouse in Sundsvall because her son, Henrik, and daughter-in-law, Anna, had told her she was not wanted in their house any longer. The widow who apparently did not get on well with her son and daughter-in-law had been forced to go out begging to survive. Due to the fact that Henrik at the time both was a locksmith and a fisherman, the Parish Meeting was of the opinion that he was capable of supporting the old widow. The church councillors expressed their dismay over the son's reluctance to fulfil his obligations towards his mother by which they meant he was breaking...

"...an alliance, founded in the words of God, which never ought to be denied either by the sense of Nature or by the Christian mind. — — if all of us would argue this way, this would completely overburden poor relief, thereby exhausting its scanty resources."

The parish undertook to support the old widow provided that the son also contributed with a sum for the care of his mother. This decision caused a number of protests from Henrik and the case was on the agenda of the parish meeting several times. Anna Loo spent her last days in the poorhouse never to return to the household of her son and daughter-in-law. She died in 1842 at the age of 78.

The fate of Anna Loo tells us a good deal about the conditions of aged people in Swedish pre-industrial society. In her abandoned poverty-stricken condition Anna had no other means of supporting herself but to go out begging. Finally she was forced to turn to the community for assistance. The comments made by the councillors reveal that it was not the right of everyone to enter the poorhouse, particularly not of those who had children capable of supporting them. Furthermore, they expressed concern about the increasing costs of poor relief. At the time when Anna applied for permission to enter the poorhouse there was a dramatic increase in the number of paupers in the country. This proletarisation resulted in a lively debate about the so called "social question" and in a major investigation of the conditions of the poor.

Children's assistance was the primary source of support for aged people. Their responsibility was deeply rooted in the past. Already in medieval legislation, it was stressed that the main responsibility for caring for the elderly lay with the family. The source of this obligation can be found in the fourth of the Ten Commandments, "Honor thy father and thy mother...". Since Anna had a son who obviously was
capable of supporting his old mother, the councillors found it natural that he should fulfil his obligations towards her.

The responsibility of children for the care of their old parents was part of Swedish law until 1956. Today, very few aged persons live with their adult children. In 1997 approximately two percent of Swedish aged men and women cohabited with a child. However, even if the elderly today mostly live alone or together with their spouse in an empty nest household, they have frequent contacts with children, friends, and neighbours. Most of the elderly have children living in the same region. This in combination with improved communications facilitate good inter-generational relations. Furthermore, the kin network today is much more extended than hundred years ago. Higher life expectancy, higher marriage rates, and declining infant mortality are the primary factors behind this change.

Most retired people nowadays are healthy and capable of living independent lives due to comparatively generous pensions and good housing. Only a few percent of people in the age group 65–79 can be found in institutions of one sort or another. The need for more intensive service and supervision is naturally higher among the very old. The majority of those living in various kinds of communal living arrangements are women, mostly working-class, unmarried and childless.

The situation of aged people is one of the most important political issues of today. An ageing population in conjunction with increased spending on public pensions and health care has led to a search for cost-saving measures and alternative forms of care. One of the trends is to shift responsibilities from public support back to families.

In some of the more developed countries the proportion of people 60 years and over is almost one in five and during the first half of the next century at least one quarter will be elderly. Furthermore, the increase in the proportion of the very old (90+) will be even larger. This is the fastest growing age group and these people are most often in need of support and care. Since the proportion of elderly people is rising faster in the developing countries than in the developed, they will have less time to adapt to the consequences of an ageing population. These changes will have important implications for the national development of these countries and for the welfare of aged men and women.

In most countries the importance of children’s assistance to their aged parents is still crucial. In spite of local variations, living in extended family households is a widespread living arrangement, even in urban areas. However, there are important changes taking place. In Japan the trend is slowly moving away from co-residence of the old with their children. Kiyomi Morioka found recently that the proportion of old people cohabiting with their children has decreased steadily during the recent decades. His explanation for this change is the disintegration of the traditional stem
family system due to the emergence of a conjugal family ideology in conjunction with rapid economic growth.\textsuperscript{9}

The United Nations Programme of Ageing reports that traditional support systems for aged people are today being challenged. Due to an ageing population in combination with falling birth rates the ratio of old persons to available caregivers is declining. Furthermore, several developing countries are experiencing industrialisation and urbanisation, which undermine traditional family support patterns. In order to attract attention to the situation of ageing populations the General Assembly of the United Nations has even decided that 1999 should be the International Year of Older Persons.\textsuperscript{10}

In Sweden as well as in many other European countries in the late nineteenth century there was an increasing concern for the impact of industrialisation and urbanisation on the living conditions of aged people. Politicians started to criticise laissez-faire policies and thought that time had come when the Government should increase its responsibility for elderly men and women. By this they meant that one of the consequences of industrialisation was a pauperisation of the older part of the population. Family ties were loosening and the elderly lost their place in the labour market. For the first time old age as such came to be defined in political discourse as a social problem.

This was of course a time of major changes. Industrialisation in Sweden took off during the last decades of the nineteenth century and an increasing proportion of production was moved from households to factories. As a consequence of urbanisation industrially produced goods to an increasing extent started to replace home made. Geographical mobility increased and people migrated longer distances to take employment in the new industrial areas. Further, industrialisation, urbanisation, and bureaucratisation caused an expansion of the public sector. Schools, public health, telegraph stations, and postal services gave women access to the labour market.

The importance of urban areas increased, not the least in a country like Sweden. These growing centres also experienced rapid social change. Political power was transferred from the old burghers to groups such as manufacturers, bankers, and higher civil servants. The towns experienced an increasing segregation and in the footsteps of industrialisation came social problems such as housing shortage, crowded dwellings and poor sanitary conditions.

Furthermore, demographic structures were changing. The proportion of old people was higher than before, due to large early nineteenth century birth cohorts, declining contemporary birth rates, increasing emigration, and rising life expectancy. Sweden, together with France, had at the turn of the nineteenth century the highest proportions of elderly.
My dissertation will investigate the impact of these transformations on the living conditions of elderly men and women. The focus will be on people ageing in some Swedish industrial urban areas, primarily the town of Sundsvall which at the end of nineteenth century was the commercial centre of the largest saw mill district in Europe.

**Old age and modernisation: a research survey**

**The concept of modernisation**

For a considerable time scholars have tried to identify how industrialisation or, in a broader sense, modernisation, affected older people. Although modernisation theory has been criticised from various angles, it has had a tendency to survive in the discussion due to an absence of alternative grand theories. Below I will try to throw some light on modernisation theory, which is not an easy task because of its imprecise and broad definitions. Modernisation comprises a set of changes such as industrialisation, urbanisation, secularisation, mass education, and social mobility. Because of this high level of generalisation the concept is hard to handle. Since my study of the living conditions of the elderly concentrates on continuity and change in participation in the labour market, the role of the family, and the responsibility of the collectivity, the overview of previous research is divided into these three fields.11

To make modernisation theory more understandable I refer to those parts of the theory that concerns each area of research and present some recent analyses dealing with these areas. After that I will present the purpose of my study and the questions I will be trying to answer.

An embryonic version of modernisation theory was to be found already in 1776, when Adam Smith discussed the veneration of the aged in his magnum opus *Wealth of Nations*. He meant that old people in "primitive" societies enjoyed greater respect than those in the more "civilised" ones.

"An old man, provided his age is not so far advanced as to give suspicion of dotage is everywhere more respected than a young man of equal rank, fortune, and abilities. Among nations of hunters, such as the native tribes of North America, age is the sole foundation of rank and precedence.— In the most opulent and civilised nations, age regulates rank among those who are in every respect equal, and among whom, therefore there is nothing else to regulate it."12
Modernisation theorists came to rely upon a sociological model, which stated that old people during the period of industrialisation turned from being an honoured group with authority to one without status. A great deal of this theory has its origin in the structural-functionalist approach, which focuses on the structure of society and sees social systems as interacting units. According to the structural-functionalists, the motor of social change is structural differentiation. The concept of differentiation was derived from Durkheim who looked upon the division of labour as the most important principle of social organisation. The structural-functionalists extended the concept of differentiation from a division of labour to structural differentiation that applied to all social institutions like the family, systems of belief, politic and legal systems.\(^{13}\)

Structuralist-functionalist theory has been criticised for being ahistorical and more or less idealising the past. It describes social change as a linear process, with a development from an undifferentiated to a highly specialised social structure. By comparing the situation of the elderly in contemporary societies at different stages of development, some modernisation theorists thought that they could even apply this knowledge to the past since the "less developed" countries could be equated with preindustrial Western societies.\(^{14}\)

A great deal of the early debate in the 1970s about the situation of the elderly concerned their status and concentrated on attitudinal change. These researchers assumed that the status of the elderly had deteriorated in the modern world. For instance, David Hackett Fischer used historical sources to study the connection between status of the elderly and modernisation. He found a loss of prestige but argued this was not related to industrialisation. According to Fischer, this decline of status had occurred earlier and Fischer explains the change by the influence of ideals such as liberty and equality originating from the French Revolution. The authority of the elderly was destroyed because the hierarchic system in society in general was being questioned.\(^{15}\) Like Fischer, the American historian Andrew Achenbaum found that aged persons were venerated in the past and that their status declined in modern society. However, Achenbaum came to the conclusion that this shift occurred later, after the Civil War. Unlike Fischer he does not have one single explanation for the decline in their status. He explains the changes as a result of a combination of structural and cultural processes.\(^{16}\)

This historical approach also came to be criticised for putting the past in a favourable light. The more scholars have studied socio-economic and demographic data, the less the emphasis on the negative effects of modernisation.\(^{17}\)
Senior workers

Modernisation theorists believed that industrialisation and urbanisation had undermined the economic basis of the extended family of pre-industrial times. In pre-industrial society old people could contribute to domestic production and their experience gave them prestige. Furthermore, they usually remained active until their death. The arrival of the wage economy meant a decline in the status of the elderly. The shift from producing goods at home to the factory meant that old people could no longer decide how long they could continue working. New technology in conjunction with industrialisation made old skills outmoded and elderly found it hard to obtain new employment. Their skills became almost useless and this automatically led to a loss of status.

The question of the impact of modernisation on work in the autumn of life is complicated because many factors were affecting old people's opportunities on the labour market. Like modernisation theorists the American sociologist Jill Quadagno discussed the negative effects of new technology on living conditions of old workers. Wages decreased as the workers grew older until they lost their job when they could not keep pace with the machines. Consequently, unskilled workers had the highest rates of retirement. Nevertheless, Quadagno considered that this issue was by no means straightforward. For instance, some elderly women might have benefited from technological changes such as the invention of the sewing machine. Articles of clothing were subcontracted out to female home-workers, who provided a cheap source of labour. The companies paid low wages and escaped the costs of rent, fuel and light which they would have had to meet if they had preferred factory production.18

The American historian Brian Gratton found stable labour participation rates among old American workers during the industrial era. Further, he saw an increase in real income over time. Although average incomes declined after the age of 50, he claimed that most older workers who could still practice their skills were well off. However, like Quadagno he noticed an increasing vulnerability among elderly workers. New technology tended to make old skills outmoded and unemployed elderly found it difficult to obtain new employment. In his study of elderly Bostonians during the period 1890 to 1950 he found that there were very few occupations open to women. However, Gratton noticed an increase in the labour force participation rates of elderly women as in the case of all women. When elderly women returned to the labour force their experiences as wives and mothers usually drew them to domestic activities such as service, sewing, and nursing.19

Modernisation theorists did not as a rule discuss changes influencing the female labour force participation. The proportion of women active on the labour market was low. They were often employed in casual part-time labour and were therefore not
included in the official statistics. Further, the idea of the husband as a breadwinner
did affect attitudes towards women’s work. It was considered that a man should earn
a family wage so his wife and daughters were not to be forced to work. A woman’s
place was in the home, creating a safe haven for herself, her husband and children.
These ideas not only influenced the middle and upper classes but also the attitudes
of working class men and women, although in practice many working class men did
not earn enough to support their families, and their wives and children were forced
to contribute to the family economy. However, these ideas had a powerful influence
on the attitudes to female work and women’s wages were kept low because their work
was looked upon as only of supplementary character.²⁰

Tamara K. Hareven and Howard P. Chudakoff have studied elderly women with a
recorded occupation in eight communities in Essex County, USA, in 1860 and 1880.
They found that very few women returned to the labour force after childbearing,
since approximately 90 percent of the elderly women in all communities but one did
not have a registered occupation of their own. The exception was the city of Law­
rence where one third of the aged women held unskilled jobs, mostly domestic
occupations. Hareven and Chudakoff also discussed the importance of female la­
bour in the informal sector of the economy such as the taking in of boarders.²¹

Like Hareven and Chudakoff, Leonore Davidoff also stressed the importance of
lodging in her book “Worlds Between”. She reckons this was an important but often
ignored source of income for widows and other women left without support. For
instance, in her study of the town of Colchester in 1851 Davidoff found that a high
percentage of those taking in boarders were elderly women.²²

Besides the taking in of boarders, elderly women’s work mostly consisted of
housework. When an old woman entered the labour market, her experience as a wife
had trained her in housework. Household tasks such as cleaning, child-caring, doing
laundry, the taking in of needlework, having cafés and inns were important sources
of income for elderly women.²³

Another important group of women working in the domestic sphere were the ser­
vants. This occupation was usually practised in the earlier part of their life cycle.
The normal pattern was for a young woman to serve as a maid some years before
marriage. However, many of them who never married remained in service for several
years, while a small proportion continued to live with their employers even when
very old, and were cared for and might even have received a small pension from
their employer. Many of the early nineteenth-century Swedish female servants left
service when they were between 45 and 55 years, probably because they were con­
sidered too old and worn out to be productive servants. The few who stayed in their
former households had a particular skill such as housekeeper or cook.²¹ According
to Jill Quadagno, loneliness and poverty was the destiny of many former servants. Few would employ servants who were over the age of 50 and therefore many of the inmates in the workhouses were former domestic servants.\textsuperscript{25}

Regarding elderly women active in the industry, the Swedish historian Christina Carlsson Wetterberg has examined the situation of elderly female workers in the wool industry in the Southern Swedish city of Malmö. Women provided the majority of the workers in the factory between 1870 and 1918 but none of the female workers were over the age of 60 and only between two and seven percent were between 50 and 59. She explains this low proportion of elderly female employees by the fact that women retired earlier than men. A vast majority of the female workers retired before the age of 50, whereas only two percent of the male workers left work before they had reached their fiftieth birthday. According to Carlsson Wetterberg this was due to gender differences in the retirement regulations. Both men and women had the right to retire after twenty years in service, but male workers could not receive a pension before the age of 55.

In addition, she discusses the motive for the absence of a minimum retirement age for women and suggests some possible explanations. She advances the hypothesis that the policy of the company may have been influenced by the view that women aged earlier than men. Further, the difficulty in finding and retaining workers during this period might have led to a policy of promising early pensions to women. Finally, according to Carlsson Wetterberg, the women seemed to have had a higher exposure of illness and accidents compared with men working in this factory.

Women's pensions were not sufficiently generous to live on. Carlsson Wetterberg found that elderly women often had various sources of income, such as pension in combination with wages, support from poor relief or relatives. Only a small minority of older employed women were factory workers. The majority were cleaning women, servants, and laundresses.\textsuperscript{26}

The Swedish economic historian Anita Göransson studied changes in class and gender systems in connection with new modes of production and labour processes. These changes did not seem to have a great impact on elderly workers since only a few percent of the elderly male and female workers both in the non-mechanised clothing industry in 1845 and in the mechanised wool industry in 1877 were over the age of 60.\textsuperscript{27}

The Swedish ethnologist Anders Björklund examined the conditions of female sawmill workers. He observed that in 1878 all 16 saw mills in the Sundsvall region employed female workers but the proportion of women employed in the timber industry decreased at the end of the century. Some women were employed in the loading of ships and assisting at sawmills and timber yards while others were occupied with
the washing of the clothes of the male workers, and selling coffee, soup and sandwiches at the workplaces. Even so, he found that the majority of the women active in the labour force being young and unmarried and that hardly anyone was over the age of 60.29

Thus factory work was not the predominant wage-earning activity of elderly women. Generally, young women were those most likely to be employed in industrial work. When women married most of them withdrew from the labour force and only returned due to family or economic crises if poverty unexpectedly drew them back.

A somewhat larger proportion of elderly women were occupied as traders and the proportion of female shopkeepers grew over time. Because the wives of shopkeepers and artisans were excluded from the official statistics, the number of working women was much higher in reality since the wives often had important functions in the business of their husbands.

Elsa Lunander's dissertation discusses the burghers' adjustments to new conditions in nineteenth century Örebro. She found a low proportion of female shopkeepers and artisans in this particular town, although the number of female shopkeepers increased during the second half of the century. However, there was one area were the women did provide the majority of the workforce: the serving of food and drink on the premises. Especially for widows, this was a way to earn a living and to avoid becoming dependent on poor relief.29

Tom Ericsson has examined female entrepreneurs in three towns in the northern part of Sweden during the second half of the nineteenth century. He found that most of the female entrepreneurs had an urban middle or upper class background. The majority of these women were unmarried. The mean age of the female entrepreneurs was relatively high with one quarter being over the age of 50.30

We can affirm conclusively that there is still a need for research on the work of old people. Not many studies have concentrated on the labour force participation rates of the elderly, particularly not those of aged women. Unfortunately, this absence can partly be explained by the fact that a large proportion of the elderly were employed in the informal sector of the economy and therefore do not appear in the official statistics.

The elderly and the family

The idea of the loosening of the bonds between generations due to industrialisation is to a great extent derived from Frédéric Le Play, who was one of the first modern empirical social scientists. Specifically, he argued that industrialisation and commercialisation during the nineteenth century destroyed the stem family, which at this time was a common family type in some European communities. This household
type consisted of parents, the family of one married son, who was the heir, and the unmarried siblings of the heir and, in pre-industrial society, formed the unit of production because this was the most effective unit of economic organisation. All members within the household, including the elderly, contributed to the family economy. The weakening of family ties followed from the removal of the economic base of the family property as production was moved from the household to the factory. Children left home at an earlier age and the elderly had to manage on their own. The households changed from large extended to small nuclear units. Furthermore, the laws were changed which enforced the division of property and made the family farm and large households uneconomic. According to Le Play, this encouraged the individual to pursue their own interest at the expense of the collective good.

Le Play thought the best way to organise industrial society was by establishing family firms. The entrepreneurs should encourage the workers to become house-owners. The primary function of the employer was to provide the workers with moral leadership and help them to obtain private property since this would prevent the destabilisation of the family.

The structural-functionalist theories, which were influential during the 1950s-1960s, tried to explain this development by a process of structural differentiation. Functions were removed from the family to institutions such as the state, schools, and factories and as the family was one element of this differentiation it became nuclear in its structure. Only two functions remained for the family; the socialisation of children into society, and securing the members' emotional stability by making home to a refuge from the chaotic world outside.

According to Talcott Parsons, there was a "structural fit" between the nuclear family and society. This family type was functionally adapted to the demands of modern society, such as high rates of geographical and social mobility. Thus, it became necessary to limit kinship obligations only to the nuclear family and since the family was no longer a unit of production the elderly lost their function and were economically and socially marginalised.

Further, Parsons argued that the nuclear family was best suited for the urban middle class, since this class was most ready to accommodate to modern society's demand for mobility. However, family ties remained strong within some socio-economic milieus. The first of these areas was agriculture, where the household economy was not separated from production. Transitions of property from the older generation to the younger was one of the reasons for the low percentage of nuclear families within this social group. This was also the case in some of the elite groups, where property was an important link between generations. Finally Talcott Parsons
mentions some lower class groups, which were characterised by unstable marriage and a mother-centred family structure.\textsuperscript{34}

Peter Laslett was one of the first to question modernisation theory as applied to the family. By studying English census-like listings he showed that the nuclear family was not a result of industrialisation because this family structure had predominated in England from the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{35} Other scholars who studied household structure in Western Europe came to the same conclusions.\textsuperscript{36} However, just as modernisation theory had been criticised by Laslett and others for the creation of stereotypes, Laslett’s notion of the nuclear family as the dominant family structure in Europe came to be challenged in turn as a new myth.

Social and regional differences in the household structure could be found within countries. For instance, in their study of pre-industrial Hungary Rudolf Andorka and Tamás Faragó found complex households in regions with a high proportion of serf-peasants and smaller households in areas with a high percentage of cotters. Furthermore, David I. Kertzer found great diversities in Italian household forms.\textsuperscript{37}

Andrejs Plakans has discussed the problems of drawing general conclusions from a small number of local communities. He emphasised how in research on Eastern Europe a few local studies have been treated as representative for entire regions. He declared:

"It is clear from this survey of readily available evidence that future research on this subject must be sensitive to the peculiarities of the eastern European area as a whole, as well as variations of custom within it. We are, after all, dealing with a part of Europe that, in many important respects in the period in question, differed from western European societies, but also within itself, contained a melange of regional and local cultures – ranging from the Finnish in the north to the Serbian in the south, and including peoples of widely differing states of socio-economic development.\textsuperscript{38}

Plakans made a very important point when he stressed the importance of distinguishing regional from local differences. In my opinion it is of greatest significance to make comparisons both within and between regions to be able to separate general patterns from the specific.

Other scholars advanced a different critique, noting an increasing proportion of extended families in connection with industrialisation. For instance, in his study of the living arrangements of the working classes in the mid-nineteenth century textile industrial town of Preston, Michael Anderson found a higher proportion of extended family households than in pre-industrial England. His explanation is based on the
exchange theory, which assumes that people adopt specific behavioural patterns if these are beneficial to all parties. Anderson explains the increase in the rates of extended family households by the advantages the young married couples and their elderly parents could obtain from each other in an urban environment. Few of the married couples, especially those on low wages, lived on their own because of economic difficulties, housing shortage, or problems with child care. In return the elderly could receive support when they became ill and infirm.39

In his study of family structure in England and USA, Steven Ruggles noticed an increase in the percentage of extended family households during the nineteenth century, for which he considered demographic change largely responsible in that compared with pre-industrial times, a higher number of children survived and the life expectancy of the elderly increased. Unlike Michael Anderson he found the highest percentage of extended family households within the bourgeoisie and not among the working classes. He argued that the former could afford to have their elderly living in their house, but economic motives were only part of the explanation. Cultural factors like Victorian norms and values were also important for the bourgeoisie family. According to Ruggles, the Victorian tribute to the family spread beyond the nuclear family to include brothers, sisters and elderly parents.40

However, when Ruggles divided the extended family households into those with vertical and horizontal extensions, he produced results, which were inconsistent with his arguments that the extended family was more frequent among the bourgeoisie. According to his classification, vertically extended households must contain parents, parents-in-law, children, children-in-law, or grandchildren. All other extended family households are defined as horizontal. The former type of extension was more common among the working class, whereas the latter was more frequent among the bourgeoisie. Ruggles explains the higher rates of vertical extended families by the lower mean marriage age of the working class, which encouraged this type of living arrangement. Further, he found that it was more common for working class children to remain in the parental household, whereas it was more frequent for an old parent from the bourgeoisie to move into the household of a married child.41

Ruggles does not advance any other explanation for the high frequency of vertically extended families among the working class apart from the earlier age at marriage, which only shows that it was more likely that working class children could live in an extended family household. He does not discuss other possible explanations for this phenomenon. I think that the "critical life situations" mentioned by Anderson might indeed contribute to the high rates of vertical extended family households in nineteenth-century Lancashire towns. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that a high percentage of children remained or moved in with parents or parents-in-law.
Housing shortage or economic hardship might have led to a situation where married children were either forced to or preferred to share households with their old parents.

Angelique Janssens also found in her study of family structure in the Dutch textile industry town Tilburg, a rise in the proportion of extended family households during industrialisation. A higher life expectancy of the elderly in combination with children leaving the parental home earlier in life meant that fewer of the elderly co-resided with unmarried children. Due to these factors an increasing proportion of old people moved into the households of married children. Furthermore, a shortage in the housing market meant that younger married couples stayed in the households of their parents for a short period. Unlike Anderson, Janssens did not find the highest proportions of extended family households among the working classes. Neither did the elite prefer this type of living arrangement although she argued they felt a greater responsibility for other relatives compared with other social groups. According to Angelique Janssens, it was the middle-class groups who had the highest rates of extended family households.

George Alter has discussed the impact of the North Western European marriage pattern on the family, and from the perspective of the older part of the population. It was characterised by high rates of unmarried people and high average ages at first marriage. He considered this pattern to be a solution as well as a problem for the elderly. The solution was that a large proportion of the elderly had unmarried children who could take care of their old parents. The married children also played an important role in the care of their aged parents but if the elderly could choose between moving into the household of a married child or being supported by an unmarried child in the own household, parents chose the latter alternative. The problem was that those who never married did not have any children who could support them.

Several scholars who have studied social differences in household size in rural areas have found smaller households among landless people than among landowning farmers. One of these authors, the Swedish ethnologist Orvar Löfgren, has compared the household strategies of the landowning peasants and the increasing proportion of landless people during the nineteenth century. Landless people were more often to be found in a household organisation which Löfgren calls *centrifuga l*. The members of these households undertook a range of tasks that all contributed to the household economy. They worked as day labourers, went out fishing, tended their gardens, and took in washing. Their children left home early to serve as farmhands and maids in order to support themselves and to contribute to the family economy. Although many of the family members left the parental household either permanently or temporarily the household still functioned as an economic unit, where resources were pooled.
On the contrary, for landowning peasants the farm was the centre to which additional labour was recruited. Some of the children stayed on the farm, waiting for the parents to retire and this created different types of social bonds between the generations and led to larger households. Orvar Löfgren calls this type of household organisation centripetal.\textsuperscript{44}

The Swedish ethnologist Gunilla Kjellman found a relatively high rate of three-generational family households among occupational groups owning a family business. Farmers, crofters, and fishermen had high rates of co-residence between generations. Property and tools were inherited and the common work led to a sharing of households. Kjellman found a connection between the transition of property and inter-generational co-residence but also stressed the importance of religion and tradition for the household pattern.\textsuperscript{45} However, in her study of the town of Lund 1930 she did not find marked differences in residence patterns between social groups. Furthermore, very few of these urban citizens lived in three-generational households.\textsuperscript{46}

It is of greatest concern to bear in mind that many of those who inmigrated to the expanding urban areas brought with them rural residence patterns and visions of how they wanted to arrange their new way of life in the town. Although the urban environment created new types of living arrangements, traditional patterns probably continued to influence the residential preferences of the newcomers to urban areas.

\textit{The importance of the collectivity}

According to modernisation theorists the increase of unemployed elderly in combination with the weakening of family ties turned old men and women into a dependant group. In the 1890s the British author Charles Booth studied poverty among aged people in England and Wales. He came to the conclusion that aged men living in urban areas were thrown out of work earlier and that support from children was more effective in the countryside. This led to a higher degree of dependence in urban areas. The results of his studies attracted attention from scholars and his view of the matter influenced the debate about the level and form of state support for the needy during the first decades of the twentieth-century. Comparable studies of the welfare of old people were carried out in USA and several social scientists were of the opinion that industrialisation turned old people into an impoverished group in society.\textsuperscript{47}

The political ideologist Adolf Hedin expressed in his famous proposal of 1884 his desire to see an increased responsibility of the State for the social security of the
The Swedish historian Svenbjörn Kilander has analysed the ideological change associated with the Government's increasing intervention in social policy during the early years of the twentieth century. The increasing influence of the state was shown by the growing number of areas in which it was involved. Regarding the so called "social question", the purpose of social policy was to strengthen the poorer section of the population by creating a feeling of togetherness among all citizens, thereby diminishing the tensions in society. Industrialisation involved an increasing social distance between employer and employee. Changes in the occupational structure and the disappearance of the patriarchal system in combination with the increasing migration from rural to urban areas forced the Government to take on more responsibility for social welfare.

Recent research has questioned the standpoint stating the impoverishment of aged people during the period of industrialisation. The American historians Carole Haber and Brian Gratton found an improvement in the living conditions of aged people and a small number of elderly recipients of poor relief during the industrial era. The contribution of the children to the family economy grew in importance and greater possibilities for the working class to accumulate savings gave the elderly a higher standard of living. However, Haber and Gratton showed that some groups of elderly continued to be highly vulnerable. A large proportion of the widows were dependent on public relief or charity. They found it difficult to obtain employment and many of them had exhausted their savings. Furthermore, a higher proportion of some ethnic groups were impoverished.

Elles Bulder has studied the income pooling strategies of Dutch elderly at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. One of the sources of income was assistance from the collectivity. Like Haber and Gratton she found that poor relief only played a marginal role in their sources of income. Widows admittedly tended to receive more assistance than other groups but this was often only a complementary source of income. Contributions from relatives and income from employment was often more important.

Jill Quadagno, who studied living conditions of aged men and women in early industrial Britain, has questioned the argument that weakening of family ties led to an increasing share of elderly becoming dependent on public relief. Dependence was not unique for industrial times since a considerable proportion of the elderly in Britain had, at least from the seventeenth-century, turned to the state for financial support. Furthermore, Quadagno argues that the increasing number of elderly women found in British workhouses in the 1870s was not occasioned by negligent children but by the policy of the Local Government Board. It aimed at reducing out-door relief by forcing children to support their old parents. Since many children were
incapable of assisting their old relatives, an increasing number of aged people ended up in workhouses.\textsuperscript{52}

\textbf{Perspectives}

Previous research has shown the complexity of studying the living conditions of the elderly. Many scholars have pointed out the danger of relying on general models such as modernisation theory to account for social change, because it gives simplistic explanations. Therefore it is of greatest concern to study the impact of socio-economic, ideological and demographic change at national, local, and individual levels. The situation of people living in communities with different socio-economic and demographic structures needs to be compared in order to be able to distinguish general patterns from the specific.

Moreover, if we divide men and women by marital status and social groups, we will obtain a more balanced picture of the living conditions of aged people. Studies of the situation of aged people today show that high rates of unmarried or childless women, usually from the working class, can be found in old age or nursing homes. Further, the oldest elderly, especially women, more often have low pensions and almost no assets.\textsuperscript{53} This shows the importance for the living conditions of the elderly of a combination of gender, class, marital status, and age.

Thus it is of greatest concern to treat elderly men and women separately. The idea of the husband as the breadwinner influenced the position of women in the labour market. A small proportion of the industrial workers were elderly women and the majority of old women at work were to be found in the domestic sector. Furthermore, women’s wages were kept low because their work was looked upon as being of supplementary character. Moreover, demographic factors such as women’s higher life expectancy and consequently higher rates of widowhood meant that the living arrangements of men and women during the last years of life differed considerably. These factors, in combination with the difficulty of earning their living made elderly women more dependant.

In an anthology treating the subject of widowhood the sociologist Helena Znaniecka Lopata divided support systems into four areas: economic, service, social, and emotional. The system of economic support includes paid work, pensions, inheritance, contributions from charity organisations, family, or others. The area of service involves care of children and old parents, transportation, legal assistance, etc. The social support system comprises visits, holidays, activities organised by religious groups or other associations. The last system of support is the emotional. This includes personal contacts, specifically comforting, protecting, and creating a positive self-image by making others feeling important, respected, useful, and accepted.\textsuperscript{54} It is of
course difficult to separate these systems, especially in historical sources. However, we can attempt to compare the availability of various systems of support for men and women, given the expected differences in the type of support likely to be available.

Last but not least is the importance of social class. Even if class differences today are less marked than hundred years ago, working class elderly still have the lowest pensions. Furthermore, of those found in institutions of one sort or another a large number are working class women. The class variable is even more important in studies of men and women who were ageing before the founding of the welfare state. Variations in earning opportunities and the availability of different systems of support need to be measured.

Furthermore, having a class-perspective in the study of the role of the family is important because of the conflicting interpretations as to which class was most likely to form the three-generational households. According to Steven Ruggles and Angelique Janssens, elderly from the bourgeoisie were more likely than others to live in large households, partly because their children could afford to support their aged parents, and partly due to their cultural values which stressed the importance of family ties. Michael Anderson, on the contrary, found a higher proportion of extended families among the working class. Thus the connection between social class and residence patterns needs further scrutiny.

**Aims and questions**

The aim of this dissertation is to explore the issue of ageing and socio-economic, demographic and ideological change, by examining some of those aspects identified by modernisation theorists as theoretically relevant: labour force participation, the role of the family, and old age dependency. From a gender and class perspective I will compare the situation of pre-industrial elderly with people ageing during different phases of industrialisation.

The first area of interest, *Senior workers*, examines the situation of elderly men and women active in the labour force during pre-industrial and industrial times. By studying labour force participation rates, social structure, and the extent of pensions and savings we will obtain an idea of the significance of employment for the economic well-being of elderly men and women. The first question to be answered is whether industrialisation and urbanisation affected the labour force participation rates of aged men and women. Furthermore, we need to know in what ways the socio-economic structure of elderly men and women was influenced by the fact that an increasing share of production was moved from the household to the factory. Finally the importance of pensions and savings for elderly men and women needs to be discussed.
How did the transformation of society affect the feasibility of retirement and savings?

The second topic The aged and the family deals with the importance of children for the support of old parents. With industrialisation, there was an increase in long-distance migration because people migrated to get employment in the new industrial areas. Did this in combination with changes in the modes of production lead to a decreasing proportion of aged people residing in the same neighbourhood as their children, to whom they could turn for support in case of need? Another important issue is to what extent children and their old parents co-resided and whether their residence patterns changed over time. Further, the situation of the childless elderly is of particular interest. The proportion of unmarried people grew during the nineteenth century, and the majority of this group was childless. The living arrangements of these unmarried and other childless people require scrutiny.

The last issue The importance of the collectivity considers old age dependency. By studying elderly paupers in the context of Poor Law policy and forms of relief at national as well as at local level we will be able to determine whether old age dependency increased over time, whether there were any changes in the proportion of paupers within different groups of elderly, and whether the forms of relief changed.

The focus of the study is on people ageing in some industrialising urban areas. Little historical research has been concentrating on the situation of elderly in towns and cities. Therefore, it is of greatest importance to extend our knowledge on this matter. This enables us to make comparisons between different regions in order to distinguish general patterns from the specific.

Specifically, I will be studying the living conditions of aged people in Sundsvall during the period 1830–1930. During late nineteenth century the town became the commercial centre of one of the greatest saw mill districts in the world. The structure of households in Sundsvall will be compared with that in two other Swedish urban areas. Since a great deal of international research has focused on the situation in textile industry towns, this study will examine the household patterns of the elderly in the textile town Norrköping. The third place of interest is the capital, Stockholm, which was the only Swedish urban area at this time equivalent in size to European metropoli. These local findings will be set in both a national and international context.
Map 1. Investigation areas.

Source: DDB, Umeå.
Methodology and sources

I will in this section present an overview of the sources and methods used in this dissertation, but a more thorough discussion on these issues will be included in later chapters. I intend to combine cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis. The former approach enables me to analyse larger populations without too much work. This makes it possible to compare living conditions of the elderly at different points in time and in different areas. Four particular years were selected for the cross-sectional analysis: the pre-industrial year 1845, and different phases of industrialisation 1880, 1910, and 1930. This approach is also used in the comparative study of the households of the elderly in Norrköping in 1870 and Stockholm in 1880.

Scholars have stressed the importance of using a longitudinal approach when studying household and family patterns. However, since many of them have been forced to use cross-sectional material such as census listings, a static view of household composition dominates a great deal of research on the elderly. Changes in household structure and in the destiny of the individuals over the life course cannot be traced by using this method.

The methodology for the analysis of longitudinal data is still poorly developed. However, George Alter has used a life course approach in his study of the women in Verviers. This approach focuses on the individual and not on the family. Family-cycle studies concentrate on stages in the history of married couples. According to Alter, this method becomes complicated when people move between households. Further, this approach ignores unmarried people, the widowed and divorced. The life course approach on the contrary...

..."views the family 'from the inside out' rather than 'from the top down' and considers the diversity of roles within families."^{56}

This approach makes it possible to study changes in the life of the individual but also to relate these transitions to family characteristics. The Swedish material lends itself to a dynamic approach due to the longitudinal information on households provided by the catechetical examination registers. It was the duty of the parson to record each year details of his parishioners' church attendance and knowledge of the scriptures. These registers in urban areas were arranged according to district and building. The name of the head of the household was at the top of the list, followed by those of his wife and children. Relatives and servants were also included.

The parish registers of Sundsvall have been computerised by the Demographic Database in Umeå, Sweden for the years 1803–1894. The combination of informa-
tion from catechetical examination registers, migration lists, and lists of deaths makes it possible to get a general picture of the destiny of aged men and women during the last decades of their life. In the longitudinal approach information from the parish registers has been combined with information from the poll tax registers from 1800–1910. Every fifth year of these registers have been computerised until 1890 and thereafter every tenth year. The computerisation of registers of the town of Sundsvall has facilitated my research, since following individuals over time would otherwise be prohibitively time consuming.

The longitudinal study focuses on events such as changes in household structure and in loss of household headship. These changes will be related to widowhood, the departure of children from the parental household, and other important factors that could influence the living conditions of the elderly. To be able to place the life course of a given individual in a specific historical context, I selected two birth cohorts, each consisting of 300 old persons. The elderly in the first cohort were born between 1755 and 1770, and they grew old before the industrialisation of Sundsvall. This cohort consists of 170 women and 130 men. The people in the second cohort entered old age during the period of industrial expansion and were born between 1810 and 1819. They were part of the big birth cohorts of the first part of the nineteenth century. 173 women and 127 men belong to Cohort Two. These cohorts will be described more thoroughly in the chapter called "The aged and the family".

The quality of the data

The definition of a household in the poll tax registers is, in my opinion, more reliable than that of the catechetical examination registers. The head of the household and all household members were registered on the same line. From 1845 on, there is information about the relationship of each household members to the head of the household, together with their names and dates of birth. Another advantage of these registers is that they make it possible to locate the elderly geographically, which has enabled me to estimate the residential proximity of children and their old parents.

In most cases people registered on the same page in the catechetical examination registers were indeed the members of the same household, but sometimes there are exceptions. At the end of the nineteenth century, there was heavy immigration into Sundsvall. This meant that new immigrants were registered on the same page, although they did not live together. The information in the earlier registers is more reliable, with the exception of some married children who were registered as residing with their parents although they, according to the poll tax registers, lived next door. In order to obtain the most accurate information, the poll tax registers and the
catechetical lists have therefore been compared with each other. However, still in some cases it has been difficult to decide whether the elderly lived alone or with non-relatives.

Information on occupation in the poll tax registers was probably more likely to reflect the current position than the occupation as recorded in the parish registers. Occupational information was more reliable in the poll tax registers as the purpose was to register those who had an income. Further, better information on the owners of house property can be found in these registers.

The disadvantage of the poll tax registers is that they contained a smaller proportion of elderly citizens than the catechetical examination registers. One possible explanation for this might be that some of these elderly persons might have been boarders, and registered in the catechetical examination registers but not recorded at all in the poll tax registers.

The statistician Gösta Ahlberg who has studied the demographic structure of Stockholm between 1850 and 1950 also found fewer people registered in the poll tax registers compared with the census at the end of the nineteenth century. His explanation to these differences was that certain individuals wished to evade taxation.\(^{57}\) Like Ahlberg Gösta Lext found a lower percentage of people recorded in the poll tax registers than in the parish registers. According to Lext people like seasonal labourers, homeless persons, and sailors were excluded from the poll tax registers.\(^{58}\) Furthermore, one has to bear in mind that at the end of the nineteenth century there was a more general problem of under-registration in the Sundsvall population registers due to the high mobility.

