Hedvig Widmalm

Exploring the Mores of Mining
The oeconomy of the Great Copper Mine, 1716–1724
Abstract

This thesis closely examines the Great Copper Mine in Falun in the first two decades of the eighteenth century. It uses a micro-historical approach to investigate the economic discourse of agrarian oeconomy, a complex idea tied to the early modern agrarian society. The implementation of a series of economic reforms in 1716 and the subsequent Royal Commission in 1724 form the key sources studied here. Part of this also includes a close reading of the words of Anders Swab, the Mine Inspector, and those who argued against his reforms.

The first three chapters introduce the methods and theories. Chapter 4 concerns the discussions surrounding the reforms. This chapter is based on the protocols of the Board of Mines, the Swedish body for governing mines and metalworks. Although the chapter uses primary source material, it provides context for understanding the materials of the Royal Commission of 1724.

The investigation of the Royal Commission is at the centre this study. The Commission was started due to a series of petitions that were sent to the Swedish Diet by the people of Falun in 1723. The Diet then created a commission, whose officials read petitions, and collected information relating to the complaints. After this material was reviewed, the commissioners called the various groups who had petitioned, and questioned them about their complaints. They also confronted Swab, the architect behind the reforms, with their findings. Through a close reading of the petitions, the associated material, and the protocols of the Commission, this thesis investigates how groups on various levels of hierarchy discussed oeconomy. The unique social structure of the Great Copper Mine meant that it was difficult to implement the economic ideals of agrarian oeconomy. The results show how economic discourse changed depending on the status of actors in the household economy, as well as how the actors were able to use their status to further their causes. The micro-historical perspective illuminates how complex, yet contradictory the structure of the household economy was. It was meant to uphold a static hierarchy, yet it still granted a relative agency to disempowered groups within it.

Keywords: Household economy, Mining history, Eighteenth century, Micro History, Discourse, Oeconomy
To my sister
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I was surprised to find myself at the Department of Economic History in Uppsala in September 2013. The presentation of the project *Places for Making, Places for Taking: Metals in the Global world, 1630 – 1820* had inspired me to apply for a PhD position there. The purpose of the project was to connect the production of precious metals to the expanding trade networks and enlightenment processes of the global eighteenth century. It was a collaboration between the University of South Wales and Uppsala, headed by the professor Göran Rydén in Uppsala, and by Chris Evans in Wales. The project required one PhD student from Sweden whose job was to study Falun during the early modern period. At the History department, I had studied household economy in the eighteenth century. I had the idea to use what knowledge I had gained there and apply it to the mining town of Falun and the production of copper. I thought I would give it a try, and was accepted. Even though I have since then veered away from the original theme of the project, I would like to thank Göran Rydén and Chris Evans for giving me this opportunity. Thank you especially Göran Rydén for the supervision and the workshops we have had together. Through this project, I have had the luck to be able to present my research at the conference of the International Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, and at several conferences in Sweden. These have been rewarding experiences.

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CHAPTER 1.
The starting point for studying the mine

There is something wrong with society when the common people want to become the rulers, and take a stand on issues that they do not understand or have the right grasp of.¹

- Mine inspector Anders Swab (1681–1731) to the Royal Commission at the mining court in Falun, 1724.

In 1713, Anders Swab returned to Sweden after having completed the European tour funded by King Karl XII’s government as a part of his education with the Board of Mines, the Swedish chamber for the economic administration of mines and metalworks. This tour had taken him from England to the ironworks and mining towns of Saxony and Bohemia. Little is known of his visit to England, but the German mining towns made an impression on him that would be felt in the mining town of Falun in eastern Sweden for decades to come. It was these areas that had impressed on Swab the wisdom of unifying the administrative bodies of the mine and the town into a singular entity known as a bergstad. He moved back to his birthplace: Falun.

1.1 Introducing the Great Copper Mine at Falun

In the early eighteenth century, the Great Copper Mine was perhaps Sweden’s largest workplace. Because of this, Falun as a society had the character of an industrial town in a pre-industrial world, with a large number of workers dedicated to the one venture that dominated the town’s economic life.

Anders Swab took the position of Mine Inspector at the Great Copper Mine in 1714. Once he had taken this position, Swab met with the local mining court’s representative bergsmän, the shareholders of the mine, and scolded them for being lazy and letting the mine fall into ruin; he warned them that

¹ RA ÄK 408 aktet, handlingar, Vol. 2 p. 179. This quote is expanded on in this thesis, see Chapter 6, p. 129.
their greedy ventures would not be allowed to hinder the common good.\textsuperscript{2} Under his command, significant changes were made to the mine’s economic administration according to his idea of what ‘common good’ entailed.\textsuperscript{3}

Swab was committed to preserving what he perceived as the traditional order of work and hierarchy of the mine, but saw it as necessary to institute radical changes to the administrative structure there in order to do so.\textsuperscript{4} These reforms were a way to ensure that a rational, traditional hierarchy of the mining enterprise remained intact even though the mine’s economic and social conditions were changing rapidly. The success of the reforms paved the way for creation of the \textit{bergstad} in December 1720.\textsuperscript{5}

As the years passed and the effects of the reforms were felt at the Great Copper Mine, there was a mounting popular opposition to Swab’s vision. This culminated in a petition sent to the \textit{riksdag}, the Swedish Diet in Stockholm, that requested an inquiry into the economic practices of the Great Copper Mine. Because of the petition, the Diet initiated a royal investigation at the Great Copper Mine in February 1724. This investigation, known as the Royal Commission to investigate the ‘oeconomy’ of the Great Copper Mine\textsuperscript{6}, consisted of a series of complaints and petitions that were read out to representatives of the Diet. They called on Swab and other town magistrates to defend their economic reforms. Their purpose was to sort out the town and mine’s \textit{hushållning}, a term translated to ‘oeconomy’ in this thesis to denote economic practices dictated by early modern social mores.\textsuperscript{7}

\subsection*{1.2 The purpose of this research and research questions}

At the Commission, Swab’s chief opponent was the man who had sent the first petition to the Diet and instigated the process: a field surgeon, \textit{bergsman}, and burgher named Immanuel Grossman. A small number of \textit{bergsmän} who believed that the reforms left them disempowered also signed a petition detailing their standpoint on the management of the mine. Many members of Falun’s burgher estate, who argued that their livelihood was threatened by the reforms, were also against Swab. Almost 300 miners who worked for the \textit{bergsmän} sent their own petitions in defiance of the local mining court’s rule that forbade them from convening. In petitions and protocols, descriptions of their

\begin{footnotes}
\item [4] See Lindroth (1955), Vol. 1, p. 416, regarding the character of Anders Swab and his motivations; See also Boethius (1951), p. 232 and Heckscher (1940), p. 44.
\item [5] This process is described in Ericsson (1970), pp. 29–46.
\item [6] In Swedish, \textit{Kommissionen för att undersöka Stora Kopparbergets hushållning}.
\end{footnotes}
everyday practices are recounted, along with economic visions that sometimes differ from Anders Swab’s.

With his reforms and the union of the town and mine, I argue that Swab and his allies at the Board of Mines restructured the Great Copper Mine according to a certain form of oeconomy. Oeconomy was the discourse, the science, and the practice of household economy; it was the predominant way of conceptualizing Swedish economic life during the eighteenth century. However, the fact that Swab and his allies’ vision conformed to a predominant ideology did not mean it was not criticized from below.

In this thesis, I uncover the ideas that motivated Swab’s economic reforms, and how they were received and argued. One purpose in posing the following research questions is to attempt to understand how stated views held by people representing different groups correlated with and differed from the notion of household economy. My central research questions are: What ideas about oeconomy were implemented at the Great Copper Mine in the 1710s and 1720s? In what ways did the different social groups living and working in Falun criticize these ideas? What norms and social mores did they use when making their arguments? Another purpose of asking these questions is to look for the ways they could use oeconomy: as a kind of regularized language, an expression of commonly held social mores, and a way to position themselves in order to argue for their rights. Essentially, this is an examination of power relations and agency in early modern society.

Oeconomy is a useful concept to investigate in order to see the amount agency that actors on different levels of social hierarchy could have in Sweden during the early eighteenth century. Discussions about oeconomy were often exchanges about practical economic concerns. This meant that at their core, they were discussions about survival. However, oeconomy also included ideas about social order and morality, and the ways that society ought to be structured according to a set hierarchical order. Oeconomy was in effect the practice of household economy. This was a type of economy that combined economic management with the upholding of the hierarchical system of an idealized agrarian household.

In studying what ways this conception of the household economy was relevant to the Great Copper Mine, I look at how the different components of a private, early modern household were managed and discussed. The household consisted of the heads of house, referred to here as householders, their wives, their children, and their servants. As a national economy developed in the eighteenth century, scientists and state officials began to apply the oeconomy of the private household to larger units in society. For instance, historians like Per-Arne Karlsson and Göran Rydén have written about the particular oeconomy of the Swedish ironworks, household units that were larger than the private households.

8 See Chapter 2.
The focus of this thesis is the oeconomy of the Great Copper Mine, as well as the oeconomy of the bergstad. If the Great Copper Mine could be seen as its own household unit, requiring its own form of oeconomy, the category of householder could handily be applied to the shareholding and administrating bergsmän. Miners working for the bergsmän were legally classed as servants, meaning that they were subordinate within the households of the bergsmän. However, in practice, the miners were frequently householders themselves, who owned homes and supported families. The Great Copper Mine was a unit that functioned differently from a private agrarian household, and the requirements of its oeconomy would be different as well. The things that would have granted householders status and authority in an agrarian oeconomy did not apply to the people who were a part of the oeconomy of the mine. Different normative conceptions and mores clashed in a way that had practical consequences for economic management of the Copper Mine and the new bergstad.

The term oeconomy is differentiated from the term economy here. Economy refers to economic practices in a modern, general sense: the management of wealth and resources. Oeconomy, on the other hand, refers to specific economic theories and practices in a specific historical context. I use the term oeconomy to mean an early modern understanding of economic life, which was seen as intrinsically tied to the structure and practices of an agrarian household.

In this thesis, the contents of the reforms 1716 are first outlined through a reading of the ways that they were laid out in the protocols of the mining court in Falun and to the Board of Mines in Stockholm. With these sources, it is possible to follow the process of planning and implementing the reforms, as well as how they were framed and discussed. A study of the Royal Commission to investigate the oeconomy of the Great Copper Mine that was held in 1724 then makes up the bulk of this dissertation. The debates of the Commission provides traces of an economic discourse held in Sweden during the early years of the Age of Liberty, when the absolutist rule of King Karl XII ended and many old notions of hierarchy were in a flux. The Commission’s protocols and petitions show what was accepted, what was up for debate, and which issues were considered relevant.

The chapters about the Commission are a study of a type of discourse. However, the Commission also represents an economic practice, in which the actors on all levels of society in Falun and at the Great Copper Mine—and on a higher level the Swedish Diet—came together in order to influence the economic administration of the mining town. To hold a discussion is to act, and the results of the Commission reveal the outcomes of these actions. In the Commission’s documents, it is possible to see how the actors who came forward and attempted to use their social status as a springboard for action and influence. Their placement within the town and within the Swedish state affected how they presented their complaints, and the way that their complaints were received and discussed, as well as the outcome of the Commission.
1.3 Previous research on the 1710s and 1720s reforms at the Great Copper Mine

The historians Sten Lindroth, Bertil Boethius, Eli Heckscher and, in particular, Birgitta Ericsson have all written about the reforms instituted in the 1710s, and the subsequent Royal Commission in 1724. In this section, a summary of the nature of their research is provided, along with an outline of my own contribution to the topic.

In contemporary sources, the Royal Commission of 1724 was called the ‘Grossmanian tumult’ because Immanuel Grossman’s petition was a catalyst. Lindroth’s history places these events in the wider context of the development of a detailed economic administration of the mine during the early eighteenth century. Lindroth documents how the administrative practices of the mine changed throughout the early modern period, without investigating the cultural and ideological underpinnings. He provides a comprehensive overview of structural, technical, and economic developments in the Great Copper Mine. The fact that he covers so many aspects of work and production at the mine in his formative account makes it inevitable that he cannot provide a detailed analysis of every event. When it comes to the reforms and the ‘tumult’, the ideas behind the different protests are not discussed in detail.

Swab also provided a vast documentation of work at the mine over the period in question, which means that Lindroth’s account is slightly biased towards his point of view of the events. The bergsmän also sometimes seem merely reactive in their petitions and protests, and Lindroth also does not delve deeply into the accounts of the miners or the burghers, who sent complaints to the Diet.

Due to his prominent role in Falun’s economic and political administration in the 1710s and 1720s and the amount of sources he left behind, Swab’s voice is also prominent in this thesis. There is an attempt, however, to counterbalance his opinions with those of the people who opposed him. This is necessary partly in order to understand which cultural perceptions they had in common and the topics they disagreed about, particularly concerning economy.

Bertil Boethius’s research in the history of Swedish mines and metalworks during the early modern period is particularly relevant here because his focus was on the labourers of the mines and smelting huts of Bergslagen. He placed the miners’ actions in Falun in a wider context, showing that their petitions to the Commission in 1724 were in line with protests that they had staged in 1696 and in 1720. He also depicted their continuing acts of protest throughout the eighteenth century. Their strategies were outlined, as well as the responses to the protests received from authorities. Boethius’s research into the miners’

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9 Sten Lindroth describes the reforms in the 1710s and the ensuing protests in Lindroth (1955) vol. 1 pp. 358–367.
10 See Boethius (1951).
actions during the early eighteenth century is thorough but, as with Lindroth, the scope of his study means there are some generalities. With a closer reading of the sources relating to events that he briefly covers, I contribute to a greater understanding of this topic.

Eli Heckscher has written extensively about the various economic reforms enacted at the Great Copper Mine in the early eighteenth century. He has linked them to a kind of proletarianization of the miners, and to the termination of the traditional work practices of the \textit{bergsmännen}.\footnote{See Heckscher (1940) pp. 22–89.} Heckscher has provided documentation of this process occurring during the eighteenth century, but is less interested in how the actors involved understood it. Heckscher’s aim was to explain a process happening over a longer period. This still leaves some questions unanswered, such as what, exactly, the purposes of the economic reforms in 1716 were and what specific consequences they had.

A closer look at the discussions surrounding the reforms in 1716 can clear up what the economic and social aims of the reforms were, and a study of the Royal Commission in 1724 shows how the effects of them were understood and debated. This more detailed investigation of the process of the reforms is necessary in order to understand how they were received.

Finally, Birgitta Ericsson has studied the Royal Commission in 1724 in relation to its impact on the formation of the \textit{bergstad} Falun. Ericsson’s focus is on the political actions of the traders and shopkeepers who made up the burgher estate in Falun. The growing political awareness of the Falun burghers is depicted as happening concurrently with the growing influence of the burgher estate in the Swedish Diet in Stockholm. Ericsson acknowledges the many intersections between the burghers and the \textit{bergsmännen}, as well as some of the ways that the \textit{bergsmännen} intersected with the miners and the mining guards. However, when discussing the reason why the Commission started and its conclusion, her focus is clearly on the actions of the burghers as a distinctive group and how it affected them. This focus is not outright stated but, in her account, she identifies their actions as having driven the course of events.\footnote{See Ericsson (1970)} My investigation is set apart from Ericsson’s partly because the purpose and method are different, and partly because the burghers are not the only actors selected.

There are many possible approaches to researching the Great Copper Mine’s history and understanding the economic reforms implemented in the early eighteenth century. At the time of writing, an on-going research project aims to compare the activities at the Great Copper Mine with Røros in Norway by studying everyday work practices in these two Scandinavian copper towns, intertwining a micro and macro perspective. The project asks how life and work in these towns were affected by changes in the European copper trade...
during the eighteenth century. In particular, the heightened production of copper in Swansea during the eighteenth century is held up as a factor in the change to both Falun’s and Røros’s internal oeconomies.13

The Falun-Røros project uses a micro-historical approach, best exemplified by Ragnhild Hutchison’s study of how the trading family, the Cramers, facilitated the transport of Norwegian copper to the European marketplace.14 This thesis has similar aims as the Falun-Røros project, in particular because of the choice to highlight oeconomy, or hushållning, as an important aspect of early modern Scandinavian economic thoughts and practices.

To summarize, this thesis examines the events of the 1710s and 1720s more closely than previous research has done. It has the aim of placing the events of the reforms and the Commission at the Great Copper Mine in the cultural context of that time. I am looking for disagreements and for different points of view. I also look at how the value system of the household economy was expressed through good oeconomy, and how this played into the management of the Great Copper Mine. What differentiates this research from the previous histories is the attempt to find the rationale behind the developments taking place. That makes this an analysis of early modern economic culture as it was expressed through the discourse of the local court, and the commission enacted by the Diet.

1.4 Oeconomy as the topic to study

Oeconomy is my translation of the Swedish word hushållning. This could also literally be translated as ‘housekeeping’, but I have chosen not to use this word as it carries a strong association with domestic household chores. Although these chores were a part of hushållning, the term was also used to describe both domestic and national economic practices. It was a moral philosophy that recognized a certain set of social hierarchies as the only way to maintain social and societal stability during the early modern period.

I have chosen the translation of oeconomy because there is a precedent for this word being used in a similar way in English writings of that time. The historian Karen Harvey discusses how oeconomy was used and promoted in English advice literature during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Books like A Complete Body of husbandry from 1727 elevated oecon-

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omy as a science. Harvey reads this as an indication that descriptions of oeconomy were often aimed at a male readership, and presupposed that their private household management was relevant to a larger social sphere of society. She also describes how some of these books gave advice that extended beyond practical matters, such as into topics like leisure and wooing. They contained moral, spiritual discussions about the meaning of good oeconomy, using examples from the Bible as economic guidelines. These English books about oeconomy belonged to a similar genre as German and Swedish housefather-literature, which historians like Tore Frängsmyr and Leif Runefelt have read as ways to understand the Swedish notion of *hushållning*.

Although oeconomy could be described as the administration and the preservation of a household, the term was also applied to the economic policies of the kingdom, and economic mores and practices, in general, during the early modern period. The second chapter of this thesis deals with how the notions of oeconomy and household economy evolved, and how the term had scientific, moral, and religious implications. Anders Berch, the man who became the first Swedish professor of economics in 1741, defined the idea of ‘levels of oeconomy’ that existed in Sweden: the oeconomy of the divine household, the oeconomy of the state’s household, and the oeconomy of the private household. Oeconomy on the higher level of the kingdom—and the even higher one, of God—encompassed the smaller levels. The Godly oeconomy could be conceived as the outer shell of a nesting doll. When opened, a smaller, more compact oeconomy of the nation state existed. Inside that, in turn, was the smallest doll: the oeconomy of the individual household.

There may have been a conception of more levels of households depending on which organization the individual household was a part of; for instance, if it was a part of a large mining town or an ironworks. Oeconomy meant different practices and different power dynamics depending on the level it was being discussed on. When studying the economic discourse of a certain era and locality, it is necessary to define several things: how many levels of oeconomy the actors conceived of, what oeconomy could have meant for each one, and how these levels interacted.

The term mercantilism is not frequently used in this thesis. Mercantilism describes the set of economic theories and policies that were predominant in various Western European countries during the early modern period. I have

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15 Harvey (2012), Chapter 1.
17 See for example Göran Rydén’s description of the *hushållning* of Leufsta bruk during Charles de Geer’s ownership in the 1740s in Rydén (2015). See also Tore Frängsmyr’s article about the divine economy in Frängsmyr (1971), pp. 217–243, as well as Harvey (2012) Chapter 2, on the language of oeconomy.
18 This definition is quoted in Legnér (2004) pp. 87–88. See also Frängsmyr (1971) pp. 222–223; Liedman (1986) chapter 1
chosen to use the term oeconomy instead, because it is more closely associated with the everyday household economy as it was discussed by the actors of that time. I do not argue that mercantilism is an incorrect term to apply to many of the economic theories presented by the actors in this thesis, in particular arguments related to the expansion of the state’s regulation of production and manufacturing. However, depending on which area the study encompasses, mercantilism risks becoming a blanket term for various ideas and practices that were actually more varied and worth discussing on their own terms.

When Birgitta Ericsson writes about the establishment of a workhouse for girls in Falun, she mentions that this was in line with mercantilist ideas about the expansion of regulated manufacturing, but does not elaborate further.19 I have found that there was a local opposition to the idea of establishing such a workhouse both among the miners and in the Swedish Diet. This opposition was rooted in older norms about who should control and profit from women’s work in society. I wish to investigate this type of variation of opinions, and believe that the term oeconomy is helpful for doing so.