In the hunt for elderly paupers, the poll tax registers have nevertheless been very informative. The poorest people in Sundsvall were recorded in a special column in the registers. The residents of the poorhouse or workhouse were also registered in these lists. This has enabled me to compare the situation of the outdoor and indoor paupers.

In addition to the sources discussed above, a variety of other records have been consulted. The study of older workers uses censuses from 1910 and 1930 at both local and national levels. Further, information on the labour force has been obtained from two Swedish statistical surveys, *Arbetareförsäkringskomiténs betänkande 1888* (The inquiry of the Workers Insurance Committee) and *Nya Arbetareförsäkringskommiténs betänkande 1893* (The inquiry of the New Workers Insurance Committee). The Government set up these committees to investigate the need for public insurance for the working classes.

Since the catechetical examination registers were only computerised up to 1892 I have used parish registers for the town of Sundsvall for the period 1893–1911 to
follow some of the individuals until their death. Further, the census of the town of Norrköping in 1870 has been used in the comparative household study. The study of household types for Södermalm in Stockholm in 1880, uses information from *Rote­mansarkivet* (the Roteman Archives), computerised by the Stockholm Historical Database. In 1878 a new way of keeping track of the population was introduced, because the population in the parishes had become too large to be recorded by one office. The parishes were divided into wards, "rotar", with an average population of around 10 000 inhabitants. In addition to demographic information these records contain information on education, poor relief, health care, etc. This system of civil registration, called *Rotemanssystemet* (the Roteman System) was abolished in 1926.59

Like the information in the catechetical registers of Sundsvall that of the Rote­mansarkivet is not completely reliable. As will be described in a following chapter the population growth in Stockholm at the end of the nineteenth century was massive and people were moving into and out of the town all the time, with the consequences that it was difficult to keep track of the population. Many persons who were registered as living alone could have been boarders, since this was a common phenomenon in Stockholm.60 Furthermore, disadvantageous for my study it has been impossible to separate those elderly who co-resided with unmarried children from those who lived with married children.

Apart from these quantitative sources I have tried to find some qualitative sources, by no means an easy task. The best sources of this kind is material from the poor law authorities. I have used minutes from the Poor Board and letters from paupers applying for relief in order to find the individual behind the statistics. Reference has also been made to some imaginative literature, where contemporary authors have described life of the elderly.

**Social classification**

Opinions vary as to how best to allocate individuals into different social groups on the basis of their occupation. The social classification that has been used is a modified version of the one that was worked out by researchers at Uppsala University as part of the migration project "Sweden and America after 1860".61 This classification is thorough and suitable for urban areas.

However, the final abolishing of the old guild system in 1864 complicates the social classification for the period under observation. Before the revision the master artisans could be separated from the other artisans but during the last decades of the century there are difficulties with separating these different categories of artisans.
Therefore, I have decided to treat all artisans both during pre-industrial and industrial times as one category.62

Unfortunately, the only women recorded with occupations of their own were the unmarried. Thus, married women and most widows had to be classified by the occupation of their husbands.

I a owners of large business enterprises, landowners
I b higher civil servants, university graduates
II a small scale business entrepreneurs in trade and industry, fishermen
II b lower civil servants and clerks, shop workers, foremen
III farmers, tenant farmers
IV craftsmen and artisans
V a workers in industry and urban commerce
V b farm workers, domestic servants
Undef. occupation cannot be defined

A great problem when studying labour force participation is to know whether a person with a given occupation was in fact working. Some workers were recorded as retired (formerly a farmer etc.) but others with an occupation might well have left work ages before. For instance, it is unclear how many who were recorded as servants were still working in old age. The question of the rate of labour force participation is very difficult to render but by comparing persons given an occupation with income tax lists I will try to come closer to the truth. Another way of eliminating sources of error is to investigate the retired to ascertain which particular employments were involved.

Another tricky question is the age of entrance into old age, and even more difficult before the national pension system was introduced in Sweden in 1914. The pension age creates a bureaucratic but also a “mental” age limit for the elderly of today. But was there such an age limit before 1914 or was old age just part of adult life? The following chapter will discuss factors that might have influenced the concept of old age and this discussion will hopefully help to define a point for entry of old age appropriate for this study.

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1 Sockenstämmoprotokoll för Sundsvalls stad 20 maj 1838. Forskningsarkivet, Umeå. (Minutes from the Parish Meeting).
2 ibid, 2 December 1838.
3 ibid, 1838–1840.
PNR 764000293 in POPUM, DDB, Umeå.

- 30 -
31 See discussion in Janssens, Angelique: Family and social change. The household as a process in an industrializing community. Cambridge 1993, pp 2–3.
33 Janssens 1993, pp 3–4.
35 Laslett 1965.
39 Anderson 1971.
41 ibid pp 208–219.
42 Janssens 1993, pp 97–114.
51 Haber and Gratton 1994, pp 65–81.
54 SOU 1997:170, pp 89 and 94.
56 See for instance, Elder, Glen H. “Family History and the Life Course” Transitions. The Family and


II. The concept of old age

"Because of my great poverty I in humbleness once again respectfully request for support, because of being incapable of earning a living due to illness and old age, almost 59 years, I have not got the strength to do work of any kind. Further, younger and stronger workers are preferred due to a shortage of work."

This was an application for poor relief from a woman who considered herself to be old at the age of "almost 59". Due to illness she was incapable of working, and according to her, this fact in combination with a shortage of labour made her less attractive on the labour market. The question is whether people of the same age were usually looked upon as old.

Today the age of 59 is low for the beginning of old age. Contemporary opinion defines entry into old age around 65. Age is a stage of life clearly defined and people above 65 are bureaucratically defined as senior citizens. No matter if they are active and healthy or ill and disabled they are labelled as elderly. However, contemporary studies of aged people show that the majority of septuagenarians are healthy and live an active life. This complicates the question of the point in time when transition from maturity to old age takes place. Not until approximately the age of eighty and above, does decrepitude and dependence become significantly more likely.

This shows the complexity of the issue of the beginning of old age. First, there is the individual perspective. When does a person consider herself old and why? Is it because of a loss of strength or mental capacity, because of a feeling of uselessness, or is it because society has labelled her "elderly"? Then, there is the general perspective. At what age does society consider her to be old and what factors decide the point of entry into old age? Gerontologists divide senescence into biological, psychological, and social ageing. In this study the third concept is the most important, as it relates old age to its societal context.

When analysing the concept of ageing historically it is even more difficult to identify the start of old age. In contemporary society the age of retirement mainly decides the beginning of senescence. Since old age pension was not a right of everyone historically, this measure is less useful when studying old age in the past. It is of course not fruitful to look for one specific age of the beginning of senescence but we need to have an understanding of changes in the concept of ageing over time. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to discuss the entry point into old age in the past by trying to find different age limits that might have been applied and the factors behind these limits.
It is useful to begin with a short presentation of perspectives on ageing in medical texts from the middle of the eighteenth-century. Demographic factors such as expectation of life at birth and at later ages, and age specific mortality will also be presented in order to be able to trace changes in health over time. Another way of examining changes in the concept of old age is to study the impact of demographic and attitudinal change on "old age" as a cause of death. In order to find how societies in the past defined old age, this chapter examines the ways in which the poor laws, taxation laws, and early pension systems looked at the issue of old people.

The age at which individuals retired from household headship will also be considered. However, since only a minority of elderly women were entitled to pensions or lost the headship of households, either because they never had been heads or because the majority of the widows who had headed households continued in this way until their death, these are poor indicators of the point of entry into old age for women. A better indicator in their case is the time when the last child left home, the start of the period of empty nest. This could be seen as a period of transitions, when their burden of work was eased but also when their access to valuable assistance disappeared.

The medical view on senescence

Since ancient times the model of the life span had been an important perception of the course of human existence. There were various variants of this model. Some medical writers divided life only into three stages; a period of ascent, a peak and then the inevitable decline, whereas other writers divided the life course in a more detailed way. The latter point of view was visualised by the staircase of life, which was a symmetric division of life into decades or stages of life. Old age was represented by the last steps of the staircase.3

Some classic medical writers divided life into seven year periods, with each of these transitions seen as climacteric years. The most critical of these climacteric years was the 63rd. According to this theory the individual entered old age at this point and quoting Johan Adolph Wadström, one of Carl von Linnés disciples who was influenced by the theory, "this year many aged persons change life to death."4

Although the period of old age started at the age of 63, decline had already begun during the two previous seven year periods. The age between 56 and 63 was called the period of ageing. This was the time of grizzled hair, deterioration of hearing, eyesight, and memory. The age from 49 to 56 was called the period of decline. During this time the deterioration was most observed among "the weaker sex" as this was the period of menopause with a subsequent sterility.5
According to several medical writers the transition into old age for women took place after their menopause and female ageing in general started fifteen to twenty years earlier than the male. Diseases like cancer and hysteria was thought to be common during this period, because of the reflux of humor that could no longer escape through menstruation. However, there was a discrepancy between the idea of women's earlier ageing and the fact of women's higher life expectancy. Further, since many women had their last child when they were in their forties it is hard to believe that they were considered to be old when they still had small children at home.

The nineteenth-century physicians advanced various explanations to account for women's higher life expectancy. Less physical labour, a low consuming of alcohol, and a less competitive life were some of these. There were also some spectacular ones such as that women "talked more, which preserved their interest in the little things of life—or because they were more sedentary (which allowed them to use less oxygen)..."

Late eighteenth century was a time when one of the political aims was to increase the population by improving the health of the people. Information given by the clergy, midwives, and doctors, in combination with the publishing of medical books on how to remain in good health increased public awareness of these matters. Carl von Linné specialised on preventive health care. Several times he lectured on the subject of dietetics. This was a tradition derived from classical medical treatment consisting of six important areas of life; air, sleep, movement and rest, food and drink, love and marriage, and peace and quiet. Linné claimed that good habits during youth would guarantee a better life during the last stages of life.

Several of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century medical writers were influenced by the theory of vaporisation. According to this theory every individual was equipped with a certain amount of life force which was slowly consumed. The human being had to economise his use of this force. The concept of temperance was very important. Excesses in food, drink, and sex were ways of wasting the life force. Poor diet, too little sleep, trouble, and grief were other factors thought to shorten life.

This theory stated that ageing was a normal stage of life and that disease was a normal aspect of this period in human life. However, following advances in medical science, the medical profession came to exercise an increasing influence on the view on old age at the end of the nineteenth century. Some medical writers looked upon ageing as a disease and argued that certain medical treatment could be offered to aged persons. However, physicians found it difficult to separate normal ageing from pathological decline and along with the perception of old age as a disease, the
view on senescence as a natural stage of life continued to exist. The classical advice of moderation in food, drink and sex in combination with regular exercise, fresh air and massage was often the only therapy that was available for the elderly until the middle of the twentieth century. Not until the 1950s a speciality for the diseases of old age was created, termed geriatrics.¹⁰

**Causes of death**

The medical influence also affected the spectrum of causes of death. Reference to old age as a cause of death was replaced by a more precise terminology. However, as we will make clear below, the frequency with which old age was cited as a cause of death was already decreasing markedly in the middle of the nineteenth century, prior to the period when the medical profession began to have a major influence on concepts of old age. The question is why this decline took place at this time. One possible explanation is the removal of the clergy's responsibility for the registration of death causes beginning in the 1830s.

This argument can be substantiated by checking the proportion of deaths to which no specific cause was affiliated. During the first decades of the nineteenth century no more than around five percent of the entries in the death registers in the Sundsvall region lacked a cause of death. A marked change can be observed beginning in the 1830s and continuing to the end of the period of observation in the 1890s. Over this period more than a third of the entries in the death registers lacked a cause of death.

![Figure 1](image.png)
Figure 1 b. Percentage of women over the age of 50 in the region of Sundsvall reported as dying of "old age".

Source: Death and burial registers from the Sundsvall region computerised by the DDB, Umeå.

Studying changes in the age at which people on death were reported as dying of old age is one possible measure of improved health conditions among the elderly. The woman referred to in the beginning of this chapter considered herself to be old at the age of 59. Some of the medical writers believed that women were ageing earlier than men. It is interesting therefore to see how many individuals were recorded as dying of old age and whether this diagnosis more frequently applied to women. There were in fact very few. Between 1800 and 1894 there were only eleven people in the whole Sundsvall region aged 54–59 appearing in the death registers as dying of old age nor is there any evidence that more women than men were reported as having died of old age.

Analysis of the mean age of people assigned old age or decrepitude as a cause of death, between 1800 and 1810 revealed that the mean age at death for men was 75.96 and for women 76.66. Between 1880 and 1890 the corresponding ages were 80.93 and 80.46 respectively. Clearly old age or decrepitude was only assigned as a cause of death in the case of the very old. However, the mean age at death for those dying of these causes of death did increase for both men and women over the course of the nineteenth century. This is either a sign of improving health or a less frequent use of old age as a cause of death, due to a more adequate clarification of causes of death at the end of the century. Unexpectedly, there were no differences in the mean age at which men and women died of old age or decrepitude in spite of the higher life expectancy of women.

To sum up, the study of causes of death shows that old age as a cause of death was usually given to people who died late in life and that there were only a small difference in the frequency with which such a cause of death was allocated to men and women. The higher average age at which both men and women described as having died of old age at the end of the nineteenth century reflects either improving health or a more specific attribution on causes of death for the younger old.
An ageing population

Sweden was one of the first countries to have a high proportion of elderly in the population. Peter Stearns found that Sweden together with France had the highest proportion of elderly in 1900. The percentage of people over the age of 65 was approximately eight percent in Sweden and France, whereas the corresponding proportion in England-Wales was 4.7 percent and in USA 4 percent. However, the French had a lower life expectancy than the Swedes. The high proportion of elderly in France was due to extremely low birth rates.\(^\text{11}\)

![Figure 2. Percentage of the population of Sweden over the ages of 60 and 80 1750-1995.](image)

Before 1880 the proportion of elderly was relatively stable. Between 1880 and 1890 the population over the age of 60 increased by 121 000. This was the greatest increase before the 1940s. The period 1810–1860 witnessed a massive increase in population which affected the age structure of the population then and later. Beginning with the period 1811–1816 there was a pronounced rise in the number of births while at the same time the mortality, particularly of infants, declined. From the 1860s emigration plus a falling birth rate also influenced the situation to some extent but population growth nevertheless continued. The large early nineteenth-century birth cohorts were an important explanation for the rise in the proportion of elderly in Sweden during the last decades of the century. This development in combination with late nineteenth-century decline in birth rates and increase in emigration were the main causes of the increase in the proportion of elderly citizens. A final important factor was the higher life expectancy at the end of the century.\(^\text{12}\)

Information on the change in life expectancy from the middle of the eighteenth century until today is presented in Table 1. Here we can compare differences in life expectancy of men and women at different ages and over the long-term. Starting by

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\(^{11}\) Figure 2. Percentage of the population of Sweden over the ages of 60 and 80 1750-1995.

\(^{12}\) Information on the change in life expectancy from the middle of the eighteenth century until today is presented in Table 1. Here we can compare differences in life expectancy of men and women at different ages and over the long-term. Starting by
examining life expectancy at birth we can see a marked improvement from the middle of the eighteenth century continuing until the present day. During this period more than forty years for both sexes have been added to the life span.

Table 1. Expectation of life of men and women at 0.50, 65, and 80 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Men 0</th>
<th>Women 0</th>
<th>Men 50</th>
<th>Women 50</th>
<th>Men 65</th>
<th>Women 65</th>
<th>Men 80</th>
<th>Women 80</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1751/1790</td>
<td>33.72</td>
<td>36.64</td>
<td>18.16</td>
<td>19.59</td>
<td>10.02</td>
<td>10.51</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791/1815</td>
<td>35.35</td>
<td>38.44</td>
<td>17.26</td>
<td>18.68</td>
<td>9.29</td>
<td>9.84</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816/1840</td>
<td>39.50</td>
<td>43.56</td>
<td>17.55</td>
<td>19.60</td>
<td>9.58</td>
<td>10.44</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>4.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846/1850</td>
<td>41.38</td>
<td>45.59</td>
<td>17.89</td>
<td>20.02</td>
<td>9.43</td>
<td>10.40</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>4.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856/1860</td>
<td>40.48</td>
<td>44.15</td>
<td>19.17</td>
<td>20.72</td>
<td>10.46</td>
<td>11.17</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>4.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871/1880</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891/1900</td>
<td>50.94</td>
<td>53.63</td>
<td>22.44</td>
<td>24.04</td>
<td>12.24</td>
<td>13.13</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911/1920</td>
<td>55.60</td>
<td>58.38</td>
<td>23.35</td>
<td>24.79</td>
<td>12.84</td>
<td>13.69</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931/1940</td>
<td>63.76</td>
<td>66.13</td>
<td>24.08</td>
<td>25.13</td>
<td>13.06</td>
<td>13.64</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961/1965</td>
<td>71.60</td>
<td>75.70</td>
<td>26.65</td>
<td>28.56</td>
<td>13.88</td>
<td>15.80</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>6.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991/1995</td>
<td>75.60</td>
<td>80.98</td>
<td>28.03</td>
<td>32.59</td>
<td>15.70</td>
<td>19.42</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>8.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Examination of the expectation of life at 50, 65, and 80 reveals a somewhat different picture. A sixty-five year old man or woman during the period 1751/1790 could expect to live approximately another ten years. In 1991/1995 the life left to them was about sixteen and nineteen years respectively. In two hundred years the expectation of life at the age 65 had "only" improved by six years for men and nine for women. Changes in life expectancy at eighty have been even smaller. The greatest alterations is due to the decline in infant mortality.

However, the health of older people has improved in many respects. Persons over the age of 75 in particular now enjoy better health and increased alertness. Analysis of the trends in the death rates of persons over the age of 50 between the 1850s and the present day (Figure 3 a and b) shows when the changes occurred, which age groups were most affected and whether there was any variation between men and women in the rate of improvement in health.
Figure 3 a. Age specific mortality of men over the age of 50 in Sweden 1841/50-1995.

Figure 3 b. Age specific mortality of women over the age of 50 in Sweden 1841/50-1995.

During the second half of the nineteenth century death rates fell markedly for all groups. However, the greatest improvement among octogenarians, especially women, has taken place in the second half of the twentieth century. Today, approximately four percent of the population are above eighty. In the future it is expected this percentage will rise, and increasing the number of elderly persons in great need of medical care and social security.

Women’s life expectancy was higher during all periods but the greatest improvements in the length of life of women has taken place since 1950. Women have experienced greater changes in expectation of life than have men. Different employments and life styles partly explain this trend. However, since the 1980s life expectancy of men has increased faster than that of women. One possible explanation for this trend is the increasing number of smoking working-class women.

Table 2. Death rates of the Swedish population 55 years and above divided by marital status and age category during the period 1871–1880.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status and age category</th>
<th>55-65 years</th>
<th>65-75 years</th>
<th>75 years and above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Swedish towns</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>24.31</td>
<td>97.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural areas</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>25.93</td>
<td>75.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>75.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Swedish towns</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>20.49</td>
<td>67.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural areas</td>
<td>22.17</td>
<td>18.40</td>
<td>49.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed and divorced</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>89.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Swedish towns</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>94.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural areas</td>
<td>32.09</td>
<td>23.23</td>
<td>68.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Extracted from Sundbärg, Gustav: "Land och stad i Sverige från befolkningsstatistisk synpunkt." In Statistisk tidskrift 1887, p 167

Because of their higher life expectancy the number of elderly women markedly exceeded the number of elderly men. In 1850 there were 1525 women per thousand men at the age of 65, in 1900 the ratio had fallen to 1253 per thousand, and today it is 1365 per thousand. In Swedish towns in the population over the age of 65 there were 2695 women per thousand men in 1850 and 1892 in 1900. However, there were differences between the towns. For instance, in 1870 in the women dominated textile industry town Norrköping the sex ratio of the population over the age of 60 was 2709, whereas in the male dominated town Sundsvall the ratio in 1880 was 1800.
The towns had a larger surplus of women because these areas attracted women more than men and because of higher death rates of men. As we can observe in Table 2 above, unmarried men in urban areas experienced the highest mortality, followed by the widowed and divorced men. A hard life with abuse of alcohol and unstable working conditions heightened the mortality of the male population. The Arbetareförsäkringskomitén also commented on the high mortality among unmarried men. According to this committee this was due to the fact that the group of unmarried men consisted of the poorest in society and were therefore unable to marry. This made them more socially and emotionally vulnerable than other sections in society.

**Official definitions of entry into old age**

As has already been mentioned the growing influence of the medical profession at the end of the nineteenth century occasioned increasing interest in the elderly. The rising proportion of elderly in combination with urbanisation also contributed to make the elderly more visible as a social group. This in conjunction with social liberal ideas and fears of the power of the working classes led to increasing attention being given to the welfare of the elderly.

During earlier periods the state showed less interest in the circumstances of the elderly but there were some laws and comments in public debates that reveal a range of opinions examining the onset of old age. In order to limit expenditures on paupers in the beginning of the nineteenth century poor people above 50 years was one of the categories of persons forbidden to move to Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö. In 1788 the state declared that the parish, where the poor person had had his homestead or had worked as a servant, was responsible for the payment of poor relief. The legislation also restricted migration. The old, infirm and those unwilling to work were not allowed to migrate if they had not received permission from the local authority. The law was the product of a more regulated system of poor relief introduced in the 1760s, which caused disputes between the parishes about the support of the poor.

This prohibition on migration was abolished by the first national poor law of 1847. This law placed increased responsibilities on the parish. Paupers were now allowed to move anywhere they wanted, but it was also stated that the community in which the poor person was living at the age of 55 had to continue supporting him/her for the rest of their life. In 1871 this age limit was raised to 60 years.

Another sign of the beginning of old age was the age of retirement from work. In 1798 civil servants were allowed to retire at the age of 70. Since late seventeenth century civil servants had retained full pay and other benefits when they became old
and unable to work, but during the eighteenth century the state paid increasing attention to the situation of elderly civil servants. It was expensive and ineffective to have other people doing the job of an old civil servant. During the first half of the nineteenth century the pension age of the civil servants was lowered to 65 and most of those employed by the Government during the second half of the century had a pension age between 60 and 65.20

Concerning pension ages for the working classes, we have to turn to discussions in the parliament. The interest in pensions for the working classes was not overwhelming before the 1880s but there were some proposals that reveal thinkable age consideration of the age from which such persons might be paid. For instance, the Baron C.A.Raab proposed in the Riksdag (the Swedish parliament) 1847–1848 that insurance funds should be created as a way to guarantee security in old age. The head of the household was to pay an annual fee for each servant in his employ, who on their fiftieth birthday could start to draw on the insurance.21 Gustav Probus Sillén laid a similar proposal in the parliament of 1856–58 and suggested 50 or 55 as a starting point.22

Some of the pension funds established at the second part of the century, set a starting point for the award of a person that was slightly lower than those of the civil servants. Most of these funds had a pension age between 55 and 60. For instance, the iron worker’s pension fund in Åtvidaberg created in 1854, paid a pension to their members from the age of 55. Workers in Norrköping were supported from the age of 60 from a fund which was established in 1889.23

As mentioned above Christina Carlsson Wetterberg discussed the age of retirement in an article about elderly female workers employed in the wool industry in the town of Malmö. She found that the vast majority of female workers retired before the age of 50, whereas only two percent of the male workers retired before they had reached their fiftieth birthday. According to Carlsson Wetterberg this was due to differences in retirement regulations as applied to men and women. Both men and women had the right to retire after twenty years in service, but male workers could not receive a pension before the age of 55.

One of the funds in Gothenburgh and another in the town of Linköping supporting widows and ”pauvres honteux” allowed such support from as early as 50.24 Maybe this phenomenon indicated a belief in the ideas of some medical writers that women aged before men. However, it could also show recognition of the fact that women in general lost their spouses at a younger age and as a result became impoverished earlier in life than men.

There were also differences in pension ages according to social position. Civil servants usually had a higher pension age than workers. The former were able to
continue their work because it was not as physically demanding as the tasks performed by many workers who became worn out earlier.

Another sign of entry into old age was the point in time when people were excused payment of the poll tax. From the seventeenth century until 1863 this age was set at 63. This was a relatively high age limit, probably because the state wanted to have as many tax payers as possible. The limit of 63 might also have been influenced by the classical view of the ageing process as outlined above according to which 63 marked the start of old age.

**Age at retirement**

Another possible sign of the beginning of old age was the time when the head of the household transferred his property to the heir. David Gaunt has discussed the age at which peasants retired. He refers to Finnish studies for the period from early nineteenth century until the first world war. In Ostrobothnia, a province in the west of Finland, the average age at retirement was 57–58 years for men and 54–55 for women at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The retirement age rose and at the time of the First World War the ages at retirement were 65 and 62 respectively. The age at retirement was somewhat higher than in the rest of Finland due to a later age at marriage in Ostrobothnia.25

Analysis of the membership of the two cohorts presented above indicated that very few ever lost headship of the household. In the first cohort (born between 1755 and 1770) only nine percent of elderly men lost the headship at a mean age of 63.5. In the second cohort (born between 1810 and 1819) the corresponding percentage was eight percent at a mean age of 64. None of the married women headed a household. Therefore, it is more fruitful to examine the percentage of widows who lost the headship of their household. 12.5 percent of widows in the first cohort lost the headship and 14 percent in the second. Their mean ages at the point of transfer were 65 and 62 respectively.

The most common reason for the loss of household headship by the members of the first cohort was that a married son or a son-in-law took over the headship. Another important reason was to enter the poorhouse, a move made more frequently by elderly men than elderly women.

To join the household of a married son or son-in-law was relatively frequent among the fishermen in Sundsvall. For instance, the fisherman Nils Linderborg headed a household consisting of himself and his wife Beata. When the couple were in their sixties they moved to the household of their only son, Lars, and his family. At this time the old couple were excluded payment of the poll tax, which indicates that they
were deemed no longer capable of supporting themselves. Beata died at the age of 69 but Nils remained in this son’s household until he died at the age of 80.26

A smaller proportion of aged men and women from the second cohort spent the last part of their life in the household of their married children. Half of elderly men who ceased to be household heads ended up in the poorhouse and an increasing number of both men and women spent their last years of life in the households of persons to whom they were apparently unrelated. Also in this cohort, a higher percentage of elderly men than women ended up in the poorhouse.

As made clear above, only a minority of the elderly lost headship of their household during the last stage of their life cycle. The vast majority of men never gave up their position while the women either never became heads or if widowed households heads, kept this position until their death. Furthermore, since very few women were entitled to pensions neither pension age nor age at retirement from the headship provide adequate indicators of when women entered old age. A better measure is needed for the female population.

Empty nest

One possible start is the time when the last child left home, the start of the period of the empty nest. Today the average age of young people leaving home for the first time is around 19 years for daughters and 20 for sons.27 This means that most parents are in their late forties or early fifties when they experience the beginning of the empty nest period. Today this period is a much more pronounced period of transition compared with the situation in the past. This is largely due to the parents’ higher life expectancy, lower fertility, and earlier childbearing in combination with increasing possibilities for the younger generation to support themselves.

Analysis of the membership of the two cohorts, shows the percentage of men and women experiencing the empty nest and their approximate age when this occurred. 31 percent of the fathers and 47 percent of the mothers from the first cohort (born between 1755 and 1770) experienced the situation of the empty nest. In the second cohort (born between 1810 and 1819) the corresponding percentages were 24 percent and 53 percent. The great differences between men and women can be explained by the lower life expectancy of men. The majority of elderly fathers at the time of their death still had children living at home.

The mean age of entry into the empty nest was 59.0 years for men and 59.1 years for women from the first cohort and 60.7 and 59.7 respectively for men and women from the second cohort. Thus, the age of the entrance of the period of empty nest did not change much over time.
Conclusions

The aim of this chapter has been to discuss the concepts of old age current in historical population through the study of the forces that shaped the opinions about the process and the definition as adopted of the onset of old age. The purpose was to identify the point in the life cycle where adult life gave way to old age, a transition point that could then be used in this study. By examining medical texts, variations in the allocation of "old age" as a cause of death, demographic change, pension ages, age at the loss of the household headship, and the start of the period of empty nest, I have tried to uncover the concept of old age held by populations in the past.

Before the twentieth century there was very little interest in the health of aged people. Human life was divided into different stages, often illustrated by the staircase of life. Medical writers described old age as a natural stage in the life cycle and they concentrated mostly on how to prolong life by living a healthy life when young. The growing influence of medical science at the end of the nineteenth century led to increased interest in the health of the elderly. Older concepts of old age were replaced by a more precise terminology. However, people said to have died of old age had reached an advanced age and the average age of men and women where death was ascribed to old age increased slightly over time.

An increase in life expectancy occurred beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century and onwards. This change in combination with large early nineteenth-century birth cohorts, declining birth rates and increasing emigration at the end of the century meant that Sweden together with France had the highest proportion of elderly at the turn of the century and probably contributed to an increasing interest in the elderly at this time.

As regards the transition point from maturity into old age, a range of ages between 50 to 70 years were adopted in the past to define the point of entry into old age. Some of the pension funds and the poor relief regulations raised the point of entry into old age during the course of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, members of the lowest classes might receive a pension between the age of 50 and 55, whereas civil servants had the highest pension ages. These class differences can be explained by the fact that the workers were probably worn out earlier than the civil servants.

Women were entitled to pensions at an earlier age than men. These differences are more difficult to explain. Medical writers thought women usually aged fifteen to twenty years earlier than men. The traditional idea of women's earlier ageing because of the menopause may have some influence here. Another possibility is that the lower pension ages for women took account of the fact that a number of the women supported were widowed and that women were usually younger than men when they lost their spouses.
I also made reference to the age when old people transferred their farms to the younger generation. David Gaunt showed that over time there was an increase in the age of retirement from the headship and he also found lower retirement ages for women. However, the timing of transfer of property between generations does not provide a very serviceable definition of the onset of old age for the elderly living in urban industrial areas, particularly in the case of women, since few women residing in urban areas gave up their headship of a household. Therefore, the start of the period of empty nest has been chosen as a more adequate definition of the onset of old age among women. The average age at the commencement of the empty nest was around 60 years in the industrial cohort. Men and women were approximately the same age when they entered the empty nest phase of their life.

As we have seen the point of entry into old age varied slightly over time by gender and social group. However, many of the entry points occurred around the age of sixty. I have therefore chosen 60 as the entry point of old age for the cross-sectional studies and 50 for the life course approach. A lower limit was set for the latter method to enable people to be followed over a longer period. In addition, the elderly will be divided into the age groups 60-69, 70-79, and 80 and above in order to distinguish the living conditions of the young and older old.

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12 Fattigvårdprotokoll för Sundsvalls stad 2 juli 1894. Medelpadsarkivet, Sundsvall. (Minutes from the Poor Board).
6 ibid, pp 12-13.
8 ibid, p 46.
10 ibid, p 91.
12 Haber 1983, p 50.
13 Hufeland, Christoph Wilhelm: Konsten att lefiwa länge. Stockholm 1798.
14 Kondratowitz 1991, p 144.
16 Haber and Gratton 1994, p 159.
18 ibid, p 15.
ibid, p 78.

Censuses for the town of Norrköping 1870 and the town of Sundsvall 1880.


ibid, pp 228–239.

Arbetareförsäkringskomiténs betänkande 1888. Del III. Statistiska undersökningar. 3. Pensionsinrättningar för statens civile betjänade, underbefäl och manskap vid armén och flottan samt kommunernas betjänade.

Riddarskapets och adelns protokoll 1847–1848. Del 1, p 118.

Riddarskapets och adelns protokoll. Del 2, 1856–1858, p 288.


Gaunt 1983 a, p 163.

PNR 756000220 in POPUM, DDB, Umeå.

Poll tax registers for the town of Sundsvall, computerised by the DDB, Umeå.

III. Sundsvall

**Socio-economic and demographic development**

Until 1850 Sundsvall was a typical Swedish semi-agrarian town where predominant trades were fishing, handicraft, and shopkeeping. During the second half of the century, however, there was a rapid change in socio-economic structure. The 1850s saw the explosion of sawmill industry. Free trade and the industrialisation of Europe, especially of Great Britain, created a demand for timber. The Swedish timber industry expanded and, especially after the introduction of the steam driven saw, Sweden was well prepared to meet this increasing demand.

The first steam-driven sawmill was established in Tunadal in the parish of Skön in 1849 and the number of sawmills in the Sundsvall area grew rapidly thereafter. The industrial expansion caused a dramatic increase in population both in the town and in the surrounding area. Sawmills were founded all over the district, some of them situated just on the outskirts of town, which explains why many sawmill workers resided in the town. The industry attracted workers from different parts of the country. Some of them were seasonal labourers, but a growing number settled permanently. Sundsvall became the commercial centre of the most expansive industrial region of that time. The sawmill industry also stimulated the economic life in the town; trading, shipping and handicraft became prosperous sectors of the economy.

The number of shopkeepers increased strongly. Within the retail trade, shops became more specialised and from the end of the nineteenth century the number of female shopkeepers also increased. There was only a slight increase in the number of master artisans but the nature of their work changed. Workshops became bigger and the number of employees increased. At the end of the century there was a marked increase of white-collar workers employed in local administration, in the Custom Service, Post Office, Telegraph Service, and in different private businesses.

Around 1900 the predominant female occupations were seamstress, worker, and servant. Almost one third of female employees in Sundsvall were lower white-collar workers. Teachers constituted the majority of this social group. Following to the expansion of trade and communications during the first decades of the nineteenth century, the number of employed women in these sectors increased.
Industrial expansion led to dramatic population growth both in the town and in the surrounding area. From 1850 to 1890, the population of Sundsvall increased nearly fivefold. In line with other expanding industrial towns Sundsvall faced problems such as overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions.

The socio-ecological map below shows the concentration of high-income earners in the city centre in 1892. The period between 1860 and 1888 was characterised by the rapid expansion of unplanned working class areas on the outskirts of the town. After the devastating fire of 1888 the town became more segregated because it was decided that the centre of Sundsvall should be rebuilt with stone houses only. The wealthiest sections of the population settled in this part of the town (as the larger circles in Map 2 show), whereas workers and small artisans predominated in the unplanned areas. Thousands of homeless people were temporarily housed in barracks after the fire. These buildings soon became permanent. Moreover, in an investigation of housing conditions in 1903 the physician Gotthilf Stéenhoff found that more than two thirds of the small flats in Sundsvall were in an unsatisfactory sanitary condition.

Other indirect consequences of the massive population growth was widespread alcoholism, prostitution, and criminality. The large number of people not registered in official sources were looked upon as a problem not only because of their assumed immoral behaviour but also because they were viewed as a threat to the established order in society.
Map 2. Socio-ecological cross-section of the town of Sundsvall 1892.
After 1840, there was a decrease in the sex ratio (relatively more men). By 1890 the population was almost evenly balanced between men and women. The male dominated industry brought increasing males into the area and in the age group 30–49 there was even a surplus of men in 1870 and 1890. During the second half of the century, Sundsvall had a relatively balanced sex ratio, as compared with other Swedish towns. A substantial surplus of women was the normal pattern in the towns, and this was also the case in Sundsvall before industrialisation. During the beginning of the twentieth century, a surplus of females appeared again because of an expanding female labour market. However, Sundsvall still had a more balanced sex ratio than several other Swedish towns.

In 1890 there was a higher proportion of married women in Sundsvall than in many other Swedish towns. Although the proportion of unmarried men was high relative to the proportions of other towns, the proportion of married men in Sundsvall also increased between 1870 and 1890. Furthermore, the marriage rates of men 20–24 years in Sundsvall was above the Swedish average.
Demographic description of elderly men and women

The proportion of aged people living in Sundsvall differed from that at the national level. The percentage of elderly in the Swedish population increased progressively during the nineteenth century whereas in Sundsvall the percentage of elderly fell during the period of industrial expansion, resulting from an increase in the population of people of working ages. This pattern was not unique to Sundsvall since the trend in most industrial areas was similar.

In 1910 the proportion of old people in Sweden had returned to its pre-industrial level. In this year the percentage of elderly men was even higher than in pre-industrial times and almost equalled that of elderly women. This is explained by a higher life expectancy and by the fact that the workers who had migrated to Sundsvall during the period of industrial expansion had reached old age at the beginning of the twentieth century.
The proportion of elderly unmarried men was relatively stable apart from in 1880 when the percentage was higher than in the other periods. This is explained by the fact that the expanding saw-mill industry attracted unmarried men from different parts of the country. There was also a progressive increase in the proportion of widowers, probably due to increases in male life expectancy or male relative to women's life expectancy.

The percentage of unmarried women far exceeded the percentage of unmarried men with the exception of the year 1880 when the proportions were relatively similar. The proportion of unmarried women were highest in 1910, while the proportion of married women was at its maximum in 1930. The reasons for this lay in part with higher marriage rates and in part with the decline in the proportion of widows, probably resulting in turn from the increases in the life expectancy of men.
Table 3. Men and women over the age of 60 accorded to marital status in the town of Sundsvall 1845, 1880, 1910, and 1930.

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<td>Widows</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>140</td>
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</table>

Sources: Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall 1845 and 1880, computerised by DDB, Umeå. Censuses for the town of Sundsvall 1910 and 1930. Research Archives of Umeå. Elderly men and women who were divorced or whose marital status was unknown has been excluded from the table, apart from those living in Sundsvall in 1930 who were included in the groups of widowed people.

Poor relief in the town of Sundsvall

Non-institutional relief

During the first decades of the nineteenth century paupers in Sundsvall were in part supported by the parish, with additional assistance coming from charitable associations and special donations. Another common form of poor relief was to house the poorest in peasant households.

The parish’s responsibility increased following the first national Poor Law in 1847. The inhabitants paid a poorhouse fee as well as the poll tax to meet the costs of poor relief. Other important contributions were derived from, for example, money collected privately at baptisms and marriages, and from donations by the wealthier people in the parish.14

Some of the donators supported either old widows from the same association as themselves or the pauvres honteux.15 Others established funds for the needy poor. One of the former was the "Lindbergska fonden", which supported poor widows from the association of artisans. One of the members of the society gave 200 riksdaler to the fund, the interest from which was paid out annually. This association founded in 1763 supported its poor members, widows, and children. The societies of shopkeepers, fishermen, and skippers also contributed to their insolvent brothers’ and sisters’ subsistence.16

In 1828 Colonel G.F. Klingstedt established a fund in memory of his late wife. The annual interest was primarily intended for the pauvres honteux but also for other paupers. A later example on the form of gifts intended for women from the
bourgeoisie was the memorial fund of Hulda Boström which was founded in 1900. In 1891 Justina Altin, who was the widow of the shipowner Lars Magnus Altin, donated 100,000 crowns to a fund supporting faithful old servants who had reached the age of 55 and had been in service in the town for at least ten years. They were entitled to support from the interest of the fund for the remainder of their life.\textsuperscript{17}

These kind of contributions can be looked upon as a form of traditional charity in which assistance was primarily directed at the social group of the benefactor. People belonging to the same association, poor old ladies from the same level of society, and old faithful servants were supported in this way.

Another kind of support was the gift of 400 riksdaler which the Swedish King Carl XIV Johan donated during a visit to Sundsvall in 1835. The interest of the fund was distributed annually to the poorest residents of the town. This year saw the establishment of the society "De nödlidandes vänner" (the Friends of the Necessitous). Every Christmas the society distributed money to the paupers. A similar fund was founded in 1873 by the shopkeeper Bengt Ammelin.\textsuperscript{18}

However, increased expenditure on poor relief in combination with difficulties in ensuring that support only reached the deserving and needing poor led to demands for other forms of relief. Furthermore, the great fire in 1888 in conjunction with heavy population growth occasioned increased expenditure on social support. In 1896 the town council decided to introduce the Elberfeldt-system to master the pauper population more effectively. This system stressed the importance of earnings instead of the receipt of alms. Another important principle was the aim to co-ordinate charity and public relief.\textsuperscript{19}

The earlier five poor relief districts were increased to ten, with one superintendent and ten guardians assigned to each district.\textsuperscript{20} All of the guardians were men, whereas previously one man and one woman supervised the work in each district. On the 27 November 1903 the poor law authorities issued a circular. Having received complaints from some women in town, the Board decided to ask the opinion of the male guardians whether women should be allowed to take part in work with the poor. There were arguments for and against this proposal. One argument of those in favour of women guardians was that women were more price conscious and therefore better able to decide who should be supported. Further, those advocating the appointment of women as guardians argued that women would have a better understanding of the situation of the numerous female recipients and their children. Those opposed to women guardians considered that women were not supposed to be in touch with "people of bad characters", as they put it. They also argued that awkward situations could come up when the guardians discussed questions of an intimate character. Finally some of the opponents of women guardians insisted that the nature of women
was impulsive and sensitive, which would make them less able to decide who was in real need of support. As the number of those for and against the proposal was even, the Board decided to postpone any decision.  

Two years later a number of women in Sundsvall met to discuss the question of female guardians. They wrote to the Poor Board arguing that women were better suited to deal with the large number of poor women and children. They also pointed to the many Swedish towns where women were both represented on the Poor Boards and worked as guardians. The following year, 1906, Sundsvall got its first female guardian. Four years later all districts but one had female guardians, but not until 1920 were women assigned to all districts.

In supporting the Elberfeldt system the Elberfeldt committee in Sundsvall stated:

"The public shall as time goes by abandon the bad habit of giving at the door or on the streets. However, charity will not be banned. Charity and public relief shall not oppose each other but each work within their own field and have an organised plan, only with reciprocal recognition of the divergent duties of each other."

At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, those in charge began to question the efficiency of the system. They considered outdoor-relief to be satisfactory, because the costs were stable and the number of recipients of poor relief had even declined by more than 500 in four years. The problems specifically arose in connection with indoor-relief. In addition, many of the guardians found their work burdensome. They were supposed to be in service for four years, but many handed in their resignations before the end of their period of service. Nevertheless, the Poor Board considered the Elberfeldt system superior to any other form of relief and in spite of the criticism the system remained in force until the 1940s.

**Public institutions**

In the minutes of the parish meeting 1811 mention is made of plans to build a new two storey poorhouse in Sundsvall but the first record of any inmates is from 1830. At this time the poorhouse housed only six people, four old women and two old men. Over time the poorhouse not surprisingly became overcrowded. In 1869 the top floor of the old telegraph building housed a number of poor people. Between 1869 and 1872 the growing number of able-bodied poor were able to stay in a hostel. The increasing number of vagrants led to demands for the founding of a workhouse. Already, those involved in the shaping of the 1848 poor relief regulations had expressed a wish to establish a workhouse in order to counteract idleness and immorality.
Almost three decades later, in 1876, a workhouse was finally founded. The old hospital building became the first workhouse in Sundsvall. The aim of the institution was to improve moral and social behaviour of the inmates. Those who had been ordered to work and who had no other choice were allowed to enter the workhouse. Persons living on their own were also to be offered work in the institution.

The workhouse was twice destroyed by fire. This led to the construction of a two-storey stone building in 1888. This new workhouse consisted of two wards; one for the able-bodied and the other for those unable to work for some reason. The latter group predominated and the Board considered this to be the most serious problem at the beginning of the twentieth century. They suggested how the institution could better fulfil its function as a workhouse and how it could become self-supporting. At first, the old and infirm could work in special wards where they were able to undertake easier tasks. The old people’s home was founded in 1903 in order to make room for the new wards and 25 old women were moved from the workhouse to Sundsvall’s first "old people’s home". Ten years later the town had another institution for the aged and in 1924 the main building of the workhouse was transformed into a nursing home, specifically for poor and chronically ill people. A further two old people’s homes were opened in Sundsvall in the 1930s and 1940s.

The residents in an old people’s home in Sundsvall. Photo from around 1910. (Museum of the town of Sundsvall).
Private institutions

The first private institution for elderly people was founded in 1897. One association, established in the memory of the founder of Sundsvall, the King Gustaf II Adolf (Gustavus Adolphus), was the driving force behind this home for widows from the bourgeoisie. Seven elderly women lived there in small flats. To be admitted to this home it was necessary to be a person of rank, reliable, recommended by at least two trustworthy persons and to have a yearly income of at least 400 crowns. It is clear that the entry requirements were very high. Few of the elderly in Sundsvall could meet them, and the poorer part of the old population ended up in the workhouse if for some reason they were unable to continue living on their own. In the workhouse aged people resided together with children, young mothers, and the physically and mentally ill.

Some years later the members of the associations of artisans and shopkeepers founded an old people’s home for their former members. Twelve people, mostly women, came to live in this home and in 1925 the same associations established a second home for another eighteen old persons.
The pauvres honteux were women who had once been better off but had fallen into poverty.

Jonsson, 1996, p 221.

17 Sundsvalls stadsfullmäktiges handlingar III. (Documents from the town of Sundsvall) 1896, pp 112–114.

18 Kommunala stadgar samt andra handlingar rörande Sundsvalls stad. Sundsvall 1874. (Local regulations and other documents related to the town of Sundsvall), pp 284–287.

19 Sahlén 1997, pp 325.
Thullberg 1990, p 37.

For further information about this system of organising poor relief see chapter VI. "The elderly paupers".

20 The Swedish title for guardian is "vårdare".

21 Protokoll från fattigvårdsstyrelsen i Sundsvalls stad. 27/11 1903:427. (Minutes from the Poor board). Appendix A.

22 Protokoll från fattigvårdsstyrelsen i Sundsvalls stad 24/11 1903. Appendix E.

23 Protokoll från fattigvårdsstyrelsen i Sundsvalls stad 1906.
Sundsvalls Stads Kommunala Handlingar. 1907–1920. (Documents from the Town Council).


27 Sundsvalls Stads Kommunala Handlingar 1902, p 181 and 1903, p 12.
Protokoll från fattigvårdsstyrelsen i Sundsvalls stad 3/11 1903.


29 Protokoll från Gustaf Adolfsföreningen 6/11 1901. (Minutes from the annual meeting of the Gustaf Adolf association).

Poll tax registers for the town of Sundsvall 1910.
IV. The value of labour

"The great expansion of the economy in our time has, besides unquestionable and important advantages for both the individual and society, led to increasing financial insecurity for the working classes.—Few of the manual workers and with them comparable groups are able to save enough to provide for their old age. For them the future looks rather gloomy and if relatives do not give a helping hand, the elderly are forced to turn to public poor relief."

The 1880s witnessed an increasing interest in old age security. On the 25th of January 1884 the leading liberal political ideologist, Adolf Hedin, proposed a national insurance scheme for accidents and old age. He criticised the influence of laissez-faire and thought that time had come when the state should increase its responsibility for the working classes. Hedin's proposal was one reason why the Government decided to set up a committee, Arbetarförsäkringskomitén, to investigate the living conditions of Swedish workers. The report of this committee did not immediately lead to legislation on old age security but during the following decades it had a great impact on the national debate on this issue. People in leading positions believed that changing socio-economic conditions were about to impoverish the older part of the population. Family ties were loosening and elderly were no longer valued in the labour market.

According to modernisation theorists the advent of industrialisation and urbanisation deprived aged people of all except the most poorly paid work and increased the unemployment rates of elderly people. New technology made old skills outmoded and it became difficult to obtain new employment. Old people became a low status group. The elderly were thought to have occupied a better position in pre-industrial society since they derived considerable prestige from the control they exercised over land and their continued economic activity.

However, previous research has shown the complexity of this issue. Jill Quadagno found that the labour force participation rates of elderly men in England and Wales fell between 1891 and 1911. One explanation for the decline was the English Old Age Pensions Act of 1908, but she also emphasises other important factors responsible for the decrease. Improving living conditions of the middle-class led to increasing possibilities to save for old age and gradually withdraw from business. A decline in the number of skilled craftsmen, replaced by unskilled workers, meant higher rates of retirement. The Workmen's Compensation Act made employers hesitate to employ
older workers, who were more likely to be injured while at work while at the same time unions were opposed to the practice of employing elderly at lower wages.

Furthermore, Quadagno found a labour force participation rate of around fifteen percent for women aged over 55 in 1901. She observed that many of these women continued to work after the age of 65 and that they were less likely to retire than elderly male workers. Self-employed women were less likely to retire, whereas teachers and commercial clerks had the highest retirement rates. These elite groups probably also had pensions and savings.²

Brian Gratton studied aged workers in Boston between 1890 and 1950 and found stable labour force participation rates. There was even a small increase in the rates until the 1930s after which they experienced a slight fall. The majority of the elderly were forced to work because they were not included in a welfare system before New Deal welfare legislation of the 1930s. Moreover, Gratton found a slight increase between 1890 and 1930 in the proportion of elderly female workers in Boston. He attributes the rise to the increase in the total number of women in the labour force and the increasing proportion of single women in Boston, who had to support themselves.³

The aim of this chapter is to examine the impact of industrialisation and urbanisation from a gender and class perspective on the activity of elderly people in the labour force. By studying labour force participation rates, occupational structure, and the extent of pensions and savings we will be able to estimate the value to elderly men and women of their earning power. It is essential to apply a gender perspective because the male and female labour markets differed markedly. Further, it is very important to study social groups in order to distinguish winners from losers.

The situation in the town of Sundsvall will be compared with conditions at the national level. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of empirical evidence for pre-industrial times. Swedish national statistics as is the case with other national sources do not provide information about the work of the elderly until the late nineteenth century but hopefully this local study will be a small contribution to this subject.

It is not easy to study the labour force activity of the elderly. The first and maybe the worst problem is to know whether an old person given an occupation in the poll tax or catechetical examination registers was in fact employed. Before 1910 the national statistics on occupations were defective. For instance, there was no information on occupation by age and marital status. Increasing spatial and social mobility made it difficult to keep track of the population and many people who had left the labour force were still registered as active workers. The absence of age-based national information on occupations before 1910, means that I have only been able to study the labour force participation rates of the elderly in the country as a whole in 1910 and 1930. However, it has been possible to examine the socio-economic status
of aged people during late nineteenth century, at least among the working classes. This information can be found in two Swedish statistical surveys, the *Arbetareförsäkringskommiténs betänkande* of 1888 and the *Nya Arbetareförsäkringskommiténs betänkande* of 1893. As was pointed out earlier the Government set up these committees to investigate the need for public insurance for the working classes.

Age-specific information on labour force participation for the town of Sundsvall has been extracted from the poll tax registers of 1845, 1880 and 1910. I have chosen these particular years in order to compare pre-industrial times with different phases of industrialisation. Information was extracted for all men and women over the age of 60 resident in Sundsvall. Given the size of the population in 1930 information for that year, derived from the census was limited to one randomly chosen sample of 300 elderly individuals.

One way to know whether a person was working or not is to link information in the parish registers with the taxation lists. Unfortunately the taxation registers in Sundsvall did not specify dates of birth, which makes the identification of the elderly both tedious and at times problematic. However, by matching names and occupation in the two sources I will try to overcome this problem.

In order to find out more about the sources of income available to old people the second part of the chapter considers the growth in retirement and savings. Some people retired because they were forced out of the labour market and others because they had the economic wherewithal. Therefore, the reasons for retirement need to be identified. Furthermore, consideration is also given to the extent of savings through an analysis of estate inventories from the town of Sundsvall. This is only a preliminary study since the sources are only available from 1888. Due to the great fire in 1888 many public documents were destroyed. Information on savings for the period 1890–1893 has been compared with records for 1908–1910.

For the purposes of the local study 60 has been selected as making the start of old age while to be able to compare the younger elderly with older people, the elderly are divided into the following three categories; 60–69 years, 70–79 years, and 80 years and above.

### 1. Work in the autumn of life

#### The informal sector

Previous research has established that many of the elderly workers were employed in the informal sector of the economy. John Benson has used the term "penny capi-
talism” for this kind of employments. He has advanced the hypothesis that these activities were of crucial importance for British working-class life throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, penny capitalists are not easy to identify and impossible to quantify. These men and women often combined penny capitalism with wage labour and also moved from one form of penny capitalism to another. Benson has tried to define this concept:

"Nonetheless, it remains possible to define the penny capitalist as a working man or woman who went into business on a small scale in the hope of profit (but with the possibility of loss) and made him (or her) self responsible for every facet of the enterprise."

The Swedish author Gerda Meyersson has described her impressions, formed from visits to different workplaces employing women in Stockholm at the beginning of this century. Many women were employed at sewing, washing, and ironing but were not included in the official statistics. Furthermore, others had work subcontracted out to their homes. Weaving, knitting, silver polishing, and making match boxes were some of their tasks. According to the author these home workers were the worst off of the female workers. They had long unregulated working hours and often worked in small and dark rooms.

Another large group working in the informal sector of the economy were the wives of artisans, shopkeepers, farmers, and fishermen who often "assisted" their husbands in their work. Numbers of aged men also undertook unskilled tasks such as wood chopping or snow shovelling but were not reported as employed in the official registers. It is of course very difficult to find data on this kind of work, probably very important for the survival of many elderly men and women. Fragments of information can be found in the literature and in records from the Poor Board but the extent of this kind of work cannot be determined.

The fate of Per Carlsson and his wife Lovisa is illuminating. At the age of 58 the former guardsman Per Carlsson wrote a letter in 1871 to the Poor Board applying for poor relief. He and his 54 year old wife had tried to earn a living by selling candy, but now they felt too old to continue this unprofitable business. Probably Per and Lovisa received some assistance from the community because they were recorded as poor in the poll tax register in 1875. It seems that Lovisa had to move to the workhouse before her husband. According to a note in the death register Lovisa had a tragic end to her life. She was burnt to death when the workhouse was destroyed by fire in 1886. Per entered the same institution three years after his wife's death, registered on his entry as suffering from old age infirmity.
Selling various things was probably a common income generating strategy of aged people. Many had to be Jacks-of-all-trades to be able to survive. The Swedish author Karl-Johan Rådström described life in the saw mill town of Tvåberga (really Sundsvall) at the end of the nineteenth century. One of the minor characters in the novel is Hilma Andersson. Every Wednesday and Saturday she drew her wheel barrow through streets broad and narrow, selling pastry to the wealthier inhabitants of the town.\(^9\)

Another example of work in the informal sector is provided by the author Gösta Söderlund. He has written about every-day life in the saw-mill industrial areas of early twentieth century Sundsvall. One of the characters is the old widow Mrs Bergström, who earned her living as a bath attendant. The whole of Friday and Saturday she spent filling bath tubs and scrubbing the backs of saw mill workers and their families. The only income she received was the fee her customers paid for taking a bath.\(^{10}\)

Given the dearth of information, we will unfortunately have to leave the informal sector of the economy at this point and concentrate on those elderly who can be found in the official records. On this base, the following section discusses the labour force participation and occupational structure of aged people during late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.
Labour force participation rates

We will start with an overview at the national level, showing the percentage of elderly men and women identified in the statistics as having an occupation. This rural-urban and gender comparison will be followed by a description of the situation in Sundsvall.

Table 4. Percentage of Swedish men and women over the age of 50 recorded with an occupation in 1910 and 1930.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>1930</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and above</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and above</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and above</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It has been impossible to measure long term changes on the national level since there is no age based information before the twentieth century. However, we can observe some interesting differences between 1910 and 1930 in the working patterns of older people. The proportion of male workers in the younger age group registered as workers in 1930 was almost the same as in 1910, but much lower proportions of men over the age of 65 were given an occupation in 1930. Furthermore, it is evident that in 1910 fewer elderly men living in urban areas than in rural were in the work force.

The percentage of older women recorded with an occupation was higher in urban areas. Moreover, there was an increase between 1910 and 1930 in the proportion of working women aged 50–64, both in urban and rural areas. The British author Charles Booth who studied living conditions of aged people in England and Wales in the
The old ferryman Olof Petter Stjernström at work, probably around 1930. The fee for crossing the Selånger river was in the beginning two öre and was then raised to five öre. The box in the middle of the ferry is the cash-box. (Museum of the town of Sundsvall)
1890s came to the conclusion that some old women benefited indirectly during industrialisation. He noticed that...

"...when younger women and girls are employed in factories the care of the home falls naturally to the old. It is in home-work, or in housework of some kind, either for those with whom they live, or for others who in return will give them food or a little money, that the great majority of old women find employment."

The percentage of elderly men and women recorded as occupied in Sundsvall between 1845 and 1930 is set out in Table 5. The highest proportion of elderly men in the work force was in 1845. The labour force participation rates in 1880 and 1910 were approximately the same but among men 70 years and above there was a successive decline over time. A radical change is evident by 1930. The proportion of elderly men recorded with an occupation was much lower than the proportion two decades earlier, especially among the septuagenarians. The percentage of elderly women recorded as occupied remained low and relatively stable until 1930, when the proportion rose to just under a fifth.

Table 5. Men and women over the age of 60 recorded with an occupation in the town of Sundsvall 1845, 1880, 1910, and 1930.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>31 (89%)</td>
<td>6 (8%)</td>
<td>11 (85%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (67%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>44 (86%)</td>
<td>6 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>68 (75%)</td>
<td>4 (2%)</td>
<td>19 (76%)</td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>88 (75%)</td>
<td>8 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 and above</td>
<td>319 (89%)</td>
<td>32 (6%)</td>
<td>94 (62%)</td>
<td>6 (2%)</td>
<td>9 (38%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>422 (79%)</td>
<td>39 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All categories</td>
<td>68 (84%)</td>
<td>25 (25%)</td>
<td>13 (36%)</td>
<td>5 (8%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>83 (65%)</td>
<td>31 (18%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** Poll tax registers for the town of Sundsvall 1845, 1880, and 1910 computerised by DDB, Umeå. Census for the town of Sundsvall 1930 (sample of 300 people).

To sum up, the study of work patterns in Sundsvall indicates that the highest labour force participation rates of elderly men occurred in 1845. Furthermore, it is apparent that employment rates of older men and women in Sundsvall correspond fairly well with the national rates. The greatest change took place between 1910 and 1930. The lowest proportion of elderly men active in the labour force was in 1930, whereas the opposite situation applied in the case of women. The issue that has to be addressed...
is whether this was a real change or whether this was simply the product of a more adequate registration.

In 1914 Swedish elderly were entitled for the first time to public pensions. The first pensions were very low but for people living below subsistence level this probably was an important element of their overall income. The pension system might have been one important cause of the decline in the rates of aged men active in the labour force. However, since the proportion of elderly women active on the labour market increased, the introduction of the pension cannot on its own provide an adequate explanation. It seems likely that elderly women probably shared the experience of younger women improving options in the labour market.

In addition, more accurate registration meant that female occupations not registered in earlier censuses were included in the census of 1930. The greater accuracy of this census could also help explain the lower rates of older men recorded with an occupation since earlier population records might have exaggerated the numbers of men active in the labour force.

**Elderly with an assessed income**

The above analysis of changes in the proportion of elderly with a registered occupation between 1845 and 1930 does not definitely establish whether all of the people having a title of their own really were working. The pronounced change visible in 1930 might have been a result of more accurate registration of employments. One way to come closer to the truth is to compare the recording of occupations in the catechetical examination registers of 1845 and 1880 with that in the taxation lists. There is further information available in the census of 1930 which records both the taxed income and property of each individual.

Unfortunately, the taxation registers do not record the date of birth of the persons they registered. Therefore, it has sometimes been difficult to determine whether a person in the taxation register was the same as someone with that name in the catechetical examination register. However, there were only a few doubtful cases and by trying to match first and second names with occupation, false links have hopefully been kept to a minimum.

Before the twentieth century the fiscal system was very complex and people paid various kinds of taxes. Since the aim of this study is to estimate activity on the labour market I will concentrate on the income tax. This method will still unfortunately result in a slight underestimation of labour force participation rates because elderly persons with a small income excused payment of this tax. However, it will hopefully bring us nearer to the truth.
There were no radical changes in the tax system between 1845 and 1880. However, in 1902 and 1910, the system of state taxation was reformed. The Riksdag (the Swedish parliament) stated that taxes should be levied on the income received by its citizens, as this was the most equitable way of raising taxes. The changes in the national tax legislation was followed by a reform of the local tax law in 1928. In spite of these changes, I consider it to be possible to estimate labour force participation rates of elderly persons on the basis of the information given in the taxation registers of 1845 and 1880 and of that in the census of 1930.

In 1845 49 percent of men aged over 60 living in the town of Sundsvall were recorded in the taxation register. Almost half of them were fishermen, who together with one worker and one carpenter had the lowest income of those who were taxed. Those at the top of the list were factory owners and tradesmen. A large number of the elderly men who did not pay tax were recorded either as artisans or workers. A handful of old women were found in the register, four of them were widows while the fifth was an unmarried owner of a bakery.

One of those still paying tax, although very old, was the fisherman Adam Wörman. At the age of 76 he paid a small amount of income tax. He and his wife Helena owned a house where their daughter Christina and their son-in-law Erik Hamrin had a household of their own. Erik who also was a fisherman might have worked together with his father-in-law. Since Adam died at the age of 95 he was probably still quite healthy when he was 76, capable of working late in life. Furthermore, Adam Wörman paid poll tax until his death. This in combination with the fact that he was still the owner of the house at the age of 95 indicates that this man managed quite well late in life. Adam was not alone having an income of his own among the other septuagenarians. Half of all men aged 70–79 were registered as tax payers.

In 1880 the percentage of elderly men recorded in the taxation registers was slightly higher than in 1845; 55 percent of men over the age of 60 and 52 percent of those aged over 70 were recorded with a taxable income. The majority of the elderly with the lowest taxable income were workers and fishermen. A wholesale dealer, bank director, ship owner and consul had of course the highest incomes. However, in 1880 as in 1845 the working classes had the lowest percentage of tax payers, even if the proportion had risen over time.

The number of old women found in the register was still very low; five widows and six unmarried women. The majority of these women ran some kind of business. One of the unmarried women, shopkeeper Gunilla Dahlberg, seemed to have been quite successful since she had a relatively high income at the age of 60. Forty years earlier demoiselle Dahlberg had migrated from Uppsala to Tuna, a parish close to Sunds-
vall. Eight years later she moved to Sundsvall. Until 1860 she seemed to have lived with relatives but in this year she established a household of her own. Not until twenty years later at the age of 61 was she for the first time recorded as a shopkeeper in the poll tax register. However, since she had a rather high income in 1880 she had probably run this business for a while.¹⁴

The situation had changed drastically in 1930. 82 percent of the men and 58 percent of the women were registered with a taxable income. Almost all of those elderly persons belonging to the upper and middle classes were tax payers. As in 1845 the artisans and workers were the two social groups with the lowest percentage of tax payers, although by 1930 the vast majority even of the artisans and workers did pay tax. A pronounced difference from the earlier years was that almost all men who were in their sixties were registered as having taxable income.

Approximately half of the elderly women with taxable income also had a registered occupation of their own. Furthermore, many of the widows were taxpayers. Several of these women might have continued their late husband's business but were not registered as having an occupation. In total, 44 percent of unmarried women, 51 percent of widows and 8 percent of wives had taxable income in their own right in 1930.

Conclusively, the comparison of the catechetical examination registers and the taxation lists suggests a divergent picture from the one presented above based solely on the poll tax registers, since there was an increase over time of men and women recorded with a taxable income. One reason for the increasing proportion of taxpayers probably was the expanding labour market for men and particularly for women. Another reason might have been the increasing number of elderly in receipt of pensions. However, those in receipt only of a national pension did not pay tax because they did not earn more than 600 crowns per year, this being the threshold for tax relief in 1930.¹⁵ The highest possible national pension for a husband and his wife at the time was approximately 450 crowns. Many civil servants, on the other hand had pensions which were generous enough to be taxed. Their pensions went up to 50 or 60 percent of their final salary, whereas the national pension in 1930 only was around 16 percent of the wage of an industrial worker.¹⁶

In order to continue to investigate the impact of a changing labour market, the following section offers more information on the employment of old men and women within different sectors of the economy.
The socio-economic status of elderly men

Modernisation theorists believed that new technology made old skills outmoded, making it more difficult for the elderly to compete on the labour market. The following section of this chapter discusses changes in the socio-economic status of elderly men and women during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The central issue is what was the impact of changing socio-economic conditions in the town of Sundsvall and in Sweden on work in old age. In which sectors of the economy were the elderly employed? Did old workers have a chance to work in the new industries or did they continue to practise their more traditional skills?

As regards the situation at the national level it is not easy to make comparisons over time, since the classification of occupations varied between censuses. Furthermore, there is only age related information on the workers and shopkeepers in 1880, whereas information on the whole labour force is not available before 1910.

Figure 7 a. Men aged over 65 resident in Sweden, according to the section of the economy in which they were employed in 1910 and 1930. Employments that could not be allocated to particular sectors of the economy are excluded.

Figure 7 b. Men aged over 65 resident in towns in Sweden, according to the section of the economy in which they were employed in 1910 and 1930. Employments that could not be allocated to particular sectors of the economy are excluded.

Sources: National censuses 1910 and 1930. SCB.
Figure 7 c. Men aged over 65 resident in the town of Sundsvall according to the section of the economy in which they were employed in 1910 and 1930. Employments that could not be allocated to particular sectors of the economy are excluded.

Sources: Censuses for the town of Sundsvall 1910 and 1930. Research Archives of Umeå.

1. Agriculture and related sectors
2. Industry
3. Trade and communications
4. Civil service and liberal professions
5. Domestic service

Due to marked differences by gender in the labour force participation and in the character of occupations, the employment pattern of men and women will from now on be discussed separately. In the case of women only those with a recorded occupation will be considered.

The majority of elderly men in Sweden in 1910 and 1930 were employed in agriculture and related sectors. Even in 1930 approximately 60 percent of male workers over the age of 65 were so employed. Around one quarter worked in the industrial sector, whereas below ten percent were occupied in the other areas of the economy. This shows that Sweden in 1930 was still very much an agrarian country although a society experiencing very rapid development.

At the time approximately one third of the Swedish population lived in urban areas. Analysis of the socio-economic status of elderly men living in towns revealed that a majority of elderly men belonged to the industrial sector of the economy both in 1910 and 1930. Compared with other Swedish urban areas Sundsvall had an even higher percentage in the industrial sector in 1910, whereas the situation was the reverse in 1930. The trade and communication activities were also more developed in Sundsvall.

Focusing on occupations of the Swedish elderly in 1880, many men over the age of 65 had traditional occupations such as shoemaker, saddler, tailor, hatter, and smith. Agricultural workers were excluded from this survey. However, in 1890 they constituted the majority of elderly workers and probably did so a decade earlier.
However, old workers represented just a small part of the work force employed in the various sectors of the economy. The highest percentage, eleven percent, can be found among the agricultural workers, whereas only between five and six percent of the carpenters, shipyard workers, spinners, weavers, masons, tanners, tailors and hatters were over the age of 65. Skills with an extremely low proportion of senior workers were sailors, engineers, shop assistants and workers in the tobacco industry. Well below one percent of these workers were elderly.\textsuperscript{17}

As has been mentioned above, the census of 1910 was more informative on employment patterns than the earlier censuses. The most common occupation of elderly men was farmer. Carpenter, shoemaker, and tailor were other common occupations for elderly men. Compared with the situation in 1880 the percentage of these older artisans recorded as active in the work force had risen slightly. However, occupations with the highest proportions of elderly workers were rentiers, capitalists, house owners, and vergers. Electricians, fitters, telephone workers, and waiters were some examples of occupations held by very few elderly men.

In 1930 farmer remained the most common occupation for elderly men although many were employed as carpenters, shoemakers, and tailors. Although the number of elderly workers in engineering workshops, shipyards, and saw mills was relatively high, these skilled trades were completely dominated by younger workers. Only around five percent of people with these occupations were over the age of 65. Occupations with the highest rates of elderly workers in 1930 were capitalists, house owners, janitors, wood cutters, shoemakers, tailors and carpenters. Occupations in 1930 with the lowest proportions of aged men were shop assistants, waiters, postal and telegraph workers.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure8.png}
\caption{Men aged over 60 in the town of Sundsvall 1845, 1880, 1910, and 1930, divided by socio-economic status. N=56 in 1845, 175 in 1880, 124 in 1910, and 127 in 1930.}
\end{figure}

Occupations of aged men in Sundsvall

This section will examine the male labour market in Sundsvall. As has been mentioned only a minority of elderly women were recorded with an occupation. Therefore, we will return to the working women further on.

Ia owners of large business enterprises, landowners
Ib higher civil servants, university graduates
Iia small scale business entrepreneurs in trade and industry, fishermen
Iib lower civil servants and clerks, shop workers, foremen
III farmers, tenant farmers
IV craftsmen and artisans
Va workers in industry and urban commerce
Vb farm workers, domestic servants
Undef occupation cannot be defined

Having constituted the largest sector in 1845, small scale business entrepreneurs had suffered a marked decline in their share of the local economy by 1880. Since the proportion of aged shopkeepers was relatively unchanged the decline was due to the decreasing importance of fishing in the middle of the century. In 1845, 28 percent of the small entrepreneurs had been fishermen, whereas a mere 11 percent of them were fishermen in 1880. By this time, shopkeeper was the most common occupation in this sector. Furthermore, the proportion of workers employed in industry and commerce (category Va) increased fivefold between 1845 and 1880.

Carl Granlund was one of many workers who migrated to Sundsvall during the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1870 he migrated from Munsala in Finland to Sundsvall together with his two year younger wife, Maria, and their six children. The family lived as tenants during their first decade in Sundsvall and all of their children left the parental household before the 1880s. The oldest daughter died at the age of 34. The two sons spend some time in Munsala but one of them returned to Sundsvall to settle down. Sometime between 1875 and 1880 Carl and Maria bought a house in the working class area of Stenhammare. One married daughter and one married son lived together with their families in the same building. At this time at the age of 68 Carl had a registered income of 200 crowns.

However, in the years that followed one daughter and her family emigrated to North America. Furthermore, the daughter and son who lived in the same house as Carl and Maria migrated to a neighbouring parish. In 1882 Maria died and two years later only one daughter and her family lived nearby. Carl were not to be found in the poll tax register during the following years probably because he no longer was the...
owner of the house. He might have cohabited with his daughter and her family. In 1890 he was registered as poor in the poll tax register. At the beginning of this year he lived alone in one of the barracks but in November he entered in the workhouse due to old age infirmity. Two years later he died at the age of 80. The cause of death was registered as cancer ventriculi. 18

In 1880 workers constituted the majority of elderly employees as they did in 1910 and 1930. Unfortunately the majority were just recorded as "workers" in the parish registers, making it impossible to determine whether they were saw mill workers or belonged to another labour category. However, the informative census of 1930 contains detailed data on occupational status. Unskilled labourers and dock workers predominated among the elderly workers in industry and commerce.

The relatively high proportion of unskilled workers is in line with the arguments advanced by Jill Quadagno. According to Quadagno elderly men often were found in poorly paid occupations. Elderly unemployed faced great problems when they had to look for new work since their skills had often become outmoded. Therefore, aged workers found it difficult to obtain work in "modern" sectors of the economy. 19

In Sundsvall traditional skills such as tailor, butcher, and smith were the most common employments exercised by elderly artisans throughout the period 1845–1930. However, more "modern" occupations such as mechanical repairer and telephone worker had appeared on the social arena. The size and the composition of the Vb category had also changed over time. In 1845 and 1880 day labourers and crofters had been the determinant employments of the elderly working in this sector of the economy, whereas occupations such as janitor and woodcutter appeared in the twentieth century censuses.

In her study of the living conditions of the elderly in Great Britain, Jill Quadagno found a predominance of elderly workers in traditional occupations such as shoemaking, agricultural work, and fishing, whereas aged workers were underrepresented in more "modern" sectors such as electricity industry and work on the railways. 20

Brian Gratton views the low rates of elderly employees in modern industry as in part a cohort effect since at one historical moment...

"...the aged can be found to be underrepresented in "modern" occupations; but viewed across time, youthful cohorts in these occupations age, and the representation of aged workers within the occupations naturally increases." 21

Summing up, my study reveals an above average proportion of elderly men practising the traditional skills of a shoemaker, carpenter, and tailor during at local and national levels in 1880, 1910, and 1930. Further, the percentage of elderly men within
these skills rose steadily over time. This was partly due to the cohort effects as pointed out by Gratton, but probably it can also be explained by the low retirement rates of men employed within these sectors of the economy. These men seem to have been able to continue working late in life.

However, this was not the situation of aged industrial workers. Although many elderly workers were employed in larger industries such as saw mills and engineering industry the proportion of elderly men with such employment was low. A maximum of five percent of all industrial workers were over the age of 65 and the rates did not change much between 1880 and 1930. These results conflicts with those of Gratton since there is no evidence of the industrial work force in Sweden ageing over the course of time. Furthermore, the 1930 census reveals relatively high proportions of unskilled labourers and dock workers. This suggests that the elderly found it difficult to find employment in the new industry.

There are some occupations that were usually practised at specific periods in the life cycle. Few older men worked as waiters or shop assistants. The average age of such workers was low and usually these skills belonged to the early part of the life cycle. Elderly men were more likely to be house owners, capitalists, rentiers, janitors, and vergers. Those persons who had been economically successful could spend their autumn of life living on their capital. Others less successful, chose or had to accept less strenuous work than they had undertaken earlier in life.

The female labour market

The great population growth in Sweden during the first part of the nineteenth century, in conjunction with increasing proletarisation made it more difficult for people to marry and establish households of their own. As long as the century went on there was an increase in both the age of marriage and in the number of people remaining unmarried. For instance, in 1800, 6.9 percent of the male population and 11.7 percent of the female population in the age group 45–49 years were unmarried. In 1850 the corresponding percentage was 9.0 and 12.3 percent respectively. Fifty years later 13.5 percent of the men and not less than 19.4 percent of the women aged 45–49 were unmarried.22

It became more and more difficult for families to support the growing number of unmarried daughters of the bourgeoisie. Commerce and crafts were regulated by the guild system, and few women were admitted. The male monopoly in the field of crafts was almost absolute. As a widow a woman could take over her husband's rights to practice a craft and a few women were occupied with baking, brewing, butchering and sewing.
An increasing number of women tried to support themselves by practising certain trades which did not require the serving of an apprenticeship. Sale of furniture, household goods, second hand clothes, tobacco, and keeping fancy are examples of trades that women had permission to practice. However, before entering these trades women were subjected to a means test since these trades were reserved for those women seeking poor relief.23

In 1846 there was a wholesale revision of the laws regulating economic activity, which among other things began the abolition of the old guild system. In theory in regard to the practising of a craft women thereafter had the same rights as men. For female shopkeepers this was an improvement in the sense that the means test was abolished. However, the prerequisite for carrying on business was that the woman had attained majority. Others were only granted the right to support themselves: the so called self-maintenance rights. Such women had the right to carry on their business without a workshop and only with the help of children.24 The proportion of women employed in commerce and crafts increased and when the government introduced full freedom of trade in 1864 women formally had the same rights as men. In 1863 an unmarried woman automatically attained majority at the age of 25. At this age she had the right to the dispose of her income and property.25

Daughters of peasants and workers often started their careers as domestic servants. Many of these women migrated to urban areas to seek employment. Some ended up in private households and others in the expanding industrial sector. Although their wages in industry were low they were paid in cash and regulated working hours meant more spare time. This made industrial work attractive. Most of the industrial workers were young women and the majority left industry when they married, never to return.26

During the second half of the nineteenth century the employment patterns of women began to change. In connection with urbanisation industrially produced goods started to replace home made to a growing extent. This led to an increasing demand for labour outside home. Further, industrialisation, urbanisation, and bureaucratisation resulted in an expansion of public sector employment. Schools, public health, telegraph stations, and postal services gave women access to the labour market. The demand for cheap labour in combination with a surplus of unmarried women led to more women getting these kind of jobs.27

The proportion of aged women active in the labour force was, however, very low. The statistics at the national level from 1880 show that the largest number of working elderly women were employed as shopkeepers or seamstresses. Four percent of the shopkeepers were over the age of 65.28 Since the statistics from 1880 only included women employed in industry and trade, the large group of servants was excluded. In
1890 the majority of elderly working women were to be found within this latter group, but only two percent of all the servants were over the age of 65.

In the 1910 census many women with a recorded occupation of their own were registered as farmers. Other common occupations were servants, seamstresses, and shopkeepers. Many aged women were recorded as house owners, rentiers, and capitalists. Approximately forty percent of the women in the latter groups were over the age of 65. Farmers, janitors, and laundresses were other occupations with large proportions of elderly female workers.

Since the agricultural sector was still very important for the Swedish economy in 1930, quite a few elderly women were recorded as farmers. Another common occupation was that of old servants. Some old women were employed in the new public service jobs in the expanding female labour market but the pace of change was slow.

In all periods a large number of elderly women were registered as servants. Although this was typically a young woman's occupation a large number of elderly women worked in the households of others. However, we have to bear in mind the deficiencies in the registration of occupations. Many of the domestic servants might still have been recorded as such but retired years earlier. However, some of these women probably had served one household for decades and finally became part of the family they had served. According to Jill Quadagno the fate of several old maids before state pensions was introduced in 1911 was to die in the poorhouse. Many were childless and did not have anyone who could support them during their autumn of life.  

Women at work in Sundsvall

In 1845 almost all women with an occupation of their own were listed as servants, except one woman who was a shopkeeper and one who was a baker. Another exception was the former midwife, Anna Lidfors. She was born in 1761 and married to the tax collector Henrik Lidfors. They had two foster-daughters because they were without children of their own. In 1808 the oldest daughter left Sundsvall and three years later at the age of 50 Anna became a widow. The younger daughter left home in 1813. Before 1820 no occupation was recorded for Anna but in the poll tax register from this year she was listed as a midwife. Anna Lidfors continued to be registered as a midwife until she was in her seventies.
Table 6. Occupations of women aged over 60 in the town of Sundsvall 1845, 1880, 1910, and 1930.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1845 (N=111)</th>
<th>1880 (N=321)</th>
<th>1910 (N=176)</th>
<th>1930 (N=173)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotel owner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House owner</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rentier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner of restaurant or café</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopkeeper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milliner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butcher</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwife</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School teacher</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watchmaker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamstress</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copper cleaner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrouder of corpses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning woman</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laundress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall 1845 and 1880 computerised by DDB, Umeå. Censuses for the town of Sundsvall 1910 and 1930 (sample of 300 persons each). Research Archives of Umeå.

In 1880 the servants still constituted the largest occupational group, although several women were workers. Occupations such as teacher, seamstress, and milliner were listed for the first time. By 1910 the number of servants had decreased markedly. Cleaning women and shopkeepers were the most common occupations in 1930 and a greater range of occupations were recorded than in previous years. Thus women were reported as owning restaurants, cafés, hotels, and had different kinds of shops. Further, some women were occupied with more specialised tasks, such as cleaning copper and shrouding corpses. The character of occupations in 1910 and particularly in 1930 suggests a more accurate registration of women’s work than before.

As I mentioned in the introduction one way for aged women to obtain an income of their own was to take in boarders. Unfortunately the sources do not tell us about the frequency of boarders. However, the poll tax registers contain information on female house owners. It is reasonable to assume that women owning houses which contained more than one flat received some of their income in the form of rent. In
1845 and in 1880 six percent of the aged women in Sundsvall owned a house containing more than one household. By 1910 the proportion of female house owners had doubled.