The Great Copper Mine as a way of studying oeconomy in the early eighteenth century

Is oeconomy a helpful concept to use in order to understand the economic discussions that took place at the Great Copper Mine in the 1710s and 1720s? The answer is that it is both helpful and problematic. When historians define oeconomy, or hushällning as noted earlier, certain assumptions are usually made. One is that oeconomy was conceptualized as the economy of the household, and that this household was a farmstead. Essentially, the practice of good oeconomy was the practice of successful farming. If this conceptualization of oeconomy is applied to the Great Copper Mine, there are some practical problems. The bergsmän could certainly be compared to farmers, whose harvest was copper. There were features of the society and work structures of Falun and its mine that separated it not only from large farmsteads that were described in economic literature of the period, however. Falun was also different from other Swedish towns. During the early seventeenth century, trade regulations were tightened. Some towns were defined uppstäder, meaning that they were only permitted to trade within the country, while towns permitted to trade with other countries were stapelstäder. Falun was mainly a site of production, and the status of its trade—and its traders—was uncertain.20

The unique position that Falun and the Great Copper Mine had held in Sweden during the seventeenth century meant that it was viewed as a place of

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20 For studies about economic literature of the early eighteenth century that was centered on agrarian households, see Frängsmyr (1971), Runefelt (2001), Harvey (2012), Hasselberg (2011).
enough importance to get attention from the state at a time of general economic strife in the country. The conditions of this place make it an interesting area to study because it brings to light how ideas and practices could differ during this period. The concept of oeconomy is highlighted because this idea, rooted in agrarian practices, is set against practical conditions that were very different. A study of the economic reforms that were enacted in the 1710s reveals the different ways that historical actors worked to save a region from such economic challenges as Great Copper Mine suffered during the eighteenth century. The fallout in 1724 shows how the population responded to reforms.21

The exceptional conditions at the Great Copper Mine made it a source for new economic thoughts, reforms, and protests. Because of this, the oeconomy of the Great Copper Mine and what that could mean for the development of the household economy in Sweden in general was subject to scrutiny. For these reasons, the Great Copper Mine in the 1710s and 1720s is a good case for investigating economic discourse during the early modern period. I aim to uncover the ideas and social mores relating to oeconomy, along with how they were visible in these reforms, as well as how they were contested. In order to do that, I use a micro-historical approach.

1.5 The method of microhistory

In this thesis, I study the arguments made by actors who were present in a period of crisis for the Great Copper Mine in order to determine the ways that oeconomy, on different levels, was described and argued about. Since there is a focus on two specific points in time in one town and a close reading of the sources, this could be called a micro study. This micro-historical approach is one of the things that differentiates this study from previous histories that concern the same series of events.

Micro studies have recently become a subject for debate for Swedish historians. There was a discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of the genre at the Swedish history conference in Stockholm in 2014.22 Three years later, the journal *Historisk tidsskrift* published an issue with microhistory as its theme.23 The question is what can be achieved by viewing history through a micro-historical lens.

The so-called cultural turn that happened during the 1970s and 1980s revitalized the field of microhistory, as historians placed a magnifying glass on

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22 This meeting was summarized by Kenneth Nyberg in *Historisk tidsskrift*, see Nyberg in Amirell (ed.) (2014) pp. 563–566.
23 See Eriksson & Fabiansson (ed.) 2017:3, Stockholm. See also Bruegel 2006; Peltonen 2001
isolated places, people and events; this contrasted the macro trends of social history that had previously dominated the field. Natalie Zemon Davis’ *The Return of Martin Guerre* and Karlo Ginzburg’s *The Cheese and the Worms* were highly influential in their focus on small towns, single individuals, and singular events, as they extrapolated on what they showed of a wider common culture. Robert Darnton’s *The Great Cat Massacre* has been acknowledged for using a grotesque event of animal cruelty in eighteenth century France to explain the historical context in which it occurred. Darton was able to contextualize this single event, and also tie it to the social tensions at work in French society that would eventually generate the ideas and events of French Revolution.

Zemon Davis and Ginzburg brought to the fore people committing acts that were contrary to the norms of their time. They explored what these cases could reveal about wider cultures and mentalities of each particular period. They discussed what the actions of a small number of people could mean in any given period, what kind of agency was possible in the sixteenth or eighteenth centuries, and how far it was possible for the actors to push against rules and norms. The histories presented in these books are the stories of agents, who were taking a part in creating the times they lived in at the same time as they are being shaped by them.

Alrette Farge’s work has been very influential to the cultural turn. She has been inspired by the history of mentalities, illuminating the everyday lives and points of view of the poorest population in eighteenth-century Paris. Emma Rothschild has more recently written in the tradition of this type of cultural history, entwining the progression of the British Empire and the Scottish Enlightenment with the lives of one family, their servants and slaves. Works like these look beyond established facts to try to uncover reality as the actors themselves perceived it at the time. This thesis has a similar aim, which pushes it into the realm of discourse study. It is necessary to get as close as possible to the perceptions held by the actors involved in a historical process in order to fully understand why they made the decisions that they made. Although it

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24 Described in Sewell (2005), pp. 1–21, pp. 22–80. William Sewell depicts this process using his own experiences as he went from having an objectivist outlook to seeing anthropological, cultural history as a necessary component of historical science.

25 See Ginzburg (1976) and Zemon Davis (1983). For other research that was influential in the “new microhistory” that was a part of the cultural turn, see E. P. Thompson’s *Whigs and Hunters* (1975), Natalie Zemon Davies’s *Culture and Society in Early Modern France* (1975), and also, Lawrence Stone’s article *The Return of the Narrative* (1980). Stone’s article is about the narrative as a rhetorical tool for historians within the context of microhistory.


27 See, for example, Farge (English translation, 1993)

might not be possibly to know fully the mentality of a historical figure, the way that he expressed himself and argued his cause shows the common perceptions that he shared—or did not share—with others. It is then possible to understand the ideas and social mores that might have influenced his actions.

Structural changes in society that occur on a macro level can also be observed on the micro level. The philosopher Michel de Certeau has been instrumental in conceptualizing how individuals in their everyday lives interacted with the structures that formed their culture and their society. This serves as a useful motivation as to why the micro level is as relevant to study as developments on the macro level. de Certeau uses the metaphor of the contrast in how one can observe people from a tall tower, compared to how one can observe them on the street level, to indicate the different ways that it is possible to study similar processes of history on the macro and the micro level.

On the micro level—the level of the individual—it is possible to observe actors using tactics to get around the rules and restrictions enacted by institutions, whose actions are defined as strategies. The tactics performed by the actors on the micro level might be inadvertent. They could be actions taken in order to survive or to experience small freedoms without conscious political intent. However, they constantly push at the boundaries set by society on the macro level. Because of these pushes occurring on the micro, or ‘ground level’, the boundaries for what is possible are never completely static. The actions by actors on the ground level send small ripples through the rest of their surroundings.29

In order to concretize this view, Göran Rydén uses the example of the Swedish traveller Samuel Schröder observing the city of London from a great height. This illustrates how eighteenth century observers tried to map out the world and at the same time acted within it on the ground level: the level of individuals.30 Karin Sennefelt has also applied de Certau to mid-eighteenth century Sweden in her study of how peasants, acting as representatives of their estate in the Diet gathered, held discussions and moved in Stockholm; they created spaces for themselves in the Swedish political sphere.31 Even in a society that valued a static, hierarchical social order, it is possible to observe people pushing, gently or harshly, against its boundaries. Sennefelt shows the different preconditions in Stockholm society that made it possible for the peasants to act together and present suggestions in the Diet.

By studying subjects as closely as she does, Sennefelt can show not only that they acted, but also how they acted. She reveals that the everyday actions and movements of the peasants were a prerequisite of the more deliberate actions they took in the Diet. This also becomes a way for her to show how the

peasants had formed a political culture in Stockholm, and how they were active rather than reactive. It is clear to me that the miners at the Great Copper Mine also had an understanding of their role in the mine’s oeconomy, and that they were active in trying to shape that role for themselves to improve their working conditions.

Structures change in a way that becomes observable over longer periods of time, but on the micro level, as argued by de Certeau, there are constant negotiations occurring. In this continuous movement, it is possible to understand how structures that can appear rigid are in fact changing. This is one advantage to studying history using a micro-historical method. Another is that the actions of people who were officially subordinate and disenfranchised in hierarchical, non-democratic societies become more visible on the ‘ground level’. As their actions are highlighted, their role in the creation of social structures becomes apparent. Many histories of the Great Copper Mine end up characterizing the miners, and to a certain extent the bergsmän and burghers, as disempowered and reactive in relation to the crown. A micro-historical approach can remedy this by creating a more complex picture of how much agency the subordinate and disempowered could have in early modern society.

1.6 Approaching the sources

For a documentation of the different changes in economic practice, there is already a vast historiography describing the economic changes that took place at the Great Copper Mine in the eighteenth century. My investigation concerns how the actors discussed these changes at the time. This qualitative investigation fits into what I have perceived as a set narrative concerning the Great Copper Mine’s economic development; this describes the dissolution of many old economic structures during this period. I wish to examine some of the events of this narrative more closely. There is also a historiography that claims that the culture of the household was so powerful during the period that it shaped practices, which is outlined in Chapter 2.

The idea that there were different ‘levels’ of oeconomy was a way of understanding how oeconomy was perceived during the early modern era. In order to understand the conflicts between different perceived levels and the way they related to the concept of oeconomy of the Great Copper Mine, it is necessary to outline what these different levels were thought to consist of in Falun, and where the boundaries of them were.

There were certain groups that are defined in the sources: bergsmän, burghers, miners, etc. The hierarchy of the household economy also allotted different levels of responsibility and power to people depending on which position they held within a household, whether they were householders, servants, or men or women. In reality, these different groupings frequently blended into one another. People could be grouped differently at different times, or belong
to several groups at once. In relation to this, the way actors framed themselves in court changed whenever their placement in the hierarchical order changed. They had a certain set of conditions to argue for their economic rights according to how they were placed in the hierarchical order of oeconomy as defined by the mining court, or by the representatives of the Diet at the Royal Commission.

They also continuously attempted to define their own group affiliations to their own advantage. Petitions are sources that reveal how bergsmän, miners and burghers attempted to position themselves in this way. The discussions that ensued at the Commission’s hearings show how these positions could be challenged and argued about. The Commission was partly a prolonged debate about the conditions that actors and groups could claim agency within and authority over the oeconomy of the Great Copper Mine. This debate also revealed how public oeconomy affected the oeconomy of private households, and whether the practice of private oeconomy was seen as relevant to the operation of public oeconomy.

Protocols, petitions and bills: the contents of the sources
The particular nature of the available sources from this period will be taken into account when devising a useful method in order to approach the material. There is a vast collection of source material available at the archive of the Great Copper Mine, and the archive of the Board of Mines. The material from the Royal Commission of 1724 is the main source I have chosen for studying the Great Copper Mine in the 1720s, because the initiation of the Commission could be seen as the ultimate reaction against Swab’s and the Board of Mines’ reforms from the period 1716–1720 culminating in the creation of the bergstad.

The protocols from the Board of Mines, the mining court and the Commission in 1724 are of interest because the different actors who partook in the conflicts were allowed to argue their cases in the arena of the court. The letters and petitions that are a part of the Commission’s extensive collection are also relevant to study because they reveal the arguments of people who were subordinate to the crown and to Bergslagen were able to present to the court. The protocols of the Commission’s hearings mainly contain discussions about the content of these letters and petitions.

The Commission’s documents also consist of bills for the mine’s various expenses, transcriptions of the mine’s historical records dating back to the Middle Ages, and investigative reports about the economic practices of the mine that were known collectively as memorial. I have chosen to focus on the combative petitions and answering memorial that investigated the petitions’ complaints, as well as the reciprocal discussions among the commissioners, the petitioners, and Swab that are in the Commission’s protocols. These are the documents in which different ideas about economic practices and norms
are the most visible and clearly articulated. I have used bills and other material gathered by the Commission to contextualize some of the subjects that were debated there, such as the workhouse for girls.

The Commission’s documents are collected in sex volumes of varying size. The latter volumes contain royal decrees and documents relating to the period after the commission’s conclusion. The largest volumes are volume one, two and three. Volume one of the Commission’s documents contains the protocols of the hearings, while an odd collection of petitions, memorial, rosters and bills are gathered in volume two. I also sometimes cite volume three of the Commission’s documents. Volume three contains cleaner transcriptions of some of the documents collected within volume two. In most cases, I have used volume two, because those are original, messy documents. They are written in different styles, and contain original signatures. They are closer to the events as they transpired. The documents of volume two are also collected thematically. For example, the different memorial related to the workhouse for girls are gathered together with the relevant bills and rosters connected to that establishment. The miners’ petitions are presented next to the replies sent by Swab. From volume two, I have used the themes that the documents are collected in as a guide for how to divide this investigation into different chapters.

Volume one and volume two have about a thousand pages each. However, the pages in volume two are numbered according to each broadsheet rather than each page, making it in actuality twice as long as volume one. I have followed this method of numbering the pages when referencing the Commission in the citations.

1.7 Terminology and translations

Here, I present a brief discussion about the translation choices made in this thesis. As well as explaining these decisions, I will elaborate on how the different terms and categorizations can be interpreted. One of the themes of this thesis is that social categorizations were constantly changing. What it meant to be a bergsman or a miner was shifting during the 1710s and 1720s, and this change was observed and commented on by the actors themselves. The groups and terms that are outlined here were in flux. It is still necessary to attempt to define broadly what they would have meant, and how previous historians have defined them, so that a deconstruction can be possible.

The miners here are known as gruvdrängar in Swedish. The word drängar placed them in a similar social category to the agrarian drängar; these were servants in the households and farmhands on farmsteads and on estates. These
servants were a part of a social category of servants known in Sweden as legohjon—a distinct group that was subordinate to the householders they served.\(^{32}\)

The *gruvdrängar* are translated to miners rather than servants, because the word miner highlights the nature of their work. Although they might have been defined as *drängar* at certain times, they were also different from agrarian servants. They performed different types of work in different working conditions. Their status was also changing during the short period that this study spans, and understanding this change is part of this thesis. Their work within the mine remained the same, although their work at the smelting huts and other areas of copper extraction and refining might have changed. Calling them something that relates to their work brings attention to that continuity, and is the most stable way to categorize them.

‘Mine Inspector’ is the translation for the title *bergmästare*, which is used by the historian Svante Lindqvist in his outline of the administrative structure of the Board of Mines.\(^{33}\) According to Lindqvist, Anders Swab would have been a new type of official, rising in the ranks of the Board of Mines during the 1710s and early 1720s. During the seventeenth century, high-ranking members of the Board were of noble birth and would have been appointed to their seats by the monarch. In the first decades of the eighteenth century, this changed. Although he officially received his appointments from the crown, Swab was a part of a new type of board members who rose through the ranks and accumulated experiences over many years, elected, and promoted through a more meritocratic system.\(^{34}\) He was a *bergmästare* in the *bergslag* of the Great Copper Mine, the third of eleven *bergmästare*-districts in the geographical region of *Bergslagen*.\(^{35}\) Swab was originally not a member of the Swedish nobility, although he acquired a noble title in 1719.\(^{36}\) Mine Inspector is used with reference to the *bergmästare* Anders Swab because it accurately defines

\(^{32}\) See Harnesk (1990), pp. 25–30 for a definition of *legohjon*, as well as a discussion of whether they could be seen as a separate social class or not.


\(^{34}\) Ibid, pp. 102–103.

\(^{35}\) Almquist (1909) p. 133, p. 151. The eleven would become twelve later in the eighteenth century.

\(^{36}\) Anders Swab’s younger half-brother Anton Swab also received a noble title, taking the name “von Swab”. Anders Swab did not change his name. Their different approaches to their noble status might have been a consequence of the differences in the nature of their work and in the scale of their ambitions. Anton von Swab was active at the Board of Mines and at the Royal Science Academy, and went on many travels abroad. After finishing his education, Anders Swab spent the rest of his life dedicated to the management of the mine in Falun. He moved to Stockholm to take a permanent post at the Board of Mines in 1730, but died within half a year of the move. See *Anders Swab*, https://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/artikel/34743, *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* (article by Margareta Lagerman), Retrieved: 2018-08-15. See also *Anton von Swab*, https://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/artikel/34744, *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* (article by Hjalmar Fors), Retrieved: 2018-08-15.
what his work entailed. A title that draws attention to the practical nature of the work is fitting in Swab’s case.

After the Board of Mines’ creation in the early seventeenth century, the Mine Inspector had deputy bailiffs and overseers who investigated the daily work and copper output of the mine. His closest overseers were known as geschworner, meaning ‘the sworn’ in German; they represented one of the many ways that German mining towns’ administrations influenced Swedish mining during the Great Copper Mine’s period of prominence. The mining administration also appointed bergsfogdar to be present at the mine in order to evaluate the work the. In the thesis, these are translated as ‘bailiffs’.

Falun and the Great Copper Mine are often differentiated in this thesis. It is important to note the difference between these two sites, as there was a tension between the town’s burghers and the people who worked exclusively with mining. The town and mine had separate parishes, and separate administrations until 1720. When the Great Copper Mine and the town’s administrations were combined into one in 1720, this entity is referred to as the bergstad.

Although I have not translated the term bergsman (bergsmän in plural), it is useful to explain what being a bergsman meant during the early modern period. This group also existed in Norway. It had originated in medieval German mining towns. In Sweden, the bergsmän worked with the mining and smelting of copper, iron, and silver. They could belong to the so-called bergsrälse. The Swedish Diet was divided into four estates: the nobility, the clergy, the burghers and the peasants. According to this system, the bergsmän were often placed in the peasant estate, or sometimes the burgher estate if they also practiced trade. However, the Swedish word frälsen, ‘liberated’ or ‘free’, is associated with the noble estate, indicating that they were spared the taxation of the other estates. Belonging to the bergsrälsen meant that, unlike the peasants, the bergsmän were not taxed for their land. However, they were taxed for the metals they produced.37 The bergsmän were further distinguished from the other estates because they acted politically as a group apart the four estates during the late Middle Ages. This led to them to sometimes being perceived as a fifth estate.38 It is impossible to find an international equivalent to the bergsmän that was contemporary to the early eighteenth century, making it difficult to translate the term.39

Together, the bergsmän formed a conglomeration known as Bergslagen. Bergslagen indicated the geographical area where metals were mined and processed, in the areas of central and eastern Sweden. It also signified the cooperation of the bergsmän who were responsible for this work.

38 Söderberg (1932), p. 103.
Bergslagen as a conglomerate could refer to all forms of mining and metalworks in the region. However, these different sites of production also had their own local bergslag, parts of the larger whole. In this thesis, Bergslagen mainly refers to the unified group of bergsmän belonging to the local bergslag of the Great Copper Mine. This bergslag represented the Great Copper Mine in Falun, and the nearby town of Avesta, where copper was minted and refined. The bergslag consisted of a selected group of 75 bergsmän, and was seen to represent the entire enterprise. In places, Bergslagen is shown to work separately from the bergsmän in this text. This is because the Bergslag of the Great Copper Mine consisted of elected representatives of the pairs. Bergsmän refers to all of the people belonging to this group. There is a differentiation between the bergsmän who operated their own shares, and Bergslagen as a collective.

How did one become a bergsman? At the Great Copper Mine, there was an idea that to be a bergsman was to own a share in the mine, and to work that share. In that way, the bergsmän could be defined as shareholders in the mine, but with that, there is a risk of conveying a modern notion of ownership that did not exist during the early modern period. It is more accurate to call them share-workers. To own a share meant to work a share as a matter of duty, serving the common welfare of the corporation that was the Great Copper Mine. The bergsmän provided workers and tools for mining and smelting. They also nominally supervised and documented the work, though sometime during the late seventeenth century, the so-called mining guards had largely overtaken this role. They held the ultimate responsibility for the work performed and the ore extracted. In many cases they were also responsible for refining the ore through a long and gruelling smelting-process in nearby smelting huts. After this, the ore was transported to the town of Avesta where it was further refined and either minted or exported to Stockholm. From Stockholm, the ore was transported to Amsterdam, the most prominent centre for trade in Europe during the seventeenth century.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the bergsmän could be compared to landowning farmers with certain privileges, because their work at the smelting huts demanded that they own land, and because they belonged to the peasant estate. At the Great Copper Mine, this ownership gave the bergsmän political rights within the administration of the town, something that was evidenced by the appointment of six officials who had seats in the mining court

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40 Almquist (1909). P. 59
41 Tom Söderberg discusses how the bergsmän appeared to have changed from being independent owners to nyjande, “users” of their holdings, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in Söderberg (1932), p. 81.
42 The many rounds of smelting and roasting are recounted in detail by Sten Lindroth in Linroth vol. 2 (1955), pp. 18–44.
during the seventeenth century. These men were appointed to keep order over the work of the bergsmän, and they were also elected by the bergsmän. The bergsmän in Falun might have held more political influence than bergsmän connected to the ironworks. This was because the local owners of those works in Bergslagen governed the ironworks during this period. The Copper Mine had no such figures for the bergsmän to pay tribute to, which meant that they had greater opportunities to enrich themselves on the takings of the mine. However, the bergsmän in Falun had to contend with the strong regulating presence of the Board of Mines.

The responsibilities and status of the bergsmän in the entire country changed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, both in iron- and copper-making towns. People observed and discussed this change during the short period covered in this study. How the practical changes for the bergsmän were described as they were happening is a part of this investigation. However, traditional bergsmän were meant to oversee and take part in every step of the process of bringing out the copper ore, from its mining to its refinement. This type of practice was typical of the pre-industrial era; the workers were not required to specialize in one task, and the owners oversaw all aspects of the work performed at their allotted share. The smelting hut was a household-like structure, similar to a farmstead where the farmer kept servants in his employ and worked with them at the same place where he had his home. The bergsmän were not necessarily expected to do the heavy work themselves, but they hired their own work teams who answered to them. They acted as managers and overseers.