This section has demonstrated conclusively that very few elderly women had a registered occupation of their own although the labour market for women was expanding. Occupations such as shopkeeper and seamstress as well as those in the domestic sector were the most common. Moreover, due to the dominance of the agricultural sector even at the beginning of the twentieth century many elderly women were reported as farmers at the national level. Finally, a greater range of occupations was evident in the twentieth century; partly because of the expanding female labour market, and partly due to the fact that occupations which had previously been excluded from the official statistics were now included in the census 1930. However, we have to bear in mind that many women were still employed in casual part-time labour and could therefore not be detected in the official sources.

Elisabet Östlund delivered newspapers to the inhabitants of Östermalm in Sundsvall. She had been a newspaper woman for almost thirty years. She died in 1913. (Archives of the editor and owner of Sundsvalls Tidning, Gustaf Reinhold Peterson, 1907.)
Conclusions

I have assessed above the impact of industrialisation and urbanisation on the labour force activity of old men and women. However, a number of problems arose in connection with the analysis of the work patterns of the elderly, principally due to deficiencies in the sources. Many elderly men and even more women were employed in the informal sector of the economy. Unfortunately, it will always be impossible to determine the extent of this section of the economy, although some information has been extracted from certain sources. Since much more detail was provided on occupations in the census of 1930 and very specialised occupations appeared for the first time, it can be assumed that this census included some occupations that had in previous periods been part of the informal sector of the economy. It emerged that a very high proportion of aged men were accorded an occupation in all the years selected for analysis except the last. The question that arises is whether all these people really were actively employed.

This study has strengthened the findings of previous research that stressed the complexity of the issue. The official statistics show a decline of the percentage of men active in the labour force by 1930. This development together with lower rates of elderly male workers in urban areas seems to support the idea that modernisation lowered the proportion of old people active in the labour force. Furthermore, the low proportion of elderly men employed in industry and in "modern" occupations might have resulted from the increasing importance placed on new technology and skills.

However, one factor that counters the idea that modernisation invariably had a negative impact on the labour force participation rates of older people is the growing proportion of old women being active on the labour market between 1910 and 1930. This rise was in part a reflection of the increasing proportion of female workers in the overall work force. Significantly, urban women were more likely to be employed than elderly women living in the countryside. An increasing proportion of aged women took up domestic occupations and trade because the expanding urban environment offered women more opportunities to earn a living. While the labour market for urban elderly men seems to have deteriorated, the labour market for urban women expanded. Nor does the marked increase in the proportion of both elderly men and women assessed in 1930 and the stable proportion of tax payers during the nineteenth century support the idea that modernisation caused a deterioration on the economic position of the elderly.

The changing occupational structure is not the only explanation to decreasing rates of elderly men active in the labour force. During the beginning of the twentieth century an increasing number of elderly persons became entitled to pensions. This had a great impact on labour force participation rates. The following chapter will
investigate the extent of the pension systems and their influence on activity in the labour market.

2. The importance of retirement and savings

Some changes in the labour force participation rates of the elderly have been discussed in the previous section. However, the registration of occupations during the nineteenth century was deficient and it is difficult to know whether an old man or woman really was working or not. In order to better understand the significance of employment for urban population in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries I will now analyse the situation of those who had left the labour force. Who precisely was registered as having retired from a particular occupation? Was it a person who was well off and had the financial means to retire or was it someone who had become unemployed or was unable to work?

Furthermore, the provenance and extent of different pension systems needs to be examined in order to better understand changes in the labour force activity. I will present Governmental and private pension funds and at a local level try to estimate how many elderly persons might have benefited from them. Moreover, I will summarise the political discussion successively leading to the development of a national pension system.

An essential prerequisite for a planned retirement was to save money. Attention will therefore focus on the ability of different social groups to accommodate savings. By comparing estate inventories for the town of Sundsvall for the periods 1890–1893 and 1908–1910 I will try to identify any changes in saving behaviour over time.

My study derives its information on retired workers from the poll tax registers because these were more likely than the catechetical examination registers to record the current situation as regards participation in the labour force. For the extent of private pension funds in Sundsvall I have turned to the *Kungl. Majts. Befallnings-hafvandes femårsberättelser* (Quinquennial reports of the County Governor). Until 1905 these sources contained information on the number of people in receipt of pensions from different associations. However, it is not possible to discover the number of state pensioners in a particular locality. Therefore, I have tried to estimate the proportion of state pensioners.
Pension funds in pre-industrial Sweden

State pensions

As early as the middle of the seventeenth century the Government of Sweden guaranteed some of its employees economic security in old age. The oldest of all pension funds was Amiralitetskriegsmanskassan established in 1642. Fees and state support financed the fund. Officers, boatswains, carpenters, blacksmiths and others who were serving the Swedish navy were entitled to pensions. Four years later the state founded Vadstena Krigsmanskassa, to support old soldiers. In 1756 this benefit system was superseded by the army's pension fund.

In a Royal Resolution of 1688 the Government stressed the importance of civil servants retaining full pay and other benefits when they became unable to work. During the eighteenth century the state paid increasing attention to the situation of elderly civil servants. It was argued that it was expensive and ineffective to have other people doing the job of an old civil servant. Therefore, from 1798 civil servants were able to retire once they had reached the age of 70. During the first half of the nineteenth century the pension age of civil servants was lowered to 65 years.

A growing number of state departments and other institutions were included in pension systems at the end of the nineteenth century. For instance, people employed by the Post Office, the State Railway, the Customs department, the state church and those employed in the public school system were entitled by this time to old age pensions. The pension age of these employees was similar to that of today, between 60 and 70 years of age. However, they had to have been in service between 30 and 40 years before they were allowed to retire. Widows and children of civil servants also received State pensions.

Few of those employed by local authorities had pension funds of their own, but since communities were not obliged to support their elderly employees no big sums were provided for this purpose. 31

Private pensions

It was not only the Government that could guarantee former employees economic security in old age. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the guilds had benefit systems for insolvent members, widows, and children of former members. Moreover, people without property such as servants could be taken care of in old age if their employers were willing to support them. According to paternalistic tradition the master of the house was responsible for the well-being of all members of his household.
He was to take care of the old and sick, and in return he was entitled to the work of his subordinates. These obligations were written into the Servant and Master Act of 1833.32

This paternalistic concern also characterised the working conditions of employees in the iron foundries. The companies running these foundries took care of the employee practically from the cradle to the grave. They were involved in almost every part of a person's life. Companies employed midwives, teachers, and doctors. Furthermore free medicine, and health insurance was common. When a worker grew old or when a woman lost her spouse the foundry provided them with housing, food, and wood. However, the amount of support varied considerably between the foundries and in some places the support was very limited.33

Paternalistic ideas characterised Swedish industrialisation in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Especially in rural areas the traditions of the foundries influenced other kinds of industrial activity such as saw mills. Part of the wages were paid in kind, and employers were responsible for their workers' social security.

According to the historian Tommy Svensson these paternalistic elements represented a continuity in practice of the old foundries, but it was also a practical way of organising production to fulfil the needs of industry. Managers of isolated factories in the countryside or companies in need of specialised labour, in particular stressed the importance of guaranteeing social security, housing and other benefits to enable them to recruit and retain the workers they needed. Svensson has studied living conditions among shipyard workers in Gothenburgh. The companies founded the first school, supported the local library, contributed to the building of owner-occupied houses and supported sickness, funeral and pension funds. This can be seen not only as an expression of liberal and humanitarian values but also as a policy of social control as an essential part in the employers' fight against an expanding labour movement.34

Other Swedish scholars have also noted these paternalistic elements in manufacturing industry at the turn of the nineteenth century. However, support from the company's pension fund was not automatic. Many of those who applied for support had to plead for assistance and there were managers to decide who were entitled to this help. For instance, the deserving pensioners had to have been employed by the company concerned for decades.35

Retirement of the landed peasants

In Scandinavia and other parts of Europe, such as Germany, Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, and Finland, all of them under Germanic law, there existed a widespread
retirement system. Under this system in Swedish called "undantagssystemet" 36, an aged farmer transferred his property during his lifetime to a relative, mainly his child, in return for food and housing for the rest of his life. The old farmer and his wife often had a household of their own either in another part of the same building as the young couple or in a separate house close to the main building. 37

The retirement contracts contained detailed information on the resources to which the elderly were entitled. For instance, the annual ration of milk, grain, potatoes, and herring was specified. Furthermore, some contracts contained guarantees that the old people would be helped with transport to the church and the mill. For many of the heirs the retirement contracts could become a burden and this often led to conflicts. There were many complaints by governments, officials and churchmen about the tensions between generations resulting from retirement contracts. 38

At the beginning of the nineteenth century approximately ninety percent of the Swedish population lived in rural areas and the most dominant sectors of the economy were agriculture, fishing, hunting and other rural by-employments. Agricultural production increased and the commercialisation of this sector intensified. In consequence, farmers started to abandon the practice of drawing up retirement contracts. After the middle of the nineteenth century contracts started to disappear from areas dominated by commercial agriculture and timber industry. If a transfer of landed property took place in these areas, it was now regulated by cash sales. Some of the elderly had the possibility to sell a part of their farm or to take out a mortgage and draw a pension from the interest on the capital. Moreover, the co-heirs tended to demand an increasing proportion of the inheritance. The gradual involvement in the money economy finally meant that the retirement contracts fell into disuse. At the beginning of the twentieth century the contracts were only common in the northern parts of Sweden and in isolated forested areas in the south. 39

**Economic security in the autumn of life**

Proposals to improve economic security in old age had been debated in the Riksdag from the 1830s but all of them had been rejected. At the beginning of the 1830s Berndt Harder Santesson from the burghers' estate tabled a proposal which would have ordered savings banks and pension funds to be established at new foundries and factories. These institutions were intended to support infirm old workers and the widows and children of former workers. Others urged the founding of savings banks. Santesson was an ardent advocate of these institutions and hoped that these banks would result in a reduction in the expenditure on poor relief. Another motive was the positive effects savings might have on the economy and morality of the
working classes. However, the proposal was rejected on the grounds that this was not an appropriate subject for Government intervention.40

Baron C.A. Raab proposed in the Riksdag 1847–1848 the founding of insurance funds in each county, as a way of solving the problem of increasing pauperisation and guaranteeing security in old age. Raab suggested that the funds should be financed by annual fees paid by all household heads who employed labour. This proposal was rejected because the Riksdag decided that too little was known about such institutions.41

In the Riksdag 1853–1858 the Burgher G.O. Sundblad presented a radical motion. He suggested establishment of a national pension fund for the needy elderly. This fund was to be financed by the poll tax in combination with charges. The members of the Riksdag rejected this motion on the basis that this would be tantamount to state financed poor relief and result in heavy expenditure. Economic security in old age the Riksdag declared should be the responsibility of the individual.42

Further proposals concerning the economic well-being of the old workers were presented in the middle of the century but all of them were rejected. Two ways of financing the pensions were specified in these proposals. Either the workers were supposed to save in pension funds or in savings banks or their employers were to save on their behalf.43 Through regular payment into savings banks or in these funds, economic security in old age would be guaranteed without burdening poor relief. Foresight and self-control should prevent the individual from destitution.

A strong motive behind most proposals was the desire to reduce the expenditure on poor relief. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a marked increase in the number of paupers. This proletarisation gave rise to concerns about the rise in the costs of poor relief and a fear that these problems would pose a threat to social stability. This resulted in a debate about the "social question" during the 1830s and 1840s and in a major investigation into the conditions of the poor.44

One of the reasons for the failure of these early proposals was the economic liberalism that dominated economic thinking. Old age insurance was not considered the responsibility of the Government but of the individual. However, at the end of the nineteenth century political thought began to move from favouring laissez-faire ideas towards increasing state intervention. The first proposal in this direction came 1882 when E. Westin raised the issue of the importance of industrial safety and accident insurance. The principal motive for these suggested improvements was to preserve industrial peace. This motion was followed in 1884 by the full fledged program of Adolf Hedin.45 Furthermore, a radical proposal in 1886 demanded shorter working hours, minimum wages, and proper housing for the working classes. This proposal was considered too radical and was rejected.46
The discussion was influenced both by humane considerations and by a wish to uphold order in society. Although the Swedish working class at this time was small and unorganised, the alleged threat from this group was used as an argument for reform. For instance, in the Second Chamber Baron Broder Abraham Leijonhufvud mentioned increasing discontent in society. He was of the opinion that reforms had to be implemented in order to calm dissatisfied workers. Several members of the Riksdag agreed.47

Another reason for the increasing concern with social security was the unease about the consequences of mass emigration to North America. Adolf Hedin stressed the importance of the improvement of working conditions in order to hinder the outflow of valuable labour from Sweden. Baron Erik Josias Sparre also emphasised the need to halt emigration which he thought would impoverish the country.48

The interest in social reforms increased even more during the 1890s, although there was still a marked resistance to reform, partly because of the financial burdens such reforms would impose on the State, and partly because of the liberal ideology which permeated nineteenth century policy. In the 1890s the argument about the threat from the working classes was toned down by the liberals and the debate stressed the plight of the poor workers.49 The motives of the conservatives were firmly anti-socialist. The former were divided into two groups: one was influenced by Bismarck's social insurance policy, a patriarchal program intending to improve the living conditions of the workers while the other was of the opinion that the state should not intervene in the lives of the citizens' and that reforms paved the way for socialism.50

International discussions also affected the debate in the Swedish Riksdag. In his famous and extensive motion Hedin discussed insurance systems in a number of European countries. For instance, he gave a thorough description of the Danish proposal on old age insurance.51 However, Adolf Hedin had a negative attitude towards Bismarck, whom he correctly reckoned used social policy as an instrument in the fight against organised labour. Bismarck's policy was vigorously discussed and due to Bismarck the conservatives began to take an increasing interest in social reform.52

After nearly thirty years of discussions, investigations, and official reports, in 1913 the Swedish Riksdag passed a law setting up a pension scheme for every Swedish citizen being over the age of 67. Any person who became incapacitated before the age of 67 would henceforth be entitled to a supplementary pension. The pension system was divided into contributory and non-contributory elements. People between the ages of 16 and 66 were to pay annual income-based pension charges. The supplementary pensions were of benefit in particular for disabled persons and was to be financed out of public taxation.
At first sight this legislation seems very radical as it incorporated the principle of equality. All elderly citizens were entitled to pensions. Compared with pension acts in other countries the Swedish system was outstanding because married women and not only women active in the labour force were included. However, women were not awarded the same rights as men. For instance, the act stated that men were to receive 30 percent of the sum they had contributed, and women only 24 percent. Elderly women also received a lower supplementary pension.

Pensionsförsäkringskommittén (the Old Age Insurance Committee) favoured reduced payments for women on the grounds of that they were more likely than men to become disabled, and also lived longer. Further, the Committee considered that women had stronger social networks than men and therefore were able to survive on smaller sums.\

Since the principle element of the pension was of contributory character payments were very low while the pension system became established. Many pensioners had to rely on public support, although the purpose had been to limit the costs of poor relief. In 1914 the value of the highest State pension was approximately 11 percent of the average wage of an industrial worker. By 1931 it was still only 16 percent.\

In 1928 the social-democratic Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Gustav Möller, pressed for more generous State pensions. The prime argument was that the pensioners being the worst off should be entitled to worthier support than poor relief. Pensionsförsäkringskommittén authorised a number of surveys to examine the effects of State pensions on poor relief and savings. These investigations eventually led to more generous pensions and the contributory part became less significant. However, in spite of this rise, State pensions were still very low. One more important pension reform came into force in 1948, when a universal old age pension of 1000 crowns per year was authorised, payable to all persons over the age of 67 regardless of income.

**Retired workers**

In order to better understand the nature of labour force participation the following account will examine the group of people registered in the poll tax lists as no longer practising their former occupation. How old were these former workers? Was it only people who were well off who retired or do we find elderly from all social groups among the retired workers?
Table 7. The proportion of men and women over the age of 60 having retired from particular occupations in the town of Sundsvall 1845, 1880, 1910, and 1930.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>60-69</th>
<th>70-79</th>
<th>80 and above</th>
<th>All categories</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>4 (11%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (15%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>13 (14%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>4 (16%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>23 (6%)</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
<td>23 (15%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>13 (16%)</td>
<td>7 (7%)</td>
<td>23 (64%)</td>
<td>11 (18%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Poll tax registers 1845, 1880 and 1910 for the town of Sundsvall computerised by DDB, Umeå. The 1930 census for the town of Sundsvall. Research Archives of Umeå. (sample of 300 people)

Examination of Table 7 shows that there was a low proportion of retired male workers in all years considered except 1930. Also with the exception of 1930, almost no women were identified as having abandoned their former employment. The impact of the Pensions Act which was introduced in 1914 is evident in the figures for 1930 in the marked rise in the proportion of retired workers aged 70–79 compared with those aged 60–69. Another explanation for the increasing frequency of female former workers in 1930 is the growth of the female labour market during the early twentieth century.

Table 8. The socio-economic status of men and women aged over 60 having retired from particular occupations in the town of Sundsvall 1845, 1880, 1910, and 1930.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social group</th>
<th>1845</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>1930</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I b</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II b</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td></td>
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<td>IV</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>V a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V b</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Poll tax registers for the town of Sundsvall 1845, 1880, and 1910 computerised by DDB, Umeå. The census for the town of Sundsvall 1930. Research Archives of Umeå. (sample of 300 people)
owners of large business enterprises, landowners
higher civil servants, university graduates
small scale business entrepreneurs in trade and industry, fishermen
lower civil servants and clerks, shop workers, foremen
farmers, tenant farmers
craftsmen and artisans
workers in industry and urban commerce
farm workers, domestic servants
occupation cannot be defined

In all the years observed except 1930 only a minority of the retired belonged to the working class. There was a somewhat higher proportion of paupers in 1845 than in other observation years, when hardly anyone was registered as poor. In 1880 and 1910 most of the retired workers had formerly been shopkeepers or civil servants. These people had the economic possibility to retire and many of them were entitled to pensions. However, by 1930 the situation had changed. The majority of the retired belonged to the working classes probably due to the influence of the State pension system.

The next issue to consider is how many of the retired workers might have been pensioners. During the first half of the nineteenth century there were only a few pension funds operating in Sundsvall. The associations of shopkeepers, artisans, fishermen had benefit systems for their widows and children\textsuperscript{56} and so had the seamen’s association, which also supported their old members.\textsuperscript{57} In 1845 two of those recorded as retired workers were probably included in a benefit system. One was a former sailor, who might have received support from the Seamen’s house in Sundsvall, which had been founded in 1804. The second possible pensioner was a former cavalry captain A. Hedman who was entitled to support from the army. Furthermore, it is known that four elderly widows received a small sum from the artisan’s association.\textsuperscript{58}

The number of pension funds increased during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when benefit systems were established for Sundsvall’s artisans, shopkeepers, workers, and unmarried female servants. Moreover, people employed by the Customs Service, the Post Office, the Telegraph, and other civil servants were included in the Government’s pension systems.\textsuperscript{59} Thirteen out of the twenty saw mills situated in the region also provided some support for their elderly employees in 1891. The elderly workers in the sawmills were usually offered free housing and fuel. Some of the saw mills could offer aged workers less strenuous work and sometimes both elderly men and women received small monetary payments.\textsuperscript{60}
However, not until the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century did a few of the saw mills in the district begin to establish pension funds.\textsuperscript{61}

Summing it can be stated that in spite of the increasing number of private pension systems, only a small proportion of Sundsvall’s older population could have afforded to retire. Until 1930 the proportion of elderly retired workers was small and the majority of these came from the petite bourgeoisie. Either they received a small pension or had some capital available. By 1930 the situation had changed. The majority of retired workers belonged to the working-class and the proportion of retired men and women had risen markedly, especially in the age group 70–79. This change was in large part due to the State pension system which had been introduced in 1914.

The above study implies that over the course of the nineteenth century the middle classes found it increasingly easy to accommodate savings. The following part will investigate saving behaviour more closely. Were savings only the privilege of a few or was it possible for people from the working classes to put up savings for old age?

\textbf{Savings}

Debates over “the social question” during the 1830s–1840s introduced the idea of saving for old age. This was one variant of the idea that individuals should be encouraged to be self-reliant and self-supporting. The economic liberalism which influenced social policy during the nineteenth century saw the question of old age security as the responsibility of the individual and not of the State. Saving was therefore one way to secure economic well-being in the autumn of life. However, such visions seem to have been difficult to implement. As has been mentioned \textit{Arbetsföräldersäkringskomitén} found that few working class people were able to save for their old age. This idea was widely accepted by many scholars at the end of the nineteenth century.

Brian Gratton questions this point of view. According to Gratton working-class Americans were able to accumulate savings during late nineteenth and early twentieth century, even if his wages decreased as the worker grew older. The income of the household was highest when the head of the household was in his fifties. This was due to the importance of the contribution of children to the family economy during this stage of the family life cycle. According to statistical surveys from the 1920s more than half of the American elderly enjoyed a good standard of living.\textsuperscript{62}

The Dutch historian Elles Bulders has studied strategies used by old people to maintain their income during the last phase of the life cycle. One of the strategies was saving and she examined the extent of working class savings between 1868 and
1921 in Winterswijk, a community in the eastern part of the Netherlands. Bulders came to the conclusion that only a small proportion of the working class was able to save for their old age. Moreover, this strategy was only a complementary source of income.\textsuperscript{63}

The present study can only offer a provisional assessment of the importance of savings for economic well-being in old age. It focuses on differences in the savings of various social groups. By comparing estate inventories for the town of Sundsvall for the records 1890–1893 and 1908–1910 I will try to identify any changes in saving behaviour over time. Together the study includes 44 men and 56 women who died aged over 60. My definition of savings includes money in cash, savings in bank, shares and bonds.

Table 9. Socio-economic status of men and women aged over 60 in the town of Sundsvall having savings 1890–1892 and 1908–1910. Sample of 50 estate inventories from 1890–1892 (21 men and 29 women) and 50 from 1908–1910 (23 men and 27 women).

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1890-1892</th>
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<th>1908-1910</th>
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<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>I a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>II a</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>II b</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Estate inventories for the town of Sundsvall 1890–1892 and 1908–1910. HLA and Rådhusrätten, Sundsvall.

I a owners of large business enterprises, landowners
I b higher civil servants, university graduates
II a small scale business entrepreneurs in trade and industry, fishermen
II b lower civil servants and clerks, shop workers, foremen
III farmers, tenant farmers
IV craftsmen and artisans
V a workers in industry and urban commerce
V b farm workers, domestic servants
Undef. occupation cannot be defined

Table 9 demonstrates that 48 % of the aged men and 68 % of the women registered in the estate inventories had some kind of savings. When the elderly are assigned to different socio-economic groups the numbers become too small for firm conclusions.
about the impact of socio-economic status on savings pattern, but the findings are nevertheless suggestive.

First, the petite bourgeoisie was strongly represented among the savers. Further, some female servants had been able to save for their old age. This was more common in the 1890s and these women also had larger sums saved than the servants in the 1910s. One of these women Sara Sofia Ström died at the age of 69. She had worked as a domestic servant in the household of a shopkeeper for about fifteen years. At the age of 44 she was recorded as a retired servant in the poll tax register. From this year until her death she lived alone in a tenanted property. She seems to have been quite well off since she had some savings and paid the poll tax until her death. Furthermore, the estate inventories reveal that she was able to employ a nurse during the last years of her life. The Swedish historian Irène Artaeus found that those female servants resident in urban areas in the early nineteenth century with the largest savings had been serving for a relatively long time in households of the bourgeoisie.

Table 10. Value of savings in Swedish crowns (kr) of men and women aged over 60 in the town of Sundsvall 1890–1892 and 1908–1910. Sample of 50 estate inventories from 1890–1892 (21 men and 29 women) and 50 from 1908–1910 (23 men and 27 women).

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
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<tr>
<td>50-100 kr</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-1000 kr</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000-10 000 kr</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 000-100 000 kr</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 000-500 000 kr</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Estate inventories for the town of Sundsvall 1890–1892 and 1908–1910. HLA and Rådhusrätten, Sundsvall.

Approximately half of the savers had a fortune of 1000 crowns or less. Those who had the highest amounts of savings were described as a factory owner, ship broker, vice consul, and farmer. The ones with the lowest amounts were the widow of a carpenter, a daughter of a fisherman, and one retired female servant.

It is evident that few workers were able to save for old age and the proportion of workers who maid savings did not increase over time. Brian Gratton’s findings are therefore not replicated in the case Sundsvall but there is some correspondence with the conclusions of Elles Bulders. It is also interesting that women seem to have outnumbered men among the savers, particularly in the period 1890–1892.
Conclusions

Economic well-being in old age attracted increasing interest at the end of the nineteenth century. People in leading positions were worried about the situation of the elderly in the new industrial society. The discussion was permeated both by humane considerations but also by a wish to uphold order and to halt emigration. Some proposals concerning economic security in old age had been discussed during the first half of the century but had been rejected with the argument that this was not a responsibility of the State. Economic liberalism dominated economic thinking and not until the end of the nineteenth century is there evidence of a transition from a laissez-faire ideology towards an acceptance of increasing intervention by the Government. However, it took another thirty years before Sweden had a State old-age pension.

As early as the seventeenth century, the Swedish government had established some pension funds but only for people employed by the army and some civil servants. The guilds also supported their old members and some companies running the iron foundries assisted their elderly workers. The standard of living of the landed peasants was secured by retirement contracts and household heads might take care of their old servants. However, the commercialisation of agriculture and the marked population increase caused a substantial growth in the number of landless people. The old retirement contracts started to disappear and the patriarchal system weakened. Thus an increasing proportion of aged people lacked economic security. This fact attracted some attention in the Riksdag but it took a long time before the elderly were guaranteed a more prosperous old age.

The effects of the national pension scheme are evident in Sundsvall by 1930 in the increased proportion of retired workers. Previously few of the retired belonged to the lower classes. The vast majority were members of the petite bourgeoisie who were able to retire because of their good financial situation and, for some, of their membership of a pension system. Members of the same socio-economic groups who were able to retire also had some savings, whereas very few workers had the possibility to accumulate savings.

Before 1930 there was evidently an under-registration of retired workers. Even if most old workers were forced to continue working late in life it was not likely that all of those registered with an occupation were still active in the labour force. The question that arises is how those without financial security in old age managed to survive. Was poor relief the only alternative available or did these elderly persons have relatives living with or near them who were able to support them? The following chapter will examine the importance of the family for old men and women in a changing society.
PNN 761000289 in POPUM, DDB Umeå.

Poll tax registers for the town of Sundsvall, computerised by DDB, Umeå.

Arbetareförsäkringskomiténs betänkande 1888. Del III. Statistiska undersökningar. 3. Pensionsinrättningar för statens civile betjänte, underbefäl och manskap vid armén och flottan samt kommunernas betjänte.

Elmér 1960, p 274.


In Sweden this type of retirement system was also called sytning or födoråd; in Norway kår, framførsl, føderåd, hold and kost; in Denmark aftægt; and in Finland syytinki. In Germany and Austria there were several names: Altenentei, Ausbehalt, Auszug, Ausgedinge, Ausnahme, Austrag, Leibzucht, Leibgedinge, Winkel. In Czech it was called vymenek.


ibid, pp 257–268.

ibid, pp 270–276.


Utskottsbetänkanden 1828–1830. Samling 8. Nr. 71


Riddarshapets och adelns protokoll 1847–1848. Del 1. 118.

Bihang till riksståndets protokoll 1847–1848. No 111.


Riddarshapets och adelns protokoll 2.1856–1858. p 288.

Bondeståndets protokoll, 3. 1856–1858, p 198.


Bihang till riksådagens protokoll. Motioner i andra kammaren. No 11. 1884.


ibid, p 21.

Bihang till riksådagens protokoll. Motioner i andra kammaren. No 11. 1884.

Tingsten 1941, p 67.

Elmer 1960, p 119.

Bihang till riksådagens protokoll. Motioner i andra kammaren. No 11. 1884.

Tingsten 1941, p 61.


Elmér 1960, pp 256–257.
55 ibid, 62–71.


60 Uppgifter rörande arbetsförhållanden, ackordspriser m.m. vid 20 sågverk inom Sundsvallsdistriktet år 1891. (statistics of working conditions at 20 saw-mill districts in the region of Sundsvall in 1891). Merloarkivet.


63 Bulders 1993, pp 154–159.

64 PNR 821001107 in POPUM, DDB Umeå. Poll tax registers for the town of Sundsvall computerised by DDB, Umeå.

65 Estate inventories for the town of Sundsvall 1891. HLA


66 I have compared the size of these savings with that of the wages of a day labourer in order to estimate the value. In 1890 a rural day labourer in the county of Västernorrland had to work 58 days to earn 100 crowns and in 1910 he "only" had to work 38 days. Jörberg, Lennart: *A history of prices in Sweden 1732–1914. Volume One*. Lund 1972, p 603.

— 99 —
V. The aged and the family

The case of Anna Loo mentioned in the introduction reminds us of the importance of children for the care of their old parents. As has been mentioned the children's responsibility for aged people was deeply rooted. The influence of the Ten Commandments was strengthened during the Reformation, which resulted in an amendment to the Swedish Law in 1608. Violence against parents or parents-in-law was one of the crimes which was a capital offence, as this crime was seen as an offence against the Law of God. On a number of occasions, however, the penalty was commuted to painful corporal punishment. Only a small proportion of these offences were ever taken to court, but violence against parents was reported right up until the middle of the nineteenth century. In the discussion about the fate of Anna Loo, the council referred to the fourth commandment and stressed its importance, but we can also read into their action some more worldly motives, such as a fear of increasing costs for the parish.

The major responsibility of the family was stressed in the early regulation governing poor relief in Sweden. In 1763, the criterion for the right to poor relief was set for the first time. One of the groups entitled to relief was the aged, provided that they did not have relatives who were able to support them. The children's responsibility was not stressed in the first national Poor Law, which came into force in 1847. The restructuring of society, and the proletarisation of the population as well as the influence of liberal values resulted in an increased stress on the parishes' responsibility for the poor. However, the additional expenditure burden placed on the parishes led to new legislation in 1853. Once more the obligation of relatives to provide for the care of the aged was stressed. An even more rigorous law came into force in 1871. Crop failures and hard times during the late 1860s, in conjunction with further rises in poor relief expenditure, and conservative politicians' fear of dissolution of family ties contributed to this harsh legislation.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the role of children in supporting the older generation in the town of Sundsvall during the process of industrialisation and urbanisation. The principal issue is whether the socio-economic and demographic changes which took place during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had an impact on children's ability to take care of their aged parents. At the time mobility in society was increasing and people migrated long distances to get employment in the new industrial areas. How did this increasing mobility affect the older part of the population? Did the majority of old parents still have children living nearby, or did fewer of them have the opportunity to seeing their children.
every day? Further, industrialisation meant changes in the modes of production since an increasing proportion of the production was transferred from the household to factories. Did this change influence the structure of the household in which the elderly resided? Moreover, the proportion of unmarried people increased during the nineteenth century, and the majority of this group was childless. How did these unmarried and other childless people maintain their standard of living in a society where children had the prime responsibility for the elderly?

To answer these questions, the elderly cannot be looked upon as a homogeneous group. Many women survived their husbands and never remarried. This fact combined with the more limited earning potential of older women, meant that the situation of old women and old men was likely to differ a great deal. Furthermore, persons who were well off, of course were better able to support themselves in old age. Finally, many of the "older" elderly who had become decrepit and whose children had left home, were disadvantaged compared with some of the "younger" elderly who still had children at home or who were still capable of working. Thus this study focuses on the importance of gender, marital status, socio-economic status, and age for the living arrangements of the elderly.

It is difficult to form a complete picture of the importance of the family because direct information is limited. Support given by children is evident when the elderly co-reside with their offspring. However, there are other forms of support. Those elderly who had children living in the same area could be taken care of as well as those who had children living in the same household. The elderly whose children lived in another area might be economically supported by these children. The sources available do not indicate the financial contributions children made to their old parents, but by combining a study of household structure of the elderly and proximity between the aged and their children, some inferences may be drawn. Of course we will not know for sure if children actually helped their parents but the frequency of co-residence and proximity between parents and children provide an idea of the availability of care. We can assume that parents who had children living in the town had better opportunities to be supported than those who did not have children nearby. I will not calculate the actual physical distance since Sundsvall at this time was a relatively small town. My definition of proximity will therefore be synonymous with living within the town.

The first section of the chapter is devoted to an examination of the household structures of the elderly in Sundsvall 1845, 1880, 1910, and 1930. Account will be taken of differences in the living arrangements of men and women by marital status, socio-economic status and age groups. These cross-sectional studies of Sundsvall are based on information taken from catechetical examination registers between
1800 and 1892, which have been computerised by the Demographic Data Base of Umeå University. Further, two samples each consisting of 300 individuals over the age of 60 have been extracted from the censuses of 1910 and 1930. The purpose is to compare the structure of the households of the pre-industrial year of 1845 with that of different phases of industrialisation.

This cross sectional approach will give a good outline of the situation but it needs to be combined with a longitudinal study. The latter type gives a more dynamic perspective which enables us to understand the connections between different events in a person's life and changes in their living arrangements during the last years of their life.

The longitudinal approach used in the second section is based on the above mentioned computerised catechetical examination lists and poll tax registers. Two cohorts have been selected for the longitudinal study; one pre-industrial and one industrial consisting of 300 individuals each. They will be followed from the age of 50 onwards. Unfortunately, information on household structure from late nineteenth century is less reliable compared with information from the pre-industrial period, due to heavy in-migration to Sundsvall. Especially information concerning people without a family is hard to interpret. For instance, people could be recorded on the same page, although they did not live together. Therefore, information from the catechetical examination registers has been compared with information in poll tax registers in order to provide further information on the members of the cohorts.

The last section in this part of the dissertation compares the living arrangements of the elderly in Sundsvall with the situation in two other Swedish urban areas, Norrköping and Stockholm, in order to discover similarities and differences in the residence patterns. The chapter contains cross-sectional comparisons between the household structure in the city of Sundsvall 1880, the parish of Olai in Norrköping in 1870, and the parishes of Maria and Katarina in Stockholm in 1880.

As has been mentioned above, the information on Sundsvall 1880 is taken from the computerised catechetical examination registers whereas information on the living arrangements of the elderly in Norrköping has been extracted from the census of 1870. The study of the residence patterns in Stockholm in 1880 is based on the Roteman Archives, which have been computerised by the Stockholm Historical Database.
In an essay about her memories from the period of childhood and youth in late nineteenth century Sundsvall, the author Maria Rieck-Müller amongst other things describes her grandmother, Sara Gröndal, who was the widow of a goldsmith, Jakob Gröndal. Sara lost her spouse early in life. Her husband died when Sara was only thirty-two years old and left her with one daughter, Carin. Mrs Gröndal went on with the business and took care of her daughter. In 1854 Carin married a shopkeeper and they built a house on the same yard as Sara’s. According to the author, her grandmother was a powerful woman who ruled over her daughter and son-in-law as well as the servants who lived in the house. When Sara was in her seventies she moved into the household of her daughter and son-in-law. The last years of her life she spent in bed due to a fractured thigh bone. Her daughter and initially a nurse from the town took care of the old widow. When the nurse became ill a lay worker from Stockholm together with Carin took care of the old lady. Sara Gröndal died in 1874 at home at the age of 81.

Sara personifies those women who lost their husbands early in life and never remarried. She also represents the wealthier part of Sundsvall’s elderly population. The widow spent her last days in a large house surrounded by her family and servants. Her daughter could afford to employ nurses who would give the best care to the old lady after she became confined to bed. Further, Sara was one of those who spent a part of her life in a three-generation household. Was this residence pattern, where old parents spent their last years of life in the same households as married offspring a common phenomenon in the town of Sundsvall or were other types of living arrangements more frequent?

Initially, this chapter treats the residence patterns in general among the elderly in Sundsvall. First, an outline of the different household types in 1845, 1880, 1910, and 1930 is presented, followed by a more thorough study of the differences in living arrangements between men and women according to marital status, social background and age group.

There are a number of ways the household formations of the aged can be examined. The classification used in this study is based on Peter Laslett’s definitions of different family types, but is adapted to the living arrangements of the elderly in my study. The terminology in the present study is closer to that being used by for instance Richard Wall and Gunilla Kjellman. In order to avoid splitting up the households into too many categories I have chosen to divide the different household types into the following eight groups.
1. Living alone  
2. Living only with spouse  
3. Living with spouse and unmarried children  
4. Living with unmarried children  
5. Living with married children  
6. Living with kin or unrelated people  
7. Living only with servants  
8. Undefined household

In the classification of households containing members belonging to two or more of these groups children have been given priority. For instance, if an old man lived with unmarried children, a sister, and servants he was classified as living with unmarried children.

The existence of the three generation family household has been much discussed within family research. Therefore, preference has been given in the classification to co-residence with married children in those few cases where both married and unmarried children lived in the same household.

Sources: Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall 1845 and 1880, computerised by DDB, Umeå. Sample of 300 individuals each drawn from the censuses for the town of Sundsvall 1910, and 1930. Research Archives of Umeå.
Figures 9 a and 9 b indicate that the predominant living arrangement of both men and women was co-residence with unmarried children, either together with a spouse or alone. The only exception was the situation in 1880, when the most frequent living arrangement for elderly women was to live alone. Further, we can see that this year the percentage of men living alone was higher than in other years and that a lower proportion of both men and women were co-residing with children. In 1910 the percentage of aged women living alone was still high but this year a higher proportion lived together with unmarried children, either together with a spouse or alone. We can also observe that in all years under consideration, men were more likely than women to live with unmarried children. This was mainly due to a lower life expectancy among men compared to women. Thus many unmarried children had not left home before their father died. If we separate the married couples living with unmarried children from the single parents co-residing with unmarried children we uncover another difference in the residence of men and women due to the differences in life expectancy. The former household type predominated among old men, whereas a higher proportion of old women lived only with their unmarried children and without a spouse.

In an article on the elderly in the Belgian textile-industry town of Verviers, George Alter discussed the impact of the Northwestern European marriage pattern on the living arrangements of aged men and women. Late marriage and a high proportion of unmarried children meant that many elderly persons could secure their support in old age. The majority preferred to live with an unmarried child being heads of their household, instead of moving into the household of a married child. Most of the elderly who lived with married children were widowed or ill.\(^7\)

We have been able to observe that this was also the situation in the town of Sundsvall. The household type in which Sara Gröndal spent her last years, the three-generational family household, was very rare. This household type was somewhat more common among women and the highest percentage can be found in 1845. These findings do not correspond with Steven Ruggles conclusions. He found increasing rates of extended family households from the 1850s in USA and England and argues that the likelihood to live in extended households increased because of a higher life expectancy both among children and old parents.\(^8\)

Furthermore, compared with the situation of urban American elderly, the proportion of elderly persons residing in this type of household in Sundsvall was extremely low. Brian Gratton and Carole Haber showed that of the American elderly 60 years and above, in 1900 24 percent of men and 34 percent of the women lived in three-generational family households.\(^9\) Moreover, Michael Anderson observed in his study of the textile-industry town Preston in England, that almost one third of both elderly
men and women lived in such households. On the other hand, residence patterns among the elderly in Amsterdam did not differ markedly from the patterns found in Sundsvall. The Dutch historian Monique Stavenuiter who has studied the residence pattern of the elderly in Amsterdam during late nineteenth century, found that between ten and fifteen percent of the elderly co-resided with married children.

Sara Gröndal only spent a part of her old age in a three-generational family household. Since the cross-sectional study only gives a snapshot of the situation at one point in time, it does not reveal changes over the life course. Therefore, we will return to the question about the existence of the extended family household using longitudinal data, trying to find those elderly men and women who at some time during their life lived in an extended family household.

As regards the proportion of elderly living alone it is evident that this pattern predominated among women. We find the highest rates of women living alone in 1880 when 44 percent were living on their own and in this year the proportion of aged men also living on their own achieved its highest level. The high proportion of such residents in 1880 might be the result of inadequate sources in conjunction with the heavy immigration, which makes it hard to decide whether people were living on their own or were boarders or employees in other people’s households. To test the reliability of the information given by the catechetical examination registers I therefore compared the percentage of people registered as living alone in the poll tax registers in 1845 and 1880.

**Figure 10.** Men and women aged over 60 living alone in the town of Sundsvall according to the poll tax registers 1845 and 1880 and catechetical examination registers 1845 and 1880.

Sources: Poll tax and catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall 1845 and 1880, computerised by DDB, Umeå.
The percentage of people living alone in 1845 was approximately the same in the poll tax registers and in the catechetical examination registers. However, a much higher percentage, especially of men, was registered as living alone in the catechetical examination registers 1880 compared with the poll tax registers. Since the total elderly population registered in the church books 1880 was larger than that recorded in the poll tax registers one possible explanation for this difference could be that the people registered in the catechetical examination registers might have been boarders, who were not recorded at all in the poll tax registers. Furthermore, one has to bear in mind that at the end of the nineteenth century there was a more general problem of under registration in the Sundsvall population registers.

A surprisingly low percentage of men and women lived alone in 1930. It might be expected that the pension system introduced in 1914 would have made it possible for the elderly to live an independent life in their own households. However, the first pensions were low, and since the 1930s was a time of economic depression, it is possible that the children delayed their departure from home. The proportion of people residing with a more distant relative or non-kin had also increased. Some people might have been forced to share households in order to cope with hard times, although it shall be remembered that they could also have had a higher number of relatives alive because of increasing life expectancy.

Compared with findings for other countries, my study shows that the percentage of elderly living alone at the turn of the century far exceeded that of other areas. For instance, Richard Wall showed in his study of living arrangements in thirteen English and Welsh communities, that in 1891 only between five percent of the men aged 65 and above and eleven percent of the corresponding group of women lived alone. Moreover, the study did not reveal any significant differences between rural and urban areas in the proportion of people living on their own. The percentage of people living with a non-family member was also higher than in Sundsvall. Monique Stavenuiter found similar results in her Amsterdam study, and so did Daniel Scott Smith in a study of the household structure of elderly in the USA in 1900.

Why do the results from Sundsvall differ from the studies mentioned above? The difference between urban United States and Sweden is expected since the USA was a melting-pot of different cultures with various types of household structures. Western and Northern European patterns were mixed with Eastern and Southern. It is more difficult to explain why the residence pattern in Sundsvall differed from the patterns in urban Great Britain and Holland, countries like Sweden lying within the zone of the Northwestern European marriage pattern.

One possible explanation is an overestimate of the number of people living alone. As has been mentioned above, sometimes it has been difficult to decide whether one
person was living alone or was a boarder. However, since a lower proportion of Sundsvall's elderly compared with aged people in other urban areas lived with children, especially married children, inaccurate registration cannot be the only explanation of the higher rates of solitary living. Was it possible or necessary for children to leave home earlier, either to establish a household of their own or to migrate to another town where employment was available? Were the elderly forced to or did they prefer to live alone instead of crowding in with other people?

So far we have been discussing the changes that occurred during the period of industrial expansion. Time has come to contemplate continuity. Although the proportion of elderly living alone increased markedly during the phase of industrial expansion the percentage of elderly women living alone was already high during pre-industrial times and only a fairly small proportion resided in three-generational households. It seems as though the vast majority of these children and/or their old parents preferred to establish households of their own instead of crowding in with relatives.

One possible explanation is that there was a more "individualistic" tradition in Sundsvall. The Swedish historian David Gaunt has discussed the possibility of a higher degree of individualism in Scandinavia. He cites contemporary Danish studies showing differences in the relationships between Danish adult children and their old parents and their counterparts living in England and USA, although the number of contacts were about the same. Scandinavian parents and their adult children do not show the same degree of interdependence as the Anglo-Saxons. Further, Gaunt refers to Frédéric Le Play who used the concept "particularistic" about the Nordic families. Le Play meant that more Nordic youngsters were able to make decisions and act independently of their parents. However, one can question the value of Le Play's description of the Scandinavian family in the middle of the nineteenth century since he studied just a few families. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that Le Play's observations parallel those in more recent studies.

Gerdt Sundström has compared the rates of elderly persons living with their children in eight countries; Japan, Poland, USA, United Kingdom, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Sweden, between 1955 and 1980. He found a decline in the percentage of elderly co-residing with children in all countries although it was much more common to live with children in Japan and Poland. However, the countries with the lowest rates of co-residence with children during the whole period were Sweden and Denmark. This adds further support to the hypothesis that there was a more individualistic residence pattern in this part of Europe.

David Gaunt suggests that the undantagssystem could be an important factor which explained the higher degree of individualism. As has been mentioned above this
retirement system meant that an aged farmer transferred his property during his lifetime to a relative, usually his child, in return of food and housing for the rest of his life. According to Gaunt, it is possible that the bad experience with retirement contracts promoted the higher degree of individualism that can be found in Scandinavia.\textsuperscript{16}

Although this retirement system eventually disappeared, it was still common in the rural areas around Sundsvall at the end of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{17} Therefore, there might be an alternative explanation as to how the tradition of the undantags-system could have influenced the structure of the household in Sundsvall. It was very common among those who had retired to live in a household of their own, either in a separate cottage nearby or in the same house. This tradition might have influenced the living arrangements in the town and could be an important explanation for the high proportion of inhabitants in the town of Sundsvall who lived alone. Many of them probably had children living in the neighbourhood.

Another factor explaining the higher proportions of elderly living alone in Sundsvall than in other urban areas could be other housing conditions. Angelique Jansens has studied the situation in Tilburg at the end of the nineteenth century. She found that this town did not to the same extent as many other industrial towns encounter overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions, even if this was a situation experienced by many members of the working class. According to Janssens, this situation in Tilburg was due to the rural character of the town. It had a spacious layout with small centres instead of one concentrated city centre. Not until 1910 a serious shortage in the housing market occurred.\textsuperscript{18}

Housing conditions in urban areas varied between countries. For instance, at the beginning of the nineteenth century the majority of the population in England, the Netherlands, Belgium, as well as in some parts of Germany, France, and the USA lived in houses, with just one or two families living in each building. In Scandinavia, Austria, Switzerland, and parts of Germany and France tenanted housing had become common at this time.\textsuperscript{19}
Table 11. The number of households in each building in the town of Sundsvall 1860, 1880, and 1910.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1860</th>
<th></th>
<th>1880</th>
<th></th>
<th>1910</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 households</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 households</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 5 households</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>899</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** Poll tax registers for the town of Sundsvall 1860, 1880, and 1910, computerised by DDB, Umeå.

The poll tax registers of Sundsvall reveal an increase in the number of buildings with more than three households in each building. The population in the town of Sundsvall increased by 135 percent between 1860 and 1880. During the 1870s a new residential area called Stenhammaren was established in order to eliminate the deficit in the housing market. Still the town had problems with overcrowding and the number of households in each building continued to increase also in other parts of the town. Furthermore, this period was characterised by a fast expansion of unregulated areas on the outskirts of Sundsvall.\(^{20}\)

Maybe these differences in housing conditions contribute to the explanation of the high proportion of old women living alone in Sundsvall. The people in Sundsvall might have lived in smaller flats than their counterparts did in for instance England and the Netherlands. Perhaps they therefore preferred to or were forced to live alone instead of crowding in with relatives.

There is of course not one single answer to the question why a higher proportion of old people in Sundsvall than in other areas lived alone but I have in this section presented some possible answers to this question. This issue, however, needs further examination. As I have already mentioned I will in the chapter treating the living arrangements of the elderly in Norrköping and Stockholm further investigate this question.

Even though we do not know for certain the proportions of elderly living on their own in Sundsvall, we can confirm that during the initial phase of industrialisation the trend was towards fewer elderly co-residing with children. This is an important change that needs further discussion and I will in the following pages consider possible explanations for this shift. An additional perspective comes from studying the residential proximity of their children, that is to say if children were still living in town but had moved to a household of their own.

Before turning to the longitudinal data and the situation in Norrköping and Stock-
holm, we need to examine further the household structure of various groups of elderly. In order to find explanations to the changes we have observed, it is important to distinguish the effects of demographic and social change. By considering separately the residence patterns of elderly men and women according to marital status, age, and socio-economic status it is easier to discern the impact of structural change. Initially we will study the connection between marital status and living arrangements.

![Old lady outside her primitive "järnspisrum" (room with an iron range) at Östermalms in Sundsvall in 1935. (Museum of Sundsvall).](image)

**Household structure and marital status**

In an earlier chapter we documented changes in marriage patterns connected with the new socio-economic structure. Sundsvall had relatively high proportions of unmarried men and as we could observe the proportion of unmarried elderly men was greatest in 1880. Further, the proportion of married women increased over time. The issue to be considered now is the impact of these changes on the living arrangements of the older part of the population. First I will scrutinise the residence patterns of men and women of different marital status.²¹
Men
In all years except in 1845, the majority of unmarried men lived alone and the proportion living in this household type was highest in 1880 and 1910. In 1845 a higher proportion of the unmarried men shared households either with relatives or non-kin. In 1930 a change can be observed. Both unmarried men and widowers were much less likely to live on their own than in earlier periods. The different situation for the widowers seems to be related to an increasing frequency of co-residence with children, which can be observed in 1910 and 1930. A slight increase in the co-residence with people outside the family can also be detected in this last year.

Of the married men three quarters lived with spouse and unmarried children in 1845 and 1880. In 1910 and 1930 the proportion who lived only with a spouse was almost as high as those living with children. Further, 1845 was the only year when any married men were to be found living with married children.

Women
The residence pattern among unmarried women resembles that of unmarried men. Having been the most common household type in 1845, 1880 and 1910, the proportion of unmarried women living alone in 1930 was less than half of the proportion in earlier periods. One important difference between elderly unmarried women and men was of course the greater importance for women of co-residence with children. Another significant difference concerned the role of people outside the family. Whereas co-residence with servants seemed to be of similar importance for both sexes, elderly women more often co-resided with other relatives and non-kin.

In 1845 most widows were to be found living with children, whereas the situation changed later. The one-person household became the most common type but in 1930 the percentage of widows co-residing with children was higher than before. This year we can also observe a greater importance of people outside the family compared to the earlier periods.

As in the case of married men, over time there was an increase in the percentage of married women living with only the spouse. At all times, however, more elderly married women than men co-resided with just their spouse.

Comparisons
At the end of the nineteenth century Sundsvall contained high proportions of unmarried elderly men due to the male dominated labour market. This was one
important factor explaining the marked increase of one-person households in the town. However, although the proportion of unmarried women was fairly stable during the nineteenth century the frequency with which unmarried elderly women formed one-person households also increased markedly at the end of the century. Further, a growing percentage of widows lived alone and there was an increasing frequency of households containing an elderly couple but no children. Therefore, we have to look for other explanations of the declining frequency of households containing children than changes in the marital status distribution of the elderly.

First we will focus on the marital status of the younger generation. The rising marriage rates in late nineteenth-century Sundsvall could be an important explanatory factor. The expanding economy led at the end of the nineteenth century to an increase in the proportion of the population who were married, especially women. In 1890 the proportions of women who were married was higher in Sundsvall than in other Swedish towns. Because of the male dominated saw mill industry Sundsvall had a relatively balanced sex ratio, whereas many other towns had a marked surplus of women. Although the rates of unmarried men was high, the proportion of married men also increased between 1870 and 1890. Furthermore, the percentage of marriages of very young men in Sundsvall was above the Swedish average.

Therefore, it seems likely that the majority of the elderly had children still living in town but not in the same household. When the children had sufficient resources they chose to establish households of their own but when times became worse such as in the 1930s they remained in their parents’ households for a longer period. In order to verify this hypothesis the longitudinal study to be discussed later will determine whether elderly parents had children living nearby even though they did not co-reside with a child.

**Household structure and age**

Although we know that there is a difference between a newly retired person and one who is ninety years old, there is a tendency to treat people above 65 as a homogenous group. Today in general, increasing dependence on others is not evident before the age of 85. This section therefore examines the living arrangements of elderly men and women from different age groups. What differences in household structure can be found between the young and older old? Were there significant differences between men and women from different age groups? Since women in general outlived their husbands, the differences between the residence patterns of a younger and older elderly women must have been considerable. The aged population is classified in three groups; 60–69, 70–79, and 80+.
Men

Living with spouse and children was the most common household type of the youngest elderly and this residence pattern decreased with age as could be expected. This was due to an increasing number of children leaving home in succession during this part of the parental life course in combination with a greater risk of widowhood. Nevertheless, among the septuagenarians this remained the most common household type in all periods except the last when the most frequently encountered situation was to live only with the spouse. Over time this living arrangement also became more frequent for the youngest age group. These changes can probably be explained by the higher marriage rates of the children.

Living alone was most common in the oldest age group during all periods but the last, when the highest proportion of this group was living with their spouse only. This age group also exhibited the greatest variety of living arrangements. However, there were only a few men in this category which makes it hard to get reliable rates.

Women

Among the youngest female elderly, living only with unmarried children was more common in 1845 and 1910 than in 1880 and 1930, whereas living with spouse and children was somewhat more frequent in other years. The most frequently encountered residence pattern, however, even in the youngest age group was living on their own, a feature that increased with age. The majority of women in the two older age groups lived alone in all periods except in 1930 when it was exceeded by co-residence with children. Living only with unmarried children was the second most important living arrangement.

Comparisons

There were important differences between the residence patterns of men and women of different age groups. Among the male elderly it was most common to have both a wife and children in the household during the last part of the life cycle, and because women in general outlived their husbands they became more dependent on others, mostly unmarried children but also to a higher degree than was the case for men, on married children. When children left home a higher proportion of the female elderly than of the male elderly came to live on their own.

There are considerable similarity with living arrangements in Lund in 1910 and
1930 where the ethnologist Gunilla Kjellman and the historian Carl Gustaf Stenkula showed declining rates by age of people living with spouse and children and an increasing proportion of the oldest men and women living on their own.25

Monique Stavenuiter also found about the same variation in residence patterns according to age among the elderly in late nineteenth century Amsterdam, although the group of elderly living alone was much smaller in Amsterdam. Here, the percentage ending up in institutions was high and this was more common for the "older" old.26

**Household structure and socio-economic status**

The impact of demographic change on the residence patterns has been discussed above. However, the variations in marital status and sex ratio were also consequences of a changing socio-economic structure. As has been mentioned Sundsvall developed rapidly from a town dominated by fishing, crafts, and trade into a commercial centre in an expanding industrial area. This part of the dissertation will investigate the impact of social change on the residence patterns of the elderly.

When the elderly are divided into different social groups, the number of individuals per category falls dramatically, making it difficult to draw general conclusions about the connection between socio-economic status and residence patterns. The classification below was used in a previous chapter but in order to receive more reliable results I have chosen to combine some socio-economic groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ia</td>
<td>owners of large business enterprises, landowners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ib</td>
<td>higher civil servants, university graduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIa</td>
<td>small scale business entrepreneurs in trade and industry, fishermen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iib</td>
<td>lower civil servants and clerks, shop workers, foremen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>farmers, tenant farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>craftsmen and artisans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Va</td>
<td>workers in industry and urban commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vb</td>
<td>farm workers, domestic servants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undef.</td>
<td>occupation cannot be defined</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the study of living arrangements in relation to socio-economic group I have used the following categorization. 1=I a+I b  2=II a+II b+III  3=IV  4=V a+V b  5=Undefined

—115—
Living on your own or with children?
The following analysis is also limited to those aged men and women who either lived alone or with their children. I chose to leave out the other household types as the number of cases becomes too small when they are further subdivided by socio-economic group. Even so, group 1 does not contain many individuals.

Sources: Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall 1845 and 1880, computerised by DDB, Umeå. Sample of 300 individuals each drawn from the censuses for the town of Sundsvall 1910, and 1930. Research Archives of Umeå.

1. owners of large business enterprises, landowners, higher civil servants, university graduates
2. small scale business entrepreneurs in trade and industry, fishermen, lower civil servants and clerks, shop workers, foremen, farmers, tenant farmers
3. craftsmen and artisans
4. workers in industry and urban commerce, farm workers, domestic servants
5. occupation cannot be defined
The proportion of men living alone was fairly stable over time and there were hardly any class differences, with the exception of 1880 when a very large proportion of the workers lived alone. As we have observed above, a much higher percentage of elderly women lived alone. Moreover, the highest rates of women living on their own were to be found within the working class in all periods except 1910. In 1880 this was the case for both men and women. Of all employees, domestic workers were among the most likely to be living alone in all periods.

Figure 12 a. Men over the age of 60 co-residing with unmarried and married children in the town of Sundsvall 1845, 1880, 1910, and 1930, divided by social group. N=35 in 1845, 87 in 1880, 76 in 1910, and 58 in 1930.

Figure 12 b. Women over the age of 60 co-residing with unmarried and married children in the town of Sundsvall 1845, 1880, 1910, and 1930, divided by social group. N=55 in 1845, 120 in 1880, 75 in 1910, and 83 in 1930.

Sources: Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall 1845 and 1880, computerised by DDB, Umeå. Sample of 300 individuals each drawn from the censuses for the town of Sundsvall 1910, and 1930. Research Archives of Umeå.

1 owners of large business enterprises, landowners, higher civil servants, university graduates
2 small scale business entrepreneurs in trade and industry, fishermen, lower civil servants and clerks, shop workers, foremen, farmers, tenant farmers
3 craftsmen and artisans
4 workers in industry and urban commerce, farm workers, domestic servants
5 occupation cannot be defined
As regards co-residence with children by elderly men, we find the largest social
differences in 1880 when the proportion living with children was much lower among
the working classes. This tendency can also be found in 1930, although the diffe-
rence is not as marked as in 1880. In all years except 1910 working class women
were less likely to be co-residing with children than were women from the higher
social groups. 1930 apart, women from the craftsmen and artisan class had the high-
est rates of co-residence with unmarried children.

Residing with a married child was a rare phenomenon among all social groups in
all periods. In 1845 and 1880 the highest rates can be found among the female
elderly from social class 1. However, the three-generational household in 1930 was
most common among men and women from the artisan class. In the longitudinal
study, the situation of those elderly who lived in this type of household will be exami-
ned in greater detail and reasons suggested for the absence of the three-generational
household from Sundsvall will be analysed.

Comparisons

We have found that a lower proportion of working class people spent their last days
together with children and that working class women were more likely than women
from other classes to be living on their own. Monique Stavenuiter found in her Am-
sterdam study that the rates of elderly people living with children were higher for
the middle class. However, this was only true for those living with unmarried child-
ren since the percentages of aged middle and working class persons living in a
three-generational household were similar. 29

Angelique Janssen, who has investigated the household structure in the Dutch
textile-industry town Tilburg, also came to the conclusion that the working class
everly were more prone than other aged persons to live in a household without
children (the so called "empty nest" phenomenon). She found the highest rates of
three-generational households in the middle class. 30 Daniel Scott Smith came to the
same conclusion as Janssens when he studied household structure of elderly living
in the USA in 1900. 31

According to Michael Anderson, "critical life situations" such as unemployment,
ilness, housing shortage, and old age led to an increasing proportion of extended
families in Preston, Lancashire. Aged people became more economically and socially
dependant on relatives. Thus the advantage to the elderly of living in this household
type was obvious, but their married children also gained from this arrangement.
Lower rent costs, a solution to the housing shortage, and a need for child-care services
were important reasons for the children to live with their old parents. 32
Although Janssens found the highest rates of three-generational households for the middle-class elderly, she also noticed that the percentage of working-class persons living in this type of households increased between the cohorts of 1849–1890 and 1880–1920. She explains this change partly with an increasing life expectancy but like Anderson she suggests that housing shortage was another important explanation, since married couples were moving into and out of the parental household.\textsuperscript{33}

As already been mentioned Steven Ruggles has challenged Michael Anderson’s interpretation that the extended household was a functional adaptation to industrial working conditions and economic hardship. He argues that the highest proportion of extended families were found among the bourgeoisie and therefore living in this household type was almost a luxury phenomenon. Some people could afford to live like this but according to Ruggles economic factors alone cannot explain the rise. Cultural values such as Victorian family ideals might be another part of the explanation.\textsuperscript{34}

By contrast with the studies of Anderson and Janssens my study of the elderly in Sundsvall revealed a decreasing percentage of old men and women co-residing with married children as the area became more urban in the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. The increasing proportion of workers in the urban environment led to a different residence pattern with a lower percentage of these elderly compared with other social groups co-residing with children and larger proportions living alone.

However, the rates of aged people living in three-generational family households were already low in 1845 prior to the urban development. Such households were commonly formed by small entrepreneurs such as fishermen, shopkeepers, artisans, and farmers. Furthermore, neither during pre-industrial times nor later did working class people co-reside with children to the same extent as other social groups. This indicates that differences in the residence patterns of the elderly were important before industrialisation and the expansion of the urban area.

Several scholars who have studied the impact of socio-economic factors on household size in rural areas have found smaller households among landless people compared with landowning farmers. As has been mentioned in the introduction the Swedish ethnologist Orvar Löfgren, has compared the household strategies of the increasing proportion of landless people and the landowning peasants during the nineteenth century. Landless people were more often found in smaller households than the landowning peasants.

According to the Swedish ethnologist Gunilla Kjellman, extended family households were more likely to be formed by those who ran some kind of business. The common work and the inheritance of property often led to a sharing of households.\textsuperscript{35}
Conclusions

This study has examined the role of children supporting the older generation in the town of Sundsvall during the process of industrialisation and urbanisation. Further, it has investigated the residence patterns of elderly unmarried people, trying to reveal how these men and women managed to arrange their living in a society where children had the prime responsibility for aged people.

One way of investigating the importance of social networks is to study cohabitation. Of course co-residence is not the only form of assistance. Children and other relatives living nearby or in other areas might have contributed to the support of old men and women. The sources available do not indicate the financial contributions but the following chapter will study spatial proximity between the aged and their children.

This cross-sectional study showed both continuity and change in the residence patterns of aged men and women in Sundsvall. A predominant residence pattern of aged men and women in Sundsvall during all periods of observation was to spend their last days living with their sons and daughters, although this pattern was less common among the working class. Furthermore, a higher proportion of men co-resided with unmarried children due to the lower male life expectancy. The fact that women outlived their husbands led to much higher proportions of women living on their own. Moreover, women to a higher degree became more dependent on others partly because they lived longer, and partly due to the fact that it was more difficult for a woman to earn a living.

By contrast with the results of Steven Ruggles, Angelique Janssens as well as Michael Anderson the extended family household was very rare in nineteenth-century Sundsvall and this household type definitely did not increase over time as it was somewhat more frequent in 1845 than later. The three-generational family household could almost only be found among the widowed elderly except for a few married couples in 1845 who lived with married children.

Furthermore, there is evidence of a rising proportion of elderly persons living alone during the phase of industrial expansion. (1845 compared with 1880) This trend was particularly notable in the case of unmarried men and women and widows. Moreover, it was more common to live alone if you were a female servant or a worker. However, in 1930 the proportion of aged men living alone was as small as in 1845 and among women it was even smaller. It seems as though the greatest changes in residence patterns took place during the initial phase of industrialisation. This was a turbulent period with high geographical mobility and massive population increase. The town attracted people from different parts of the country. Many of these immigrants had left relatives, hoping to start a new and better life in the expanding town.

By 1930 the town and its people had stabilised. However, this was also a period of
economic depression, possibly leading to a delay of children's departure from home. The proportion of people residing with a more distant relative or non-kin also increased. Some people might have been forced to share households in order to cope with hard times. These people might have had a higher number of relatives alive due to an increasing life expectancy.

The rates of elderly women living on their own in Sundsvall far exceeded the proportions in the other European and American studies. I therefore discussed whether this was the result of the changing socio-economic structure, of different housing conditions in Sundsvall than in the other urban areas observed, or if a rural or pre-industrial tradition prevailed in Sundsvall since the rates of elderly women living alone seem to have been high already during pre-industrial times. The undantagssystem often meant that the old parents had households of their own, although they lived very close to their children and grandchildren. This might also have been the situation in Sundsvall.

Thus one important issue is to investigate whether some of these people living in households of their own had children at hand and still preferred or were forced to set up households of their own instead of crowding in with relatives. Although the rates of one person households increased, it needs to be established whether this was accompanied by a declining proportion of these elderly men and women having children living nearby who would have been able to assist their old parents. Therefore, the following chapter will examine whether aged people had children living in the vicinity.

2. A longitudinal approach to the study of the residence patterns of the elderly in Sundsvall

A cross-sectional study enables us to treat fairly large populations in a time efficient way. However, this method only gives a snapshot of the situation on an aggregated level. By contrast, a longitudinal approach makes it possible to examine events taking place at different points over the individual's life cycle. The aim of this part of the study is to deepen the cross-sectional analysis in order to better understand the changes in living arrangements that took place between pre-industrial time and the period of industrial expansion. The study both examines changes in household structure over the individual's life cycle and the spatial proximity between aged men and women and their adult children.
The results of the cross-sectional and longitudinal studies are not strictly comparable. A great deal of the information on the members of the two cohorts is from the last occasion on which they were recorded in the catechetical examination registers. This was one of the most vulnerable periods in an individual’s life and probably occasioned a higher degree of dependence on other persons. Therefore, these living arrangements might have differed somewhat from those in the cross-sectional study. Further, the lower age limit applied in the longitudinal study means that several men and women who died or outmigrated between the ages of 50 and 59 are included in the longitudinal but not in the cross-sectional study.

**The two cohorts’ demographic and socio-economic characteristics**

Before discussing these issues it is appropriate to describe the major characters of the two cohorts. The pre-industrial cohort consists of 170 women and 130 men born between 1755 and 1770 and the industrial of 173 women and 127 men born between 1810 and 1819. Those elderly who lived in Sundsvall for at least one year after the age of 50 were selected. These individuals were followed from their fiftieth birthday until their death or outmigration and those who immigrated after the age of 50 will be followed from the time of immigration.

First, information will be presented concerning the age structure, marital and socio-economic status of the two cohorts. This information is from the point in time when these aged men and women were last recorded in the town of Sundsvall. Furthermore, this section will present the geographical mobility of the members of both cohorts.

**Age structure**

The highest percentage of the men of both cohorts were in their fifties. Furthermore, the proportion of very old men (aged over 80) doubled, whereas the other two age categories were smaller in the industrial cohort than in the pre-industrial. The highest percentage of elderly women from the first cohort were in their sixties and a larger proportion of women than men belonged to this category. In the second cohort, however, approximately the same percentage of men and women were 60-69. Most women were in their seventies, and unexpectedly a slightly higher percentage of men than women were very old. Summing up, we can observe a somewhat older population in the industrial cohort than in the pre-industrial.
### Table 12. Age distribution of men and women aged over 50 when last recorded in the town of Sundsvall.

Cohort One: 130 men and 170 women born between 1755-1770.
Cohort Two: 127 men and 173 women born between 1810-1819.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort One</th>
<th>50-59</th>
<th>60-69</th>
<th>70-79</th>
<th>&gt;79</th>
<th>Total number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cohort Two</strong></td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall 1803-1892 and poll tax registers for the town of Sundsvall 1800-1910, computerised by the DDB; Umeå. Parish registers for the town of Sundsvall 1892-1911, Microfiche. Forskningsarkivet, Umeå.

### Marital status

The proportion of unmarried men in the second cohort increased by thirteen percent, whereas the proportion of unmarried women only had increased by no more than six percent. A lower percentage of the men in the second cohort was married, whereas unexpectedly the proportion of widowed men was relatively stable. One would have expected a declining percentage of widowers, because of a declining percentage of married men. The stable proportion of widowed men is probably explained by a higher life expectancy in combination with a higher proportion of inmigrating widowers. The percentage of married women and widows remained relatively stable. This situation in combination with the lower increase in the pro-

![Figure 13. Marital status of men and women aged over 50 when last recorded in the town of Sundsvall.](image)

**Sources:** Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall 1803-1892 and poll tax registers for the town of Sundsvall 1800-1910, computerised by the DDB; Umeå. Parish registers for the town of Sundsvall 1892-1911, Research Archives of Umeå.
portion of unmarried women than men is not surprising since the sex ratio in Sundsvall was quite balanced, which meant that the opportunities for women to marry were more favourable here than in many other Swedish towns.

**Socio-economic status**

As we can see a radical change in the social structure had taken place between the cohorts. The group of small entrepreneurs had diminished dramatically. This was largely due to the declining importance of fishing. In its place, the proportion of workers had increased substantially as also had the proportion of artisans.

**Figure 14.** Socio-economic status of men and women aged over 50 when last recorded in the town of Sundsvall. Cohort One: 130 men and 170 women born between 1755 and 1770. Cohort Two: 127 men and 173 women born between 1810 and 1819.

Sources: Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall 1803–1892 and poll tax registers for the town of Sundsvall 1800–1910, computerised by the DDB; Umeå. Parish registers for the town of Sundsvall 1892–1911, Research Archives of Umeå.

I a owners of large business enterprises, landowners
I b higher civil servants, university graduates
II a small scale business entrepreneurs in trade and industry,
II b lower civil servants and clerks, shop workers, foremen
III farmers, tenant farmers
IV craftsmen and artisans
V a workers in industry and urban commerce
V b farm workers, domestic servants
Undef. occupation cannot be defined
Geographical mobility

12 men and 24 women of the pre-industrial elderly migrated into town but only five of them left Sundsvall. Except one, all of these five elderly people returned. The situation of the members of the second cohort differed markedly from that of the first cohort. 125 women and 94 men from the second cohort lived in the town until their death. 37 women and 20 men had out-migrated, never to return, and 24 persons can not be traced after 1892.

There are only a few Swedish studies of migration patterns of the elderly. Monica Edgren, has studied mobility of the elderly in the small southern Swedish town Falkenberg and its surrounding countryside. She found that the elderly were very unlikely to migrate. 36 Sune Åkerman has examined migration patterns in eleven districts in the county of Västmanland 1895–1930. By contrast with the results of Edgren, he showed a relatively high mobility among persons aged over 50. 37

My study shows that elderly members of the industrial cohort were very mobile. Whereas only 9 percent of the men and 14 percent of the women in the pre-industrial cohort migrated at some point during their old age, the corresponding percentage in the industrial cohort were 36 and 39 percent respectively. 38 As we have seen in a previous chapter, migration to and from Sundsvall began to increase in importance from the middle of the nineteenth century. During the 1870s and 1880s the number of people moving in and out of Sundsvall reached its highest level. After 1890 migration rates began to fall. The migration pattern in Sundsvall differed from that in many other Swedish towns. The majority of the migrants were male due to the expanding saw mill industry in the area during the second half of the nineteenth century. 39

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Figure 15. Length of period of observation for men and women aged over 50 in the town of Sundsvall. Cohort One consists of 130 men and 170 women born between 1755-1770. Cohort Two consists of 127 men and 173 women born between 1800 and 1819.

Sources: Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall 1803–1892 and poll tax registers for the town of Sundsvall 1800–1910, computerised by the DDB; Umeå. Parish registers for the town of Sundsvall 1892–1911, Research Archives of Umeå.
Even if the mobility was larger in the second cohort than in the first there were no significant differences between the two cohorts concerning period of observation. One would have expected that this period would have been much shorter for many of the members of the industrial cohort than for those of the pre-industrial, due to the higher spatial mobility in the second cohort. However, the period was only slightly shorter in the industrial cohort. The median length of the period of observation was 15 years for both men and women in the first cohort, whereas it was 11 years for the male and 13 for female members of the second cohort.

A majority of the migrants of the pre-industrial cohort were women, most of them unmarried or widows. For men the situation was different. The majority were married. Migrants were drawn from most social groups. The majority of the migrants belonged to the youngest age group (50–59) but there was a significant difference between migrating men and women. One quarter of the women were over 70, whereas all of the male migrants except one were under 70.

In the industrial cohort 20 percent of the elderly migrants left the town never to return. The number of ever migrating elderly was about three times as high as in the first cohort. 46 men and 67 women migrated at least once late in life. Married men still predominated among the male migrants and among women equal numbers of widows as of married women migrated. Almost all social groups were represented among the migrants although a large proportion were artisans and workers. This was not surprising since these two social groups were the largest in Sundsvall at the time. The vast majority of the men who migrated were under the age of 60, whereas more than half of the female migrants were over 60 when they moved. Furthermore, 28 percent of the women were 70 and above at the time of their last migration. Almost all of them in the year preceding their death were residing in the household of one of their children.

Changes in living arrangements during the later phases of life

In the cross-sectional study we were able to observe some important changes in the living arrangements of the elderly between 1845 and 1880. To be able to understand the changing residence patterns of elderly men and women in Sundsvall, events taking place at the end of the life cycle of the individual need to be examined. However, initially we present an overview of the household formation patterns of aged men and women in both cohorts when they were first and last recorded in the town. This shows what happened within the cohorts during the latter phases of life.
Figure 16 a. Residence patterns of men and women aged over 50 and born 1755-1770 (Cohort One) when first and last recorded in the town of Sundsvall. N= 130 men and 170 women.

1. Living alone.
2. Living only with spouse.
3. Living with unmarried children.
4. Living with married children.
5. Living with other relatives or non-relatives.
6. Living only with servants.
7. Living in institution.
8. Undefined.

Sources: Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall 1803–1892 and poll tax registers for the town of Sundsvall 1800–1910, computerised by the DDB, Umeå. Parish registers for the town of Sundsvall 1892–1911, Research Archives of Umeå.

Comparing the two cohorts we find both continuity and change. The proportion of elderly living with unmarried children declined with age and other residence patterns became more common. In the pre-industrial cohort living with married children and with other people was more widespread, especially among women, compared with the industrial cohort. Elderly people living alone increased with age in both cohorts, but this trend was more pronounced in the industrial cohort, particularly in the case of women.

Some important differences occurred between the cohorts in the way in which residence patterns varied over the life cycle. Changes such as decreasing proportions...
living with unmarried children, increasing proportions living with married children and living only with spouse were more marked in the pre-industrial cohort, whereas the increasing percentage of older women living on their own was a particularly marked change in the industrial cohort.

This study also contains information about those who ended up in institutions, either in the poorhouse or in the later founded workhouse. Only a small proportion of the elderly from either of the cohorts were last recorded as residing in an institution. However, these proportions, same as they were, represented a considerable change from the situation of the younger elderly, none of whom (in the pre-industrial cohort) lived in an institution. Furthermore, we can observe that a much higher percentage of men than of women from the industrial cohort ended up in an institution.

Summing up, the living arrangements of the two cohorts correspond reasonably well with the findings in the cross-sectional study. The greatest difference between pre-industrial and industrial times was a higher percentage of aged men and women ending up living on their own in the latter cohort. Further, there was a lower proportion living with married children in extended family households. A slightly lower percentage of elderly men lived with unmarried children in the late nineteenth century than had been the case earlier. In the case of women this was only true at the start of old age.

Marital status and life course

In 1828 at the age of 16 the journeyman Gustaf Forsberg migrated from Stockholm to Sundsvall. For a few years he lived in the household of his employer the tanner Johan Ekström and his family. Ten years later Gustaf married. His wife Birgitta, the daughter of a fisherman, was a year younger. They had four children of whom two survived their parents. During the following decades Gustaf and Birgitta changed residence several times. When the couple were in their sixties their daughter Märta left home to marry a man living in town. Their son Frans set up a household of his own, together with his wife Carolina. Both Frans and Märta had five children each and Gustaf and Birgitta went on living as tenants. After the death of his wife Gustaf moved to another house but still maintained a household of his own. When he was in his seventies he was noted in the poll tax registers as being poor probably because he was unable to work. However, at least until 1892 (the end of registration) he was able to stay in his own household. This might be explained by the fact that he had two children and many grandchildren living nearby who could assist him during critical life situations.¹⁰
Gustaf was one of the members of the industrial cohort who spent his last years as a widower. He migrated to Sundsvall early in life and remained in the town until his death. During their autumn of life Gustaf and Birgitta had a household of their own and when Gustaf became a widower he continued as head of his own household instead of moving into the household of one of his children.

This section examines marital status as a determinant of residence patterns. By studying elderly men and women on a micro level we will hopefully reach a better understanding of their family and household patterns. Unfortunately, a full life history as illustrated by the account of Gustav is not possible. Due to the time consuming character of the longitudinal approach I have chosen to study these men and women from the age of fifty until their death or outmigration.

Some important changes in residence patterns between the pre-industrial era and the time of industrial expansion have been documented. The rates of elderly men and women living alone increased and decreasing proportions had married offspring living in the same household. I argued that adult children preferred to establish households of their own when they had the economic wherewithal and that as the labour market in Sundsvall was expanding the elderly would have had children living elsewhere in town. Therefore, this section will examine the spatial proximity between aged men and women and their adult children in addition to studying changes over the life cycle in the household patterns of the elderly.

Although Sundsvall experienced massive population growth at the end of the nineteenth century, in the international context the town was relatively small at the time when men and women belonging to the industrial cohort were coming of age. Therefore, it is a reasonable assumption that the elderly could be assisted by children who lived in other parts of the town. Having children living nearby was of course no guarantee of good relations between parents and their adult children, but residential proximity is a valuable indicator of a potential family network.

**Widowhood**

Initially the focus will be on those who had lost their spouses. Widowhood is one of the most vulnerable periods in a person's life. Loss of economic security, emotional and social deprivation may all hit the surviving partner. This section therefore examines the potential support network of widows and widowers. By studying the structure of their households and their proximity to their children, a part of the social network of these elderly will be mapped out. Further, the household position of the investigated persons also will tell us more about their social status. To what extent did elderly widowers and widows succeed in remaining heads of their
households and what might have been their reasons for moving into the households of others?

A vast majority of the male members of both cohorts were widowed during the period of observation, whereas nearly half of the women had been widowed prior to the start of observation. It is a well known fact that a much higher proportion of women experienced widowhood and that widowhood lasted much longer because of their higher life expectancy, as well as their lower age at marriage and lower rates of remarriage.

In the pre-industrial cohort some cohort members remarried. Whereas only one of the widows remarried, twelve of the widowers did. None of the members of the industrial cohort remarried. This might be explained by inaccurate registration of remarriages due to the higher geographical mobility of the second cohort. Some persons could have remarried before they moved to Sundsvall and therefore did not have the date of their new marriage noted in the registers.

Approximately half of the widows and widowers in the pre-industrial cohort still had children living in the same household when they were last recorded in town. Half the elderly who lived with married children had moved into the household of the child. A higher proportion of the widowers compared with the widows co-resided with married children. The time between widowhood and co-residence with married children varied considerably depending on age at widowhood and the age at which the child married.

The residence patterns of the widows from the industrial cohort were not dissimilar from those of the widows from the first cohort. Almost the same percentage as in
the earlier cohort resided with children. The small decline is explained by a slightly lower percentage living with married children. Very few married children lived in the parental household. The majority of the widows who co-resided with married offspring had either moved to Sundsvall to join their children or had immigrated with them. Most of these widows belonged to the group of small entrepreneurs or civil servants, implying it was those who were somewhat better off who migrated with their married children.41

Surprisingly, the percentage of widows living alone declined markedly between the two cohorts, whereas the proportion of those widows living with other relatives or non-kin had increased. These proportions differ markedly from those of the cross-sectional study, which indicated a substantial increase in the proportion of widows living on their own between 1845 and 1880. One explanation for these differences might lie with the difficulty mentioned above, of determining in the cross-sectional study whether some of the elderly registered as living alone actually were living together with others. However, the results of the longitudinal study are more reliable in that in this case the living arrangements of the elderly as registered in the catechetical examination registers has been compared with their household patterns as recorded in the poll tax registers. Another important explanation for the difference is that usually an individual was last recorded in the longitudinal study shortly before their death. Dependence on other persons was probably strongest during this very vulnerable period.