1.8 Disposition of the thesis

This thesis is divided into ten chapters, including this initial introductory section. I have chosen to divide the thesis partially by theme while also being guided by chronology. Chapter 1 has presented these initial research backgrounds regarding my sources, methods, and why I have made my translation choices. Chapter 2 continues the discussion about oeconomy provided here, adding additional historiographical background as to why it is a significant topic to study in the early modern period. There is a focus on the concepts of hierarchy and the Holy Household that I use in this thesis. Chapter 3 provides a deeper historiography into the Great Copper Mine, establishing it as an important site of conflict and economic change. Chapter 4

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45 Lindroth (1955), pp. 157–158. See also Boethius (1951), p. 56.
46 This process has been studied by Maria Sjöberg and Anders Florén in iron making, See Sjöberg (1993), Florén (1995).
47 Heckscher, regarding them not working themselves, (1940), p. 39. See also Sjöberg (1993) and Boethius (1951) who both describe how bergsmän also worked like this in iron-making societies.
is empirical, but focuses primarily on the significance of the 1716 reforms, how they set the stage for future changes that are key to this investigation. Although these chapters are primarily historiographical, they provide background for my empirical chapters that follow. Chapters 5 through 9 present my key findings from the sources I described here. The final chapter presents my conclusions and summarizes this work.
CHAPTER 2.
Overview of oeconomy in the Age of Liberty

2.1 Introducing meaning in the early modern discourse

In this chapter, I provide a historiography of oeconomy and household economy, as well as other terms that historians have used to denote similar expressions. The aim is to understand the ideological frameworks that the actors in question were operating under and, from this, comprehend how they structured their society. In order to do so, it is important first to distinguish what that word oeconomy could mean according to early modern discourse. Then, how it and similar terms have been used in the historiography needs to be explored as a way of mapping out historical change.

God’s household

To begin with, what the Holy Household meant in early modern societies, and how it was relevant to economic practices, is important to establish. The envisioning of the nation state as a type of household also had practical consequences for the way politics, religion, and science were practiced. Here, I recount some of the ways historians have discussed household economy.

The Swedish Lutheran Church preached that human society was structured like a household. The view of the world as a divine household was supported by the Bible, and given a further prominence in the section of the Lutheran catechism known as the hustavla.¹ This idea’s earliest known inspiration came from Aristotle’s writings. The word economy was derived from the Greek word oikos, meaning household. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, hushållning and oeconomia or oeconomie could be interchangeable in Swedish.²

² Frängsmyr (1971) p. 218. See also RA ÅK 408 handlingar vol. 3, pp. 22–23 where the word hushållning is used on one page and the word oeconomie is used on another. Both refer to the purpose of the Royal Commission to investigate the hushållning at the Great Copper Mine.
The conception of the house and the hierarchy within it as society’s most fundamental structure was a durable. This view was not unique to Swedish Lutheranism. It had a lot in common with similar holistic views about hierarchy and morality as integral to economic practices in other countries during the early modern period, notably in Austria, the German lands, France, and England. The historian Otto Brunner has been influential in defining early modern social and working order of the Holy Household as the ganzé häus—the ‘great house’—by studying the rules and rituals of feuds between noble families in medieval Austria. With his notion of the ‘great house’, Brunner argued that medieval European nations were not governed through a political sphere with strong institutional power that could be separated from the private sphere. Instead, he described medieval Austrian society as comprised of a network of houses ruled by lords who guarded their own property through a sense of honour and householder obligation. Brunner’s work has heavily influenced the understanding of how medieval societies operated.

The concept of the ‘great house’ also colours early modern historians’ understanding of European household ideology in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For instance, the historian Marion Gray has identified the economy functioning as a household as a predominant ideal in seventeenth-century Europe. The hierarchical interdependence between householders and subordinates was a feature of this economic model. Gray describes this ideal as consisting of that the economy of the household should be reproductive rather than accumulative, and that commerce had no role. Overall, the art of practicing household economy was deferred to those who owned land. Their task was to manage that land, while maintaining hierarchical order within their households. This order meant that regulations for how to treat servants, the power relations between women and men, as well as moral virtue, were synonymous with the practice of good economics. Brunner’s and Gray’s studies show how such concepts might have originated in central Europe, and how they were rooted in feudalism. The dissolution of the household-based economy was tied as much to the centralization of nation states as it was to the advent of industrialization.

What is of interest here is how slow this development was, how durable feudal notions of oeconomy were well into the eighteenth century, and how they could be adapted and changed to fit more modern conditions. The historian Sara Maza has observed something similar in France prior to the French Revolution of 1789. She has highlighted a traditional household culture in

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3 A description of and discussion about the Lutheran hustavla is given by Hilding Pleijel in Pleijel (1970). Tore Frängsmyr and Leif Runefelt also discuss this heritage, as well as the connection to Aristotelian ideals. See Frängsmyr (1971), pp. 224–228, and Runefelt (2001), p. 93, p. 122. Martin Luther and the ‘Swedish Luther’ Olaus Petri’s efforts to promote marriage and forming a household using religious arguments are outlined by Kenneth Johansson in Österberg (ed.) (1997), pp. 31–44, and by Kekke Stadin in (Stadin), 2004, pp. 17–21.


France during the revolutionary period that did not differentiate between private welfare and common welfare. Proponents of this traditional culture used the idea of the bourgeoisie—and of capitalism—to denote the ‘other’ in society and to define themselves in contrast. Capitalism did not exist as an ideal during the early modern period. According to Maza, this concept was merely a straw-man accusation in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century political discourse. People used it to depict enemies in a negative light; it is less helpful for an understanding of how actors perceived their own actions. Maza’s book questions a historiographical narrative that has emerged about the causes of the French Revolution: that it was created and led by a liberal-minded bourgeois middle class. Instead, Maza emphasizes how many of the revolutionaries defended a more traditional social order with medieval roots, in continuity with Brunner’s ‘great house’.

With the notion of household economy being so durable, the question is how exactly it could adapt and evolve. How was this concept created and recreated, and could it be subverted? The British historian Susan Amussen has been particularly influential within the field of gender history and the history of household economy in early modern England. She ties the social structures of early modern villages to an ideology of the family as the pinnacle of social order. Like Brunner, she has studied household manuals and conduct books. However, she also connects the pre-eminence of this family-oriented ideology in the English seventeenth and eighteenth century to England’s rapid population growth and the ensuing economic and political turmoil during that period. Crises and turmoil fuelled the growth of a literature that stressed the importance of family for stability and order. Amussen also draws structural comparisons between the economic practices of families in small villages and the way political writing during the seventeenth century described the state.

Reading Maza, Gray, and Amussen reveals that there were ways of conceptualizing and structuring society in France, the German lands, and England that were similar to Anders Berch’s description of oeconomia on different levels in Sweden. The idea about the ‘great house’ can quite easily be used understand what set of ideas governed economic decisions in early modern Swedish society. Sweden had close ties to the cultural and intellectual traditions of the German-speaking lands during that time. The administrative structures of the Great Copper Mine were directly inspired by the structures of German towns like Goslar in Saxony. Swedes continued to take inspiration from similar German towns well into the eighteenth century. A class of bergsmän had also existed in Germany during the late middle ages. By the eighteenth century, however, they had

long disappeared. The fact that this status and its accompanying cooperative management of labour continued to exist in Sweden into the nineteenth century shows how feudal structures could be retained, as long as they adapted and changed with shifting conditions. This thesis is very much a study of how traditions and norms that were several hundred years old could co-exist with new trends and developments, including how old ideas both shaped and were shaped by new circumstances. The feudal ideals of the Holy Household were not outdated and irrelevant in the eighteenth-century centralized state. These old notions still shaped the process towards centralization, although that might appear contradictory.

One way that an old notion of oeconomy shaped the new state was in how it was adapted into the sciences of economics and of botany during the eighteenth century. When economic science evolved from the concept of household oeconomy in Sweden, it was still rooted in agrarian practices and philosophies. The historian Tore Frängsmyr has looked at the evolution of oeconomy into a science, using material issued from the Royal Science Academy as a source to reveal how the Swedish intelligentsia discussed it. He shows how they formulated oeconomy as the science that connected theology to natural law. Sweden in the early eighteenth century was a country with a scientific and religious culture characterized by utility. Utility was the driving force for the development of scientific institutions at that time. The right utilization of God’s natural resources was essential to both the science of botany and the science of oeconomy. Natural sciences served the purpose of understanding nature in order that humans could efficiently utilize it. Scientists during the eighteenth century discussed nature, as created by God, in order to be exploited in the right way by man; the right kind of exploitation was good oeconomy.

Olof Rudbeck’s theory that Sweden was the site of Atlantis took this idea of nature as ordained by God to a different level, elevating Sweden as a uniquely blessed country. Rudbeck had a strong influence on the development of the sciences in Sweden in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In a less extreme form, his theories were echoed in the discussions about oeconomy held by scientists like Anders Berch and. This view of nature as existing for man’s use was connected to the theological aspect of oeconomy, since nature was God’s creation. Not only had God created the natural

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11 Rudbeck’s school of thought was still influential in Uppsala when the future Mine Inspector Anders Swab studied at the university there, and he must certainly would have had an awareness of it. See the introduction and biography of Olof Naucler in reprint of his dissertation from 1941, describing his connections with Rudbeck and Swab, in Naucler (1702), translated by Engelbert Nordenstam (1941), Introduction.
environment, he had also appointed humans to be the guardians and administrators of that environment. Oeconomy was not only a matter of survival: it was a sacred duty. It was the preservation and utilization of a property that was ordained to man by a higher power.\textsuperscript{12}

The historian of ideas Leif Runefelt draws a link between oeconomy and the early modern culture of utility, with its conceptions of morality.\textsuperscript{13} For householders it was both a natural law and a Christian duty to take responsibility for the household under their care. Religious views were also naturally integrated with scientific ones. They revealed that a shared economic discourse between the ruling elite and the lower estates existed in early modern society that was closely connected to the travails of everyday life. The spiritual, the moral and the everyday were integrated in the household economy.\textsuperscript{14}

The religious origins of the economic theories of the eighteenth century meant that the practice of proper oeconomy was laced with moral implications. Runefelt sees continuity between this and the seventeenth-century conception of a moral economy that dictated not what humans were but what they ought to be. Runefelt describes utility as having been the way to express virtue. As an example, this view stressed the importance of practicing economic frugality, defining luxury consumption and the use of foreign goods as being both morally lax on a personal level, as well as crippling the nation’s economy. On the other hand, consumption in accordance with one’s position in society, according to the estate to which one belonged, was appropriate. Consumption was an economic practice with the purpose of upholding a stable hierarchical order on society.\textsuperscript{15}

There was also a religious argument for maintaining the hierarchy of the Holy Household. God was the highest ruler according to this hierarchical model. The clergy preached tenets of good oeconomy to the public at different times in history. The church historian Hilding Pleijel has studied the way that the order of oeconomia was depicted in the hustavla. The hustavla described society as consisting of three different fields: the field of politics, the field of economics, and the spiritual field. Within each of these, one group was subordinate to another. An estate could be superior within one field and subordinate within another. For example, within the spiritual field, the clergy were superior. Within the field of politics, the landowning nobility were dominant. In all fields, utility was emphasized, since this order meant that everyone had an allotted place and function in society.\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Tore Frängsmyr describes Carl Linneaus’s and Johan Fredrik Kryger’s philosophies as well as Anders Berch’s in this way in Frängsmyr (1971), pp. 224–238.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Runefelt (2001), in particular Chapter 4.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Runefelt (2005), p. 48, Frängsmyr (1971).
\item \textsuperscript{16} Pleijel (1970).
\end{itemize}
There is continuity between this Lutheran notion of utility and the Swedish academic discussions about utility during the eighteenth century. As the name implies, the hustavla presented society as a household, with each field governed by particular householders; women, children and servants were subordinate within the household in every estate, just as in the individual households. According to Pleijel, the doctrine of the hustavla would have reached a wide audience when it was preached from the pulpit during the early modern period.17

One can question what this frequent preaching meant. The question is relevant to this thesis, which deals with an on-going discussion about matters pertaining to oeconomy between people on different levels of hierarchy. Some historians have raised the question regarding the degree of acceptance amongst the peasant estate of the Holy Household at different points in time. Regarding the strength of the hustavla as a normative document, the historian Daniel Lindmark has argued that it was not consistently dominant in Swedish political and economic discourse. It was not continuously preached from the pulpit during the early modern period. It had a renaissance in the last three decades of the 1700s, but was not popular at the beginning of that century.18 Perhaps it was not then preached in Falun in the period that this study covers: the 1710s and 1720s.

It is also worth asking whether the concept of the Holy Household was popularly recognized even if it was preached, or if the lower estates—as well as people who did not belong to any estate, such as farmhands, maids, and miners—had different conceptions of what oeconomy entailed.19 While it is true that there could be continuities of thought throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these would have persisted at the same time as Sweden underwent periods of economic and military upheaval. These also occurred in Falun, where the economy was negatively affected by the outcome of the Great Northern War (1700–1721). The administrative structure there also changed concurrently with the fall of absolutism in Sweden.

To conclude, scientists and philosophers began to formulate a science of oeconomy during a period when preaching the doctrine of the hustavla might have become less popular to present in church. Falun and the Great Copper Mine was an economic unit during this time; it was a bergstad that had its own form of oeconomy. The economic upheavals that happened there, and the ideologically tinted discussions that followed, can be studied as an example of how oeconomy shaped and was shaped by discourse during this period.

17 Ibid.
18 Lindmark (1995), p. 81. See also Österberg (1992) and Aronsson (1993) pp. 11–42, who argue that peasants frequently opposed the normative prescriptions imposed from above.
19 This is one of the starting points for Kekke Stadin in her book Stånd och Genus I stormaktstidens Sverige about gender hierarchies in different estates in Sweden during the seventeenth century. She discusses the norms of the period and which estates they can be said to have applied to. See Stadin (2004).
Falun and the Great Copper Mine are illustrative of how oeconomy was evolving and changing during this period, as well as how many continuities of thought and practice remained. A key aspect to understanding how oeconomy functioned during this time is how groups on different hierarchical levels interpreted, negotiated, and discussed it. This is particularly crucial when making changes in economic policy. Oeconomy as an ideal—or an ideology—must not be viewed as rigid and all encompassing. For this reason, my focus is on how oeconomy was discussed, how it could be understood, and how policies were formulated through interactions between people on different levels of social hierarchy. The purpose is to subvert the notion that oeconomy was ordered, static, and dictated by the elite.

The household and oeconomy: Ideals and practices

Oeconomy was a form of economy that was organized according to a certain set of moral and religious ideals. The study of the household as a societal model risks taking the ideals expressed in household manuals and early modern economic texts at face value, fitting every type of practice into that framework. As mentioned, one of the ideals of a household economy was that the order of the household should be a static, hierarchical structure. How much freedom did actors have within its seemingly rigid framework? By looking for what forms of agency people on different hierarchical levels could have, I can see how this framework could accommodate different perspectives and priorities. A fundamental assumption for this thesis is that both the establishment and continued performance of different social hierarchies were necessary for the practice of oeconomy. For this system to be as holistic, as contemporary economists like Anders Berch claimed, it would have to be visible and acknowledged by all members of society, including those who were subordinated in these hierarchies.

Several historians have looked at how and in which ways the agency of actors shaped the ideology of the household economy through everyday practices. For example, Göran Rydén has made the word *hushällning* the object of his investigation because he believes this places a focus on the continued creation and re-creation of the household. He looks at how the practice of oeconomy influenced and was influenced by eighteenth-century economic science.20 Karin Hassan Jansson has brought the continued negotiation between different levels of households to the forefront. When studying criminal court

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cases, she investigates what she has identified as the ‘language’ of the household, which was used in order to define what was considered normal in contrast to the abnormal. The abnormalities she looks at are crimes, specifically rapes committed within households. Hassan Jansson shows that when a maid-servant was accusing her master of rape the language she used was full of household tropes. She would paint him as tyrannical and herself as obedient when fulfilling the tasks and the role expected of her within the household. By studying this use of household-related language, Hassan Jansson identifies a type of ‘household culture’ as being continually created and enacted in the arena of the courtroom. She also reveals how this culture changed and eroded during the course of the eighteenth century. Rydén and Hassan Jansson have both studied how the household was made and remade by interactions between members on different levels of status within the household, and negotiated between different levels of households in society at large.

A focus on performativity opens up the possibility for cultural shifts to happen, changing old norms and ideals. Joachim Eibach has presented the notion of the *das offene haus* or ‘the open house’ in the early modern German lands. There, the house became a performing space for household activities. People formed the borders of their own houses socially in their interactions with members of other households. Eibach characterizes the creation of a household as a continuous social process; it was made, remade, and affirmed through constant interactions with the outside world. It gained its societal meaning through these interactions. Eibach has described this as ‘doing house’. The lack of privacy during the early modern period meant that domestic economic practices were highly visible and discussed by the neighbourhood, which helped cement the idea that oeconomy tied wider society together with family life and home.

Eibach also shows how the gradual dissolution of the household-based economy happened concurrently with a greater emphasis on the house as a closed-off space during the eighteenth century, as opposed to *das offene haus* in previous centuries. By studying the evolution of the architecture of homes, Eibach has shown how the home gradually became a more private sphere. He ties this change to the emergence of an urban middle class. If ‘doing house’ was not kept up, if it changed, or had unintended consequences, perceptions of work and space could also change with it. Eibach sees the perceived need for the performance of ‘doing house’ during the early modern period as evidence of how widespread the idea of the household must have been. The closing off of private households during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries meant that household culture was losing influence in society.

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22 See Eibach (2011) and (2014).

23 Ibid.
‘Household culture’ and ‘doing house’ express something similar to what this thesis explores: the discursive practice of household economy in different arenas and on different levels of society during the early modern period. Oeconomy was an economic practice and a way of perceiving that practice. Within oeconomy, the economic duties of each member of the household were in accordance with their status within the household. Their interactions with other members of said household and interactions with other households were also tied to their status. In order to understand how widely this perception of oeconomy was held, it is not enough to look at normative texts. It is also necessary to study how oeconomy was enacted and discussed in everyday life.24

The boundaries of the household being studied need to be identified and located. The private sphere of oeconomy is a simple enough unit to imagine, although recent research has begun to question if the normative agrarian household, which manuals about oeconomy depicted, was actually as common in early modern society as has been presumed.25 However, oeconomy was also a matter of administering the large, unwieldy nation state. This all leads to the following questions: how it was possible to ‘do’ oeconomy in a place like the Great Copper Mine in Falun? What duties did this entail and what happened when people failed those duties? For the purpose of understanding oeconomy in that setting, it is relevant to consider the particular economic preconditions of the mining town.

2.2 The oeconomy of Swedish ironworks

The oeconomy of the Swedish ironworks serves as a useful comparison to the oeconomy of the Great Copper Mine. The ironworks were sites of metal extraction, refinement, and manufacturing. During the eighteenth century, the economists and politicians conceptualized them as large economic spheres practicing a form of oeconomy particular to the demands of that type of production. The state purposefully created these spheres through economic policies that burdened the surrounding agrarian households. In turn, these households were pulled into the spheres’ orbits. This sphere of oeconomy, the ‘oeconomy of the ironworks’, was created in order to support metal production during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when iron and copper were the Swedish kingdom’s most successful wares to export.

Per-Arne Karlsson has studied the oeconomy of metal production in Sweden during the mid-eighteenth century. He looks at the period from the 1730s to 1770s, but also compares the oeconomy of this period to Swedish economic policies during the seventeenth century. He has given the oeconomy of the

metalworks in northwestern Sweden the name bergslagshushållning or ‘the oeconomy of Bergslagen.’ This oeconomy signified the Board of Mines’ policies regarding the self-sustenance of the mines and metalworks located in the whole region of Bergslagen during the seventeenth century. According to the policies dictated by this oeconomy, areas of land surrounding metalworks and forgers in the region of Bergslagen would be utilized with the purpose of supporting the metalworks. The peasants who worked these lands provided set shares of their grain to the metalworks’ upkeep. Wood from the surrounding forests were used for the same purpose. The oeconomy of Bergslagen meant that all types of activity found within the region of Sweden where Bergslagen was located should be devoted to the production of metals. The economic activities in other regions, meanwhile, were centred on agriculture.26

The implementation of this type of regulation, which Karlsson discusses, has also been noted by other economic historians. Göran Rydén’s research into the oeconomy of the ironworks of Leufsta bruk has been mentioned. Lars Magnusson has identified the policy of dividing and specializing in different regions as a hallmark of Swedish mercantilism during the early modern period. Maria Sjöberg has also observed that this specialization was intensifying in Bergslagen as the eighteenth century progressed.27

Karlsson differentiates between the oeconomy of Bergslagen and the ‘oeconomy of the ironworks’, brukshushållning. The oeconomy of the ironworks refers to the specific restrictions that the state placed on the works’ owners’ trade with pig iron from the 1730s onward. The reasoning behind this restrictive policy was that the expansion of the trade would have motivated the owners of the works to produce more pig iron. The lowered prices of such an expanded production would also have created a heightened demand to increase the production rate; the costs would eventually outweigh the rewards.28

Within early modern oeconomy, moderation and self-sustenance were certainly more than lofty moral ideals. They were the foundations of an economic analysis drawn from a perceived knowledge of which members of society possessed perspective and foresight, and which did not. The restrictive policies implemented by the state were necessary in order to check undisciplined economic practices of traders and owners of ironworks. In economic debates of this period, the wide, rational perspective held by agents on the level of the state was frequently compared to the self-interested, wasteful actions of greedy entrepreneurs. The tradesman who acted only to enrich himself was a common negative stereotype of this period. For instance, it has been noted that the notion of the self-interested capitalist existed as a negative caricature long before he existed as an economic ideal.29 In regulating the ironworks, the state

was acting according to a vision for oeconomy on a national level. The state was the keeper of order, a necessary regulating head that counterbalanced the different interests and forces within its borders.