It is evident that the residence pattern of the widowers had changed dramatically between the two cohorts. The proportion of widowers in the second cohort with children in the same household was almost half the proportion in the pre-industrial cohort, whereas increasing proportions were living alone, with other relatives or non-kin, and in the workhouse. Such major changes require an explanation.

In discussing the result of the cross-sectional study reference was made to the improving labour market. It was further suggested that this might have enabled children to leave home earlier but still remain in the town. When the proportions of widows and widowers having children in the household are added to those having children living in town, the percentage of elderly persons with the access to their children is obtained. 80 percent of the widowers and 78 percent of the widows from the pre-industrial cohort had children living in town, whereas the corresponding percentages for Cohort Two were 66 and 71 percent. Thus a large majority had children living in town who could support their old parents even though they did not live together. Moreover, the decline between the pre-industrial and industrial cohorts in the percentage of widowers having children living nearby was not as dramatic as the decline in the frequency of co-residence with children.
I will now examine in more detail the situation of those who neither had children living in the same household nor in town, and try to explain the differences between the cohorts. The issue addressed are why some of the elderly did not have children living in the town of Sundsvall and the living arrangements they adopted in the absence of children.

**Table 13. Reasons for widowers and widows aged over 50 not having children living in Sundsvall when last recorded in the town. Cohort One born between 1755–1770 and Cohort Two born between 1810–1819.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort One</th>
<th>Last child died</th>
<th>Last child outmigrated</th>
<th>No children registered</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Widowers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widows</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort Two</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widows</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall 1803–1892 and poll tax registers for the town of Sundsvall 1800–1910, computerised by the DDB; Umeå. Parish registers for the town of Sundsvall 1892–1911. Research Archives of Umeå.

The greatest difference between the cohorts was that a higher proportion of elderly from the industrial cohort had not registered any children in the town of Sundsvall. More than half of these people had moved late in life to Sundsvall and only stayed for a short time. It is possible that they had children living elsewhere. As mentioned above, around one third of all the elderly from the second cohort had migrated at some point during the period of observation, whereas only one tenth of the members of the first cohort had spent some time after the age of 50 in another parish.

**Table 14. Living arrangements of men and women aged over 50 without children present when last recorded in the town of Sundsvall. Cohort One born between 1755–1770 and Cohort Two born between 1810–1819.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort One</th>
<th>Alone</th>
<th>Kin or unrelated</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort Two</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall 1803–1892 and poll tax registers for the town of Sundsvall 1800–1910, computerised by the DDB; Umeå. Parish registers for the town of Sundsvall 1892–1911. Research Archives of Umeå.
Aged widows and widowers without children present in Sundsvall seldom changed their living arrangements more than once after the death of their spouse or the death or outmigration of their children. Some of those who received indoor relief, managed to live on their own for some years before they had to move to the poorhouse.

Of the widowers from the pre-industrial cohort one old man lived with a grandson but the remainders either ended up in the poorhouse, lived alone, or spent their last days cared for by a female servant. Almost half of the widows from the first cohort lived alone after their children had died or outmigrated. The others either lived with some kin, unrelated persons or ended up in the poorhouse.

Jöns Granberg was one of many members of the industrial cohort who late in life migrated to Sundsvall on his own. Some of these people spent only a few years of their lives in the town either living alone or in the household of an employer. Jöns Granberg moved to Sundsvall in 1873. He was 56 years old and had been a widower for about fifteen years. He migrated to Sundsvall to work as a tailor’s cutter. Granberg only stayed in Sundsvall for two years, living in the town's largest “household”, where his employer, the master tailor Bartel was the head of a most atypical “household” consisting of 46 people. In addition to the master, his wife, seven children and his old mother, tailor’s cutters, journeymen, apprentices, seamstresses, maids, farmhands and errand boys all lived in the same household. Jöns Granberg returned to Stockholm 1875. He was registered as childless but he might have had children waiting for him in Stockholm.  

Unfortunately it is more difficult to interprete the living arrangements of the childless members of the industrial cohort. It is quite difficult to decide whether the widows and widowers lived alone or lived together with other people. Around a quarter ended up in the workhouse. Some spent years before moving to the public institution, either living alone or co-residing with kin or unrelated persons. Others went there directly after their children had died or left town.

Another issue is the extent to which it was possible for an old widower to remain head of his household until his death and for widows to have households of their own. This is a good indicator of the status and to some extent of the economic situation of an old person. In the first cohort 74 percent of the widowers and 71 percent of the widows headed their own households. Most of those who had given up the headship had transferred their property to a married son or son-in-law. Other elderly no longer heading their own households had either moved into the household of others or entered the poorhouse.

The situation had changed by the time of the industrial cohort, when only just over fifty percent of the widows and widowers headed their own households. Some lived in the households of children, most of them married. However, the pronounced
decrease in the proportion of elderly heading their own households can largely be
explained by the increasing proportions of men and women who lived in households
of others. This in turn was occasioned by changes in the social structure. An increasing
percentage of the elderly were workers, many of them migrating late in life to Sunds­
vall. It was inevitable, that a particularly high proportion would end up in the
households of other persons. Some differences in the proportions of elderly men and
women who lived in these type of households are also apparent. Widowers were
more inclined to live in the households of employers, whereas widows were more
likely to co-reside with relatives or unrelated persons. Another important explanation
to the decline in the number of elderly heads was the rising proportion of aged men
ending up in the workhouse.

To sum up, the vast majority of aged men and women who had lost their spouses
still had children living nearby, although the percentage of elderly with children in
the same household was lower in the industrial cohort. The principal cause of this
change was the increasing possibility for children to establish households of their
own earlier in life. In addition, there was a slight fall in the proportion of elderly men
and women who had children living nearby. This was probably due to the increasing
mobility of the elderly members of the second cohort. Some of them might have had
adult children who had already left home before they decided to move to Sundsvall.
Others may have migrated because they did not have any children who were able to
support them. In the next section we will look at the married couples to discover
whether the same trend towards a decreasing proportion with children living in the
vicinity is apparent.

**Elderly couples**

Three quarters of the married aged men in both cohorts had children living in the
same household when last recorded in the town. Around half of the married women
had children living in the same household, although the proportion was somewhat
lower for the second cohort. 86 percent of the men and 74 percent of the women from
the first cohort had children living nearby, either in the same household or in town.
Of the members of the second cohort, 87 percent of the men and 73 percent of the
women were living with or close to their children.

A higher proportion of married men headed their own household in the industrial
cohort. This change was due to the fact that almost no married elderly couples from
the industrial cohort co-resided with married children. Most of those residing in
three-generational households in the pre-industrial cohort were small entrepreneurs
such as fishers, shopkeepers, artisans, and farmers. Among the fishermen I found

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moderately high proportions of children staying in the parental household some years after their marriage.

Hans-Olof Jonsson, who has completed a detailed study of the fishermen in the Sundsvall region, argues that certain conditions had to be fulfilled before one could establish oneself as a fisherman. Preferably the person in question should be related to or have married into a family of fishermen. Furthermore, sons-in-law who had been born in rural areas had to work for their parents-in-law for six years before they could become fishermen in their own right. This might be the major reason why so many of the households of the fishermen were extended.

Spinsters and bachelors

Finally we will examine the destiny of those who never married. What forms of living arrangements did they adopt as they neared the end of their lives? To whom could they turn when they wanted support in old age?

Figure 18. Living arrangements of unmarried men and women aged over 50 when last recorded in the town of Sundsvall. Cohort One = 7 men and 30 women born between 1755–1770. Cohort Two = 21 men and 41 women born between 1810–1819.

Sources: Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall 1803–1892 and poll tax registers for the town of Sundsvall 1800–1910, computerised by the DDB; Umeå. Parish registers for the town of Sundsvall 1892–1911. Research Archives of Umeå.

There were very few unmarried men in the first cohort but of these seven bachelors three spent some years with a sibling. The others lived in the households of an employer or kin, with a servant, or in the poorhouse. There was a higher proportion of unmarried aged men in the industrial cohort. Due to the less accurate registration in force at the time of the second cohort as mentioned above, it is difficult to determine the living arrangements of the members of the industrial cohort. The unmarried men either lived in the household of an employer, with or nearby fellow-workers or other unrelated people. Only one of the twenty-one lived with a brother. However, more
than forty percent of the unmarried men ended up in institutions; three in the sailors home and six in the workhouse. The situation had changed dramatically from the time of the first cohort since only one unmarried man from the pre-industrial cohort spent his last years in the poorhouse. The higher proportions living in institutions and as boarders account for the fact that only half as many men as in the pre-industrial cohort were household heads.

Almost half of the unmarried women in the pre-industrial cohort spent some part of their old age in the household of a brother or a sister, but only about a quarter of these women spent the whole period of observation in this type of living arrangement. The main reason for this was the death of their sibling. Further, it was very common for elderly unmarried women to live with employers. Some spent the whole period in the same household while others changed households at least twice. Others again lived in the household of an employer as they entered old age but ended up alone or in the poorhouse. These women probably had to move when they did not have the strength to carry out the work their employers expected.

Only around one tenth from the unmarried women in the industrial cohort spent some of their old age with siblings. The vast majority can be found either living in the household of an employer or shared a household with other persons with whom they were apparently not related, nor is it clear why they were living together. Around a fifth lived with unmarried children, most of them until they were last recorded in Sundsvall. Very few ended up in the workhouse. Only three women of 41 had to spend their last days in that institution.

**Servants and demoiselles**

Elisabet Hägglund, an unmarried demoiselle, lived at the age of 47 with her daughter and old mother in the household of her sister Sara and Sara's husband, the shopkeeper Olof Smerling. The year after the death of her mother, Elisabet and her daughter left town. In 1841 after 27 years away from Sundsvall, Elisabet returned to spend the last years of her life with her sister and her sister's husband.45

Comparing the two major groups of unmarried women, the servants and the demoiselles, some important differences are evident. The latter category consisted of unmarried daughters of the bourgeoisie. Eight of the fourteen demoiselles in both cohorts co-resided with a sibling or another close relative, at some point during the last part of their life cycle. The other six lived alone.

Only one of the thirty servants in both cohorts co-resided with a close relative, a niece. The majority of the servants from the first cohort lived in the household of their employer. The living arrangements of these elderly servants seemed to have
changed somewhat by the time of the industrial cohort. A great disparity in living arrangements is apparent. Some servants lived with their children, others shared a household with other servants and a higher proportion than in the pre-industrial cohort lived on their own. However, we have to bear in mind that due to the inaccurate registration of some of the households it is quite difficult to decide whether these women lived alone or with others.

Differences in the living arrangements of the unmarried related to socio-economic status are in line with those Irene Artaeus observed in her study of single women in the Swedish town of Västerås during the early nineteenth century. She found that demoiselles usually co-resided with sisters or other female relatives, while servants either lived in the households of their employers or in the household of a widow who needed some extra income.46

Steven Ruggles also found many unmarried upper class spinsters spending their adult life living with siblings. A higher proportion of the daughters of bourgeoisie either did not find a suitable marriage partner or chose to remain unmarried. Some of the women with means of their own might have chosen the latter alternative in order to "escape the subjugation of matrimony". 47

Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter has been to deepen the cross-sectional study of the living arrangements of elderly men and women in the town of Sundsvall during pre-industrial times and the period of industrial expansion. We have been able to observe both continuity and change. In both cohorts the majority of elderly men and women had children living in Sundsvall and the most common living arrangement was co-residence with unmarried children.

Even if the proportion of elderly persons who lived alone increased as a result of early industrialisation, the vast majority had children living nearby. This is surprising since we could expect that the increasing geographical mobility would have resulted in a lower proportion of old people having children at hand. However, industrialisation seems to have affected the living arrangements of elderly men and women of different marital status in a variety of ways, since a declining proportion of widowers and unmarried men lived with relatives and a much higher percentage ended up in institutions. By contrast very few of the unmarried women spent their last days in the workhouse. Even if the importance of close relatives had diminished, these women seemed to have been able to support themselves effectively. Maybe they had other important social networks or were able to manage on their own better than the men. I will return to these questions in the chapter which considers the poor relief offered to the elderly.
Finally, we established that the majority of the elderly headed their own households even if the percentage decreased over time for the widowed and unmarried although not for the married elderly. This decline was due to the changing industrial structure leading to increasing geographical mobility. Workers who had moved to Sundsvall late in life more often spent their last years in the households of others or ended up in the workhouse.

3. A comparative analysis of the living arrangements of the elderly in Norrköping, Stockholm, and Sundsvall

Compared with European and American urban areas, elderly people living in Sundsvall during the period of industrial expansion formed different types of households. A high proportion lived alone and a lower percentage co-resided with married children and with other relatives or non-kin. However, the longitudinal study showed that the majority of the old parents still had children living nearby even though they did not live together.

This chapter will compare the living arrangements of the elderly in Sundsvall with those of the elderly from two other Swedish urban areas, Norrköping and Stockholm, in order to find out whether the residence patterns in Sundsvall were unique or occurred in other Swedish urban areas as well. The former city has been chosen because it was the largest textile industry town in Sweden at the end of the nineteenth century. Since several of the studies of families and households in urban areas in other countries have focused on residence patterns in textile industry cities, it is appropriate to compare these studies with a Swedish urban area with a similar industrial structure. The high proportion of female industrial workers in Norrköping meant that the town differed from Sundsvall both in its socio-economic and demographic structure. The choice of Stockholm is justified by its size and contribution to the national economy. The capital was the only Swedish city that in terms of size could compare favourably with other European metropoli. In 1880 Stockholm had a population of around 168,000, whereas the population in the second largest city in Sweden, Gothenburg, was only half that size. Twenty years later the capital had approximately 300,000 inhabitants.

I have chosen to study the situation at the beginning of the industrial expansion in Sweden. The information on Sundsvall and two parishes in the southern part of
Stockholm, Katarina and Maria, dates from 1880. The census of Norrköping from 1880 is of poor quality, since it is almost impossible to separate the different households in the lists. Therefore, I have studied the households a decade earlier in 1870. The data are analysed from a cross-sectional perspective because, as has been mentioned previously, this method is less time consuming and permits the study of fairly large populations.

The socio-economic and demographic development of Norrköping and Stockholm is presented first. This is followed by an outline of the living arrangements of all men and women over the age of 60, which leads on to a discussion of the differences in residence patterns between people of various marital statuses and social groups.

In the study of Sundsvall the female elderly were classified by their husband’s occupation, since few of the women had an occupation of their own. Unfortunately, registrations of the widows in Norrköping and a number of those in Stockholm failed to mention their former husband’s occupations, making it difficult to classify the female part of the population. To circumvent this problem I have chosen to start by focusing on those women with an occupation of their own, in order to calculate the labour force participation rate of elderly women in each city. Further, the unmarried women will be classified according to social status. The demoiselles represent the higher social strata, as these women were the daughters of the bourgeoisie. Being a servant was an occupation but could also simply mean an unmarried woman from the lower level of society. Finally the widows in Norrköping were described in different ways according to their social status. The appellation ”änkefru” indicates a higher social status than ”äncka”. The living arrangements of these groups of unmarried women and widows will be investigated, in order to study the impact of socio-economic status on the living arrangements of elderly women.

**The socio-economic and demographic development in Norrköping**

In the 1830s Norrköping started to develop as a modern industrial town and the following decades were Norrköping’s period of substantial expansion. Between 1820 and 1850 the number of clothing factories increased almost threefold. This industrial expansion and the founding of cotton factories around 1850 markedly changed economic life and at the end of the 1860s Norrköping was one of the few Swedish towns where industrial production was of real importance. After Stockholm, this town was at the time the most important industrial centre in Sweden. A further marked change in the industrial structure took place as a number of smaller textile
industries were driven out of business by larger companies in the late 1860s. At the beginning of the 1870s there was an expansion of large-scale industry and new factories were founded in Norrköping. During this decade the cotton industry expanded more rapidly than the traditional clothing industry.

The textile industry dominated the economic life of the city, contributing to more than 80 percent of the total production. The single most important line of business was manufacture of clothing.\textsuperscript{50} Printing was the second largest industry. Other important industries were sugar, paper, tobacco, and engineering.\textsuperscript{51}

As a consequence of the character of Norrköping's economy, many women were able to find employment. In 1865 almost half of the industrial labour force were women. This was not only the situation within the textile industry but there were also high proportions of female employees in the paper mill and printing.\textsuperscript{52}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{population-development-norrkoping-1800-1900.jpg}
\caption{Population development in the town of Norrköping 1800-1900.}
\end{figure}

\textbf{Source.} Historisk statistik för Sverige. Del 1. Befolkningen. SCB.

The town experienced a substantial increase in population mostly due to immigration and in the footsteps of industrialisation followed social problems such as a shortage of housing and overcrowding.\textsuperscript{53} With industry employing many low paid workers, particularly unmarried young women, the town had poor housing standards. The one room flat was the most common type of housing but compared with Stockholm it was less common to take in boarders.\textsuperscript{54}

The majority of the paupers received outdoor relief and a great many of those who were in need of care were housed in other people's homes. These people received money from the community to provide the paupers with food and housing. In 1842 two workhouses had been founded; one for men and one for women.\textsuperscript{55}
The socio-economic and demographic development in Stockholm

Stockholm at the end of the nineteenth century was the largest industrial city in Sweden. Like in most Swedish towns, the expansion of Stockholm started in the middle of the nineteenth century. This was the end of a century of stagnation. The following quotation summarises the period of stagnation in the capital:

"Economic growth was weak and a process of de-industrialization took place during which much of the largest sector, the textile industry, was closed down. Demographic growth was slow, involving a very high mortality, normally an excess of deaths over births, a declining nuptiality and a rising bastardy rate."\(^{56}\)

However, during the first half of the 1870s investments increased and Stockholm’s industry developed more rapidly compared with industries in other urban areas. The metal and engineering industry was the most important sector and other branches to expand were food, paper and printing. On the other hand, the textiles and match manufactures experienced a recession.\(^{57}\)

Population increase in the capital during the early 1880s was probably the largest ever, perhaps with the exception of the great expansion of the seventeenth century.\(^{58}\) The growth was largely due to the influx of migrants exceeding the outflow. At the end of the century the rate of natural increase was about the same as in other Swedish towns but the net migration gain was three times higher.\(^{59}\) The substantial population increase during the last decades of the century owed much to the expansion of the service sector. Trade, transport, and service had much higher proportions of employees compared with other Swedish towns.\(^{60}\)

Figure 20. Population development in Stockholm 1800-1900.

In spite of the declining importance of textile production, the proportion of women in the industrial work force increased probably due to an increasing employment of women in the printing and paper industries. Further, increasing numbers of women were employed in breweries, bakeries, and in chemico-technical industry. In addition, the number of seamstresses rose during the 1880s and an increasing number of women were employed in trade and in the public sector. Domestic work was of course an important source of income and this sector was less sensitive to economic fluctuations compared with other types of employment.  

Like many other Swedish towns Stockholm had a marked surplus of women due to the higher rates of female immigration but also because of the higher death rates of urban men. Compared with other Swedish towns the latter factor was of greater importance for the skewed sex ratio in Stockholm.

Mobility within the city was extremely high. On average the inhabitants changed their place of residence every third year. Young people working as servants and apprentices probably constituted the bulk of these migrants. Like other expanding industrial cities Stockholm faced the problems of a shortage of housing and overcrowding. At the end of the nineteenth century the parishes selected for study, Maria and Katarina, were two of the poorest in Stockholm. They were characterised by heavy industrialisation, a large population increase, poor housing standards, as well as bad sanitary conditions. The parish of Katarina had the worst living conditions with very high mortality and overcrowding.

In the 1890s, the author Gustaf af Geijerstam, with the support of a friendly society, launched an investigation into the living conditions of Swedish workers. One of his studies dealt with the housing conditions and standard of living among people working in an engineering workshop and in the textile industry in Stockholm. Geijerstam found great differences between the two groups of workers. The engineering workers were often better off than the textile workers. For instance, some of the engineering workers lived in flats of a standard almost comparable to that of the bourgeoisie, whereas many of the textile workers rented just a bed, not even a room. It was not unusual for more than five people to share the same room. Being a lodger was very common.

Further, Geijerstam asked married couples for details of their wages, expenditure on rent, insurance, and support to others. This latter question is of particular interest for my study. It emerged that around a quarter of both groups of workers helped their old parents either with small sums of money, with food, or accommodated parents in their households.  

Since most of the flats were very small it is probable that many of the elderly tried to support themselves some way to avoid crowding in with relatives. Either they
lived alone or they might have taken in boarders themselves in order to receive some kind of income. If the elderly became weak and infirm it was possible that they ended up in one of Stockholm's institutions. During the middle of the eighteenth century it was decided that each parish in Stockholm should have its own poorhouse. Both the parish of Katarina and Maria therefore had their own poorhouse. Further, at the end of the nineteenth century Stockholm also built a large workhouse, Diillska arbetsinrättningen, and an institution for the old and infirm, Grubbens försörjningsinrättning, which housed hundreds of paupers.

Members of the bourgeoisie did not normally end up in these institutions because the pauvres honteux and old men from the wealthier sectors of society were housed in private old age homes where the diet and conditions were better than in the poorhouses. Some of these homes were built in the 1860s–1870s while others such as Borgerskapets Ankehusinrättning and Borgerskapets Gubbhus had already been founded during the eighteenth century.66

Before looking at the living arrangements of the elderly in the three cities, the following section sets out the demographic and socio-economic structure of the elderly in each city to provide the appropriate context for the study of residence patterns.
Old men and women in Norrköping, Stockholm, and Sundsvall

At the end of the nineteenth century aged people formed a small minority of the urban population. In the town of Sundsvall in 1880 men and women over the age of 60 represented just 5.7 percent of the population.\(^7\) In the parish of St Olai in Norrköping 1870 the percentage was 4.8.\(^8\) In Stockholm 3.9 percent were over the age of 65 in 1880.\(^9\)

Table 15. Men and women over the age of 60 resident in the town of Sundsvall 1880, Norrköping 1870 and the parishes of Maria and Katarina in Stockholm 1880.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sundsvall</th>
<th>Norrköping</th>
<th>Stockholm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>860</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources. Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall 1880, computerised by DDB, Umeå.
Census for the parish of Olai, Norrköping 1870. Research Archives of Umeå.
The parishes of Maria and Katarina, Stockholm 1880. The Roteman Archives, computerised by SHD, Stockholm.

It is evident that the excess of women among the elderly was less pronounced in Sundsvall than in Norrköping and Stockholm due to a more balanced sex ratio in Sundsvall. The presence in Sundsvall of a male dominated saw mill industry ensured there was a higher proportion of men living in the town and in its vicinity compared with the other urban areas. Norrköping on the contrary had high rates of women working in its industry, principally in textiles but also in the paper mill and in printing. Stockholm had for a long time attracted female migrants, because its role as a major urban centre and national capital provided increased opportunities for women to earn a living. Here the marked surplus of women was also augmented by the aforementioned higher male mortality compared with other towns.
Table 16. Men and women over the age of 60 according to marital status in the town of Sundsvall in 1880, in the parish of Olai in Norrköping in 1870, and in the parishes of Maria and Katarina in Stockholm in 1880.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sundsvall</th>
<th>Norrköping</th>
<th>Stockholm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowers</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widows</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources. Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall 1880, computerised by DDB, Umeå.
Census for the parish of Olai, Norrköping 1870. Research Archives of Umeå.
The parishes of Maria and Katarina, Stockholm 1880. The Roteman Archives, computerised by SHD, Stockholm.
Elderly men and women who were divorced or whose marital status was unknown have been excluded from the table.

As for the marital status of the older population there are some interesting differences between the areas. In Norrköping there were lower proportions of unmarried men and women compared with Sundsvall and Stockholm. At the same time Norrköping had a very high percentage of widows. In all probability the prosperous labour market around the middle of the nineteenth century led to a rise in the marriage rate, particularly for men as a consequence of the surplus of women.70

Sundsvall had the highest proportion of elderly married women due to the high percentage of men in the population, whereas Stockholm had the lowest proportion of both married men and women. As compared not only with other Swedish towns but also with other European cities, Stockholm showed very low proportions of married people. From the beginning of the nineteenth century until the 1850s the marriage rate in Stockholm decreased steadily but during the 1880s and 1890s in pace with an increasing wealth, it increased.71 Moreover, the relatively common phenomenon of men and women cohabiting without being married contributed to the high rate of unmarried people in the capital. This living arrangement was called "Stockholmsäktenskap" (Stockholm marriages) and was most frequent among the working class.72
Figure 21 a. Socio-economic status of men and women aged over 60 in the town of Sundsvall in 1880. N=175 men and 315 women.

Source: Catechetical examination registers from the town of Sundsvall 1880, computerised by the DDB, Umeå.

Figure 21 b. Socio-economic status of men and women aged over 60 in the parish of St Olai, Norrköping in 1870. N=229 men and 631 women.

Source: Census for the parish of St Olai in Norrköping 1870. Research Archives of Umeå.

Figure 21 c. Socio-economic status of men and women aged over 60 in the parishes of Maria and Katarina, Stockholm in 1880. N=877 men and 2458 women.

Source: The roteman archive for the parishes of Katarina and Maria, computerised by the Stockholm Historical Database.
I a owners of large business enterprises, landowners
I b higher civil servants, university graduates
II a small scale business entrepreneurs in trade and industry, fishermen
II b lower civil servants and clerks, shop workers, foremen
III farmers, tenant farmers
IV craftsmen and artisans
V a workers in industry and urban commerce
V b farm workers, domestic servants
Undef. occupation cannot be defined

We can observe a large proportion of women whose social status cannot be defined. Thus we must set aside for the moment the question of the socio-economic status of elderly females and focus on the status of the aged males in the three cities. The socio-economic structure of the cities varied considerably. In Sundsvall workers constituted the largest group; twice the size of the proportion of workers in the capital but not as large as in Norrköping, where the textile industry dominated production. Further, the proportion of small entrepreneurs in Sundsvall far exceeded the proportions in Norrköping and Stockholm. Nearly half of this group were fishermen and as fishing had previously been one of the principal employments in Sundsvall, several of the elderly still styled themselves fishermen. In the capital the largest social group were the artisans, although the percentage was only slightly higher than in Norrköping. Stockholm had higher proportions of lower civil servants and shop assistants compared with the other towns because of its role as the capital and administrative centre.
Socio-economic status of women over the age of 60 recorded as employed in the town of Sundsvall in 1880, the parish of St Olai in Norrköping in 1870, and the parishes of Katarina and Maria in Stockholm in 1880. N=51 (Su), 55 (No), and 295 (St).

Sources.

Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall in 1880, computerised by DDB, Umeå.

Census for the parish of St Olai, Norrköping in 1870. Research Archives of Umeå.

The parishes of Maria and Katarina, Stockholm in 1880. The Roteman Archives, computerised by SHD, Stockholm.

1a owners of large business enterprises, landowners
1b higher civil servants, university graduates
2a small scale business entrepreneurs in trade and industry, fishermen
2b lower civil servants and clerks, shop workers, foremen
3 farmers, tenant farmers
4 craftsmen and artisans
5a workers in industry and urban commerce
5b farm workers, domestic servants
Undef. occupation cannot be defined

Returning to the women where own employment were specified in the sources we find, not unexpectedly, that the bulk of elderly working women were employed in the domestic sector. This is particularly the case in Norrköping, where the servants constituted an overwhelming majority of all employed women. There were just two of the women in Norrköping with an occupation outside the domestic sector. One was a midwife and the other was recorded as an engraver. Only nine percent of the old women in the parish of St Olai were registered as employed.

Studying the situation in Sundsvall and Stockholm we find a somewhat different situation. The proportion of women recorded as employed in their own right was a little higher, 16 and 12 percent respectively, but above all the dominance of the domestic sector was not as marked as in Norrköping. Other occupations such as workers, hawkers, traders, seamstresses occurred more frequent in the registers. The question that arises is why these occupations do not appear in the Norrköping
census. Most likely some women in Norrköping practised such employments. As we have seen the town had a high percentage of elderly women, who needed to earn a livelihood. All of these women could not have had access to children or others who would support them and would have been obliged to support themselves. Thus the absence of occupations for women outside the domestic sector in Norrköping must be due to the inaccurate registration by the census of the employment of women. This was of course also the case in Sundsvall and Stockholm because there was a large number of women not recorded as employed, such as working wives and the widows who continued their former husband’s business. However, the registration of working women in Norrköping was even more inadequate. The fact that the widows were recorded without reference to their late husband’s socio-economic status but were simply termed widows illustrates the little interest that was taken in their occupational status. Probably many of the elderly women in Norrköping worked in the same branches of the economy as in Sundsvall and Stockholm. Further, the dominance of the textile industry must have meant that some factories subcontracted the manufacture of some articles of clothing to women working at home, even to aged women.

Living arrangements of aged men and women in three urban areas

The following sections present an overview of the household patterns of aged men and women in the three cities. I have used almost the same categorisation as in the Sundsvall study, apart from abandoning the distinction between married and unmarried children. This decision was taken because of the inaccurate registration of three-generational households in Stockholm. However, I will discuss the extent of this type of living arrangement in the other two cities.
An examination of the living arrangements of the elderly reveals some patterns that were common to all three cities. The predominant residence pattern of aged men was living with spouse and children and of the female elderly the most common pattern was living alone. Thus more men than women tended to live with a spouse alone, or with spouse and children. Of the residence patterns of the female elderly living alone, living only with children or with other people were more frequent. Both in Sundsvall and Norrköping it was very rare to live with married children. As we saw in chapter V:1 only two percent of elderly men and three percent of elderly women in the town of Sundsvall co-resided with a married child. In Norrköping not a single man lived in a three-generational household and only four percent of the elderly women were so situated.

The residence patterns of the elderly in these Swedish cities differed from those
in most other urban areas where living arrangements of the elderly have been studied, although there were some similarities such as a high percentage of elderly co-residing with unmarried children and low proportions living with people outside the family. A lower percentage of Swedish elderly, particularly elderly women, lived with children, especially married children. What is even more striking are the high rates of women living on their own in all three Swedish cities. Such a high proportion of solitary living has not been found anywhere else. For instance, in Amsterdam where a comparably low percentage of the elderly co-resided with children only around ten percent lived on their own.

However, there were also some important differences between the Swedish cities regarding the living arrangements of the elderly. Living alone was much more unusual among men in Norrköping. Compared with elderly men in Sundsvall, the male population in Norrköping was more likely to co-reside with a spouse, kin or unrelated persons, and in institutions. Compared with the situation in Stockholm, higher proportions of elderly men in Norrköping lived with a spouse, spouse and children, and kin or unrelated persons. Among women we find that those living in Sundsvall were more likely to co-reside with both spouse and children. Further, it was somewhat more common for the female elderly in Norrköping to live with people outside their immediate family.

The highest percentage of elderly residing in institutions occurred in Stockholm, both for men and women. Stockholm because of its role as the capital and major urban centre had already established institutions for different groups of poor in the eighteenth century. The presence of these institutions was a major cause of the higher proportions of elderly in Stockholm in receipt of indoor relief. As has been mentioned above in Norrköping two workhouses for both men and women had been founded by 1842, but the town did not have any private old age homes at that time. Since Sundsvall began its period of major expansion in the 1870s and was still quite a small town it only had one institution for the poor, the workhouse, founded in 1876. The level of urban development is therefore one important determinant of the proportion of elderly living in institutions.

The capital recorded the lowest percentage of elderly co-residing with children. It is hard to know whether the proportions of elderly living with children were low because the elderly in Stockholm enjoyed better access to institutions or if the institutionalisation itself was the product of a high percentage of childless people. Probably both factors were relevant. As there was a considerable mobility within Stockholm old parents could have had children living in the city although they did not share a household. The children were more likely to change residence frequently but as the Sundsvall study indicated, elderly people also changed residence relatively often.
Stockholm had the highest rates of elderly unmarried men and women. This was one of the explanations for the lower percentage living with children, whereas the low rates of unmarried men in Norrköping might help to explain the low proportion of men living alone. Another possible explanation for the lower proportion of elderly men in Norrköping who lived alone and the somewhat higher percentage of both aged men and women who lived with unrelated people might be the poor relief system that was practised in Norrköping: in particular the housing of aged paupers in the homes of other people. To provide a fuller understanding of the differences between the cities, the following section considers differences between the cities in the living arrangements of the elderly according to their marital status.

**Household structure and marital status**

An investigation of the connection between marital status and the living arrangements of the elderly in the three areas, is intended to determine whether differences between the cities in the distinction of the elderly by marital status explains some of these variations in residence patterns. Unfortunately the marital status of those elderly persons living in institutions in Sundsvall was not recorded in the catechetical examination registers. These institutionalised elderly have, therefore, to be excluded from this part of the study. However, I will still discuss the possibility that a person’s marital status influenced their chances of entering an institution. In order to make the results from Sundsvall comparable with those for Norrköping and Stockholm I have used the proportions of aged men and women living in institutions as recorded in the longitudinal study.

**Figure 24. Living arrangements of unmarried men and women aged over 60 in the town of Sundsvall in 1880 (institutions are excluded), the parish of St Olai in Norrköping in 1870, and the parishes of Maria and Katarina in Stockholm in 1880.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sundsvall</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norrköping</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources.** Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall in 1880, computerised by DDB, Umeå.
Census for the parish of Olai, Norrköping in 1870. Research Archives of Umeå.
The parishes of Maria and Katarina, Stockholm in 1880. The Roteman Archives, computerised by SHD, Stockholm. Men and women living in institutions in Sundsvall are excluded.

—152—
In both Stockholm and Sundsvall the vast majority of both elderly unmarried men and women lived alone. Residence patterns in Norrköping differed from those in the two other cities in that the elderly were more likely to live with kin or unrelated people. In Norrköping and Stockholm about the same percentage of elderly men were recorded as residents in institutions, whereas the percentage of unmarried women receiving indoor poor relief was much higher in Stockholm than in Norrköping. According to my indirect estimates more than forty percent of the unmarried elderly men and slightly more than five percent of the unmarried elderly women in Sundsvall were residents in institutions.

**Figure 25.** Living arrangements of married men and women aged over 60 in the town of Sundsvall in 1880 (institutions are excluded), in the parish of St Olai in Norrköping in 1870, and in the parishes of Maria and Katarina in Stockholm in 1880.

N=men and women: 100 and 89 (Su), 132 and 120 (No), 444 and 362 (St).

- **Spouse only**
- **Spouse and children**
- **Institution**
- **Alone**
- **Others**
- **Alone or others**

**Sources.** Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall in 1880, computerised by DDB, Umeå. Census for the parish of Olai, Norrköping in 1870. SCB. The parishes of Maria and Katarina, Stockholm in 1880. The Roteman Archives, computerised by SHD, Stockholm.

Men and women living in institutions in Sundsvall are excluded.

Among elderly married men in all three cities it was most common to co-reside with a spouse and children. In Sundsvall this household type was much more frequent than in the other two cities both among men and women and in Norrköping this was also the most common residence pattern of elderly women. Stockholm differed from the two other cities because the most common residence pattern of elderly married women was to live with their husband but without any co-residing children. Stockholm also had the highest rates of married men and women living apart from their spouses. Finally, Stockholm and Norrköping had roughly equivalent proportions of elderly married people living in institutions.
Figure 26. Living arrangements of widowers and widows aged over 60 in the town of Sundsvall in 1880 (institutions are excluded), the parish of St Olai in Norrköping in 1870, and the parishes of Maria and Katarina in Stockholm in 1880. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sundsvall</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norrköping</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>1143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In all three cities the most frequent living arrangement of the widows was to live alone and this was also the situation of widowers in Stockholm. For widowers in Sundsvall and Norrköping co-residence with children was, however, somewhat more common than living alone. Furthermore, widowers and widows in Norrköping were more likely to live with kin or unrelated people. The proportion of widowers residing in an institution was about the same in Norrköping as in the capital but it was much more frequent among the widows in Stockholm. My estimates for Sundsvall suggest more than twenty percent of the widowers and around five percent of the widows spent their last days in the workhouse.

Comparisons

I have asked whether differences between the three cities in the distribution of the elderly by marital status might explain some of the variances between the cities in the living arrangements of the elderly. Stockholm had the lowest percentage of elderly co-residing with children and relatively high proportions of elderly residing in institutions. Sundsvall had the highest rates of co-residence with spouse and children. Living with kin and unrelated people was somewhat more common in Norrköping.

Some of these differences can indeed be explained by the different marital status distributions. The low proportion of unmarried aged men in Norrköping was an important factor behind the low rates of men living alone in that city. Further, the
high rates of unmarried elderly in Stockholm probably explain in part the low proportions who lived with children and the high proportion of unmarried women residing in institutions. Finally, the large proportions of married women in Sundsvall meant that higher proportions lived with a spouse and children.

However, there are still differences between the cities in the living arrangements of the elderly that seemingly cannot be explained by a different marital status distribution. For instance, although the high percentage of unmarried people in Stockholm reduced the probability that old age would be spent in the same household as children, married, and widowed elderly were also less likely in Stockholm than elsewhere to share a household with a child. Further, in Norrköping co-residence with people outside the immediate family was higher both among unmarried and widowed elderly. Other explanations need to be sought for these differences. The following sector will therefore consider the relationship between socio-economic status and living arrangements.

Household structure and socio-economic status

It was demonstrated above that the employment patterns in the three cities differed considerably. Norrköping had the highest proportion of workers, Stockholm the highest rates of civil servants, and Sundsvall the highest percentage of small scale business entrepreneurs. Did these variations in the social structure have any influence on residence patterns?

Initially the living arrangements of elderly men of different socio-economic statuses will be presented. I have used the same social division as in the cross-sectional study of Sundsvall in order to avoid a small number of cases in certain categories. This study is followed by an examination of the living arrangements of the demoiselles and servants in Norrköping and Stockholm, which will be compared with the residence patterns of the demoiselles and servants in Sundsvall as revealed by the longitudinal study. Finally, the residence patterns of the two groups of widows in Norrköping are examined.

Men

Living with children was in general more frequent among the upper class than among the working class. The situation within the middle classes was more ambiguous. Middle class groups in Sundsvall showed a higher frequency of cohabitation with offspring than those in Norrköping and Stockholm. Furthermore, Sundsvall was on
its own when it came to the proportion of workers residing on their own with more than half of the elderly male workers living alone. Much of the difference in this respect between Sundsvall and Norrköping and Stockholm can be explained by a high proportion of workers in the latter two cities who lived in institutions. We do not know the social status of the inmates in the workhouse in Sundsvall but most likely the vast majority came from the working class.


1 owners of large business enterprises, landowners, higher civil servants, university graduates
2 small scale business entrepreneurs in trade and industry, fishermen, lower civil servants and clerks, shop workers, foremen, farmers, tenant farmers
3 craftsmen and artisans
4 workers in industry and urban commerce, farm workers, domestic servants
Undef. occupation cannot be defined

Women

The Swedish author Ludvig Nordström wrote about an old faithful servant, Lisa, who served in the household of a wholesale dealer in Stockholm at the beginning of the
twentieth century. Lisa wanted to leave her family because she felt too old and no longer of any use. The master of the house wanted the old maid to remain in the family and to persuade her to remain therefore told her dreadful stories about the fate of old servant women. He used to tell her...