The oeconomy of ironworks refers not only to a local centring of all activity on the production of metals, but also the heavy regulation of the trade of these metals from the 1730s onward. The Swedish government regulated this oeconomy heavily, according to the perception that the ironworks constituted a part of, and existed in service of, a national oeconomy. The enrichment of the whole nation was the goal of these ironworks. The enrichment of individual owners and traders was seen as detrimental to that goal and was thus discouraged.

The oeconomy of the ironworks was upheld through the use of a type of ‘household ideology’ of duty and reciprocity that bound local peasants to supply the works with grain and fuel. This household ideology that he identifies is similar to the type that historians like Marion Gray, Leif Runefelt and Tore Frängsmyr have studied using normative sources. Karlsson also calls it a type of ‘patriarchalism’ or ‘paternalism’. He defines this ideology as a rigid manifestation of hierarchy in which the person who could have the status of household held absolute power and found it difficult to negotiate with his subordinates. In this power dynamic, subordinates had a right to support themselves, while householders had the right to expect obedience from them. Work was divided along hierarchical lines, according to the skillsets each worker possessed. In this ideological framework, people were encouraged to stay within their sphere of work. This ideology discouraged the flexible work patterns of smaller agrarian households. Karlsson argues that peasants near the ironworks identified themselves as subordinate to the owners of the ironworks, meaning that they identified the works as household-like structures. Their petitions and pleas show that they acted in accordance with it.

Karlsson characterizes household ideology as a way of upholding a hierarchical system in which the owners of the ironworks had the role of householders, while the peasants were their household subordinates within the sphere of the ironworks. This is significant since Karlsson, by outlining this hierarchy, identifies the ironworks as types of households that existed on a level between the public household and the private household manned by a married couple. It made sense for ironworks to function as village-households and for the economic administration of them to be termed oeconomy.

This seemingly rigid household ideology changed in function in the mid-eighteenth century. In the 1750s and 1760s, peasants who were a part of the oeconomy of the ironworks were able to protest the heavy taxation laid on

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them by the owners of said works. This was not a result of a new ideology, but of a change in the interpretive prerogative. Instead of upholding oeconomy according to the owners, oeconomy according to the peasants gained headway. When the peasants gained a stronger voice and were able to get support in the Diet for their causes, the owners and administrators of the ironworks also eventually softened in their stance, modifying their views. This change in the practical function of household ideology led to a change in the ideology.\(^{34}\)

Karlsson’s observations are important to this thesis. He not only discusses Swedish metal production as its own level of oeconomy, but he also highlights how interactions between householders and subordinates both enacted and subverted it. He points to how men who were householders on a private level could become subordinates in the sphere of a larger household. These different roles on different levels were evidently difficult to balance. Peasant householders had the responsibility to supervise their own oeconomy while obediently providing for a larger one. The peasants who were in a subordinate position could tactically use their subordination to further their own ends by appealing to the crown for aid. They could also use their status as householders to further their cause since they could argue that they had befitting responsibilities to fulfil. This kind of contrast in status within different spheres of oeconomy is also key to interpreting the actions of the actors who petitioned the Diet to complain about the administration of the Great Copper Mine in 1724.

2.3 Oeconomy, duty, and hierarchy in discourse

One conception of oeconomy, according to early modern religious doctrines and Swedish scientists, was that there were households in different levels in society and there were hierarchies within the households. The hierarchical relationship within households was based on the idea that a sense of familial trust and care should exist between masters and subordinates. This sense of mutual obligation was essential to a functioning oeconomy. In this section, I discuss the tactics of groups who were in subordinate positions and how they could use that fact to further their own ends, as well as what advantages they could have in accepting a subordinate role in hierarchical structures integral to oeconomy.

Interactions and power plays within households

A familial intermingling between social networks and economic networks was common during the early modern period. John Kleinig defined this as patriarchalism; this was a system that was rooted in feudalism denoting the patron’s, or the father’s, rule over an entire household. He differentiated this from the

individualized system of paternalism that characterized work relationships between patrons and clients in modern times. In short, patriarchalism was the householder’s rule and, though it carried over into the early industrial sites of Swedish ironworks in the nineteenth century, it had feudal roots. According to patriarchalist ideals, the father—in the household, the householder, in the land, the monarch, and in the world, God—protected his subordinates and demanded obedience in return. The patriarchalist social order was a cementation of hierarchies, but hierarchical relationships were defined as though they were emotional bonds that placed duties on both superiors and inferiors. This was a way to create a secure society by preventing tyrannical abuse from patrons and disobedience from the people in their care: their ‘clients’.

This was an idealized envisioning of the intermingling of work and family life as it might have been described in normative texts, but it does not follow that such a system worked smoothly in practice. In a Swedish context, the historian Börje Harnesk discusses the ways that the crowd received patriarchalism as an ideology. He criticizes the way that church historians such as Hilding Pleijel have emphasized the rigid order of the hustavla, arguing that such studies focus on the preachers and not on whether their sermons were understood or accepted by the people they were preaching to.

The question of whether patriarchalism or household ideology were accepted must be raised, even if it is difficult to answer. Harnesk states that patriarchalism, as a term, might be too broad to be helpful because idealizations of familial relationships between employers and employees can be observed in almost any period, and not just the early modern era. However, he argues that patriarchalism became distinguishable because it changed; at certain times, it had a weaker hold, while at other times it came back into vogue. For instance, the mid-eighteenth century saw a tighter restriction in the movements of servants and day labourers, and harsh punishments for those who transgressed these laws. This remained in place until the 1770s when there were debates about how to keep servants in periodicals such as the royal economic publication Hushållningsjournal. Those who argued for a loosening of the restrictions of movement placed on servants and labourers used arguments saturated in patriarchalism, according to Harnesk. Mainly, they argued that the restrictions placed on servants’ freedoms were unnecessary. Responsible

36 E. P. Thompson discusses the clients’ attitudes towards their patrons in Thompson (1975), pp. 382–405. For patriarchalism’s influence on political thought, Schocket (1975), and for a discussion of the criticisms against patriarchalism during the late eighteenth century, Miller (1998) Chapter 2. Patriarchalism has been studied in a Swedish context by Harnesk (1990); Hasselberg (1998), pp. 240–255.
37 Harnesk (1990), p. 10
38 Ibid, pp. 50–72.
39 Harnesk notes a letter from 1762, sent from Stora Kopparbergs län, the district in Dalarna where Falun was situated, in which the peasants complained about restrictive policies because servants were forbidden to move there from a nearby district. Ibid, pp. 32–40.
E. P. Thompson has also raised the question of how accepted patriarchalism was among those who were subordinate within households. Thompson discussed how the deference shown by poor people to their benevolent patriarchs could contain resentment towards them. Their patriarchalist relationship with their employers put them in a position to make demands of them within the accepted hierarchical order of the moral economy. According to what Thompson defines as the notion of a moral economy, English rioters of the late eighteenth century were acting to preserve what they were entitled to, according to the economic and moral norms that they acknowledged. If the question is whether the crowd at large accepted patriarchalism, Thompson shows an example in which such a crowd used patriarchalist arguments about their superiors’ duties in order to protect their own rights. The rioters had an interest in using such arguments because they functioned as a viable political strategy for them. According to Harnesk, patriarchalism receded and then came back into vogue among the Swedish elite. It was continuously resisted by servants and maids whose attempts to travel and change employment inadvertently affected the elite’s patriarchalist strategies. Thompson turns this around by showing how patriarchalism was not only commonly accepted, but also used by common people to further their own interests.

The view that a type of moral rhetoric existed, which was used by subordinate groups, is similar to the one identified as household ideology by Per-Arne Karlsson, and was manifested in household culture according to Karin Hassan Jansson. In this study based largely on complaints and petitions, it is useful to operate under a similar assumption that a form of acceptable, morally motivated protest existed during the early modern period. These actors used this type of rhetoric when they protested because they believed it conformed to accepted societal norms, which meant that it could conceivably work in their favour. Their interpretation of those norms naturally differed from that of those they were protesting. Nevertheless, the rhetoric they used must in some way have been even acknowledged by the elite for it to hit home.

If there was a morally tinged rhetoric that could be used as a tool of protest, what did the subordinate groups that used it hope to achieve with it? By asking this, it is perhaps possible to glean the degree that such groups acknowledged

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41 Thompson (1971) pp. 76 – 136
as well as accepted the notion of the Holy Household. A study about a popular uprising that is geographically and temporally close to this current work, in which similar tactics as the ones Thompson describes, can be used for comparison. Karin Sennefelt has written about how peasants from the region of Dalarna revealed their political awareness and articulated their views when they confronted their superiors at the Diet in 1743.\textsuperscript{42} They described the king as a benevolent, fatherly figure whose role was to look after the peasant estate and guard their rights.\textsuperscript{43} Sennefelt does not show the peasants as merely reacting to harsh conditions. She instead studies their political discourse on its own terms by asking what purpose this line of argument served for them, assuming there was rationality behind it. In the peasant rhetoric of the period, the weak status of the king during the Age of Liberty was a crucial focus of criticism; while the system of the monarchy was in place and the king was weak, there was nobody to look out for peasant interests at the Diet. The Age of Liberty still kept the figure of the monarch as a symbol. His role as a protector of peasant rights might then also be purely symbolic, and there appeared to be nothing else concrete to fill that void.\textsuperscript{44}

Sennefelt shows how the idea that the king was a benevolent patriarch was useful because it gave the peasants something to rally behind. E. P. Thompson and Börje Harnesk have described patriarchalism as a way for the ruling elites to legitimize their rule by propagating the fiction that it was based on a bond of trust.\textsuperscript{45} If it was a fiction, it was still powerful enough to make it possible for the Swedish peasants of the 1740s, as well as English rioters in the 1790s, to use it to further their own causes.\textsuperscript{46}

As mentioned in the beginning of this section, these interactions are a facet of oeconomy. Oeconomy does not separate the ruling from the ruled. It rather illuminates how early modern society was built on a network of mutual duties and obligations. It is not helpful to draw one line between the ruling and the ruled—the oppressors and the oppressed—when, as current research shows, early modern society was layered in a more complex way with people being subordinate in one sphere and masters over another. Thompson, Harnesk, Sennefelt and Hassan Jansson’s perspectives are particularly relevant to this thesis since they reveal the dynamism of the seemingly rigid Holy Household. It stemmed from a type of ideology, but it had also seeped into culture and had become a regularized language that everyone could use for their own cause. Oeconomy was broader than the economic theories of the elite and it remained durable in agrarian society, even while its economic preconditions and policies changed.

\textsuperscript{42} Sennefelt (2001).
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid, pp. 60–61, p. 296.
\textsuperscript{44} Sennefelt (2001) p. 296.
\textsuperscript{45} See Harnesk (1991); Thompson (1975); Thompson (1971).
Divisions of work in norms and practice

The clash between norms and practices has been widely studied in early modern gender history. Gender historians have analysed oeconomy as a way to understand how men and women worked to support themselves. Many studies concern the dismantling of the household economy. An earlier paradigm of gender history has connected the advent of industrialization to the emergence of ‘separate spheres’ for men and women during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This theory holds that the household as a unit used to be centred on the married couple: in the private household, the farmer and farmer’s wife, and in the kingdom, the king and queen. As the husband moved from working at a productive agrarian farm to selling his labour for wages in the modern economy, the reproductive work of the home exclusively became the wife’s task.

The close connection between this process and the development of industries has recently been questioned. Amanda Vickery has observed that there is plenty of evidence for such a process also occurring during the early modern period, before the advent of industries. The Swedish historian Anders Florén has found that this new division of labour between husbands and wives was seen as a source of problems in the ironworks Jäders bruk during the mid-eighteenth century. The new work divisions occurred there because the husbands’ sites of work were removed from their own households, rather than because of industrial development.

This situation did not require industrial development. The prerequisite was instead a large site of work in the region that drew to it a single-sex workforce. In a similar vein, Christopher Pihl has documented how such a gendered division of labour occurred in Sweden when the main source of work in the region involved a royal estate. The size of the estate affected the division of work. If the place of work was rich and lucrative enough, there would be no shortage of men working and women would not be called to work side by side with men. Since the Great Copper Mine was the largest single workplace in Sweden during the early eighteenth century, it is relevant to investigate whether this stronger division of labour between the genders occurred there as well, as well as how this affected the discourse about oeconomy there.

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48 See Clark (1919), Scott (1989). Marion Gray describes how this separation between the work of men and women became increasingly pronounced in German household literature during the eighteenth century. Ylva Hasselberg describes a similar process in the Swedish genre of household books. See Gray (2000) chapter 6; Hasselberg (2011) pp. 355–365. See also Berg (2009). For more about the large amount of work performed in practice during the early modern period, and how they were paid, see Roper (1989) and Ogilvie (2003).
It is worth noting that worries about such developments might have been exaggerated. Even where this division of labour had occurred, home making, handicrafts, storing and preparing food were still important contributions to the economic sustenance of private households. Göran Rydén has shown that in early nineteenth century ironworks, women’s supplementary reproductive work was vital to the survival of metalworking families. The on-going Gender and Work project in Uppsala has also recently published the results of their quantitative investigation of men’s and women’s work in early modern Sweden. One of the main findings is that both men and women were flexible in their tasks and adaptive to the different working conditions in different regions. Smaller households survived as independent production units during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, supplying and being supplied by the nearby larger places of production.

The type gender history conducted by the Gender and Work project, which focuses on documenting practices in order to understand how they related to regulations and norms, is useful to the study of oeconomy. It recognizes the economic importance of work that was not officially documented in the same way as the work of the householder, the official representative of the private household. Current gender histories frequently compare practical, flexible realities to the rigid social norms that divided men and women’s work during the early modern era. The results are usually that the norms could be subverted in different ways.

2.4 Defining the Holy Household: A conclusion

This historiography about the Holy Household and oeconomy is an attempt to shed light on how different historians have discussed these concepts, their various findings, and the ways that they have problematized these concepts.

By discussing how oeconomy was defined within science and religion, and how it functioned in practice as a culture, I provide an idea of the framework that the actors at the Great Copper Mine might have acted in the 1710s and 1720s. The question raised at the beginning of this chapter was: why study the oeconomy of the Great Copper Mine? Additionally, why use that term in particular, when there are many different concepts known to social and economic history that could be used instead? What I show with this chapter is the importance of studying the ideas informing the arguments made by the actors themselves, as this leads to a less deterministic reading of history. The way to gain insight into what governed the actions of the actors is to examine what they hoped to gain and feared to lose by acting, and how they envisioned the future, as opposed to evaluating their actions based on future developments.

which we know about but which they could not foresee. The oeconomy of ironworks is a particularly important concept to understand. It is very much in that light that I discuss what type of oeconomy was implemented at the Great Copper Mine in the 1710s and 1720s, and according to whom.

After outlining how the concepts of the Holy Household and oeconomy were well established during the early modern period, I have highlighted the different things they could mean to people who belonged on different levels of hierarchy. It is difficult to grasp the degree that people belonging to subordinate groups actually accepted the Holy Household, outlined in the hustavla, as an ideology. I have cited the historians Daniel Lindmark and Börje Harnesk, who have questioned how strong the hold that notions of household-based hierarchy actually had over people belonging to subordinate groups, whether household culture was something that in fact vacillated during the early modern period. However, several historians have established that people in subordinate positions frequently used household tropes to argue their cases. The concept of mutual trust and obligation functioned as an opening for negotiation and debate between people on different levels. Although the ideal of a functioning oeconomy was that it should uphold a static social order, this ideal could have the opposite effect in practice if people belonging to subordinate groups used it as a rhetorical tool to question the elite. In this context, I read the arguments that different groups presented to the Royal Commission held at the Great Copper Mine in 1724.

Per-Arne Karlsson has identified the household as an ideology that set the framework for how people acted, and how successful those actions were. When Karin Hassan Jansson depicts a similar tactic used by maidservants in court, she avoids calling this a manifestation of household ideology and instead focuses on the household as a form of rhetoric that was an expression of a normalized culture. Both householders and subordinates could use this culture to forward different points of view. However, Hassan Jansson does not conclude that these actors were arguing for different social orders, possibly because the type of conflict she has studied does not concern oeconomy itself. In the empirical chapters of this thesis, I will use hers and other historians’ understandings of interactions between actors on different levels of hierarchy within a household culture. This will be done in order to study how such arguments were made and what they meant at the Great Copper Mine, as well as if it was possible to express opposing visions.
CHAPTER 3.
The history of the Great Copper Mine

During the seventeenth century, the Great Copper Mine was Sweden’s treasure chest. Iron was the metal that had the greatest economic significance for Swedish trade, but the Great Copper Mine was special because it was the single source for all of Sweden’s copper output. During the 1620s, Sweden’s output and export of copper increased drastically. At this point, King Gustav II Adolph’s regime attempted to implement a copper standard for coins as a way of capitalizing on Sweden’s near monopoly on the copper trade. This gamble seemed doomed from the outset, when Spain stopped minting coins. However, Sweden soon started producing coins on its own in the town of Aveta near Falun. The escalation of the copper production correlated with Sweden gaining the status of a great military power in Europe. The period of the Great Copper Mine’s greatness and Sweden’s dominance over the copper trade was circa 1620–1690. Setting the stage for the investigation to follow, this chapter briefly outlines how the Great Copper Mine gained its status as Sweden’s treasure chest, and then went into decline.

3.1 Swedish copper on the world stage

The economic historian Karl-Gustaf Hildebrand has described how the lucrative position of Swedish copper on the foreign market affected the town’s infrastructure during the seventeenth century, while Eli Heckscher has compiled statistics on the extent of the role that Swedish copper actually played in Europe. These histories complement each other, showing the uniqueness of the Great Copper Mine’s placement in the European copper trade, as well as how the mine’s infrastructure was adapted in order to meet this great demand.

Heckscher’s standpoint was that the perceived role of Swedish copper in the world during that period could only be understood through a comparison with the international copper trade. This history has frequently been coloured by nationalistic self-interest, particularly in historical writings about Sweden’s

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1 See Lindroth (1955), pp. 152–173 and pp. 189–192, regarding the history of the mine during the 1620s.
2 Edvinsson (2012)
age of expansion during the seventeenth century. Heckscher critically examined the bills available from archives in Amsterdam, Europe’s greatest market for copper. He also looked at the patchy records from the mines in Hungary and the German lands. Piecing together sources from different countries in this way, Heckscher was able to compare the Swedish copper output in Europe to that of those countries, and to that of Japan, which became a competitor during the 1670s. His results show that the Swedish output of copper exceeded that of Hungary by several hundred tons a year. Although the Hungarian sources do not cover every year or decade of the 1600s, a qualitative reading caused Heckscher to conclude that what was considered a very good year in Hungary was perceived as a mediocre one by the Swedes. The diaries from the chemist Eric Odhelius’s travels also provide the source for a contemporary comparison between the Hungarian and Swedish mines. Heckscher concluded that during the seventeenth century, the Swedish dominance over the European copper market appeared to have been almost total, with some brief competition from Japan.

The Great Copper Mine was not only pulled onto the world stage; there were forces within the country, the town, and the mine that were both pushing it forward and holding it back. They were all dealing with how to best harness this great source of wealth.

Reforms to facilitate the copper trade were necessary. Hildebrand has described how the complex, yet archaic internal market system that existed in Sweden at that time meant that copper ore was traded via informal exchanges with local tradesmen and changed hands many times before it finally reached Europe. This process was too slow to meet demand. The strong, centralized Swedish government responded by enacting a series of reforms to simplify production and trade. There were experiments with free trade measures in the 1630s to make it easier for foreign traders to gain access to Swedish markets. These experiments were short lived since the idea was met with strong opposition from the Diet. Foreign traders did gain access to trade within Falun after 1688, to the chagrin of local burghers. This did not mean that the crown suddenly supported free trade. One continuity remained in the policies of the Swedish state: trade should not exist unregulated for its own sake, and that the crown would maintain a strict control.

In the 1620s, the rapidly expanding trade initially created confusion within the Great Copper Mine because it necessitated a rapid escalation of production.

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6 Ibid, p. 231.
7 Ibid, p. 277.
8 Hildebrand (1946), pp. 26–49, pp. 93–98.
10 Hildebrand (1946), pp. 144–145. See also Magnusson (2001) for a more thorough discussion about Swedish mercantilism and the different branches within it, some arguing for a limited free trade.
to meet heightened demands. Swedish copper’s new prominence in Europe meant that the mine was an object of strong interest to the crown, which created new administrative systems there in order to control its riches throughout the seventeenth century. The confusion caused by the rapid increase in mining operations meant that the bergsmän found their work scrutinized to a greater extent than before.11

A system of working teams based on the shares of the bergsmän was in place when the first detailed, yearly descriptions of mining work at the Great Copper Mine appeared during the 1600s and 1610s. At that time, the period a working team might labour in one room might be one to two days.12 According to Sten Lindroth, mining had become a slower process by the 1650s, which was during the mine’s greatest prominence. Foreign demand was at its peak. At the same time, extracting copper from the mine was evidently becoming a more laborious process. What took between one and two days now took up to a week at least; many of the work teams lagged behind, slowing down the working order for the rest.13 The work- and shareholder system had been set in practice when mining at the Great Copper Mine had been a smaller-scale operation during the late Middle Ages. The increasing demand of copper in Europe and the rapid expansion of mining operations put a strain on the traditional working order of the bergsmän.14 At the same time, the crown was finding new ways to strengthen its control over the mine’s operation and output through the appointment of a new group of overseers, the geschworner, and the creation of the Board of Mines.

The crown’s regulation of the Great Copper Mine

The Board of Mines was founded in 1637.15 The crown now had an efficient administrative apparatus it could use in order to regulate its mines, its ironworks and nascent metal manufactories.16 At the Great Copper Mine, the Board of Mines appointed new overseers and gave extended privileges and responsibilities to the Mine Inspector and the geschworner who aided him in overseeing and reporting on work at the mine. The geschworner wrote regular reports, providing detailed descriptions of the progress of the work teams and

11 See Lindroth (1955), vol. 1, pp. 159–164 regarding the mine’s expanding administration, and pp. 166–168 regarding the presence of the Board of Mines at the mine during the seventeenth century, and the new frequency of royal commissions to investigate economic activities at the mine.
14 See Ibid, p. 201 for when the copper production was at its height and the complaints of the bergsmän during this period.
15 It is called Bergskollegium in Swedish. Hjalmar Fors has translated it to the “Bureau of Mines” in his book The Limits of Matter: Chemistry, Mining and the Enlightenment (2015). I have chosen the conventional translation in calling it the Board of Mines.
16 In Falun, the Board of Mines was also a way to realize old ideas for a bergstad. See Hildebrand (1946), p. 100.
the quality and quantity of their work and takings. These were answerable to the Mine Inspector who, in turn, reported to the Board of Mines. The Mine Inspector also presided over the mining court that, apart from legal cases, discussed economic matters and all manner of legal issues concerning town life. Along with the Mine Inspector, the court consisted of twenty-four elected representatives of the bergsmän. These men would meet in the gruvstuga, the mine’s court house, once a week to discuss the issues of the miners, the workings of the mine, and local political and economic matters. Apart from this select group, miners and other townspeople were not allowed to be present in front of the mining court, unless they were called.

The court was both a tool to exert power and a communication channel between the state and the miners. Bertil Boethius has interpreted the court as a functioning to curtail the rights of the miners and the local peasantry, continuing the broader loss of political status that these groups experienced during the seventeenth century. He reads the concentration of such diverse powers on a small select group as evidence of that intent, although he rightly points out that these sources were, by nature, prescriptive and would not have documented practices that were more flexible.

In addition to the mining court, the Board of Mines regularly sent representatives to visit Falun during the period of the mine’s greatness. The Swedish monarchs of that period also took a personal interest in the workings of the Falun mine, revealing its perceived importance to Sweden’s economy. Overseers like the geschworner, who were appointed by the Board of Mines, also visited the mineshafts. The Mine Inspectors also routinely did this. After the onset of the Age of Liberty however, the mine’s administration expanded and the administrative work became more detailed and time consuming. Lindroth notes that the reports of the geschworners also became significantly less detailed in the 1730s, possibly revealing their lack of first-hand knowledge about what they were documenting. The Board of Mines sent delegations to Falun less frequently and the kings stopped visiting during this period, when the mine’s status had begun to decline.

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18 Ibid, pp. 157–160. Boethius (1951), pp. 54–57. The protocols of the mining court reveal how it dealt with burials, auctions, the American missionary society, etc. See, for example, Stora gruvrättsprotokoll 1721, register. See also Kristiansson (1996) for a close study of early modern jurisdiction at the mining court in Falun.
20 Ibid, p. 56.
The corporative bergsmän: Traditional divisions of work

The seventeenth-century work practices of the bergsmän were based on traditions dating from the middle ages. Though there are few exact sources depicting work in the mine from the first period of expansion in the mid-fourteenth century, the system of ordering of work in the mine between the bergsmän might date from that period.23

According to this system, the bergsmän would divide into work units known as par, “pairs”. The reason the work units were called pairs had nothing to do with the number of workers; it may have originated from the use of two bellows that the workers would carry with them for smelting; this revealed the ancient connection between owning shares of the mine and owning and operating smelting huts.24 The pairs would divide into four groups, who would be divided into four again through a lottery.25 The pairs would eventually become divided into 16 groups of “fourth-parts”. In 1616, the number of fourth-parts representing Bergslagen at the Great Copper Mine was fixed to 75.26 The elected representatives of the 75 could be called together when collective decisions had to be made at the mining court, as happened during the royal commission in 1724.

These fourth-parts would divide areas in the mine to work on by using a dice game known as dubbel, which was held on New Years’ Eve. This game of dice decided which fourth-part would take a certain room in the mine, and in which order the different fourth-parts would take the rooms. One fourth-part would work in a room for a certain amount of time, until the quota for ore had been reached; then they would move on to the next and a new fourth-part would enter the room they exited.27 In this way, the bergsmän would leave the forming of work units and the division of caverns to chance, a system that was guaranteed to be fair and equal. A sense of fairness took precedence over a purely economic rationale. During the mid-seventeenth century, the bergsmän consisted of 25 pairs, divided up into 400 fourth-parts. In the latter half of the seventeenth century the bergsmän numbered around 800, and their hired workers around 600;

23 The most common point of reference for how the medieval work at the mine was organized are king Magnus Ericsson’s letter of privileges for the Great Copper Mine from 1347, and a description of the mining order from 1360, the oldest document relating to work divisions in the mine. See Boethius (1951) p. 40, Heckscher (1938) p. 35. For a copy of Magnus Eriksson’s letter granting privileges, see RA ÄK Vol 2 Akter, hadlingar pp. 72 – 75.
24 Lindroth 1955 vol. 2 p. 148 regarding the history of the bellows.
25 The par was only divided into four parts during medieval period. The next division happened during the Vasa period when the workplace and mining expanded greatly. The fjärdepart-system was in place until 1888. See Söderberg 1932 p. 79, Lindroth 1955 vol I pp. 95–96 and Boethius 1951 p. 41, pp. 56–60.
26 Söderberg 1932 p. 81.
the crown additionally employed between 200 and 300 miners when the production was at its peak.28

3.2 The crisis period, 1687–1720

In 1687, there was a cave-in in the Great Copper Mine, which destroyed the two chasms known as Bondestöten and Blankstöten. The cave-in restructured the mine into one large, gaping hole called Stora Stöten, or ‘the Great Pit’. In subsequent histories, this cave-in gained a symbolic importance as a hallmark of the end to the Great Copper Mine’s period of greatness.29 There was something larger-than-life about this dramatic event; it was as though the hand of God had played a part. In truth, as many historians work to explain, the great cave-in was a man-made disaster.30 It was only the most dramatic of many cave-ins that had occurred in the seventeenth century due to expanded activity and poor structural reinforcement in the mine.31

The negative effects of the cave-in on the mining operation were not immediately apparent. Miraculously, it had happened on Midsummers’ Day, one of the few holidays when people did not work in the mine, which meant that there were no casualties. The cave-in also exposed new tendrils of ore that were easy to extract from the rubble. The first problems manifested when it was discovered that the cave-in had destroyed many of the caverns that had been a fixture in the working order of the bergsmän for centuries. New work teams known as rotar had to be organized instead, in order to extract the newly exposed ore. There was no system in place for the Board of Mines to regulate and tax the new teams. Now, there was no proven method of economy for preserving and utilizing the ore in an ordered, balanced way that was easy to document and tax. The economic activity of the mine became chaotic.32

Competition also grew in the international copper trade. Between the 1680s and the 1730s, British copper production intensified and, by the mid-eighteenth century, it had taken over Sweden’s position of dominance over the European copper trade.33

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28 Boethius 1951 regarding crown employees, p. 87. Regarding the number of bergsmän, p.105. Regarding the number of miners in the employ of the bergsmän, p. 168.
29 See Lindroth (1955), vol. 1, pp. 235–239. He lets the cave-in end the epoch of the mine’s greatness in his division of chapters, and Hildebrand (1946), who ends his book about Falun’s seventeenth century with the year 1687.
In England and Wales, this development in copper production came concurrently with a surge in economic growth at the end of the seventeenth century. The state’s encouragement of the development of useful science and technology certainly also played a part in the rapid expansion of Welsh mining ventures. In Falun, on the other hand, experiments with new mining technology were discouraged in the 1690s and early 1700s. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Swedish economic thinkers and scientists operated within a culture of utility. This culture can be compared to a similar frame of thought that Joel Mokyr has studied in early modern England.  

However, Sweden was a nation with sparse resources, recovering from the devastating loss of the Great Northern War (1700–1721). A scientific culture would blossom there in the mid-eighteenth century. At the beginning of the century however, the King would mainly give his patronage to inventions and innovations that could aid him in warfare. In Falun at the beginning of the century there was a resistance against investing in new and untried technology however. When the scientist Christopher Polhem was in charge of the Great Copper Mine’s machinery in the 1690s, he created a device that automatically freighted copper from the chasm using waterpower. This machine was a success that earned him fame in Sweden. However, there was a resistance to his ideas in Falun. The miners resented the way new technology infringed on and took over their work, and how much it cost to mend, maintain, and refuel to the machines. Polhem also frequently came in conflict with the Board of Mines and with Anders Swab in particular, over his lack of commitment to Falun. After becoming Mine Inspector, Swab complained about Polhem’s “strange whims and confusing concepts”. In 1716, Polhem left his post in Falun. There were some further attempts to implement his innovations in the 1720s that were met with failure. The freighting machine from the 1690s was his most successful contribution to the mining operation.

In England, experiments in developing new technology were frequently met with resistance in similar ways, but there were also successes. Nuala Zahedieh has connected England’s successful technological breakthroughs in the field of mining and metalworks to its colonial expansion during this period. England’s new colonial territories offered new economic challenges. The need to amass and organize new types of resources, as well as improve communications over vast geographical distances, were incitements for the English to invest in technological development. Copper was a vital material that could be used as a tool of colonization. The metal’s unique thermal conductivity made copper pots particularly suited to the processing of cane sugar.

35 Fors (2015) p. 71
36 Lindroth (1955), vol. 1, p. 344; Fors (2015) p. 82
37 “Underlige infall och confuse concecter”, see Lindroth (1955), vol. 1, p. 345.
Copper pans were used for salt evaporation. Copper plates were used in shipbuilding and in the construction of cannons. Copper items were also traded for slaves. The colonies’ heightened demand for copper gave English entrepreneurs the impetus to invest in Welsh copper mines in Swansea, to use coal as fuel, and to create steam engines.39

While England was developing ways to harness and maintain the resources from its new colonies, Sweden was embroiled in a costly war and lost much of its European territories. Its status as a great military power in Europe was also lost. Sweden did not have the labour force to maintain control over its new territories and defend the borders. The cave-in in the Great Copper Mine in 1687 happened partly because of expanding too fast while lacking the structural components to maintain the new excavations. Although the cave-in did not singlehandedly end Sweden’s domination over the European copper trade, it was a sign of the end of the Swedish empire, which would collapse for similar reasons. The devastation of Great Northern War, as well as the ascension of a different kind of colonial power in the eighteenth century, were more significant for the decline of the Swedish copper trade than the cave-in.

The cave-in did expose critical weaknesses in the mine’s internal operation. The medieval system of work teams was not adapted for the intense copper production that was required during the Great Copper Mine’s period of importance. By exposing flaws, the cave-in helped create the conditions that eventually made reforms possible. Before that could happen, however, Falun and the mine were afflicted with other local disasters.

The impact of war, bad harvests, and unrest, 1696–1717

Although its miners were exempt from military service, the Great Copper Mine was still affected by the outcome of the Great Northern War. In 1719, during the end phase of the war, Russian forces invaded the area surrounding the town of Gävle near Falun, spreading fear and unrest in the whole region.40 However, for the Great Copper Mine, the war was mainly an economic problem. In order to finance it, King Karl XII had issued an extensive minting of an emergency currency; this included copper coins with weaker levels of copper than usual. This practice caused inflation, as well as undermined the credit of Falun copper.41 The town was in need of a large reserve of coins. There was little production of grain and other crops, since local activity was centred on the mine, and the pollution that the mine produced made it difficult to grow crops in the area. A coin supply was needed in order to pay for grain importation. However, the pressure to produce coins for the crown’s war-induced

41 Ibid, pp. 1–6.
debts depleted Falun’s monetary supply. As a result, the use of bills and tokens as a replacement for coins became increasingly common in Falun.\textsuperscript{42}

As a new Mine Inspector, Anders Swab proved to be astute in handling the inflation that befell Falun during the Great Northern War. While the price of copper was low in 1715, Swab advised \textit{Bergslagen} to buy up copper in order to control the output of coins. They were able to sell coins for a higher price than what they were worth in copper, and \textit{Bergslagen} could make a profit. Falun’s economic situation slowly improved. Meanwhile, the years 1717–1720 yielded bad harvests in the surrounding region, making grain difficult to obtain even if Falun’s monetary supply was improving. A warehouse for grains was created in 1717 in order to combat this problem. Anders Swab was the driving force behind this new institution.\textsuperscript{43}

Swab might have worried that the miners would riot or go on strike if conditions were too harsh. The miners had gone on strike during the tenure of the previous Mine Inspector Harald Lybecker in 1696. He had managed to talk them out of it, but murmurings of dissent continued. When miners protested again in 1720, they went beyond what Swab considered the acceptable channels. Instead of trusting their issues to be resolved by the mining court, they sent delegates to the Diet in Stockholm, disobeying an order that they not do so. In response to their protest, the Diet sent a commission to investigate if their complaints were valid.\textsuperscript{44} Though these complaints concerned general prices for grain and lack of wages, they also began to raise criticism of the functions of the warehouse for grains during the commission’s hearings.\textsuperscript{45} The commission did not recognize their complaints in 1720. However, the method of their protest was remembered when the field surgeon Immanuel Grossman presented his petition to the Diet in 1723, leading to another commission in 1724.\textsuperscript{46}

To Anders Swab and the deputies of the mining court, this protest had looked too much like \textit{rotenskap}, a form of mutiny.\textsuperscript{47} This may have made them more determined to institute the \textit{bergstad} in the winter 1720–1721.

\subsection*{3.3 How Falun became a \textit{bergstad}}

The ramifications of the unification of the town and mine known as the \textit{bergstad} were also argued over at the Royal Commission in 1724. The Falun burghers, in particular, raised objections to this unification. In Chapter 8,

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{42} Ibid, See also Edvinsson (2012).
  \item \textsuperscript{43} Boethius (1951), pp. 244–245; Ericsson (1970) pp. 6–16.
  \item \textsuperscript{44} Anders Swab described this process, which he considered unlawful, in RA BkH E 2c : 4, Bergsverksrelationer Stora Kopparberget 1720–1724, pp. 1–3.
  \item \textsuperscript{45} Ibid, pp. 19–21.
  \item \textsuperscript{46} Boethius (1951), pp. 249–254; Claesson (2015), pp. 57–58.
  \item \textsuperscript{47} RA BkH E2c : 4, Bergsverksrelationer Stora Kopparberget 1720–1724, p. 1, p. 27
\end{itemize}

which concerns the complaints of the burghers, a more complex picture of the
conception of the bergstad and consequences emerges. Here is a brief recount
of how it happened, which will be returned to in the latter chapter.

Anders Swab initiated the unification of the mine’s and the town’s admin-
istrations in 1720. The changing status and the actions of Falun’s burgher es-
tate created the preconditions for the unification. The Falun burghers had held
an exclusive right to trade with the bergsmän in copper ore until the year 1688,
when foreign traders were allowed to trade with the bergsmän on the same
terms as the locals. Since 1688, the Falun burghers had fought to get their
exclusive right to trade there reinstated.48 Their opponents at the mining court
eventually thought their actions necessitated a crackdown. According to Bir-
gitta Ericsson, Swab and his allies accused the burghers of riling up the miners
by spreading false information about the warehouse, eventually leading the
miners to protest the commission in 1720.49 The actions of the burghers were
seen as so troublesome that the Board of Mines threatened to revoke Falun’s
town privileges, which would have hindered the burghers’ ability to trade.
This threat, in turn, led the town’s administrators to plead with the Board of
Mines and raise the suggestion for a bergstad as a compromise.50

The Board of Mines was initially reluctant to accept this idea because they
saw it as yet another attempt by the burghers to regain control over the copper
trade. According to the surviving protocols of a commission, the Board of
Mines sent in order to solve this conflict, Anders Swab presented the sugges-
tion for a bergstad that was eventually accepted in 1720.51 In this text, Swab
included a clear warning to the town administration that they should not at-
tempt to change anything in his suggestion, as they would never achieve con-
ciliation with the Board of Mines. With the threat of losing Falun’s town priv-
ileges and the burghers’ right to trade hanging over their heads, the admin-
istration accepted Swab’s proposal, according to Eriksson.52

The act of unification stated that Bergslagen and Falun town were joined
into one body, out of love for the common good “so that both Bergsmän and
burghers are called under the name Bergslag with no distinction made; but the
common good for this area is considered to be the Copper works’ preservation
and growth . . .”53

By Ericsson’s account, the aim of the act seemed to be to remove the au-
tonomy of the burghers and absorb them into Bergslagen, in service of the
idea that it should function as one harmonious body. For the purpose of this
thesis, this conception of the bergstad could be seen as something similar to
the ideal of the household as one body. The head of the body was the copper

51 Ibid, p. 36.
52 Ibid, pp. 35–36.
mine, governed by the Board of Mines via Bergslagen, and the burghers who
did not act in compliance with the head would be seen as disobedient. This
was not merely an ideal; the act limited the movements of the burghers in
practice, as the next section will show.

Falun’s burghers and their problems with the bergstad

According to Ericsson, the burghers seemed to have been justified in their fear
that the bergstad would infringe on their trade and push them out of local
economic decision-making processes. One of the greatest changes to Falun
with the creation of the bergstad was the combining of the town’s treasury
with that of Bergslagen. This meant that all of the burghers’ expenses were to
be paid via the treasury of Bergslagen. In return, Bergslagen stood for town
expenses, such as the preservation of buildings. The formation of the bergstad
stipulated that Bergslagen had a duty to the town, but the power to make de-
cisions about how use the town’s treasury also lay with them.54

The bergstad also pushed the issue of the warehouse to the forefront when
there was a demand that the burghers pay a certain tax, a ‘contribution’, con-
nected to what they were to sell. The burghers complained that the warehouse
ought to pay a tax as well.55 The Board of Mines, in particular Anders Swab,
saw this as unnecessary, since the warehouse already paid other expenses for
obtaining its wares. For the burghers, this state of events was not generally
known, and there was a widespread distrust between them and the administra-
tion of the bergstad in any case.56

In the administration of the bergstad, the burghers were disadvantaged in
many ways. According to the new regulations, burghers could only participate
as council members on the town council if they were also bergsmän. The pur-
pose of the bergstad was to encourage work at the mine, and to encourage
foreign traders to deal with Swedish copper.57

The idea of the bergstad was that the burghers should participate in the
copper works, and that the bergsmän should also be a part of the town’s ad-
ministration. Both the burghers and a number of bergsmän criticized this idea.
In 1720, the town privileges from 1642 had cemented the rights of these peas-
ant-bergsmän, letting them keep their shares in the mine and work as they had
previously. However, the bergstad only allowed those bergsmän who were

55 Ibid, p. 16.
56 See Ibid, pp. 16–20 for a description of the Royal Commission of 1720, which was partly
instigated by the bourgeoisie. See also Ibid, p. 104–108 for how the Falun burghers tried to
dismantle the warehouse, and the letter of complaint from the burghers to the Royal Commis-
57 Ericsson (1970), pp. 66–73, regarding the way the treasury at the Great Copper Mine was
combined with that of the town. Hildebrand sees this as having always been the purpose of the
bergstad, though those plans could not be achieved in the seventeenth century. See Hildebrand
(1946).
also members of the burgher estate to be a part of the town’s new administrative body.\textsuperscript{58} The new regulations split the \textit{bergsmän} into groups with different privileges, dividing them against each other; this was similar to how the burghers were divided by guild regulations. The act of the \textit{bergstad} encouraged members of the burgher estate to participate in the copper works and the \textit{bergsmän} to participate in the town’s administration. It also restricted a substantial number of them from doing so, marginalizing them in Falun’s political and economic life.\textsuperscript{59}

3.4 Conclusion: From a golden age into decline

It is important establish why the 1710s and 1720s was a period of decline for the Great Copper Mine. There were many reasons for this decline. Eli Heckscher has pointed to the lessening of copper ore within the mine as the fundamental reason why production began to decrease gradually after its peak of the 1650s. New competition from England was a contributing factor as well. England’s colonial expansion in the eighteenth century can be compared to Sweden’s role as a European power in the seventeenth century. Military power and influence was an important condition for the maintenance of an expanding trade network. By the 1720s, Sweden had lost much of its international military influence. Turmoil caused by bad harvests and local unrest coupled with the devastation caused by the Great Northern War on a national level were other factors in the decline of the mine.