"stories about female servants who ended up in the poorhouse - maybe this is where all old servants disappeared? - and this would frighten her and make her become weak at the knees, so that she had to sit down and promise the wholesaler to stay the year out."**77**

The figure below sets out the frequency with which elderly female servants and demoiselles spent their last part of their life cycle in institutions and in other types of living arrangements.

![Figure 28](image_url)

**Sources.** Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall in 1880, computerised by DDB, Umeå.

Census for the parish of Olai, Norrköping in 1870. Research Archives of Umeå.

The parishes of Maria and Katarina, Stockholm in 1880. The Roteman Archives, computerised by SHD, Stockholm.

As we can see some of Stockholm’s female servants ended up in the poorhouse but living alone was the most frequent residence pattern adopted by both the female servants and the demoiselles. However, it was more common for female servants than for demoiselles to live with other people. This can be explained by the fact that a moderately high percentage continued to live with their employers. The proportion of female servants and demoiselles who spent part of their old age in institutions was larger in Stockholm and it is surprising to find such a high percentage of demoiselles ending up in one of the capital’s institutions. The reason for this was the number of institutions for burghers in Stockholm. As mentioned above, some of them had
been especially founded for pauvres honteux, principally women from the higher strata of society. The longitudinal study of Sundsvall and other research has revealed the importance of siblings for the residence patterns of the demoiselles. Servant women did not form such households. It is not possible to decide whether the demoiselles in Stockholm lived with siblings but contrary to the findings for other communities only three of the demoiselles in Norrköping co-resided with a sibling.

Figure 29. Living arrangements of two “classes” of widows: “änkefruar” and “änkor” aged over 60 in the parish of St Olai in Norrköping in 1870. N = 320 “änkor” and 47 “änkefruar”.

Source. Census for the parish of Olai, Norrköping 1870.

Turning to the widows in Norrköping, there was a marked difference in the living arrangements of “änkefruar” and “änkor”. The latter poorer group was much more likely to live alone or end up in institutions, whereas the higher status “änkefruar” were much more likely to live with kin and unrelated people. The vast majority of the co-residing unrelated persons were servants, whereas only two percent of “änkor” lived in this type of household.

Comparisons

We have been able to establish that residence patterns differed depending on the individual’s socio-economic status. Common to all three cities was that upper class men were more likely to co-reside with children and that consequently fewer lived alone. Further, Sundsvall and Stockholm had lower rates of working class men co-residing with children. In Sundsvall the living arrangements of the workers were more distinct than in either of the other two cities.

The most common residence pattern of both groups of unmarried women was to live alone but there were some differences between the demoiselles and the female servants, particularly in Stockholm. The female servants were more likely than the
demoiselles to co-reside with non-kin most of whom were their employers. Further, a much higher proportion of the demoiselles in the capital resided in institutions for the *pauvres honteux*. In Norrköping the most important social difference between the two groups of widows was that the higher status "*änkefruar*" were particularly likely to co-reside with other people, principally servants.

**Conclusion**

In order to discover whether the residence patterns of elderly men and women in Sundsvall were also common in other Swedish urban areas, the above account has set out the situation in two other Swedish cities, Norrköping and Stockholm. The former was chosen because it was the largest textile city in Sweden at the end of the nineteenth century. Since several of the studies of families and households in urban areas in other countries have examined household and family patterns in textile industry cities, it has been natural to compare these studies with a Swedish urban area with a similar industrial structure. The choice of Stockholm was justified by its high level of urban development. The capital was the only Swedish city which could compare favourably in the size with other big European cities.

The cities showed both similarities and differences in residence patterns. The predominant living arrangement in all three cities among aged men was living with spouse and children while among female elderly it was most common to live alone. Thus elderly men tended to live with just their spouse or with a spouse and unmarried children. Among the female elderly living alone, living only with unmarried children or with unrelated people were more frequent types of households.

However, there were also some important differences in residence patterns between these Swedish cities. Living alone was much more unusual for elderly men in Norrköping. This can be explained by a combination of factors: the low proportions of unmarried men, moderately high proportion living in the poorhouse, and the existence of a poor relief system, which paid people to take care of elderly paupers in their homes. In addition, old women in Sundsvall were more likely to co-reside with both spouse and children as a consequence of the high rate of married women in this city. At the same time the male dominated labour market in Sundsvall made it easier for women to find a partner.

Stockholm had the lowest percentage of elderly persons co-residing with a child. One possible explanation for this pattern was the high mobility of the city's population. Old parents could have had children living in the city although they did not live with them. Another explanation for the low numbers living together with children was the high percentage of unmarried elderly in the capital, resulting from the
low marriage rates at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Further, the highest percentage of both elderly men and women residing in institutions were to be found in Stockholm. The city in view of its size and its role as the capital had established institutions for different groups of poor already in the eighteenth century, which explains the higher proportions of elderly receiving indoor relief. Moreover, a moderately high percentage of members of the bourgeoisie lived in institutions due to the presence of institutions specifically founded for these groups.

Residence patterns of aged persons in Swedish cities differed from those in most other urban areas where the living arrangements of the elderly have been studied. However, there were some similarities in living arrangements such as a high percentage of elderly co-residing with unmarried children and low proportions living with people outside the immediate family. Differences concerned the percentage of Swedish elderly, particularly women, who lived with children. Co-residence with a child was less common in Swedish cities. Even more striking was the high rate of women living on their own in all three Swedish cities. Such a high proportion of solitary living elderly has not been reported in any other previous study.

However, residing alone was not synonymous with the absence of offspring living nearby able to take care of their old parents. The longitudinal study of two cohorts of elderly in Sundsvall revealed that the majority of old parents still had children living in the town although they did not share the same household. Yet, even if the high proportion of elderly living alone and the very low percentage co-residing with married children should not be interpreted as indicating isolation from other members of the family, such residence patterns indicate a desire on the part of adult children and/or their old parents to preserve a certain degree of independence.

An important issue raised was whether the interdependence of old parents and their adult children was of less importance in Sweden than in other parts of Europe. It was suggested that the breeding ground for this more "individualistic" pattern might have been the retirement system, *undantagssystemet*, that was common in rural areas of Scandinavia. This system meant that an aged peasant transferred his property during his lifetime to a relative, normally one of his children, in return for food and housing for the rest of his life. The old farmer and his wife maintained a household of their own either in another part of the same building as the young couple or in a separate house close to the main building. Even though the old couple and their married children lived close to each other, usually they do not seem to have shared the same household. It is likely that this traditional living arrangement involving separate households may also have influenced the residence patterns of the urban elderly. This system probably was advantageous for both the old parents and their adult children and families.
The unmarried men and women possibly became somewhat more isolated during the initial phase of industrialisation. It is clear that the role of relatives as co-residents diminished and the social networks of fellow workers and employers probably became more important. However, a very high percentage of these men ended up in institutions. This indicates that their social networks were not sufficiently strong to form a safety net during the last phase of their life cycle.

The gender differences were important, even during the last stage of life. Very few of the unmarried women in Sundsvall ended up in institutions perhaps because they tended to have stronger social networks. On the other hand, it was relatively common for unmarried elderly women in Stockholm to reside in an institution. However, a smaller proportion of elderly women than of elderly men were institutionalised even in Stockholm. The authorities might have preferred to give elderly men indoor relief, whereas women were more often left to manage on their own. The role of poor relief will be discussed in the following chapter.

1 Odén 1994, pp 15–16.
5 PNR in POPUM, DDB 793000582.
8 Ruggles 1987.
9 Haber and Gratton 1994, p 29.
10 Anderson 1971, p 139.
11 Stavenuiter, Monique: "Last years of life: changes in the living and working arrangements of elderly people in Amsterdam in the second half of the nineteenth century." Continuity and Change 1996:2, p 220.
Gaunt 1983a, p 173.
Gaunt 1983a, p 173.
Janssens 1993, pp 43–44, and 47.
See Appendix 1.
Tedebrand 1997, p 105.
See Appendix 2.
Stavenhuijer 1996, p 220.
Since category III, the farmers, was very small I have chosen to treat this group together with category II.
A few elderly persons living with married children were also co-residing with unmarried children. ibid, p 234. The higher classes are omitted in her study, because the number of elderly belonging to this class was to small.
Janssens 1993, p 145.
Anderson 1971, pp 139–141.
Janssens 1993, pp 145, 156–157.
Edgren, Monica: Migration och äldrande. Lund 1990.
Tedebrand 1997, p 106.
PNR 812000822 in POPUM. DDB, Umeå.
Poll tax registers for the town of Sundsvall, computerised by DDB, Umeå.
Högman, forthcoming.
PNR 817001004 in POPUM. Page 793 in the poll tax register of Sundsvall, 1875.
The household headship is insecure for approximately ten percent of the widows.
PNR 766000316 in POPUM, DDB, Umeå.
Historisk Statistik för Sverige. 1969, pp 61 and 64.
Svensson, Jörn, Godlund, Sven och Kerstin: "Norrköpings ekonomiska och sociala historia 1870–1914."
ibid, p 93.

ibid, p 103–104.


ibid, pp 272–273.

Key-Åberg, Karl: Inom textilindustrin i Norrköping sysselsatta arbetares lönevillkor och bostadsförhållanden. 1896, pp 85–86.


Ahlberg 1958, p 124.


Matovic 1984, pp 67–68.


Ahlberg 1958, p 100.


Basstatistik, Sundsvalls stad. Del 1.

Census for the town of Norrköping 1870.


Ahlberg 1958, p 37.

There was a lower proportion of unmarried men aged over 15 in Norrköping than in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Karlskrona, and Uppsala. This indicates a particularly favourable marriage market for men living in Norrköping. Source: Folkmängdstabeller 1830. Tabellverket.

Matović 1984, pp 73–74.

ibid, pp 162–163.

See p 93.

It has not been possible to separate the elderly in Stockholm living with married children from those living with unmarried children.

Bulder 1993.


Stavenuiter 1996, p 220.

VI. Elderly paupers

"With these words undersigned in humbleness requests to receive an annual contribution of 50 crowns due to my high age of 73 and my inability to earn a living. Should I have this support it would enable me to go on living in the household of my son-in-law Robert Johansson in Svarvik with whom I have resided since 14 May 1874. Not having this support forces me to apply for entrance to the workhouse since my son-in-law is in poor economic conditions having a sick wife and two children to support. They have hired a domestic servant and I cannot be a burden for them without paying them a little sum."

This letter was an application for poor relief written in 1880 by the old widow of a shoemaker. She had been a widow for twenty-five years and now she had to turn to the community for assistance. During the nineteenth century poor elderly men and women together with widows with small children, and disabled breadwinners constituted the majority of paupers. Many of those without access to support from relatives during the autumn of their lives had to turn to community for relief. The elderly poor belonged to the "deserving" paupers, unless they were socially mal-adjusted. However, their rights varied over the course of time in line with changes in economy and ideology which influenced the laws governing poor relief and the type of relief provided.

At the end of the nineteenth century old age came to be defined as a social problem. The 1880s witnessed the start of a debate about the pauperisation experienced by working class people during their final years. Arbetarförsäkringskomitén was able in its statistical surveys to observe an increasing number of new recipients of poor relief aged 60–75 years. Approximately half of those fully supported were over the age of 60. Industrialisation was thought to lead to a pauperisation of the elderly due to the effects of weakening family ties and exclusion of aged persons from the labour market. Thus, industrial society had little need for the elderly, who were condemned to a life of dependency.

This chapter discusses the impact of industrialisation and urbanisation on dependency in old age. It was demonstrated above that at the end of the nineteenth century only half of the aged men and a minority of the elderly unmarried women and widows in Sundsvall had taxable income. Furthermore, some categories of elderly people seemed to have developed a weaker social network as a result of industrialisation. Most of them were unmarried. We need, therefore, to determine how many
were in need of poor relief and how the percentage of elderly recipients of poor relief changed during the period of industrial expansion.

As mentioned in the introduction the sociologist Helena Znaniecka Lopata divided support systems into four areas: economic, service, social, and emotional. I will in this chapter discuss the importance of these different systems of support for men and women of various marital statuses. The results from the local study will be compared with a national investigation of aged paupers. In order to achieve a fuller understanding of the situation facing the aged paupers I will describe changes in Poor Law policy during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The forms of relief and the role of philanthropy will be discussed both at a national and a local level.

Perceptions of poverty

Perceptions of poverty change depending on the financial resources of society and contemporary values which influence attitudes towards the poor. Is it then possible to measure poverty? John Henderson and Richard Wall discussed a variety of measures in the anthology "Poor women and children in the European past". One way is to adopt an absolutist definition of poverty, for instance by a standard poverty line. However, there are also relativist definitions of poverty involving an arbitrary poverty line, for example through defining as poor the poorest ten percent of the population. A third way is to adopt a cultural definition. In other words, that people are poor if they consider themselves as poor or if others look upon them as such. However, none of these definitions is satisfactory because there are of course no complete and precise measuring instruments. What is considered as poverty in one population and at one point in time is inappropriate in another.3

Another method to define poverty is by identifying the people excused payment of different kinds of taxes. However, there are problems with such measuring instruments, too.4 Before the 1860s paupers were not alone in receiving such assistance. For instance, soldiers, sailors, and farmers clearing former forest land did not have to pay poll tax. Not until 1863 did the poll tax law state more precisely the list of those exempt, limiting exemption to those who received poor relief and others whom the local authorities considered to be poor.5 Fortunately, these people could be identified in the poll tax registers of Sundsvall. Another way of measuring poverty would be to count the recipients of outdoor relief. However, this was not possible in this study, since the age of the recipients was not recorded in the minutes from the Poor Board.

The residents in public institutions were not included in the group notified as

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165---
poor. Beginning in 1865 the local authorities registered the year of birth of the residents in poor- and workhouses in the poll tax registers. By combining information on those notified as poor with the residents in institutions I will try to estimate changes in the dependency of aged people associated with early industrialisation. I consider this to be a satisfactory method of comparing dependency over time, even if perceptions of poverty were probably somewhat different in 1845 from what they were to be in 1910.

The national study of elderly paupers is based on the statistical surveys from Arbetarförsäkringskomitén from 1885, which recorded the total number of elderly recipients of poor-relief in Sweden. As has been mentioned in the first chapter the Government set up this committee in order to investigate the living conditions of Swedish workers. This survey will be compared with a similar survey, which prompted from 1912 års Ålderdomsförsäkringskommitté (Old age insurance committee) to draft reforming legislation. However, one has to be aware that the national statistics adopted different measures of poverty to those in use in the local studies.

**Poor Law policy**

The law of 1763 on hospitals and orphanages placed responsibility for the care of the poor, old, and infirm on the parishes. For the first time there was a definition of poverty and the legislation stated how the costs should be divided between the state and the parishes. The law divided the poor into three groups of which the first group was...

"...people who are incapable of supporting themselves due to decrepitude, infirmities of old age or some kind of disability and who have no relatives capable of supporting them."

Aged and infirm persons in hospitals were to be moved to poorhouses, because medical care was to be separated from poor relief. Mercantilist motives can be detected behind this law. The old and decrepit constituted the majority of those living in hospitals. When these groups were moved to poorhouses, money which earlier was spent on the elderly could be spent on poor children. This would promote population growth. However, the enactment created practical problems because several of the poorhouses were already overcrowded and could not house more elderly paupers. Moreover, many parishes had not built poorhouses. Amending legislation was therefore passed embodying a less rigid categorisation. Under this piece of legislation the hospitals retained their responsibility for the care of mentally ill and incurable.

In connection with the more regulated system of poor relief during late eighteenth
century, it became necessary to stipulate the obligations of the parishes in regard for the support of their poor. In 1788 the Government declared that the parish where the poor person had had his homestead or had worked as a servant, was responsible for the payment of poor relief. This legislation also restricted migration. Old, infirm, and people unwilling to work were not allowed to migrate unless they had permission from the local authorities.

During the 1830s and 1840s the so called "social question" was extensively debated. Severe socio-economic conditions, dramatic population growth, the threat from the pauperised population and the rise of liberal humanitarian values during the middle of the nineteenth century, had a strong impact on the shape of the first National Poor Law, which came into force in 1847. This law increased the responsibility of the parish. Furthermore, the paupers were now free to migrate. The Poor Law also stated that they should be supported by the parish where they had been living during the past three years except that the parish in which the paupers had been living at the age of 55 should continue to support them for the rest of their lives. Due to the increasing mobility in society the Poor Law of 1853 stated that the parish in which the pauper lived when he became in need of relief was responsible for providing the support. Furthermore, the responsibility of relatives was stressed and an amendment of 1855 stated:

"Parents and children should contribute to the support of each other, as need arises to the best of their ability."

Further legislation during the second half of the century strengthened the responsibility of the parish. Crop failures and harsh economic conditions at the end of the 1860s led to increased expenditure on poor relief. These factors in combination with the fear of conservative politicians of weakening family ties resulted in a new Poor Law in 1871. This law divided poor relief into one compulsory and one voluntary element. The former consisted of a barely adequate support for those who were unable to work and who did not have relatives capable of supporting them. Children, the mentally ill, the disabled and the elderly constituted this group. Further, as a consequence of increasing local autonomy parishes were free to decide what constituted barely adequate support. The individual citizen's possibility to appeal against decisions concerning poor relief disappeared because of this restrictive legislation, which remained in force until 1918.

The Poor Law of 1871 stated that it was the duty of the husband to maintain his wife. Some of the members of the committee working with this new legislation suggested that the wife's maintenance obligation should be stressed, too. However,
this proposal was rejected on the grounds that common law gave the husband the right to dispose of his wife's property, through his position as head of the household. Not until almost fifty years later, did the Poor Law of 1918 enforce reciprocal maintenance obligations on married couples.\textsuperscript{14}

This new Poor Law also stated that people had the right to satisfactory instead of barely adequate support. Furthermore, differentiation became an important word. Mentally and chronically ill persons were to be accommodated in certain institutions, but if this was impossible special wards should be set up for these groups in other types of institutions. Children should only stay in children's homes, and the county councils were to establish workhouses for unruly able-bodied labourers. Finally, local authorities were to provide their aged inhabitants with rooms in old people's homes or in some kind of nursing homes if the population in the area in question was large enough.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{Forms of poor relief}

\textit{Non-institutional relief}

Housing the poorest in the households of peasants was a common form of poor relief in pre-industrial Sweden. The poverty stricken were moved between the farmers of a given parish. The length of the stay was dependent on the size of the homestead. Those with large farms were to house the paupers for a longer period. Usually the pauper stayed a couple of days on each farm.\textsuperscript{16} This was a rural form of poor relief and at the turn of the century it only was practised in some rural areas.\textsuperscript{17} Such a solution was forbidden by the 1918 Poor Law.\textsuperscript{18}

Auctioning out the poor was another common form of out-door relief and had a better reputation than moving the paupers around the parish. The elderly were auctioned out for a year at a time, but these auctions were more common for poor children. At the end of the nineteenth-century these auctions were replaced by a more humanitarian relief system under which the parson or some person in authority asked someone they reckoned suitable to support the aged pauper.\textsuperscript{19}

The most common form of poor relief at the end of the nineteenth-century was out-door relief. The advantages of this system was that the paupers could remain in their own homes. The paupers were offered support either in food, clothes, wood, or in cash. However, the authorities saw some disadvantages with the system, since it was thought to foster idleness. Therefore they wanted a stricter control of the recipients of outdoor relief.\textsuperscript{20}
Institutional relief

Already in 1571 the Government had recommended all parishes to build poorhouses, but not until 1734 did this become compulsory.\(^{21}\) The early poorhouses usually consisted of one or two rooms, where men and women of different ages were mixed together. The residents did the housekeeping themselves and the healthier paupers took care of the old and infirm.\(^{22}\)

From the end of the 1860s large public institutions were founded. These poorhouses had detailed regulations and a supervisor who was in charge of the inmates who were to be encouraged to develop moral and personal responsibilities. Often a farm was connected with the institution and the paupers were supposed to work there.\(^{23}\) The corresponding institution in urban areas was the workhouse where the able-bodied were occupied with tasks such as washing, wood chopping and gardening. Most of these inmates were alone or old and several suffered from physical or mental illnesses. These large institutions often had special wards for the physically and mentally ill. Many people perceived these institutions as the ultimate disgrace because living in the workhouse involved the loss of personal freedom.\(^{24}\)

Special institutions for the elderly were rare before the beginning of the twentieth-century. Most of the early private old people’s homes were intended for women who had once been better off but had fallen into poverty, the pauvres honteux. These homes were financed by donations or fees. The standard of care provided in these institutions was much higher than that of the poorhouses. Usually the elderly even had a room of their own, with their own or donated furniture.\(^{25}\)

These places served as a model for the later public old people’s homes. The poorhouses were criticised for their size and because of the mix of different categories of inmates. The new institutions were intended to be more home-like. Small and middle-sized communities were the first to introduce these homes. The larger towns had at the end of the nineteenth-century built large poorhouses. These were called old people’s homes but they did not fulfil the criteria of such a home as many of these institutions could accommodate at least 100 residents.\(^{26}\) Many of the elderly thought they did not deserve such a terrible fate as ending up in one of the homes for old people. Hospitalisation and restraints on personal freedom had a deterrent effect, which also permeated the public view of these new institutions.

During the 1940s the author Ivar Lo Johansson and the photographer Sven Järlås travelled all around Sweden visiting a number of old people’s homes. They presented a grim picture of these asylums that were meant to be worthy homes for the elderly, describing how these institutions housed a mix of the chronically ill, mental patients and socially maladjusted persons. Furthermore, Johansson criticised the frequency of committals, which were forced through by over-zealous social workers. He also
described the gloominess experienced by the aged inmates of these institutions:

"The old age home is for the neighbourhood the house where many peculiar people live. It is the lonely castle of isolation. No one goes voluntarily up its raked path. Most of the paupers know that they will end up there, but they do not realise it before they sit there on the edge of their bed."\(^{27}\)

Ivar Lo Johansson was one of the most influential Swedish authors of the time. He was also an ardent critic of society and his polemical writing initiated an intense debate in Sweden. Representatives of central authorities and Poor Boards felt correctly they were under attack. The standard of care provided to the elderly had improved and society was on its way to the development of the welfare state, but still reality had not caught up with the social political aims and guidelines.\(^{28}\)

Old woman in the workhouse of Timrå, a neighbouring parish of Sundsvall, sitting "on the edge of her bed". (1905–1906). Photographer Eric Gravé. (Museum of the town of Sundsvall).
**The role of philanthropy**

It is important to take into consideration the influence of philanthropy on the financing and shaping of poor relief. Private support was of the greatest significance, as often charity and poor relief were integrated, with the same people involved in both organisations. The debate during the 1830s and 1840s concerning the "social question" encouraged the development of philanthropic associations. Advocates of economic liberalism, who exerted a considerable influence on welfare policy during the nineteenth century, believed that poor relief should be financed by private means and not by the Government. According to these people the best solution for assistance was to be provided by philanthropic associations. It was recognised that the local authorities had the prime responsibility for poor relief but support from charitable organisations was nevertheless essential.²⁹

However, the concept of philanthropy changed over time. Staffan Förhammar, who has examined the importance of philanthropy for the disabled, has distinguished the traditional from the new philanthropy. The latter involved long-term cooperation with public institutions each with their own distinct area of responsibility. The objectives of the former were only to temporarily ease the situation of the paupers through gifts and donations.³⁰

According to Roger Qvarsell charity as a concept has to be distinguished from that of philanthropy. Charity provided aid for a particular purpose, whereas philanthropy involved organised activities with the aim of solving social problems in the long run. Qvarsell divides philanthropy into three main areas. The first consisted of people who were trying to influence the authorities by rousing public opinion. The second category was composed of individuals who founded institutions for different groups of needy people. These private initiatives were of the greatest importance for the disabled but also for some categories of elderly persons. A number of institutions for poor old widows from the bourgeoisie were financed by donations. The third area of philanthropic activities was the founding of associations in urban areas. Membership of these bodies usually consisted of upper or middle class women whose mission was to help and educate the paupers.³¹

Birgitta Jordansson has also investigated how the character of charity changed over time. Traditional charity consisted of donations and alms, usually given to the social group of the benefactor. For instance, it was very common to support the pauvres honteux. According to Jordansson the recipients were equivalent of an extended family. The members of the family were to be supported when they became poor. Furthermore, care had to be provided to faithful old servants who also belonged to the family.

As an increasing number of women became involved in philanthropic activities
at the end of the nineteenth century the character of charity changed. New associations concentrated on supporting the lower classes, particularly working class women. Members of these associations stressed the importance of visiting the paupers as well as of personal contacts with the recipients. In this way those in receipt of relief were not only to be economically supported but also nurtured and morally strengthened.32

Philanthropic ideas had a great influence during the nineteenth century. During the latter half of the century the Government had reduced its support for the poor. Crop failures at the end of the 1860s had led to increasing expenditure on poor relief. The Poor Law of 1871 brought on a tougher policy and insisted that some of the costs of poor relief were met from private sources. Industrialisation and urbanisation also placed additional burdens on the poor relief system.

The result was a growing demand for a more efficient system of poor relief. Many Swedish towns introduced the"Elberfeldt system". This model was imported from the German textile industry town of Elberfeldt, where it had been in use since the 1850s. The organisation relied on volunteers who were responsible for a small number of poor people. The idea was that this would facilitate the personal contacts between caretakers and caregivers but also make it easier for the authorities to supervise the recipients of relief. 33

The members of the Sundsvall Elberfeldt committee had studied the system in two other Swedish towns and the following is a summary of their arguments for introducing the model to Sundsvall:

- The system was more in harmony with the provisions of the law in that it protected the poor and needy from real destitution, and educated the negligent.
- It facilitated thrift. Wastefulness could be avoided by better knowledge and control, which would make begging unnecessary.
- The better off would be obliged to be sympathetic and the worse off would be helped more effectively."34

Thus the members of the committee had a very positive attitude towards the new system. Economic and social problems and deficiencies in moral character were to be solved. The attitudes of the members also reflected the liberal aim of developing a feeling of solidarity between different social classes, thereby counteracting the threat of class conflicts. The following statements by the committee express their ideas about class reconciliation:
"... from a moralist view the Elberfeldt system has proved to be better than previous systems of relief due to its personal character. Its beneficial moral effects affect not only the paupers but also their guardians and society as a whole. The fact that classes are brought together, that wealth may extend its hand of friendship to destitution, must bring about a greater benevolence and compassion on one side, and less bitterness and more contentment on the other. The more the members of society work together for a better situation for those in want, the more society will increase its interest in the plight of these people."

The need for centralised philanthropic organisations increased in order to put pressure on the Government to take on a greater responsibility for living conditions of poor people. At the beginning of the twentieth century people in prominent positions showed a growing interest in the plight of the poor. Two philanthropic organisations, Centralförbundet för socialt arbete (the National Association of Social Work) and Svenska fattigvårdsförbundet (the National Association of Poor Relief), were the driving forces behind the campaign to reform the Poor Law. The members of these associations came from the cultural elite in Stockholm and were influenced by social liberal and paternalistic ideas.

The reformers wished to create a system whereby the deserving paupers would be supported in a humane manner. However, they considered that poor relief should not only satisfy economic needs but also help to restore the morality, sense of duty, and thrift of negligent citizens. The liberal idea of help-to-self-help was the ideological basis of these organisations. Poor relief should help the paupers to support themselves and their families. The aim of this policy was to create a feeling of solidarity, thereby counteracting class conflicts.

**Elderly recipients of poor relief**

In order to investigate the situation of elderly paupers at the national level, two surveys containing information on Swedish recipients of poor relief in 1885 and 1908 will be analysed. The first was undertaken by 1888 års Arbetareförsäkringskomité as a result of the growing interest in the plight of the poor workers, and the second by 1912 års Ålderdomsförsäkringskommitté.

These surveys included both those elderly in receipt of in-door relief and those fully supported by out-door relief in urban and rural areas. However, the two surveys presented different categorisations of age and marital status. The latter survey is unfortunately much more inadequate because it combined the unmarried and the widowers/widows in one group. Furthermore, only the situation of the married male
paupers is described in detail. However, these official statistics provide some useful information about the most vulnerable groups in society. The proportions of urban and rural elderly recipients of poor relief according to gender, marital status and age are set out below.

The statistics from 1885 indicate a growing proportion of recipients of poor relief with increasing age. For example, 2 percent of those aged 60–69 received poor relief compared with 11 percent of those aged over 70. Approximately half of the total number of the recipients of support were aged over 60. There were some gender differences between urban and rural recipients. 6.5 percent of the men and 5 percent of the women aged over 55 and residents in towns received poor relief. The corresponding percentages in the countryside were 3 and 4.5 percent.37

**Figure 30 a. Percentage of men and women aged over 55 resident in towns in Sweden receiving poor relief in 1885, by marital structure and age group.**

**Figure 30 b. Percentage of men and women aged over 55 resident in rural areas in Sweden receiving poor relief in 1885, by marital structure and age group.**

Source: Arbetareförsäkringskomiténs betänkande 1888. III Statistiska undersökningar. Del 5.
The majority of old paupers were elderly widows. This is not surprising since the widows constituted the largest component within the elderly female population. However, in order to investigate how marital status affected the risk of poverty, consideration needs to be given to the proportion of paupers within each marital status group. Elderly urban unmarried men seem to be the most pauperised, followed by elderly widowers. The percentage of paupers among the former group was particularly high. The proportion of elderly poor unmarried urban women also exceeded the proportion of elderly poor widows.

The situation of the rural poor was somewhat different. In rural areas women constituted the majority of the poor; the largest proportion occurring amongst the unmarried. The percentage of poor widows assisted by the poor law authorities was slightly higher than that of widowers. Moreover, compared with the situation in towns fewer of the youngest of the elderly unmarried men were receiving poor relief.

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**Figure 31 a.** Percentage of men and women aged over 60 resident in towns in Sweden receiving poor relief in 1908, by marital structure and age group.

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**Figure 31 b.** Percentage of men and women aged over 60 resident in rural areas in Sweden receiving poor relief in 1908, by marital structure and age group.

The different categorisation of age and marital status in the latter survey means that a detailed comparison of the two surveys is not possible. Nevertheless, the situation in 1908 seems to correspond fairly well with the situation thirty years earlier, since urban men who lacked a spouse were still the most vulnerable. Otherwise, the statistics do not reveal any significant variations in the frequency with which the non-married or married residents in urban or rural areas received poor relief.

In a study of pre-industrial Sweden Anna-Maria Skoglund has investigated the situation of Swedish paupers in 1829. Her account was based on letters from Swedish parsons who reported on the state of poor relief as far as it fell within their sphere of responsibility. The letters were written as part of an investigation into the state of poor relief in the country launched by King Karl XIV Johan. Skoglund found that 10 percent of the population aged 60–69 were in receipt of poor relief as were 19 percent of those aged over 70. These were higher percentages than in 1885. Furthermore, she noted that widows aged over 60 constituted the majority of the paupers.39

To sum up, it is evident that the dependency rate of urban elderly men exceeded that of elderly rural men. In a previous chapter I have discussed the negative impact of industrialisation on the social networks of single men. The health of the male population also suffered from a hard life with abuse of alcohol and unstable working and housing conditions.40 The high proportion of recipients of poor relief among the younger elderly is in line with these expectations.

According to Arbetareförsäkringskomitén mortality was twice as high among unmarried men aged 35–55 compared with similarly aged married men. The committee explained the unfavourable situation of the bachelors by the fact that they did not have anyone to share their lives with but also because...

"...only those in a better economic position have the possibility of contracting a marriage, whereas the unmarried population includes those individuals economically worst off. Given such circumstances it should be obvious that this exceedingly huge difference in the need for poor relief between on one hand the unmarried and on the other hand the married population, is not solely due to marriage."41

The urban environment did not seem to have the same negative impact on single urban women. These women had possibly created tighter networks than their urban counterparts. Some of the unmarried women had children who were capable of supporting their old mothers, while others lived with the families for whom they had previously worked. Urban women may also have had more options of financial support than rural women.
If we compare the results of the study of the number of paupers in Sweden 1829 with those in the national statistics from 1885 it is evident that in just over half a century there had been a marked decline in the proportion of elderly paupers. However, it is difficult to compare changes over time in dependency in old age at a national level. Skoglund’s information on elderly paupers is based on a sample of 335 parishes of 2324. Although these parishes had different socio-economic structures, they are not completely comparable with the other two statistical surveys since these included all parishes in Sweden. Differences in the categorisation of age and marital status in the latter surveys also complicate comparisons. Therefore, we have to turn to the local level to get a better knowledge of changes over time in dependency during old age.

The poor elderly in the town of Sundsvall

I will first present part of the life histories of some of the people behind the statistics. In 1830 there were four women and two men living in Sundsvall’s only poorhouse. All of them were over the age of 60 and the artisan, Per Gederström, as well as the former servant, Barbro Lögdqvist, were in their eighties. Per had been a widower for eighteen years and he had no children who could take care of him. Barbro seemed to have worked as a servant for quite a long time but at the age of 79 she entered the poorhouse. The tax collector Johan Tunberg had been a widower for more than twenty years when he came to the poorhouse. His two daughters had left Sundsvall and at the age of 71 he had no alternative but to move to the poorhouse. Märta Hansdotter was the only one who had children living in town. She ended up in the poorhouse following a stroke. She might have been so disabled that her children were not capable of caring for her.

All of these inmates remained in the poorhouse until their death, and resided there for at least five years. One childless widow Anna Byman came to the poorhouse at the age of 64 and stayed there until her death eighteen year later. She had been a widow for at least 30 years prior to the arrival in the poorhouse. Anna committed suicide at the age of 82.
Between ten and twelve percent of the elderly residents of Sundsvall got indoor relief or were considered as poor by the community. The proportion of paupers in the elderly population was remarkably stable between 1845 and 1910. In 1930 there was a slight decrease in the proportion of paupers, probably due to the influence of the State Pensions. Figure 32 reveals that in most years there were no major differences in the proportions of elderly men and women registered as poor. However, the longitudinal study presented in the previous chapter gives a different picture. It showed that a higher proportion of elderly men than elderly women ended up in institutions at the end of the nineteenth century. The most vulnerable group was that of unmarried men but many of the widowers also ended up in the workhouse.

One of these unmarried men was Anders Bäckman who had been a boarder. He had no one who could take care of him and as he was 72 years and sick he was incapable of working. Therefore he applied for permission to enter the workhouse.\textsuperscript{42}

The percentage of old people ending up in institutions increased over time. As we have observed in chapter III the situation of the elderly in Sundsvall became a particular problem at the turn of the nineteenth century. The predominance of old and infirm residents in the workhouse presented the authorities with their greatest problem, since the work performed in the institution was supposed to be an important source of income. Another problem was the mix of different categories of paupers within one institution.

This raises questions about the residents in the town’s institutions. Did the composition of the institutionalised people change radically around the turn of the century? Was the workhouse population ageing and were the majority of the residents widowed or unmarried, men or women?
One explanation for the increasing share of elderly who ended up in the workhouse is of course the availability of such institutions. Comparisons above of the living arrangements in Sundsvall with Stockholm and Norrköping showed that the largest city Stockholm had the largest proportion of aged people in institutions. Norrköping also had a higher percentage of indoor paupers than Sundsvall. As has been mentioned these cities had sufficiently large populations to found institutions at an early date, Stockholm during the eighteenth century and Norrköping in the 1840s. Before the founding of the workhouse in 1876 there was only one small poorhouse in Sundsvall. The workhouse expanded at the end of the century but not until the turn of the century were other institutions for the elderly established.

**Figure 33 a.** Percentage of men aged over 60 resident in institutions in the town of Sundsvall in 1865, 1875, 1885 and 1910. N= 2 in 1865, 10 in 1875, 16 in 1885, 52 in 1910, and 53 in 1930.

**Figure 33 b.** Percentage of women aged over 60 resident in institutions in the town of Sundsvall in 1865, 1875, 1885 and 1910. N= 5 in 1865, 10 in 1875, 21 in 1885, 46 in 1910, and 24 in 1930.

Source: Poll tax registers for the town of Sundsvall 1865, 1875, 1885 and 1910 computerised by the DDB, Umeå. Census for the town of Sundsvall 1930. Research Archives of Umeå.
The proportion of institutionalised elderly among the younger old remained relatively stable over time, whereas the percentage of the very old who were institutionalised increased. Prior to 1910 few men over the age of 80 resided in institutions. However, this year almost one third of all men in Sundsvall aged over 80 lived in the workhouse. One important explanation for these changes was the ageing population. In 1890 1.5 percent of the male population in Sundsvall was over the age of 70 and 1910 this percentage had doubled.44

As observed in the national study, marital status also had a profound impact on the likelihood of entry into the workhouse. Unfortunately it has been difficult to identify marital status for the elderly living in institutions between 1865 and 1910. Five of the elderly who lived in the poorhouse in 1830 were widowed. The one remaining inmate, a woman, was unmarried. In 1865 widows still constituted the majority of the institutionalised population but the proportion of unmarried people had slightly increased. In 1910 more than forty percent of old men living in the workhouse were unmarried as were about forty percent of the old women. More than one quarter of the male elderly were married while an equal proportion were widowers. Half of the aged women were widowed and only a few were married. Twenty years later the situation was more or less the same with the exception that the proportion of unmarried people living in institutions had increased still further. This was especially the case for elderly men. A profound change had therefore taken place in marital structure of the old inmates between the first half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth.

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Figure 34. Male and female inmates of the poorhouse/workhouse aged over 60 as a percentage of all residents in the poorhouse/workhouse in the town of Sundsvall 1830-1930.

Source: Catechetical examination registers for the town of Sundsvall 1830. Poll tax registers for the town of Sundsvall 1870, 1885, and 1910. Census for the town of Sundsvall 1930. SCB.
In 1830 all of the inmates were aged over 60. Thereafter, the proportion of elderly persons residing in public institutions fell until a new increase became apparent between 1890 and 1910. In my opinion the most important explanation for the ageing population of the workhouse around the turn of the century was the growing proportion of elderly persons in town in general. As has been mentioned there was a relatively high percentage of elderly in the pre-industrial population but because of the growth in the number of people of working age as a consequence of industrialisation, the proportion of elderly inhabitants in the population was lower between the 1850s and 1890s than either earlier or later. The large cohort of young workers had come of age at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The American historian Brian Gratton also noticed an ageing population in public institutions when studying old people in Boston at the turn of the nineteenth century. He found an increase in the proportion of elderly living in the workhouse even though the institution was primarily intended for those people unwilling to work or with a criminal background. Gratton also noted a similar trend in the national level data. In 1880 one quarter of people living in institutions were over the age of 65. By 1923 the proportion had doubled. According to Gratton this was due to the reduced number of young people entering such institutions. Many younger persons were now placed in more specialised institutions.45

At the beginning of the twentieth century there was also a tendency in Sundsvall to move certain groups of people out of the workhouse into more specialised institutions. Thus patients suffering from tuberculosis were moved to a sanatorium in 1913 and in 1916 the mentally ill had an institution of their own.46 However, complaints about the number of old people in the workhouse had already been voiced at the turn of the century. Thus we have to look for other explanations for the rising proportion of old people in the workhouse.

One further explanation might be a change of attitudes. The Elberfeldt-system, which was introduced in the 1890s, created closer relations between caregivers and caretakers because one single guardian was responsible for a small unit of paupers, consisting of around five persons. This led to a greater knowledge of the needs of the poor, which might have increased interest in the situation of aged men and women. Most elderly belonged to the group of deserving poor and possibly the national debate starting in the 1880s about living conditions of the elderly contributed to the greater attention of the problems of Sundsvall's aged citizens.