Socially, the mine was restructured drastically prior to the period of this study. During the period 1620–1690, there was heightened government control, regulation, and taxation. During the period from the 1690s to the 1710s the administrative body of the mine was distanced from the actual work taking place there. This caused distrust among the workers and planted seeds of rebellion. The creation of the \textit{bergstad} in 1720 also formalized the marginalization of the Falun burghers.

While it is important to establish the decline, it is equally crucial to show that the Great Copper Mine had a golden age in the mid-1600s. Its position was unique then in Europe, as it was the sole provider of copper for Sweden’s monopoly on the commodity. In the period that this thesis covers—the 1710s and 1720s—the golden age was not so long ago that it had been forgotten. Memories of what life had been like during that time became argumentative tools for many of the parties who debated how the Great Copper Mine should be restored in the 1710s and 1720s. When presented synoptically like this, the two contrasting periods—the golden age and the decline—were not so firmly

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid, pp. 59–64, pp. 70–71.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, pp. 37–46.
separated in the imaginations of the actors, as they appear to be. Now, the stage is set to address the next period.
CHAPTER 4.
Centralizing and equalizing the mine: The economic reforms of 1716

On June 22, 1715, the Board of Mines convened to discuss the economic situation at the Great Copper Mine. King Karl XII had ordered an emergency minting of copper coins in order to fund his military campaign. The shares of the mine that belonged to the crown received priority when it came to smelting, weighing, evaluating, and minting. The Great Copper Mine’s Mine Inspector Anders Swab asked the Board to affirm that the bergsmän retained the right to weigh and evaluate their own ore before the crown evaluated theirs. At the meeting, the members of the Board of Mines sympathized with the plight of the bergsmän in Falun. The new competition from the crown slowed their work process. This, in turn, hindered their ability to support themselves, their families, and work teams. However, the Board was powerless to grant the bergsmän the privilege Swab had asked for because that might prevent the King from receiving his liquid funds.1

At this meeting, the Board also raised the issue that many Mine Inspectors, including Anders Swab, received so little pay for their work that they could not afford to regularly travel to Stockholm to take part in the Board’s meetings. This made it more difficult for men like Swab to communicate the difficulties facing local bergsmän to the Board, as well as receive aid from the Diet.2 Another question the Board discussed at this meeting was whether they should cease to use their own tile stove to heat the meeting room during the summer months in order to save fuel. It was suggested that the fuel saved might be put to better use in the local ironworks.3

4.1 Introduction: Reforms and rationales

The protocols of this meeting reveal how dire the economic and administrative situation was for both the Great Copper Mine and the Board of Mines at the height of the Great Northern War in 1715. The Board was operating under an

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2 Ibid, pp. 1052–1053.
3 Ibid, pp. 1050–1051.
absolutist regime whose ruler was embroiled in foreign warfare, paid for by resources they produced and administered. Apparently, one consequence of this was that they could not heat their own meeting room, or pay wages to prominent people in their employ. In this situation, it might be reasonable to presume that the Board’s resolutions pertaining to economic reforms would be conservative and cautious. However, this was when Anders Swab chose to present a set of radical reforms to the Board of Mines for consideration, which were implemented in the following year. This chapter outlines the content of these reforms and, when possible, what kind of economic rationale lay behind them.

4.2 Investigating the reforms

One of the reforms of 1716 was the institution of a warehouse for grains in Falun. This was a way to centralize and govern the distribution of food, tools, and wages to the miners of the Great Copper Mine. Swab also presented a suggestion to the Board of Mines for a new way of supervising the *rotar*, the unregulated work teams who conducted explorations of new and abandoned rooms in the mine. The mining court discussed instituting new ways of regulating the supply of wood. Changing the working order of the mine and redistributing the ore between the *bergsmän* were also suggested. These were the main reforms that were drafted to the Board of Mines in a pro memoria signed by Swab and the twenty-four elder *bergsmän* of the mining court in 1715. The mining court then discussed the reforms as they were gradually implemented in 1716.

This chapter contains an account of the economic reforms instituted at the Great Copper Mine by the Board of Mines. I use protocols from the Board’s and the mining court’s meetings to show how some of the reforms were discussed in 1715, through the process of their implementation at the mining court in 1716. The main reforms proposed and the discussions that followed are outlined. I focus on Swab’s stated motivations for suggesting the reforms, the Board of Mines’ suggested motive for supporting him, and how the mining court then received their proposals. It is important to study the way the reforms were outlined and discussed at the time because the historiography of the Great Copper Mine is vague about what overall purpose the reforms were meant to serve, whether they had a large impact on the changing economy of the mine, and whether this impact had been intentional. The official intent can, at least, be understood from reading about the ways that the reforms were discussed before they were implemented.

My primary questions are: what aim did deputies of the mining court and the Board of Mines say that they had with the economic reforms? Which economic problems did they see, and how did they attempt to combat them? By discussing these questions, I show the assumptions about economy that Swab
and the Board of Mines might have operated under when they instituted the reforms.

The nature and content of the sources

The protocols used in this chapter reveal how the Mine Inspector Swab and his allies, Swab’s opponents in the mining court, and the members of the Board of Mines discussed the economic reforms in 1716. The earliest stated intentions behind the reforms can then be compared to the reforms’ effects in 1724 that are dealt with in subsequent chapters. The actors’ statements of intent are outlined, along with a recapitulation of some of the arguments for and against them, such as they were.

The documents used here are a protocol of meetings at the Board of Mines in 1715, and the protocols of the weekly sessions at the mining court in 1716. These protocols appear to be summarized transcripts of conversations held at the Board’s and mining court’s meetings. The discussions in the court protocols used here offer the views of actors on the level of the state—in the case of the Board of Mines—and with the mining court at the local administrative level of the Great Copper Mine. The transcripts from the mining court also reveal that some of the actors present had dual roles. Although men like Falun’s mayor Johan Holenius and the council member Philip Trotzig were a part of the mining court, they also belonged to the burgher estate and represented the interests of both the town and the mine. Mine Inspector Swab also embodied two different levels in the two sources. At the mining court, he was a representative of the Board of Mines appointed to oversee the local administration at the Great Copper Mine. When he was presenting his suggestions for reforms to the Board of Mines, however, Swab became a representative of the local level of Falun and the Great Copper Mine, appealing to the larger ‘household’ of the state. Evidence of the ability of actors to move between levels of households and adopt different identities within those households is prominent in these sources.

The arguments presented at the mining court are coloured by the fact that only elders of the bergsmän and burghers, belonging to the town’s administration, were present for these discussions. Miners and other burghers were not present. The roles of women and children within mining were not discussed at this time. Miners were only present at the mining court when they were called to participate, which happened later during the Royal Commission. Miners could send petitions to the mining court and could be called to discuss these petitions, as they were in 1720 and again in 1724. The actors present at the mining court in 1716 did not have their status questioned from as many angles in 1716 as they would be in 1724. The discussions about reforms only

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sparsely discussed how they might infringe on the rights and privileges of different groups, such as miners or poorer burghers. This lack will be compensated for in subsequent chapters focusing on the Royal Commission of 1724, in which miners and burghers sent petitions and were called forward to be interviewed about their complaints.

4.3 The reforms in previous research

The economic historian Eli Heckscher contends that the reforms of 1716 were an important part of the Great Copper Mine’s modernization. He argues that they were radical because they reshaped the administration of the mine. At the same time, he notes that they were a formalization of changes that had been occurring over a much longer period. The main changes he brings up were that the miners became distanced from the bergsmän as a consequence of the bergsmän losing their role as overseers for their shares and work teams. According to Heckscher, Swab’s reforms had the effect of transferring the miners from working under the bergsmän to working directly under Bergslagen as a collective. This meant that both individual bergsmän and their deputies—the mining guards—eventually lost their status as figures of authority for the miners. This removal was achieved by making the miners take their pay from the warehouse for grains.

They still continued to work the shares of the bergsmän, but on the payroll of Bergslagen, according to his account. The bergsmän soon went from being a type of mining and landowning farmer to being an owner of stock in a mining company. Heckscher describes this development as happening as a consequence of the wealth generated by the mine during the seventeenth century. This meant that a number of bergsmän could enrich themselves and then withdraw from more direct supervision of the work on their shares. They enlisted the mining guards as deputies to supervise their shares and work teams. Because of this practice, the status of the bergsmän as hands-on supervisors was eroded. Heckscher also describes this erosion as an inevitable effect of the economic decline of the mine in the early eighteenth century, possibly hurried by the economic reforms of 1716 that were instituted to help the mine.

To what degree was the erosion of the status of the bergsmän as masters an effect of the reforms in 1716, and to what degree was it due to previous developments that had happened over a longer period of time? How inevitable were the economic developments that followed the reforms? To what degree did they follow intentions of the people who enacted them? These questions can

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5 Heckscher (1940), p. 27.
7 Heckscher (1940), pp. 51–52.
8 Ibid.
be answered when the economic intentions expressed in relation to the reforms are compared to how they were discussed later in 1724. In order to understand the social and economic structures that were subject to reform in 1716, some additional context will also be provided. In particular, the role of the bergsmän, their authority over the miners placed in their work teams, and the nature of shareholding in early modern Swedish mines and metalworks will be outlined. After this, I present a closer reading of the protocols of the mining court and the Board of Mines as they outlined and discussed the reforms.

The social structure of the Great Copper Mine in 1690–1716: Bergsmän, miners and the role of the household

In his history of the Great Copper Mine during the Middle Ages, the historian Tom Söderberg traced the origin of the corporative ownership system of the bergsmän and discussed how that system benefited the crown. He took note of the word ‘allotment’, which had been used to mean ‘share’. The bergsmän were allotted shares rather than owning them. Their ownership of shares in the mine was in some ways temporary, accorded to them by a higher power and serving a greater purpose. This fits well with medieval and early modern ideas of oeconomy as a practice of virtuously utilizing the resources bestowed unto man by God. According to this way of thinking, the crown could also reasonably claim a high tax on the harvests of copper by the bergsmän.9

The bergsmän paid a tax of a fourth from their earnings from their share. During periods when there was a lack of coin in Falun, this was usually paid in refined copper ore.10 Lack of money was a continuous problem in Falun and elsewhere in Sweden. Paying with other wares like grain, as had been previously common, became less feasible during the seventeenth century, when Sweden was pushing towards becoming a more monetary economy.11 During the period of the mine’s greatness, circa 1620–1690, the Board of Mines also issued quotas for the amount of ore that should be mined. The tax stipulated that the crown had a right to one-fourth of the ore of each share.12 The quotas meant that the working teams of the bergsmän stayed longer in caverns that did not yield ore quickly, slowing down the work teams’ traditional alternating in the chasms. They were encouraged to dig deeper, making the mine more unstable and difficult to work in, and to seek out new or previously abandoned

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9 Söderberg 1932 p. 77. Ridder in Olsson ed. (2012) p. 157. The nature of the crown’s rights when it came to the bergsmän’s corporative system is also discussed in Lindroth 1955 and Boethius 1951. According to Lindroth: “The Copper Mountain was, according to that time’s views on regal rights, the property of the monarch”. (My translation) Lindroth 1955 vol. 1 p. 157. See also Lindroth 1955 vol. 1. pp. 74 – 75 re. the beginning of this system in the early seventeenth century.
12 Ibid, See also Lindroth (1955), Vol. 1, pp. 74–75.
rooms known as roterum to compensate their income in order to reach the crown’s quota.\textsuperscript{13}

The quantity of copper in the ore had also decreased; it was actually at its peak before the mine’s period of greatness. According to Sten Lindroth, the ore contained seven per cent copper during the 1570s. By 1650, it was at four per cent, and by 1720, it had reached “an even low” at around one per cent.\textsuperscript{14} This indicates that the period of greatness was due to the diligent activity in the mine during the seventeenth century, rather than to the mine’s natural resources.\textsuperscript{15} Other European mines produced ore of a higher quality, but at a slower rate.\textsuperscript{16}

For the group known as the brukande bergsmän, the bergsmän who worked with both copper extraction and refining of the ore, costs mounted, and the work took increasingly longer as the quality of the ore declined.\textsuperscript{17} Eli Heckscher claims that it is unknown why shareholding in the mine suddenly demanded much more capital during the eighteenth century, letting the wealthier bergsmän buy out the poorer ones.\textsuperscript{18} Perhaps the more difficult and costly smelting process could explain why many sold their smelting huts and began a downward social trajectory, eventually becoming miners, while a few secured their wealth and became owners.\textsuperscript{19}

Through compilations he made of the extant lists of the shareholders, Heckscher claims that the working bergsmän steadily reduced in number from the 1720s onward. While there had always been bergsmän who did not work with the metal production, the working bergsmän had represented a majority in the lists of work teams from 1686. The next surviving and complete list from 1725 shows that the number defined in this way had decreased to one-third of the ownership of the mine. Although the working bergsmän continued to be a massive force within Falun, they noticed that they were dropping in number. They issued complaints about the new owners who were crowding them out. In the 1780s, the Board of Mines took active measures to protect the working bergsmän, giving them precedence in buying shares in the mine, but it was apparently becoming increasingly difficult for them to sustain themselves in such a business.\textsuperscript{20} This was a substantial change in the organization of production and in everyday working life.

During the seventeenth century, the 24 deputies who took part in the mining court mostly consisted of bergsmän who had a personal, practical knowledge

\textsuperscript{14} Lindroth (1955), Vol 1, pp. 126–130.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, p. 130. The quotation marks are his, and it is unclear specifically what he refers to, but probably the religious depictions of the mine.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Note extra costs, including wages. See Heckscher (1940), pp. 49–51.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid. This process has also been described by Urban Claesson, see Claesson (2015).
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, pp. 41–47.
of the mine. By 1720, this was no longer a requirement. There was a drive towards specialization in the state’s oeconomy during this period, so those who performed paperwork and those who had practical knowledge were no longer necessarily the same people. After the institution of the bergsstad, the elected representatives of the bergsmän were no longer six but two, and their work also became far less varied, mostly consisting of bookkeeping.21

These changes at the Great Copper Mine are in line with Maria Sjöberg’s description of similar changes that were occurring in Swedish ironworks during the same period. Due to the expansion of state bureaucracy, iron making became more regulated and specialized during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.22 This was a feature of the expanding national economy during this period, what can be defined as the oeconomy of the household on the level of the state.

It can be debated whether the reforms that were implemented in 1716 had a drastic effect on the economic administration of the Great Copper Mine, or if they were instead an aggregation of changes in practice that had been happening over a longer period. However, what is of interest to this study is what the perception of the reforms was, and how that perception might have influenced people to act. Whatever the effects of the reforms were, the perceived effect they had was central to many of the complaints presented to the 1724 Royal Commission.

4.4 The reforms in 1716: Their stated purpose and their impact

One of the reforms instituted in 1716 was the gradual abolishment of the game of dice that had previously determined the order that the fourth-parts worked the caverns.23 Another important reform was the implementation of new overseers in various operations, expanding the mine’s administration. Finally, there was the instituting of a warehouse for grains, an institution that would be one of the main points of contention for the Royal Commission in 1724. After its construction had started in 1716, the warehouse quickly expanded its operations, going from its original charitable aim to functioning as something similar to a bank. With that expansion, it became a major source of conflict because it was accused of infringing on the trade of the local burghers.

The mining court’s protocols show how Swab presented his suggestions to the court and gradually got them to agree to his plans. The court documents

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21 Boethius (1951), pp. 152–154. Lindroth (1955), pp. 352–35, regarding the more administrative tasks of the Mine Inspector during the eighteenth century, as well as the changing quality of the annual reports after the 1730s.


23 See an explanation for the term “fourth-parts” in chapter 3 of this thesis, p. 57
credit him with making the suggestions for how to reform the *rotar*, and communicating with the Board of Mines about how to best implement these reforms. They show that a discussion about the removal of the game of dice that determined the working order of the work teams in the mine was in progress in January of 1716. The protocols of the mining court also show that Swab appeared to have been the driving force behind many of the reforms. They do not reveal anyone else to have put such suggestions forward. The initiative was usually credited to him. Swab’s arguments for the reforms to the Board of Mines in 1715 and to the mining court in 1716 are presented here, along with some opposing points of view held by the mining court.

Ordering equality: The abolishment of the game of dice

It is unknown for how long the working order of the mining teams had been decided by the game of dice known as the *dubbel*. The system used by the fourth-parts in 1716 had been in place since 1652, when it had been reformed. By 1716 it was regarded as a tradition. One of the first points of discussion when the mining court convened in January 1716 was whether this system could be abolished. The question for the mining court was not whether it ought to be, but rather when and how. However, after some deliberation, the court issued a statement that an end to the game might wait because it was not an urgent problem. Furthermore, some members expressed doubts about whether it would be possible to restructure the working order if there was no traditional way to do so. As a response to these expressed doubts, Swab presented a suggestion from the Board of Mines that the working order of the fourth-parts be a fixed constant. The Board of Mines decided that the game of dice would be abolished, but some reservations were raised against this decision in the local mining court, notably by the mayor and head of the town administration Johan Holenius, an early opponent of Swab’s reforms.

The discussion about the abolishment of the game of dice at the mining court in Falun shows how Swab used different strategies to push forward his reforms. First, he argued that the old system was inefficient, an argument that was generally accepted at the mining court. When there was some opposition to his suggestion for reform, he explained what deeper ramifications the reform would have. It became apparent that the achievement of greater equality among the *bergsmän* was Swab’s main object. In his attempts to convince the mining court, Swab mentioned the necessity for equality of status among the *bergsmän*, which could “only be achieved when it is counted out in money”.

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26 STORA Gruvrätten serie 57 (1716), p. 547.
He put forth the suggestion to redistribute the ore between the bergsmän so that they could all get equal shares.27

Swab expressed certainty that this economic equality was a desirable object, and indeed, nobody at the mining court argued against this idea.28 This is evidence that the whole mining court regarded equality among the bergsmän as an important part of the mine’s successful oeconomy. However, the mining court in Falun was slow to accept Swab’s view that abolishing the game was an immediate necessity. Although they did not argue against his premise that equality among the bergsmän was desirable, some of the members of the mining court, among them Johan Holenius, expressed doubts about the solutions Swab offered to the problem, suggesting a more cautious approach. After a few months of discussion, the court finally raised the question of whether it was necessary to make such a change right away.29

The lengthy hesitation on the part of the court caused Swab to explain, definitively, his purpose with pushing for the reform, and why he considered it an urgent matter. Swab stated that since his intention was to create equality in the working order of the pairs, the game of dice was an inconvenience. Since the changes this game wrought yearly in the working order of the pairs created “the greatest confusion”, he could not promise to create the desired equality.30 He then went on to describe how the game of dice had been created in 1652, a time when the conditions at the mine were very different.31 The working order of the pairs had already been upset by the cave-in, the expansion of mining and the rotar. The dubbel was now impractical and outdated. The mining process needed more regulation. Such an important thing as the working order of the fourth-parts could no longer be left to chance.

… for [Swab] cannot see that the game of dice could have any purpose other than to create order, and Bergslagen has always been able to take care of one thing and another as long as the pairs remain set in place and after their numbers put in order, because the last pairs as well as the first have gained their sustenance though equality and preservation.32

Finally, the mining court agreed to the reform. However, the mayor Holenius still argued that the old way had its advantages as a way to bring stability

29 STORA gruvrätten serie 57 (1716) p. 390
30 Ibid.
31 Though Sten Lindroth states that this practice had medieval roots, he notes that it was reformed in 1652. See Lindroth (1955), Vol. 1, p. 169.
32 "… ty kan han intet see hwad till dubblet annat är nyttigt, än bringa alt i ordning, der emot Bergslagen alltid hade störste reda så i ett som annat om pahren stode oarubbad, och efter des gl nummer i ordning satte, emedan så den sidsta, som första, genom jemligheten hafwa att ehrna sin refusion, och weedergällning. . ." STORA gruvrätten serie 57 (1716), pp. 390–391.
through custom. 33 This argument held a certain weight. Holenius was possibly anticipating that some bergsmän would be against the abolishment of this traditional way to divide the work amongst them.

The Board of Mines did not provide substantial arguments against the abolishment of the game of dice. There, Swab’s desire to achieve “jemlighet”, economic equality among the pairs of bergsmän, was his most repeated argument, and it was apparently accepted. For this reason, perhaps, his following reform, with the purpose of a redistributing the ore between the bergsmän as another means to achieve equality, was not discussed thoroughly. Instead, the Board of Mines talked about the suggestion for a different type of lottery. 34

Centralizing and expanding the administration of the mine

The reform to the system of rotar in 1716 was a way to expand the Board of Mines’ ability to monitor and tax the work of the bergsmän. In the mid-seventeenth century the Board of Mines had enforced ore production quotas in order to regulate the crown’s supply of copper. These quotas affected the autonomy of the bergsmän. Although Sweden and the Great Copper Mine faced little competition in copper output on the world stage in the seventeenth century, the competition for copper within the mine was escalating. 35 This was due to Karl IX’s (1550–1611) creation of a new group of bergsmän who would work directly under the crown, in order to expand mining at the Great Copper Mine in the first decade of the seventeenth century. 36 These new crown-bergsmän became more and more integrated with the others, sharing several of the mining chasms that had previously been designated for the older, independent group. 37

In the centuries since the working order of the pairs had first been put in place, the process of mining had also slowed down considerably, as has been mentioned. In order to compensate for the diminishing returns from the privately owned pairs, a system called rotar was established. It was regularized in the 1640s. 38 This practice meant that pairs could seek out new hidden rooms or abandoned mines in search for ore to supplement their regular output. 39 It

36 In 1600 when Karl IX had introduced the new bergsmän, they were forbidden to work in the chasm known as Bondestöten, which was considered the richest chasm. This chasm was reserved for the older group of bergsmän. In 1655 however, the Mine Inspector Hans Lybecker argued that all bergsmän should be united in one group, “one people, one Bergslag”. See Lindroth (1955), Vol 1, pp. 71–72, p. 169.
38 Lindroth (1955), Vol 1, p. 173.
helped the bergsmän sustain themselves, but presented a problem for the Board of Mines, which had trouble monitoring the division of the rotar. There was no system like a lottery or a game of dice to determine how such rooms should be divided up; the main representative of a pair could simply obtain permission from the Mine Inspector in order to begin working in such a room.\footnote{Ibid, p. 176.}

Anders Swab’s reform of the monitoring of the rotar meant that overseers were appointed who would document the work of these teams, the rooms they explored, and the copper they mined. This was a way of regulating and controlling the rotar, solving the difficulties with taxing them. This was the purpose of the reform, as presented by Swab to the mining court, with a letter of support from the Board of Mines. The mining court found his reasons to be rational and offered no opposition.\footnote{RA BkH Protokoll (1715) E 4: 136, pp. 2258–2265.}

A conflict ensued when Swab presented a suggestion for the appointment of a new overseer over the wood supply; another reform that had the Board of Mines had backed after receiving few opposing arguments.\footnote{Ibid, pp. 2252–2259.} It is unclear from the documents of the mining court what task this new overseer would have. A bureau in charge of supplying wood to the mine already existed. However, the lack of wood was a critical problem for the mine at this time, and it would continue to be a serious issue in the following decade, as evidenced in the records of the Royal Commission in 1724 in which it was a topic of discussion. In 1716, the mining court deliberated on how to amass new forest areas surrounding Falun and utilizing them for the mine.

In connection with this, Swab stated that they would appoint a new overseer and that he would be in the pay of Bergslagen.\footnote{The suggestion was first discussed in STORA gruvrätten serie 57 (1716), p. 184, and again on May 3 pp. 214–219. On May 15, the above-mentioned disagreement happened, pp. 229–230. “Hr inspect. Sohlberg sade, att Sahl Bergsrådet i sin tid alltid lemnade till Bergslagens eftertänkande, att föreslå uthwägar till richtighetz ehrnäende uti sådane måhl; men för des utträttande här wid macht förmätte han icke så sielf tänka derpå, dock war här ofta sådane förslag på tahle, och att betieter skulle tillsättas, som borde hafwa lohn, fördenskull tycker han det inge lättare wägar kunna tagas,till sådanes afbetalhning än som föreslagit är.” STORA gruvrätten serie 57 (1716), pp. 229–230.} This was debated on the same day that the topic of regulating the rotar had been discussed, a reform that had also necessitated the hiring of new overseers. When the suggestion of appointing yet another overseer was brought up, the inspector Eric Sohlberg, also a deputy of the Board of Mines, remarked that many new overseers were being appointed and that it was customary for the mining court to deliberate upon such reforms before they were decided.\footnote{Ibid, pp. 2252–2259.}

It was possible that Sohlberg disagreed with the idea of appointing a new overseer. Criticisms would later be raised against many of the new appointments from 1716, including against the appointment of the overseer of the
wood supply. However, Sohlberg’s disagreement in 1716 was not to do with whether the reform should be implemented, but with how Swab had proposed to implement it, by evoking the authority of the Board of Mines instead of letting local bergsmän decide. Eric Sohlberg was both a representative of the Board of Mines and member of the mining court in Falun. Like Swab, he was a representative of the state on the local level in Falun, and a representative of the local level to the state when he took part in the meetings of the Board of Mines. When he raised criticisms against Swab, he was defending the sovereignty of the local level against an encroaching state level, with its expanding and centralizing of the mine’s administration. These types of conflicts of sovereignty on different levels of economy are crucial to understanding how battle lines were drawn when the commission arrived in 1724. In 1716, the tone of the documents was civil, however. There was a strong sense of consensus and a shared desire for practical solutions. If there were disagreements, they were subtly expressed.

The instituting of a warehouse for grains

One of the greatest and most contested reforms in Falun in 1716 was the establishment of a warehouse for grains.45 Anders Swab discussed this warehouse with the Board of Mines in December 1715. The protocol shows that his stated intention with it from the beginning was for it to function as a kind of poor relief for miners when the region was beset by bad harvests and heavy inflation. When the Board of Mines suggested that a treasurer be appointed to the warehouse, Swab argued against this. According to Swab, the warehouse was a small operation in place to handle an ongoing crisis. It was experimental and did not need a treasurer until they knew how it would function in practice. To appoint a treasurer was to move too quickly.46

In the beginning, Swab argued against that the warehouse should be a large institution serving the whole population of Falun. At this time, he also did not say that the warehouse should supply a larger variety of wares than necessities such as food, grain, and wool, although the warehouse would quickly expand to include the sale of a variety of other items. The term used for these was kramvaror, meaning items of low value such as nails, needles, and soap. Tobacco and shoes also eventually became a part of the stock.47 The original purpose of the warehouse, however, was to provide supplies at a time when the miners were threatened with starvation.

45 Spannmålsmagasin in Swedish.
47 This was discussed more thoroughly in the burghers complaint to the royal commission. See chapter 8, p. 170
Other ways of supplying grain for the miners were also discussed. Johan Angerstein, a member of the Board of Mines, argued that many bergsmän already reserved the right to go to the market personally and find supplies for the miners in their employ. Swab replied that the warehouse was only meant for miners in desperate circumstances, those that were not placed in the steady employ of bergsmän who could buy things at the market in their stead. Swab then elaborated on what troubles these miners faced. If the miners were forced to buy supplies from burghers at the marketplace, they would have to buy them at elevated prices. The warehouse would supply them the necessities for life at a cheap, regulated price.48

The protocol of the mining court reveals how they instituted the warehouse in 1716. This warehouse also necessitated the instatement of a new overseer in the pay of Bergslagen. On Swab’s recommendation, a man named Johan Bergström was chosen. He was described as competent and trustworthy, and a “good son of a bergsmän”.49 Bergström was given the task to buy the wares for the warehouse. The total cost of this first batch of wares was 3,224.4 daler kmt.50 In half a year, the warehouse expanded and the cost rose almost 25 per cent, to 13,304.28 daler kmt in May. Apart from the imported food and grain, other undefined wares were being bought for the warehouse, even though the selling of these had not been a part of the original stated intent.51

The warehouse soon expanded in other ways. In March of 1716, the geschworner Johan Luth presented the suggestion to the mining court that the warehouse should become the site for administering other forms of poor relief, apart from food and grain. He suggested that miners’ widows’ pensions, their inheritance, and funeral aid, should also be handled via the warehouse.52 In this way, the warehouse fully became a social safety net for the miners and their families. At the same time, it also started to function as a place in which the funds of the Bergslagen were distributed in ways that were not obviously connected to poor relief. It became the place where regular pay to miners working under Bergslagen was administered, and where they could take loans. The profits the warehouse made went to the funding new excavations in the mine.53

49 His appointment to oversee the warehouse was discussed in STORA gruvrätten 57 (1716), pp. 19–22. His qualification as a “good bergman’s son” (Swedish: wacker bergsmans son), was given on in May on p. 217 when Swab recommended him to also oversee the rotar. Swab suggested that he was in need of work, because his “troubles are all too familiar to us”.
50 The Swedish coin unit was Daler kopparmynt, which can be abbreviated to Cr or kmt.
51 STORA gruvrätten serie 57 (1716), p. 336. In March of that year, the sum was 8,720 daler kmt, as seen on Ibid, p. 162.
52 Ibid, p. 60.
53 In January, this was not administered via the warehouse, as seen in STORA gruvrätten serie 57 (1716), pp. 25–36. From February 1716, on pp. 49–50, the warehouse had begun to have this function. See also p. 9, pp. 60–61, p. 94, p. 123, p. 132, p. 149, p. 170, p. 207, in which various mining ventures, as well as payment for workers, are shown to have been transmitted via the warehouse.
In the court protocols for each day’s meetings there is usually a section titled Bergslagens arbeten, ‘works of the Bergslagen’, noting the work performed by miners working under Bergslagen in different caverns, as well as how many workers there were in each room. I have interpreted this as a section that documents work done under the direct charge of Bergslagen as a conglomerate, to differentiate it from work directed by individual bergsmän within the pairs. Bergslagen had officially kept a workforce of miners numbering between 200–300 people throughout the seventeenth century. A large number of miners working directly under Bergslagen was nothing new in 1716.54 In the sections noting the ‘works’ of Bergslagen, miners under the pay of Bergslagen received their payment via the warehouse. In the protocols there is no statement revealing that anything new or remarkable was happening, apart from the fact that the payment was transmitted via this new institution. There is no revelation that miners were being removed from their placement in privately operating pairs of bergsmän to taking their pay from Bergslagen. As mentioned, the purpose of the warehouse, from the beginning, was also to discourage miners in the pay of private bergsmän to take their wages there. According to the mining court in 1716, the warehouse existed for miners who “enjoy the payment of Bergslagen”, meaning miners who did not have steady employment in individual pairs of bergsmän. 55 The warehouse had become an administrative centre for Bergslagen.

The issue of what functions the warehouse should have was briefly debated in 1716, when the question of whether it represented an unfair competition for the burghers was raised: “But since the court does not want for the people to be handled otherwise than with the greatest reason, and for them to make better purchases than they could have at the burghers’ shop.”

Essentially, the discussion was stalled. Bergström was asked to wait out the month so that he would not have to force the miners to pay more for something than the value warranted. The court would investigate his receipts, so that his purchases for the warehouse were in accordance with its stated purpose.56 This discussion shows that the court saw it as more undesirable for the warehouse to have higher prices than the burghers should at the marketplace. According to the court, the warehouse in fact should compete with the burghers if possible. Swab’s intent with the warehouse was certainly that it should have an advantage over the burghers’ prices, if only so that miners in danger of starvation would be able to afford the price of grain.

The reforms proposed to the Board of Mines in 1715, and presented to the mining court in 1716, had various causes, as has been outlined above. All of these reforms had a direct effect on the economy of the Great Copper Mine.

54 Heckscher (1940), p. 44. See also Lindroth (1955), Vol. 1. pp. 185–188, regarding Bergslagen’s mining works.
55 STORA gruvätten serie 57 (1716), p. 18.
56 Ibid, p. 22.
When this oeconomy was investigated by the state in 1724, the results of these reforms were studied and evaluated. The question was then as it is now: what had been the intention behind the reforms? The discussion about how to achieve economic equality among the bergsmän, and the discussion about competing with the burghers, offer clues to how Anders Swab and his allies saw the oeconomy of the mine. The idea of equality among the bergsmän was desirable was seen as a given, however. Swab expressed his view of the burghers’ role in the oeconomy of the mine more strongly, and more controversially.

The ‘two societies’: Anders Swab and the problem of the burghers at the Great Copper Mine

The reforms of 1716 had particular implications for the status of the burghers in Falun. Swab’s idea that the warehouse might compete with the burghers carried over into other economic discussions. In one deliberation at the mining court that was unrelated to the warehouse, Swab gave an indication of his opinion of what the burghers’ role should be in the town’s oeconomy. He ordered all of the members of the town’s burgher administration—among them Johan Holenius—to leave the mining court. He also ordered bergsmän who were also members of the burgher estate to leave. Swab said that while he had previously wanted to present suggestions to all of Bergslagen, he now wanted to confer with the estate of the bergsmän only. This order was questioned by Holenius, who said that he was a deputy at the mining court and was of the same stature as everybody else present. Swab replied that the decent thing to do was for the “town society” to leave. What had passed between “the two societies” now prevented him from speaking while burghers were present, he said.57

In another instance, Philip Trotzig, a burgher and a member of the town’s administration as well as a bergsman, was reprimanded because he had written a letter with content judged insulting towards the court. Trotzig begged to escape punishment, saying that he had a wife and children to support. The court gave him a lenient sentence on the condition that he would resign his position as a member of the town’s administration.58 The content of the offending letter he had written remains a mystery. At one point, Swab asked him to which “society” he thought he belonged—shortly before Trotzig was asked to give up his status as a burgher.59

These instances, coupled with Swab’s proposition that the warehouse for grains should compete with the burghers’ sales at the town market, reveal that Swab did not envision the burghers as a part of the oeconomy of the Great

57 STORA gruvrätten serie 57 (1716), p. 185 “Dhe hindrade honom, what emel. Begge societerne är passerat och skulle derföre hålla anständigt, att de af stadt Societeten, sielfwilligt taga afråde...”
Copper Mine. His vision was something apart from the Swedish state’s structure of the Diet, in which the burgurers represented one of the four estates. It was closer to the idea of a *bergstad*, inspired by German mining towns, and possibly the oeconomy of ironworks.60

Falun and the Great Copper Mine’s administrations were fused into one entity in 1720, a final step in the process of economic reforms begun in 1716. At this early stage, in 1716, Swab had the mandate to shut out members of the burgher estate from discussions at the mining court, for the reason that they were burgurers. This highlighted the crucial status Great Copper Mine held in comparison to other businesses in Falun, and what that meant for Swab’s conceptualization the town’s oeconomy.

4.5 Norms of oeconomy in the 1716 reforms

In this section, I present examples in the sources that reveal the economic reasoning underlying the reforms. For instance, what did the actors at the mining court and in the Board of Mines regard as natural and normal when it came to oeconomy, with regard to these reforms?

In 1715, the Board of Mines discussed Anders Swab’s suggestions for an improvement of the “*oeconomie or hushållning*” of the Great Copper Mine. Apart from this, the word *hushållning* (oeconomy) is sparingly used. However, both this protocol and the protocols of the mining court dealt with oeconomy when they were discussing the reproduction and maintaining of the operation and the social order at the Great Copper Mine. One thing that stands out from a reading of these protocols is that the Board of Mines supported greater regulation via the appointment of new overseers, and a more effective distribution of work and takings among the *bergsmän*. With the implementation of a warehouse for grains, it was taken as a given that the Great Copper Mine and the state had a responsibility to provide for the miners placed in the pay of *Bergslagen*.

At this early date, the idea of a warehouse did not meet with much opposition. As mentioned earlier, the issue was raised about whether the warehouse was supposed to compete with the burgurers selling at the marketplace, and Swab appeared to argue that it should. Although the warehouse from the beginning was supposed to compete with the burgurers, it was still seen as compatible with the oeconomy of Falun and the Great Copper Mine according to the Board of Mines and the mining court. Any negative effects that this reform might have had on the local burgurers’ trade and on the shopkeepers in Falun were not discussed.61 There was no natural place for the burgurers’ trade and

61 RA BkH *Protokoll* (1715) E 4, pp. 2261–2263.
subsistence in the vision for the oeconomy of the Great Copper Mine that Anders Swab presented. At this point, other representatives of both courts also appeared to agree with him.

The lessening of copper ore that Eli Heckscher has named as the main cause of the mine’s decline was not mentioned as a cause for economic hardship.\textsuperscript{62} One of the main problems that the Board of Mines and Swab identified with the oeconomy of the mine was not the decline of copper, nor was the lack of wood mentioned as a depletion of a natural resource. The issue was instead discussed as a problem of inefficient utilization of the resources at hand. There is little evidence from the sources to show that Swab or other actors expressed the motivation to reshape the whole oeconomy according to a set ideal. Rather, the discussions in the protocols show that they enacted the economic reforms that they perceived as necessary in that moment, in line with a statement Swab would later make to the Royal Commission in 1724: “… you give a different remedy to someone who is ill than to someone who is well.”\textsuperscript{63}

The reform to abolish the game of dice did have a long-term aim of creating a sort of equality among \textit{bergsmän} that had not apparently existed before, and reshaping long held traditions at the mine. But the warehouse for grains and the appointment of new overseers were not reforms that were framed with the aim of reshaping the oeconomy of the town and mine. The only openly ideologically coloured argument apparent in the sources is perhaps the one expressed by Swab when he dismissed the concerns of the burgher estate. Even there, he did not explain why he held these views. He would expand on his opinion of the burgher estate’s role in Falun and the Great Copper Mine at the Royal Commission in 1724, and this is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8 of this thesis.

At the mining court, there were arguments made for a limiting of the proposed reforms, which can be seen as having been framed in practical terms; for example, the mining court discussed the economic feasibility of hiring new overseers, and whether there was a pressing need to abolish the game of dice. When it came to the warehouse for grains, Anders Swab himself argued that there was no need to hire a treasurer there before they knew about what kind of functions the warehouse would have.\textsuperscript{64} There might have been a pressure on Swab to underplay the wide reach of these reforms, or he might not have seen them as so radical as they would appear to be later on. Arguments in favour of reforms that seemed to move towards an eventual change in the whole oeconomy of the Great Copper Mine were not explicitly stated to be for a great change. In these protocols, Swab and the Board of Mines seemed instead to respond to economic concerns in the way they knew how: without intending to cause a shift in the whole way of life at the Great Copper Mine.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{62} Heckscher (1940), p. 27.
  \item \textsuperscript{63} Ander Swab quoted in RA ÄK 408, Vol. 2 \textit{Akter, handlingar}, p. 55.
  \item \textsuperscript{64} RA BkH \textit{Protokoll (1715)} E 4, p. 2261.
\end{itemize}
Any pinpointing of a major shift in the mine’s oeconomy in these protocols goes against the stated aims of the reforms, which were to find practical solutions to immediate problems. This reading is the most fruitful for understanding how the hierarchies operated at the time and in the environment in which authority was not questioned. This can then be compared to the Royal Commission held in 1724, in which different groups who had complaints about the economic reforms were called to the court to discuss their complaints. What were the obvious responses to a crisis in such an environment according to the cultural mandate that the hierarchical structure of that time afforded? The protocols of the Board of Mines present a more unified group than the protocols of the mining court, and the mining court in turn comes across as having the object of manifesting unity, sometimes at the cost of not pursuing critical considerations.

Unlike during the Royal Commission in 1724, there was no direct conflict that had to be resolved in 1716. The discussions in the protocols of the mining court and the Board of Mines in 1715–1716 reveal what the normal responses to proposed reforms were, when shared notions of the ideal oeconomy were unquestioned. By contrast, the protocols of the Royal Commission to investigate oeconomy at the Great Copper Mine in 1724 reveal an ideal under heavy scrutiny, which had to defend itself. When Swab, and the Board of Mines, were confronted by the complaints that arose in response to the changes that had been caused by these reforms in 1723–1724, they formulated more strongly worded and openly ideologically framed arguments for the reforms than were in evidence at the time when they were implemented.

The reforms can be seen as heralding a new era, because of the visible effects they had in restructuring and centralizing the administration of the Great Copper Mine, and for the way they would come to define the mine’s relation to the townsfolk. However, in 1716, the responses to the economic crisis revealed not new ideas that would revolutionize the economic practices of the Great Copper Mine, but rather the pragmatic responses to an on-going crisis. Those responses were treated as a slight change—for some, granted, inconvenient and potentially troubling—to current economic practices. This change was not yet openly at odds with the notions of oeconomy upheld by the state, by the miners or by bergsmän. The opposition would manifest later, during the hearings of the investigation into the oeconomy of the Great Copper Mine in 1723–1724.

Levels of hierarchy and economic practices
This chapter concerns actors who were members of the local administration of the mine, and actors who were a part of the state’s administration of Swedish mines and metalworks. Through the reforms, the Board of Mines and the mining court outlined how much the operation of the mine should be regulated and how far their authority extended. The expansion of oeconomy on the level
of the state affected the hierarchical status of many of the people who worked in connection with the mine, not the least the bergsmän of lesser means and the local burghers. The status and experience of working bergsmän were apparently valued by these actors, however. When overseers for the warehouse were discussed, Bergström, a son of a bergsmän who had experience and roots within the local community, was appointed. His status and connections to the working bergsmän were cited as his chief merits.65

This appointment and the qualifications cited for him reveal an intention to integrate local knowledge with the expanding administration of the state. An appointment such as raises the question of whether the expansion of the economy of the state was really at the expense of the autonomy of local economy, or if the evolution of the state’s role in local economy was more organic. At any rate, this appointment shows that the members of the mining court might have wanted local knowledge and heritage to be utilized in the town and mine’s expanding economy.