Until now we have concentrated on elderly residents in public institutions but what of the outdoor paupers? As has been admitted above I have not been able to identify those receiving out-door relief, and therefore have had to rely on the recording of poor people in the poll tax registers. These were people whom the local authorities considered poor.
The outdoor male paupers were the minority in all years, but the sex ratio became less skewed over time. Most of these men were married. Widows constituted the single highest category of pauper in all years except in 1910, when married men and women were in majority. Furthermore, the proportion of elderly unmarried female paupers increased after 1875. During the nineteenth century most poor people were in their sixties but at the turn of the century an ageing poverty stricken population can be found.47

To sum up, the proportion of elderly paupers in Sundsvall remained relatively stable over time in spite of demographic changes such as an ageing overall population and a growing proportion of unmarried people. These changes in combination with the fact that an increasing share of production moved from the household to factories could have resulted in a higher proportion of poor aged men and women.

However, the marital status composition of the elderly pauper population changed. During the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth widows formed the most needy group, whereas unmarried men and women came to be more dependent from the turn of the nineteenth century. As we have seen in chapter III, the proportion of unmarried old people living in Sundsvall remained relatively stable, with the exception of an increase in the proportion of unmarried men in 1880. Why then was there an increasing proportion of elderly unmarried paupers? One explanation for this phenomenon could be that many of these people had migrated to Sundsvall and therefore did not have relatives living nearby who could care for them.

The cross-sectional study of the paupers did not reveal any differences between the proportions of elderly men and women receiving indoor and outdoor relief. However, the longitudinal approach showed that a higher proportion of elderly men than of women ended up in institutions at the end of the turn of the nineteenth century and that the unmarried were the most likely to be institutionalised.

Carl Gustaf Stenkula who has studied living conditions of old people in Lund at the beginning of the twentieth century also found a higher percent of indoor male paupers, whereas more women were supported in their homes. According to Stenkula the authorities thought that women were better able to take care of themselves. Furthermore, he found that women were more likely to resist entering the poorhouse.48

Charles Booth came to the same conclusions in his study of elderly paupers in England and Wales in late nineteenth century. He believed that single men accepted more easily living in institutions, partly due to the fact that they found it difficult to manage on their own, partly because relatives were unwilling to house them. Women were thought to be more useful in the household.49

Referring to the systems of support discussed by Helena Znaniecka Lopata my study indicates differences in the type of assistance provided to men and women.
The majority of the paupers were women. Many of these women were widows and could not support themselves. However, some like the widow mentioned in the beginning of this chapter might have had children, employers, or others who were willing to house them or take care of them. This in combination with the fact that they were more capable of managing on their own, meant that they were less likely than men to end up in the workhouse. Furthermore, their more effective social networks probably meant that their need for social and emotional support was already met in a better way.

Men on the contrary had better opportunities to support themselves as long as they were able-bodied. However, when they were widowed or disabled many men found it very difficult to manage on their own. Therefore, some of those without relatives or friends were forced or preferred to move to the workhouse, where they received the care they needed. The following letter to the Poor Board from Anders Wågberg documents the plight of one elderly male pauper:

"With these words undersigned in humbleness requests to enter the workhouse. I am 72 years old and not capable of supporting myself. Until now I have been able to get a small income by wood chopping but nowadays having no strength in my arm I am incapable of going on with this work. Since my old wife plans to emigrate to America leaving me alone I must turn to the community for help."

**Conclusion**

According to modernisation theorists industrialisation and urbanisation forced many elderly into destitution. Some researchers have questioned this point of view, either by demonstrating that living conditions improved during industrialisation or by claiming that impoverishment was not a new phenomenon. The aim of this chapter has been to examine the effects of industrialisation on the extent of the dependency of elderly men and women in Sundsvall, setting the finding in the national context. An additional aim was to study the different support systems of men and women.

From 1845 to 1910 the percentage of elderly paupers in the town of Sundsvall was very stable; approximately one tenth of old men and women in Sundsvall either lived in public institutions or were listed as outdoor paupers. National statistics indicate a decline over time in the proportion of elderly paupers. The issue is whether this was a sign of improving living conditions or whether it indicated a harsher poor relief policy. The Poor Law of 1871 brought in a more restrictive policy leaving philanthropic and charitable institutions to fill in the gap. However, the elderly were
viewed as deserving paupers, provided that they did not have children capable of supporting them or were classed as socially maladjusted.

Even if the percentage of poor old men and women was stable a change did occur in the marital status composition of the pauper population. During the nineteenth century the widows constituted the most dependent group but the proportion of unmarried elderly paupers increased as the century went on. Many of these people had to turn to the community for assistance because they did not have anyone who could take care of them when they became old and infirm.

The number of aged men and women resident in institutions also increased. Population growth as a result of industrialisation and urbanisation led to an increasing institutionalisation. The workhouse was primarily intended for maladjusted people, who were to be propelled towards a more moral behaviour through the policy of help-to-self-help. The inmates were supposed to contribute to the financing of poor relief through their own work. Thus, the high proportion of old and infirm residents at the beginning of this century became a significant problem for the authorities of Sundsvall. The presence of so many elderly in the workhouse meant a loss of income leading to financial problems for the poor law authorities.

The effects of demographic change had a great influence on the increasing proportion of institutionalised elderly at the turn of the nineteenth century. The industrial expansion of Sundsvall led initially to a younger population but when these young migrants reached old age at the beginning of the twentieth century their need for institutional care increased. Furthermore, a high percentage of unmarried people with no relatives living nearby occasioned the vulnerability of elderly unmarried men and women.

Apart from demographic and socio-economic factors, changes in attitudes might also explain the increasing percentage of elderly inmates in the workhouse. The new poor relief organisation introduced in the 1890s in Sundsvall meant closer relations between caregivers and caretakers, which probably led to an increasing understanding of the situation of aged people and to a more tolerant humane view of individual paupers. Further, the national debate about old age security which started in the 1880s probably also influenced attitudes towards the poor.

The national study of 1885 showed that the widows constituted the majority of the paupers. Women usually outlived their husbands increasing their risk of dependency. However, urban elderly unmarried men and widowers were the most likely to be dependent. Urban men probably had weaker social networks than urban women and the rural elderly. A hard life with abuse of alcohol and unstable working and housing conditions made them more vulnerable than their female counterparts, who often had children, other relatives, friends and employers who could take care of them.
Old men may have found it easier to earn a living but found it more difficult to live alone. They needed help with cooking and cleaning. If they were well off they could hire a servant but if poor without relatives or friends they were probably obliged to enter the workhouse. Elderly women often had difficulties to support themselves from work but could manage better on their own. Further, since many elderly women had a more effective social network they had better systems of service, social and emotional support than aged men. 

However, we have to bear in mind that widows constituted the majority of all elderly paupers. Even if most widows managed on their own or with the assistance of relatives and friends many were poverty-stricken and a large number ended up in the workhouse. However, very few was in the same situation as Anna Loo, who was abandoned by her child. Most children took care of their old parents to the best of their ability, although some of those elderly whose children had died or left town were forced to turn to poor relief, when they became incapable of supporting themselves.

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5 Lex 1979, pp 43–72.
For some time scholars have tried to identify how industrialisation and urbanisation or, in a broader sense, modernisation affected older people. Modernisation theorists believed that industrialisation and urbanisation undermined the economic basis of the extended family, which they supposed was the dominant family form prior to industrialisation. Children left home at an early age and the elderly had to manage on their own. These scholars imagined that households were transformed by modernisation from large extended to small nuclear units.

In pre-industrial society all members within the household, including the elderly, had contributed to the family economy. Old persons could continue to contribute to domestic production and the experience they had gained in the course of a long life gave them prestige. Furthermore, they usually remained active in the labour market until their death. The entrance of the wage economy was thought to result in a decline in the status of the elderly. The shift from producing goods at home to factory production meant that old people could no longer decide how long they could continue working. New technology also made old skills outmoded and the elderly thus found it hard to obtain new employment. Their skills became almost useless and this was thought to result in an automatic loss of status.

According to modernisation theorists the increase in the proportion of elderly who were unemployed in combination with the weakening of family ties made old men and women dependant. Aged men living in urban areas were thrown out of work earlier and support from children was more effective in the countryside. This caused a higher degree of dependency in urban areas.

Modernisation theory, however, has been criticised from various angles. Scholars were able to show that the nuclear family household was already dominant during pre-industrial times. Others noticed an increasing proportion of extended family households in the expanding industrial areas. Furthermore, some researchers insisted that old age dependency was not a new phenomenon connected with industrialisation. In spite of this criticism, modernisation theory has proved tenacious in the discussion due the absence of alternative grand theories.

Because of its high level of generalisation the modernisation concept is difficult to pin down. It comprises a set of changes such as industrialisation, urbanisation, secularisation, mass education, and social mobility. In order to comprehend more clearly the impact of modernisation, the aim of this dissertation has been to explore the issue of ageing in relation to socio-economic, demographic and ideological change by focusing on some of those areas identified by modernisation theorists as
theoretically relevant; labour force participation, the role of the family, and dependency in old age. In order to distinguish general patterns from the specific this study has compared living conditions of aged people living in communities with different socio-economic and demographic structures.

There is relatively little research by historians on the situation of elderly in towns and cities and there are almost no studies which have examined the effects of industrialisation and urbanisation on Swedish elderly. Therefore, it was vital to extend our knowledge of this relationship. The focus of attention was the living conditions of aged people in the town of Sundsvall during the period 1830–1930. During late nineteenth century this town became the commercial centre of one of the greatest saw mill districts in the world. In addition, the structures of the households of elderly men and women in Sundsvall were compared with the households of the elderly in two other Swedish urban areas. Since a great deal of international research has focused on the situation in textile industry towns, this study examined the households of the elderly in the textile centre of Norrköping. The other town selected was Stockholm, as the only Swedish urban area at this time comparable in size to other European metropoli.

I have compared the living arrangements of the elderly in pre-industrial times from a gender and a class perspective with those of the elderly who lived through during different phases of industrialisation. By analysing the residence patterns of men and women by marital status, socio-economic situation, and age, I was able to produce a more balanced picture of the impact of industrialisation and urbanisation on the living conditions of the elderly.

The idea of the husband as the breadwinner influenced women’s role in the labour market. Women in general did not return to work when they finished childbearing. Very few industrial workers were elderly women and the majority of old women who were working were employed in the domestic sector. Furthermore, women’s wages were kept low because their work was looked upon as supplementary to what could be earned by men. Moreover, demographic factors such as women’s higher life expectancy and consequently higher rates of widowhood meant that the living arrangements of men and women during their last years of life differed considerably.

The occupation of a given individual and his/her membership of a particular social class affected the systems of support that were available in old age. The family should not be studied in isolation but in its appropriate economic and social context.

In order to comprehend how old age was conceptualised in the period 1830–1930 an introductory chapter looked at the forces which shaped views on ageing as well
as age limits applied to define entry into old age. The purpose was to identify the point in the life cycle when a person moved from adult life into old age which could then be used in this study through analysis of medical texts, measurement of variations in the frequency with which old age was used as a cause of death, changes in life expectancy, the ages from which pensions were paid, age at retirement from the head of the household, and parent’s age at departure of the last child from the parental household (representing for the parents the start of the empty nest phase of the life cycle).

It emerged that age on entry into old age changed over time and varied by gender and social group. Definitions of entry into old age applied by the state and private organisations ranged between 50 and 70 years. During the course of the nineteenth century some of the pension funds and the poor relief authorities raised the entry point into old age. One possible explanation for the raising of the entry threshold is the improving health of the population. It was also discovered that the lowest social classes contained the highest proportions of young pensioners (aged 50-55) whereas civil servants had the highest pension ages. Such class differences reflect the fact that workers were probably worn out earlier than the civil servants.

Women retired at younger age than men. These differences by gender are more difficult to explain. Medical writers thought that females usually started to age fifteen to twenty years sooner than men. This traditional idea of earlier ageing by women was connected with the menopause. Furthermore, some of the funds which paid pensions at an earlier age were supporting widows. As women were younger than men when they lost their spouses this might explain the lower pension age in this case.

However, most of the entry points into old age were set around the age of 60. Therefore I adopted the age of 60 for the cross-sectional studies and 50 for the life course approach. The choice of a lower limit for the latter method reflected the wish to follow people over a longer time period. Three areas of interest were considered: employment patterns, the role of the family, and the importance of the collectivity.

**The value of labour**

By studying labour force participation rates, the social structure, and the extent of pensions and savings I have tried to measure the value of labour for elderly men and women during pre-industrial and industrial times. The first question was whether industrialisation and urbanisation affected the labour force participation rates of aged men and women. A second objective was to determine whether the socio-economic status of elderly men and women was influenced by the fact that an
increasing share of the production moved from the household to the factory. Finally
the importance of pensions and savings for elderly men and women was discussed.

A number of problems arose in the analysis of the work patterns of the elderly,
 principally due to inaccuracies and omissions in the sources. Many elderly men and
even more women were employed in the informal sector. Unfortunately, we will never
be able to determine the actual proportion of occupations in this part of the economy,
although the informal sector is occasionally documented in certain sources. Since
occupational data were much more detailed in the census of 1930 and very speciali­
sed occupations appeared for the first time, it is reasonable to assume that this
census included some of the occupations that earlier had belonged to the informal
sector of the economy. A further finding was that a very high proportion of aged men
were registered with an occupation in all periods except 1930 and it is not likely
that all of these men really were active in the labour force.

This study has emphasised the complexity of the issue. The official statistics
record a decline in the percentage of men active in the labour force between 1910
and 1930. This development together with lower rates of elderly male workers in
urban areas could support the idea that modernisation did have a negative impact
on the proportion of old people active in the labour force. Furthermore, the low
proportion of elderly men working in industry and in ”modern” occupations was a
consequence of the increasing importance of new technology and new skills.

However, one factor that makes against this negative assessment of the
modernisation theorists is the expanding female labour market. Between 1910 and
1930 there was an increase in the proportion of elderly women active in the work
force. This rise was a reflection of the increasing proportion of female workers in the
labour market. Women living in urban areas also had higher rates of employment
compared with elderly women living in the countryside. Over time, an increasing
proportion of aged women took up domestic occupations and trade because the
expanding urban environment offered women more opportunities to earn a living.
While the labour market for urban elderly men seems to have deteriorated, the reverse
was the case for urban women. Nor does the marked increase of both elderly men
and women with an assessed income by 1930 and the stable proportion of tax payers
during the second half of the nineteenth century support the idea that modernisation
worsened the employment possibilities of the elderly.

The changing occupational structure, however, is not the only explanation for the
declining rates of elderly men active in the labour force. During the beginning of the
twentieth century an increasing number of elderly persons were entitled to pensions.
This had a great impact on the labour force participation rates of elderly men. The
impact of the national pension scheme is evident in the employment patterns of
elderly in Sundsvall in 1930 in the large number of workers reported as no longer practising their former occupation. Before the introduction of the national pension scheme only persons in a good financial situation or those included in a private pension system had the possibility to retire. These persons who were able to retire also had some savings, whereas very few workers where thus fortunate.

Even in the seventeenth century the Swedish government had established pension funds but only for people employed by the army and for some civil servants. The guilds also supported their old members and the iron foundries provided limited assistance to some of their elderly workers. The economic well being of old landed peasants was guaranteed by retirement contracts and masters might have taken care of their old servants. However, following the commercialisation of agriculture and the massive population increase there was a major growth in the number of landless people. Retirement contracts became less common and the patriarchal system started to decay. The result was that an increasing proportion of aged people were without any form of security in old age. This fact attracted some attention in the Riksdag but it took a long time before the elderly were guaranteed at least minimum support in old age.

Not until the end of the nineteenth century was there a sign of increasing interest in the question of financial security in old age. However, at this time a number of prominent people started to express concern about the situation of the elderly in the new industrial society. Major elements of social policy incorporated both genuine concern for the plight of the elderly but also a wish to uphold order and to halt emigration. Some proposals concerning security in old age had been laid during the first half of the century but had been rejected on the grounds that this was not a responsibility of the Government. Economic liberalism dominated politics and not until the end of the nineteenth century was it apparent that a transition was in train from laissez-faire ideology towards an increasing interventionist attitude of the Government. However, it took another thirty years before Sweden got a system of national old-age pensions.

**The aged and the family**

Another important issue was the importance of children for the support of their old parents. Long-distance migration increased in conjunction with industrialisation because people changed residence in order to find employment in these new industrial areas. Consideration was given as to whether this in combination with changes in the modes of production lead to a declining proportion of aged people co-residing with or lived nearby their children. The residence patterns of the childless elderly
have been of greatest importance in this study since the proportion of unmarried people grew steadily during the nineteenth century.

The cross-sectional analysis of the structure of the households of aged men and women during the process of industrialisation and urbanisation produced striking findings. By contrast with the results of Michael Anderson, Steven Ruggles, and of Angelique Janssens on the residence patterns of the elderly in other parts of Europe, it was established that the extended family household was extremely rare in late nineteenth-century Sundsvall. Moreover, the proportion of extended family households definitely did not increase over time as the proportion was somewhat higher in 1845 than later. The three-generational household was almost entirely confined to the widowed elderly with the exception of a few married couples in 1845 who lived with married children.

Furthermore, there is evidence of a rising proportion of elderly persons during the first phase of industrial expansion who lived alone. This trend was particularly notable in the case of widows, and unmarried men and women. Rates of living alone were particularly high among servants or workers. However, in 1930 the proportion of aged men living alone was as low as in 1845 and the percentage of women residing on their own was even lower than in 1845. It seems as if the greatest changes in residence patterns took place during the initial phase of industrialisation. This was a turbulent period with high geographical mobility and massive population increase, leading to crowded dwellings and unstable living conditions. Sundsvall attracted people from different parts of the country. Many of these immigrants had left all their relatives behind, hoping to start a new and better life in the expanding town.

By 1930 the town and its people had stabilised. However, this was also a period of economic depression, possibly causing children to postpone their departure from home. The proportion of people residing with a more distant relative or with non-kin also increased. Some people may have been forced to share households in order to cope with hard times. However, they may also have had a higher number of relatives with whom they could live due to the increases in life expectancy.

The purpose of the longitudinal approach was to deepen the cross-sectional study. The results from the longitudinal study modified but also strengthened some of the findings of the cross-sectional investigation. We were able to observe the importance of unmarried children for the members of both cohorts. It also emerged that a somewhat higher proportion of aged members of the industrial cohort lived alone, even if the percentage was not as high as that recorded in the cross-sectional study. However, in spite of rising proportions living on their own a majority of the elderly living in Sundsvall had children living near them.

Industrialisation seemed to have affected the living arrangements of men and
women of different marital status in a variety of ways. The vast majority of elderly married men and women in both cohorts had children living nearby. This was also the situation for the widows. However, the percentage of widowers who had children living in Sundsvall was lower for the industrial cohort than for the pre-industrial. Moreover, the social networks of the increasing numbers of unmarried men seemed to have weakened. A declining proportion lived with relatives and a much higher proportion ended up in institutions. On the contrary very few of the unmarried women ended their lives in the workhouse. Even if the importance of close relatives had diminished, these women seemed to have received some support in old age. It is conceivable that they had other important social networks or were able to manage on their own better than men.

Finally, it was established that the majority of the elderly headed their own households although the percentage of elderly widowed and unmarried who were household heads decreased over time. This decline was the result of changes in the industrial structure. Workers who had immigrated late in life more often spent their last years living in the households of other people or ended up in the workhouse.

In order to distinguish general patterns from specific the household types of elderly men and women in Sundsvall were compared with those in two other Swedish urban areas, Norrköping and Stockholm. Similarities and dissimilarities in the residence patterns were discussed. The predominant residence pattern in all of the three areas was aged men to live with their spouse and children and for aged women to live alone.

However, there were also some important differences in the residence patterns of the elderly between these urban areas. Men in Norrköping were much less likely to live alone. This can be explained by a combination of factors: the low proportion of unmarried men, the relatively high proportion living in the poorhouse, and the existence of a poor relief system, whereby the poor law authorities paid people to take care of elderly paupers in their homes. Further, old women in Sundsvall were more likely to co-reside with both spouse and children as a consequence of the high proportion of married women in this town. Stockholm showed the lowest percentage of elderly co-residing with children. One possible explanation for this pattern was the high mobility of the city’s population. Old parents might have had children living elsewhere in the city but they did not live with them. Another explanation for the low numbers of elderly persons in the capital who co-resided with children was the high percentage of unmarried elderly, a consequence of the low marriage rates at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The highest percentage of elderly living in institutions were also to be found in Stockholm, both among men and women. As a result of its higher level of urban development Stockholm had been quick to found
institutions for different groups of poor, which explains the higher rate of elderly persons in receipt of indoor relief. A fairly high percentage of the elderly members of Stockholm's bourgeoisie were also resident in institutions as a number of these had been specifically founded for these groups.

The residence patterns of the elderly in the Swedish cities differed from those in most of the other European and American urban areas where living arrangements of the elderly have been studied, even if there were some similarities in living arrangements such as a high percentage of elderly co-residing with unmarried children and low proportions living with non-relatives. The percentage of Swedish elderly living with children was lower, particularly among women. Even more striking was the high proportion of women living on their own in all three Swedish cities. Such a high proportion of solitary living elderly cannot be found in any of the other studies. However, residing alone did not necessarily betoken social isolation as many elderly had children living nearby who could take care of their old parents if the need arose. The longitudinal study of Sundsvall established that the majority of old parents still had children living in the town although they did not share the same household. Yet, even if the high proportion of elderly living alone and the very low percentage co-residing with married children do not indicate social isolation, these residence patterns reveal the desire of adult children and/or their old parents to obtain a certain degree of independence.

I also considered whether the interdependence between old parents and their adult children was of less importance in Sweden than in other European areas. The origin of this more "individualistic" pattern in Sweden might perhaps lie with the retirement system, undantagssystemet, that was common in the rural areas of the Scandinavian countries. Under this system an aged peasant transferred his property during his lifetime to a relative, normally one of his children, in return for food and housing during the rest of his life. The old farmer and his wife often had a household of their own either in another part of the same building as the young couple or in a separate house close to the main building. Even though the old couple and their married children lived close to each other, they do not appear usually to have shared the same household. It is likely that this traditional living arrangement with separate households may also have influenced the residence patterns of the urban living elderly who had a rural background.

Different housing conditions in urban Sweden than for instance in England and the Netherlands may also explain the higher rates of old women living alone in Sweden. A relatively high proportion of people in Scandinavian towns lived in tenement houses, whereas in England and the Netherlands it was more common to live in houses with just one or two families living in each building. It might have been
easier for English and Dutch people to house their old parents because their flats might have been more spacious, whereas old people in Sweden to a higher extent lived alone instead of crowded in with relatives.

Another important change concerns unmarried men and women. It seems probable that the unmarried were somewhat more isolated during the initial phase of industrialisation. What is certain is that the role of relatives lessened and the social networks of fellow workers and employers probably became more important. Consequently, a very high percentage of these men ended up in institutions. This indicates that their social networks were not strong enough to constitute a safety net during the last phase of their life cycle. Very few of the unmarried women in Sundsvall ended up in institutions perhaps because they tended to have stronger social networks. On the other hand, a considerable proportion of unmarried elderly women in Stockholm did enter in institutions, although not to the same extent as unmarried males. The authorities might have preferred to give elderly men indoor relief, whereas women were more likely to be left to manage on their own.

**Elderly paupers**

This section examined changes in the extent and nature of dependency in old age during the period of industrialisation and urbanisation. The role of the collectivity in the care of the elderly was revealed through considering the status of elderly paupers in the context of Poor law policy and forms of relief at both national and local levels. The specific issue treated was whether dependency in old age increased over time and whether there was a change in the proportion of paupers within different sections of the elderly population. Consideration was also given to whether there was any change over time in the nature of the relief provided.

From 1845 to 1910 the percentage of elderly paupers in the town of Sundsvall was very stable; approximately one tenth of the old men and women of Sundsvall lived either in public institutions or were registered as outdoor paupers. National statistics indicated a decline in the proportion of elderly paupers over time. This raised the question as to whether this was an indicator of improving living conditions or a sign of a harsher poor relief policy. The Poor Law of 1871 imposed tougher conditions for the award of relief and tried to transfer some of the cost of support onto charitable organisations and the paupers' relatives. However, it is less likely that this new policy had a major impact on the situation of aged men and women since they were invariably classed as "deserving paupers", unless they were socially maladjusted or had relatives capable of supporting them.

Even if the percentage of poor old men and women in Sundsvall was relatively
stable there was a change in the composition of the pauper group in terms of marital status and age. During the nineteenth century the widows constituted the majority of all paupers but an increasing proportion of unmarried elderly paupers could be observed as the century went on. Many of these people had to turn to the community because they did not have anyone who could take care of them when they became old and infirm.

There was also an increase in the number of aged men and women entering institutions. Population growth connected with industrialisation and urbanisation seems to have encouraged increased rates of institutionalisation. The workhouse was primarily intended for maladjusted people, who were well treated and encouraged to be decent citizens. Furthermore, the inmates were supposed to contribute through their own work to the costs of their care. The high percentage of old and infirm residents at the beginning of the twentieth century became a significant problem for the authorities of Sundsvall, as it represented a reduction in their income.

Cohort effects were in part the cause of the increased proportion of institutionalised elderly at the turn of the century. The industrial expansion in Sundsvall led initially to a younger population but when these young migrants entered old age at the beginning of the new century their need for institutional care increased. Furthermore, a high percentage of unmarried persons with no relatives living nearby meant that this group was more vulnerable than other categories of elderly.

Apart from demographic and socio-economic factors, changes in attitudes might also help to explain the increasing percentage of elderly inmates resident in the workhouse. The new poor relief organisation in the 1890s brought with it closer relations between caregivers and caretakers at the local level. This in turn probably led to a better understanding of the situation of aged people and to the more sympathetic treatment of individual paupers. In addition, the national debate on security in old age which started in the 1880s probably also affected attitudes in Sundsvall towards the elderly.

The national survey of the 1880s showed that the widows constituted the majority of paupers. Women usually outlived their husbands resulting in their higher rates of dependency in old age. However, the highest rates of dependence were experienced by elderly unmarried men and widowers living in urban areas. Urban men probably had weaker social networks than either urban women or the rural elderly. A hard life with abuse of alcohol and unstable working conditions made them more vulnerable than their female counterparts, who often had children, other relatives, friends and employers who could care for them. Old men may have found it easier than women to earn a living but were in greater need of domestic support. They needed help with cooking and cleaning. If they were well off they could hire a servant but if they were
poor and were without relatives or friends they would probably be forced to enter the workhouse. Elderly women may have had problems with earning a living but could better manage on their own. Moreover, since many elderly women had a stronger social network they had better systems of service, social and emotional support than were available to aged men.

This dissertation has shown the importance of not analysing aged people as a homogenous group. Men and women experienced old age and the effects of industrialisation and urbanisation in different ways. Women's higher life expectancy in combination with fewer opportunities to support themselves made them more dependent on children and other persons. By contrast, men often had better possibilities to support themselves and their shorter life expectancy in conjunction with their later age of marriage meant that they were more likely to be living with both their spouse and children until they died.

Industrialisation made it somewhat more difficult for old men to obtain employment, at least if they became unemployed and then tried to find a job in a modern sector of the economy. Old employees were most likely to have traditional skills and only a small proportion were employed in the new industries. Old women, however, had better opportunities to earn a living in urban than in rural areas.

The impact of marital status on the economic well-being of aged men and women was also significant. Married men and women probably had positive experiences of industrialisation. Their children could more easily find employment earlier in the new industry and were thereby more capable of supporting their old parents. Another group who may have gained from the industrialisation and urbanisation were the widows. The urban areas gave these women better opportunities to earn a living and, as was the case of married elderly couples, their children might have found it easier to support their elderly mothers.

Both the national and local surveys showed that unmarried men and to some extent widowers were the most vulnerable groups of elderly in urban areas. An urban life style with unstable living conditions in combination with a frequent abuse of alcohol made these men more vulnerable than others. Referring to the vocabulary of the sociologist Helena Znaniecka Lopata, such men could arrange their economic support, but their needs in terms of service, social and the important emotional support were not fulfilled. Many widowed and unmarried men spent their old age living with or near fellow workers and employers but since a high proportion ended up in the workhouse their social networks cannot have been strong.

Unmarried women, on the other hand, seem to have been better able to manage on their own. Some of them might have had children who could contribute to their care and support. Others had employers, neighbours, or friends who may have taken

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care of them. They could from a practical point of view take better care of themselves than could elderly unmarried men and their need of social and thereby also emotional support was more often fulfilled. The local authorities may have considered that women were better able to look after themselves than men and this might have influenced who the community preferred to offer indoor-relief.

Endless speculation is possible as to the impact of industrialisation and urbanisation on the lives of elderly and whether these transformations improved or worsened living conditions. The heterogeneity of the elderly population naturally complicates the picture. Some old persons had a better life in the urban environment whereas others had bad experiences of life in the town.

The increasing numbers of old men and women living alone could have been a sign of social isolation. Many of those who were childless and had moved to Sundsvall late in life had weaker social networks than the members of the pre-industrial cohort. Furthermore, several old men and women also experienced the dark sides of the urban areas, such as overcrowding, poor sanitary conditions, and the social problems that were the consequences of massive immigration.

However, on the whole my study indicates improving living conditions for the majority of people who entered old age in the urban environment at the turn of the nineteenth century. More opportunities to earn a living, particularly for women, in combination with a better standard of living of their children contributed to the better situation. An increasing interest in social policy rendered the elderly more visible. Furthermore, a growing proportion of old people living on their own suggests that the old and their children may have had a better chance to live independent lives instead of crowding in with relatives. After all, the majority of these aged people did have children living nearby who were able to take care of their old parents.

I would like to remark that even if the church books and poll tax registers offer a variety of data on peoples’ lives and destinies, a great deal of valuable information is still hidden in other sources. We still do not have much knowledge of the quality of inter-generational relations and how old people actually felt about their situation. Quantitative research is of greatest significance because of its ability to embrace all levels in society but hopefully further research will be able to combine quantitative with qualitative sources more extensively, thereby improving our knowledge of the lives of the elderly.

Finally, the present study shows the importance of using comparative analysis of the living arrangements of elderly in urban areas with different socio-economic and demographic structures. Thereby we are able to distinguish general patterns from the specific both at national and local levels. Hopefully we will see more of this type of studies in the near future.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unmarried</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>Divorced and unknown</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alone</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with spouse</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried children</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>74</td>
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<td></td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried son</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried daughter</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse, unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with unmarried children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>Unmarried son</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried daughter</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married children</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married son</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married daughter</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives or non-kin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with servants</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sum</strong></td>
<td>42</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>32</td>
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</table>

Source: Catechetical examination registers of the town of Sundsvall 1880.
Table 20. *Household structure of women over the age of 60 in the town of Sundsvall in 1880, divided by marital status.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unmarried</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>Divorced and unknown</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>61  76</td>
<td>72  51</td>
<td>5  83</td>
<td>138  44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with spouse</td>
<td>35  39</td>
<td></td>
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<td>35  11</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried children</td>
<td>53  60</td>
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<td></td>
<td>53  17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried son</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried daughter</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse, unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with unmarried children</td>
<td>4  5</td>
<td>52  37</td>
<td>1  17</td>
<td>57  18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried son</td>
<td>3  16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried daughter</td>
<td>1  22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>1  14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1  1</td>
<td>1  1</td>
<td>8  6</td>
<td>10  3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married son</td>
<td>1  4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6  3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married daughter</td>
<td>1  4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4  2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives or non-kin</td>
<td>11  14</td>
<td>6  4</td>
<td></td>
<td>17  5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with servants</td>
<td>3  4</td>
<td>2  1</td>
<td></td>
<td>5  2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>80  100</td>
<td>89  100</td>
<td>140  99</td>
<td>6  100</td>
<td>315  100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Catechetical examination registers of the town of Sundsvall 1880.
Table 21. Household structure of men over the age of 60 in the town of Sundsvall in 1910, divided by marital status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unmarried</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>Divorced and unknown</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>2  100</td>
<td>12  32</td>
<td>2  100</td>
<td>16  13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with spouse</td>
<td>26  32</td>
<td>26  21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried children</td>
<td>56  68</td>
<td>56  45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried son</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried daughter</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse, unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with unmarried children</td>
<td>19  50</td>
<td>19  15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried son</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried daughter</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married children</td>
<td>1  3</td>
<td>1  1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married son</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married daughter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives or non-kin</td>
<td>2  5</td>
<td>2  2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with servants</td>
<td>4  11</td>
<td>4  3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>2  100</td>
<td>82  100</td>
<td>38  101</td>
<td>2  100</td>
<td>124  100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census for the town of Sundsvall 1910. (sample)
Table 22. Household structure of women over the age of 60 in the town of Sundsvall in 1910, divided by marital status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unmarried</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>Divorced and unknown</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>22  92</td>
<td></td>
<td>44  47</td>
<td>2  67</td>
<td>68  39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with spouse</td>
<td></td>
<td>28  51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28  16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried children</td>
<td></td>
<td>10  49</td>
<td>27  49</td>
<td></td>
<td>27  15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried son</td>
<td></td>
<td>10  7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10  7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried daughter</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with unmarried children</td>
<td>1  4</td>
<td>45  48</td>
<td>1  33</td>
<td></td>
<td>47  27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried son</td>
<td>17  48</td>
<td></td>
<td>1  1</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried daughter</td>
<td>12  48</td>
<td>1  33</td>
<td>1  1</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>16  100</td>
<td></td>
<td>1  1</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married children</td>
<td>1  1</td>
<td>1  1</td>
<td>1  1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married son</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1  1</td>
<td>1  1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married daughter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives or non-kin</td>
<td>1  4</td>
<td>3  3</td>
<td>4  2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with servants</td>
<td>24  100</td>
<td>55  100</td>
<td>93  99</td>
<td>3  99</td>
<td>175  100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census for the town of Sundsvall 1910. (sample)
Table 23. Household structure of men over the age of 60 in the town of Sundsvall in 1930, divided by marital status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unmarried</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>Divorced and unknown</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with spouse</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>39</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried son</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried daughter</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse, unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with unmarried children</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried son</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried daughter</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married children</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married son</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married daughter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives or non-kin</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with servants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>31</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census for the town of Sundsvall 1930. (sample)
Table 24. Household structure of women over the age of 60 in the town of Sundsvall in 1930, divided by marital status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unmarried</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>Divorced and unknown</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with spouse</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried children</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried son</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried daughter</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse, unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with unmarried children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried son</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried daughter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married son</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married daughter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives or non-kin</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with servants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census for the town of Sundsvall 1930. (sample)
Appendix 2

*Household structure of men and women over the age of 60 in the town of Sundsvall 1845–1930, divided by age.*

Table 25. Household structure of men over the age of 60 in the town of Sundsvall in 1845, divided by age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>60-69</th>
<th>65-79</th>
<th>&gt;79</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with spouse</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried children</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried son</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried daughter</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse, unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with unmarried children</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried son</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried daughter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married son</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Married daughter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives or non-kin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with servants</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
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<td>Sum</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>101</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Catechetical examination registers 1845.*
Table 26. Household structure of women over the age of 60 in the town of Sundsvall in 1845, divided by age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>70-79</th>
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<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with spouse</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried children</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried daughter</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse, unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with unmarried children</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unmarried daughter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Married children</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Married daughter</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with servants</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Sum</td>
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<td>99.5</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Catechetical examination registers 1845.
Table 27. Household structure of men over the age of 60 in the town of Sundsvall in 1880, divided by age.

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>60-69</th>
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<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
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<td>19</td>
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<tr>
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<td>23</td>
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</tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>Spouse, unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
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</tr>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Unmarried son</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unmarried son and daughter</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Married children</td>
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<td>Married son</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Married daughter</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Other relatives or non-kin</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with servants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

Source: Catechetical examination registers 1880.
Table 28. Household structure of women over the age of 60 in the town of Sundsvall in 1880, divided by age.

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>60-69</th>
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<th>&gt;79</th>
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<th>Total</th>
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<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>138</td>
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<td>Only with spouse</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>53</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>15</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Spouse, unmarried son and daughter</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with unmarried children</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried son</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Unmarried son and daughter</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Married son</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Married daughter</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives or non-kin</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with servants</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>315</td>
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</table>

Source: Catechetical examination registers 1880.
Table 29. Household structure of men over the age of 60 in the town of Sundsvall in 1910, divided by age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>60-69</th>
<th>70-79</th>
<th>&gt;79</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with spouse</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>Spouse and unmarried children</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
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<td>Spouse and unmarried son</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried daughter</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse, unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with unmarried children</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<td>Unmarried daughter</td>
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<td>Unmarried son and daughter</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Married daughter</td>
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<td>Other relatives or non-kin</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with servants</td>
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</table>

Source: Census of the town of Sundsvall 1910. (sample)
Table 30. Household structure of women over the age of 60 in the town of Sundsvall in 1910, divided by age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>60-69</th>
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<th>&gt;79</th>
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<td>%</td>
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<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>68</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Spouse and unmarried daughter</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse, unmarried son and daughter</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with unmarried children</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Unmarried son</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried son and daughter</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married daughter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives or non-kin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with servants</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of the town of Sundsvall 1910. (sample)
Table 31. Household structure of men over the age of 60 in the town of Sundsvall in 1930, divided by age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>60-69</th>
<th></th>
<th>70-79</th>
<th></th>
<th>&gt;79</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with spouse</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried children</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with unmarried children</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried daughter</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse, unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with unmarried children</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried son</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unmarried daughter</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married children</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married son</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married daughter</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives or non-kin</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with servants</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of the town of Sundsvall 1930. (sample)
Table 32. Household structure of women over the age of 60 in the town of Sundsvall in 1930, divided by age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>60-69</th>
<th></th>
<th>70-79</th>
<th></th>
<th>&gt;79</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with spouse</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried children</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried son</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse and unmarried daughter</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse, unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with unmarried children</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried son</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried daughter</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried son and daughter</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married children</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married son</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married daughter</td>
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<td>3.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives or non-kin</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only with servants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of the town of Sundsvall 1930. (sample)
# Appendix 3

Table 33. The number of men and women over 60 notified as poor by the community in the town of Sundsvall in 1845, 1860, 1875, 1885, 1890, and 1910.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unmarried</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Widowers/widows</th>
<th>Undefined</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;79</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;79</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;79</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Poll tax registers of the town of Sundsvall 1845, 1860, 1875, 1890 and 1910, computerised by DDB, Umeå.


The situation of aged people is one of the most important political issues of today. An ageing population has led to increased spending on public pensions and health care, and in the search for cost-saving measures and alternative forms of care, people have started to look for solutions from the past. One way is to shift responsibilities from public support back onto families. Popular opinion persists in the view that the elderly enjoyed high status in pre-industrial society. This view embraces the belief that industrialisation destroyed family ties and left the elderly to a life of isolation. In order to better understand the situation of old men and women historically, accurate knowledge of our past is essential.

This book deals with the impact of socio-economic, demographic, and ideological change on the living conditions of men and women ageing in nineteenth and early twentieth centuries urban Sweden. The intention is to explore from a gender and class perspective how these social transformations affected the employment patterns of the elderly, the role of the family as a provider of care in old age, and the extent of dependency of aged men and women. This study indeed shows an increasing percentage of elderly living on their own during the initial phase of industrialisation, but living on one’s own did not necessarily entail isolation from relatives. The majority of old parents continued to have children living in the vicinity.

By contrast with studies of scholars such as Michael Anderson, Steven Ruggles, and Angelique Janssens this study reveals a decreasing proportion of old men and women co-residing with married children during the process of industrialisation and urbanisation. The present study also shows that working-class people were less inclined than other social groups to live with children.