If the intent was not for the state to expand its influence at the expense of local authority, this process, which Eli Heckscher observed as occurring during the eighteenth century, must be examined more critically. Did the economy of the Great Copper Mine change only in order for it to remain the same? Evidence that this was the stated intent on the part of the reformers led by Anders Swab seems clear enough, but what did the reforms actually accomplish when it came to changing working practices and shifting hierarchies at the Great Copper Mine? This question is followed up in the study of the Royal Commission of 1724, when the effects of the reforms were discussed by the people who were not present at their inception. Although it would be difficult to gauge their effects in the short time-span that had passed, the new overseers’ knowledge of mining practices had already been put to the test in 1724.

One obvious effect of the economic reforms implemented in 1716 was that they extended the administrative outreach of the state, via the Board of Mines, over the economy of the Great Copper Mine. The appointment of new overseers, and with them a more extensive documentation of the rotar and the wood supply, were clear examples of this effect. The abolishment of the game of dice, a practice dated to 1652 but had possibly existed since the Middle Ages in some form, overriding some small resistance of the local mining court, was another. The institution of a warehouse for grains was not as clear an example of the Board of Mines expanding its influence over the Great Copper Mine, since the warehouse did not originally have the aim to compete with individual bergsmän for influence over the miners. When the Board of Mines discussed the establishment of a warehouse for grains, Swab in effect said that it was supposed to be a form of aid to impoverished miners, rather than a fixed institution.66 There was no explicit discussion about a long-term encroachment

65 STORA gruvräten serie 57 (1716), p. 19.
66 RA BkH Protokoll (1715), p. 2261.
and a re-education of the authority of the *bergsmän*. However, Anders Swab did state from the beginning that the warehouse had the purpose of competing with the burghers’ trade at the marketplace.\(^67\) This meant that with the instituting of the warehouse, Swab and the Board of Mines might well have meant to expand the state’s influence over not only the oeconomy of the Great Copper Mine, but also of the oeconomy of Falun as a town.

Swab’s goal to create equality amongst the *bergsmän* can be understood according to the ideas about an ordered, hierarchical oeconomy. What separated hierarchical levels was not difference in wealth, or in the status that wealth alone could bring. Richer *bergsmän* were not meant to have a higher status than more impoverished ones. The level of hierarchy that one belonged to was rather determined by which group one belonged to, what type of responsibilities one had, and what type of work one performed. *Bergsmän* were meant to be equal to other *bergsmän*. The gaps in wealth between them had to be rectified.

Swab’s dismissive treatment of the burghers at the mining court shows that their competing with the warehouse might not have been an unintended consequence on his part. The links between different households were in the similarity of their structures. This included the way that the work was organized: the householder supervised his household, and the household obeyed him. Members of the household were tied together through a sense of mutual obligation. The householders’ authority was grounded in his sense of duty to those under his care, his duty to his superiors and his understanding of his own place within the oeconomy of the state.

Swab evidently had trouble fitting the practices of the burghers of Falun into this hierarchical system. This was evident in his disregard for their concerns when the warehouse for grains was discussed in 1716. This expansion of the Board of Mines’ oeconomy in Falun can be seen as the expansion of a higher level of oeconomy at the expense of a smaller, private level—the outer shell of the nesting doll swallowing up a smaller, inner one. The expansion was not obviously visible in every aspect of the town and mine’s oeconomy at the time, when the reforms were implemented, but the reforms did set in motion such a development.

### 4.6 Conclusion: The impact of the reforms

In the introduction to this chapter, I recounted how previous historians, notably Eli Heckscher, have characterized the economic reforms of 1716 and how the impact of these reforms has been understood. I noted that there was some confusion about the degree that the reforms could be seen as the cause of economic change, and the degree that they were just an official ratification of

\(^{67}\) STORA *gruvrätten serie* 57 (1716), p. 22.
changes that had already occurred many years earlier. As Heckscher showed, the economic process that made it more difficult for working bergsmän to work in the mine was occurring before Swab’s time. Did the reforms of 1716 hinder or hasten this process? Even after diving into the protocols of discussions that led to the reforms, the question of how radical they were is difficult to answer. Contention existed even at the time about how many of the changes that happened to the Great Copper Mine’s economic practices happened naturally, due to the predetermined development of the economy, and how many were steered by the political ambitions of the mining administration.

In fact, Swab’s reform of the working order of the fourth-parts, in which the game of dice was abolished and the ore was divided equally amongst the pairs, had the purpose to combat inequality among the bergsmän. This reform was implemented as an answer to that a process was happening in which certain bergsmän were enriching themselves while others were struggling, something that was seen as a problem. The redistribution of the ore was an attempt to reverse this development. Eli Heckscher has characterized the reforms as having furthered this process instead. As I have found, there is little evidence in the discussions and deliberations about the warehouse that either Swab, the Board of Mines, or the representatives of the mining court intended to force the miners who took their pay from the bergsmän to take payment from Bergslagen. The reforms had the stated aim to create equality among the bergsmän, and to provide the miners with vital necessities. The question of whether the reforms were radical or if they had the purpose to preserve the status quo could be seen as a question of whether they were for modernization, or if they were conservative. That division of ideologies is not useful to apply to the early modern period, if one purposes to understand how the reforms were perceived at the time. It is more relevant to suppose that Swab and others pictured an ideal oeconomy and an ideal order that was static and ordained by God. The reforms were implemented with the purpose of achieving this order.

Work in the mine was becoming longer and more intense during this period, as the copper ore declined in amount and in quality. An ever-greater investment of capital was necessary for the bergsmän to be able to continue their enterprise. It was easier to keep shares for those who did not have to invest in the increasingly expensive mining work. More and more, the shares were regarded as papers signifying a value rather than sites of work and reinvestment. Poorer bergsmän traded their shares for work as guards and miners. This was the economic development that threatened the existence of the smaller-scale utilizing bergsmän, and the traditional oeconomy of the Great

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68 This is discussed by Anders Swab and the Royal Commission’s president Sven Lagerberg in 1724. See RA ÅK 408, Vol. 1, Kommissionsprotokoll, p. 561. The long term economic processes making it more difficult for the bergsmän who worked close to the mine to hold on to their shares were discussed by Eli Heckscher in Heckscher (1940), pp. 44–45.
69 Heckscher (1940), p. 49.
Copper Mine, and had already done so for a few decades. When it came to this process, the reforms of 1716 could be seen as a consequence of it rather than a cause.

There is still the possibility to consider that the reforms sped up the process. Heckscher has highlighted the role of the warehouse for grains in furthering the proletarianization of the miners by removing them from the pay of bergsmän to the pay of Bergslagen. As shown here, there is little evidence that the warehouse was meant to function in this way, and also little evidence to show that there was any type of official, large-scale removal of miners from one type of employment to a different one. The miners who received payment via the warehouse were listed in the category of the works of Bergslagen, indicating that they were already under the employment of Bergslagen. There is no evidence of a perception that anything about the employment of the miners ought to be changed.

To summarize, my aim is not to disprove that the destruction of those practices took place over the course of the eighteenth century. However, reading how the reforms in 1716 were discussed and implemented shows no evidence that the mining court or the Board of Mines meant for the bergsmän to cede their administrative powers to Bergslagen. The protocols of the Board of Mines and the mining court in fact show that Swab was trying to reverse this development.

Swab’s complex views on the proper roles of bergsmän, burghers and, to a certain extent, miners were brought to the fore in the Royal Commission of 1724, which is studied in subsequent chapters. At the Commission, the subjects of his reforms would step forward to give their own views of them. They were not fully able to do so in 1716. However, the early discussions of these reforms hinted at the holistic way Swab and the Board of Mines envisioned the oeconomy of the copper mine at the time when of the first reforms.
CHAPTER 5.
The Royal Commission of 1724 and the evolution of the bergsmän

In this and the subsequent chapters, I examine the arguments presented by different actors and groups at the Royal Commission in 1724. Many of these pertained to the consequences of the reforms that had been implemented in 1716. The focus of this chapter is on some of the main disagreements with these reforms, and how they were related to different conceptions of oeconomy.

5.1 Introducing the Commission

This chapter features a short chronological description of how the Commission began in 1723–1724, along with a presentation of some of the main actors, such as Immanuel Grossman. The whole list of subjects for the Commission is outlined, along with a discussion about why some things might have been omitted, while other things were included. Next, Grossman’s own arguments regarding why he petitioned the Diet are outlined alongside Anders Swab’s defence against some of their accusations.

The text sent to the commission by a group of ten so-called brukande bergsmän, ‘working’ bergsmän, is presented together with Grossman’s arguments. The bergsmän who signed the presented petition were in charge of every aspect of metal extraction and refinement. They were responsible for providing work for miners, to restock the wood supply, and to take charge of the transportation of the ore to refinements and trading ports. As share owners and workers within the mine, and as potential representatives of Bergslagen and the mining court, the bergsmän naturally had an investment in the entire mine’s oeconomy, and the channels to make their opinions about it known. With this in mind, it is clear as to why it was in Swab’s interest to devalue Grossman’s contributions as a bergsmän, and emphasize his other roles. The argument between these actors came down to their different ideas on where legitimacy rested, and on what grounds oeconomy could be practiced and debated. This is what this chapter purposes to uncover.
Royal Commissions as appeasement tools in early modern Sweden

In her research about royal commissions instigated in Sweden during the mid-seventeenth century to the early eighteenth century, Marie Lennersand argues that these commissions were a way for the crown to both communicate with and appease the populace, promoting the idea that their complaints were heard and that they could affect their situation. This was typical of the practices of the Swedish bureaucracy during that period. Royal commissions were relatively common in Sweden up until the 1730s. According to Lennersand, this petitioning were a part of a common form of interaction between the crown and its subjects during this period. They were a way for the regime to make a manifestation of the mutual benefits of an ordered, hierarchical society.¹

In the seventeenth century, the commissions were a way for the absolutist monarch to affirm his support from local peasants by showing them attention. The commissions were usually set up in order to punish local officials accused that the peasants had complained about. During the 1720s, the Diet continued to send commissions in this way, in order to placate rural voices of dissatisfaction and keep a reign on local officials.²

Lennersand’s emphasis is on the commissions held in agrarian milieus, and the ways the ruling elite used them as tools of hierarchical control. It is also possible to interpret the commission held in Falun in 1724 in this way, especially considering the way Swab was questioned and criticised. However, this commission was remarkable for the size of its investigation, for the different facets of economic life investigated and the many different groups who sent petitions and were present at its hearings. This research also concerns the agency of the hierarchically inferior groups who petitioned the Diet, rather than what purpose the Diet had.

Since the 1650s there had already been at least three royal commissions held in Falun in order to investigate various complaints. One was held in 1720. The actions of the people who complained in 1724 were not unprecedented. There would have been a script in place for them to use when they wanted to send their complaints to the Diet. Royal commissions visited Falun in the 1760s, because the bergstad continued to be the site of experiments in economic reform and ensuing popular upheaval. As late as 1786, there was a large commission to investigate the economy of the mine.³

The use of commissions as a form of both communication and propaganda resembles how local courts functioned during the seventeenth century. In many cases, like in Falun, these local courts were the sites of local governance, not merely concerned with upholding the law but with administering institutions such as hospitals and poorhouses and organizing collective work in the village. In a close study of the mining court’s records from 1650 to 1682, the Falun historian Sture Kristiansson shows that the local court routinely dealt out milder punishments than the higher courts.⁴ This can be interpreted as a

¹ Lennersand (1999).
form of soft power manifestation. It deferred the right to use political violence to the highest court of the crown, while at the same time instilling the local court with the image of benevolent mercy, easing the relations between the crown and its subjects. In this way, it was similar to the ting, in place in agrarian villages and towns. It dealt with all manner of questions and problems and functioned, at least in appearance, as a tool of two-way communication between subjects and superiors as well as a disciplining body.\(^5\)

The arena of the local court was mainly a space for householders: male heads of households who had a right to partake in decision-making processes. Servants could make complaints and send in petitions and then attend if the court called them to attend. For servants and for women who were not widows, their role was that of a faithful subordinate.\(^6\) People belonging to these groups could also use their subordination within social hierarchy as a discursive tactic during the early modern period, often by appealing to a higher hierarchical level at a higher court and then highlighting their immediate superior’s failure to protect them and take care of them. People belonging to occupations could be well versed in how best to present these cases to the local courts, what type of status they should assume, and what kind of language they could use.\(^7\)

### 5.2 How the Commission of 1724 began

The Diet sent a Royal Commission to Falun in February 1724 because the surgeon, burgher and bergsman Immanuel Grossman wrote a list of complaints outlining what he thought was wrong with the economic administration of the mine. Grossman travelled to Stockholm in the spring of 1723, accompanied by the mining guard Eric Erichsson, and supported by the trader Abraham Sundblad and a few other members of the Falun burgher estate who saw the creation of the bergstad and Swab’s other reforms as threats to their livelihoods. Grossman stayed in Stockholm throughout April to observe the sessions of the Diet and formulate a list of complaints about the mismanagement of the Great Copper Mine and the institution of the warehouse for grains.

Although the Diet quickly dismissed most of his initial demands, Grossman won a victory when he managed to convince the Diet that the conditions at the mine were so serious that a Royal Commission with the purpose of investigating the economy there was needed. In February 1724, the Commission arrived in Falun to review the many letters, articles, petitions, and bills that had been presented to them by the different parties that were in conflict there:

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\(^5\) Andersson (1998); Kristiansson (1996); Lennersand (1999).


bergsmän, burghers, miners, guards and, of course, Anders Swab, whose reforms were the main subject of criticism. The Royal Commission first met on the February 3, 1724. It lasted to May 18.

The baron and council member of the Diet, Swen Lagerberg, led the Commission. Lagerberg was a former officer and a veteran of the Great Northern War. By 1724, he was a dominating figure in the administration of Sweden’s financial politics. He was the appointed the leader of Statskontoret during the first decades of the Age of Liberty, when the absolutist reign of King Karl XII had ended; absolutism was discredited and the Diet held unprecedented power. In government, he was second in rank to Arvid Horn (1664–1742), the president of the Privy Council Chancellery. Horn has a claim to have been the most powerful figure in the country during the first years of the Age of Liberty, and Lagerberg was in effect his second in command. Lagerberg was also close to Horn personally. However, he was not as much of a public figure as Horn, and was thus subjected to less criticism and opposition. His position within government was more stable as a result. The fact that a man of such status, also held in such high esteem, led the Royal Commission to investigate economy at the Great Copper Mine shows that the mine was still regarded as important to the oeconomy of the kingdom at that time.

Lagerberg’s deputies were the County Governor Peter Danckwardt, the lawyer Johan Rosenstolpe, the assessor Nils Lagerstolpe and the kammarråd Karl Hindrich Wattrang. They could call for access to the various bills for costs and purchases, rotes and accounts that belonged to the Mine’s treasury, the warehouse, the manufactory, and other institutions that were subjects to their investigation.

During the Commission’s hearings, elders of the mining court were usually in attendance, although they were never all present at once. Swab always attended when he was required to do so. Grossman and his allies, as well as all the other groups who had sent in petitions and complaints to the commission, were present at the hearings when they were called to testify. When it came to the miners, there was a discussion about if they should be allowed to attend at all, and how many could attend. Bergsmän of the mining court were also sometimes missing from the hearings even though they were supposed to be present. This was because they were at their country estates supervising seasonal farm work. As the Commission proceeded, the commissioners noted these absences and the commissioners suggested that Swab had deliberately

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9 Statskontoret can be defined as an agency for public management.
10 In the Swedish biographical encyclopedia, Svenskt biografiskt lexicon, he is called “along with Horn, the real leader of the country’s fates.” Hofberg et al. Svenskt biografiskt handlexikon II: 4 (1906), pp. 3–4.
neglected to call them to the court. However, the Commission lasted from early February to well into the spring; the bergsmän who owned estates had the responsibility to go home to manage them.

The fact that these members of the court had multiple responsibilities meant that they could not manage the mine’s economy, since they could not regularly partake in the Commission’s hearings in which this economy was decided. The divided responsibilities of the bergsmän and the question of who was meant to take charge of the management of the mine was also one of the main subjects of the Commission’s first hearings. The reason why the bergsmän and their role in the mine’s economy became the focus of the conflict was that Grossman identified their decline in status as due to the economic hardships they faced as “the fundamental cause from which infinite troubles stem.” The list of complaints presented to the Commission in which they were identified as the main areas of discussion are summarized in the following section. After this, the chapter will focus on the ways that Grossman, Swab, and the bergsmän discussed and argued over the work of the bergsmän and how it fit with the economy of the bergstad.

5.3 The groups who sent petitions: A summary of actors and sources

The groups that are important to this study are the bergsmän, the miners, the burgners, and the orphans—usually women or girls—who worked in a manufactory that was started in 1720. The views of the commissioners who represented the body of the state are also taken into account in order to separate their viewpoint from Swab’s. This emphasizes how he could be both representative of and a subordinate to the state in this courtroom, depending on whom he was addressing.

As already mentioned, the main individual actors who receive scrutiny in this chapter are Grossman and Swab. In the sources, Lagerberg and the other commissioners are frequently presented as acting in unity, and are thus often referred to as “the commissioners” here. The individual actors are important to note when they were prominent proponents of different viewpoints of economy. I have highlighted the groups I chosen here because the nature of their work and status were central to how the economy of the bergstad functioned.

When complaints are presented as being written by “the bergsmän”, or “the burgners”, these categories might not fully explain whom the actors involved were or whom they were speaking for. However, the petitions were frequently named after the status of the writers—like the “complaints of the burghers”,

13 RA ÄK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, p. 446.
for example—and this is how they will be referred to here, with the understanding that the labels do not necessarily tell the whole truth about who the documents represented. The complainers could also reject the categorizations imposed on them by others. The burghers who wrote to complain about the warehouse, for example, did not wish to be conflated with the richer members of the same estate who held high positions in the town administration and who owned shares in the mine.

Similarly, the working bergsmän who came out in support of Grossman criticized wealthier members of their own group who did not oversee the entire process of extracting and refining the copper in the same way that they did.\textsuperscript{14} The wealthy bergsmän they criticized were the same group that Swab and his supporters blamed for the mine’s ruin when they were defending themselves against the criticism levelled at them by, among others, a number of bergsmän.\textsuperscript{15} As mentioned in Chapter 2, it was common to characterize opponents as being steered by a rich elite group who only looked out for their own private interests.\textsuperscript{16} It is only in the case of the miners that a petition can be said to represent a group defined by a singular type of work; the miners were distinguished by their work in the mine. It is clear from the nature of these complaints that these miners did not own the shares they were working on. Work in the mine also affected how they presented themselves: their legitimacy rested in the way that they “risked their lives in a work that held many dangers”.\textsuperscript{17} However, the miners’ status was still uncertain, as there was a question of whether they answered to the bergsmän or to Bergslagen, and whether they had a right to petition the court.

The main crux of the miners’ complaint was that they did not receive payment. According to the mining statutes, the miners were meant to receive a portion of their wages in grains rather than money.\textsuperscript{18} Due to the poor quality of the soil around Falun and the lack of coin within the town, grain was in short supply. Swab, however, used his fortune and his connections with traders out of town to provide the warehouse with grain. Through his efforts, the warehouse apparently saved the mining population from starvation during the difficult years of war and bad harvest, 1717–1720.\textsuperscript{19} In spite of this, more than 200 miners expressed concern that the warehouse had become the site where

\textsuperscript{14} RA ÄK Vol 2 Akter, handlingar, pp. 28–29 contains a copy of the letter of a bergsmän. For the complaints of the burghers, see Ibid, pp. 870–880.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, pp. 32–69.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, pp. 32–69 and pp. 835–843 contain examples of Swab painting his opponents as being motivated only by self-interest. See also pp. 870–880, showing the members of the burghers who sent in complaints doing the same.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid, p. 169. See also Bertil Boethius quoting Olof Naucler’s thesis from 1702 where he states that “to be sure it is more bareable to join the military than to risk one’s life under the dangerous cliffs which just as surely crush the careless and the careful, the peaceful and the criminal.” In Boethius (1951), p. 304.
\textsuperscript{18} This was discussed in the commission during the miners’ hearings in RA ÄK 408, Vol. I Kommissionsprotokoll, pp. 585–588.
\textsuperscript{19} Boethius (1951), pp. 244–246.
they received their wages. They were worried that the agents of the warehouse were cheating them. Another prominent concern was that they were worried about not being paid at all, since payments were frequently delayed. When a lack of fuel stalled work in the mine the miners went idle, and they complained that it was impossible for them to support themselves and feed their families under such conditions. The main targets of their complaints were the new overseers who they claimed were incompetent administrators. The miners wanted their overseers to have the experience of having worked in the mine themselves, and for them to understand fully the mine’s inner workings.

The burghers had a different set of complaints. They saw the warehouse as a competitor to their own businesses, a competitor with an unfair advantage. The local burghers to Falun characterized themselves as poor and not able to form the connections that Swab had access to when he obtained grain. According to the burghers, the warehouse threatened the livelihood of impoverished members of their estate. The list of complaints distinguished between those members of the burgher estate who worked in small shops, and those who took part in the town’s administration who, according to the rules of the Bergstad, would have also owned shares in the mine, making them Bergsmän as well as members of the estate of the burghers. The burghers’ complaints are presented more thoroughly in Chapter 8.

The complicated way that the groups are defined is more of an opportunity than a problem. There were multiple points where the different actors shared a similar analysis of what type of problems the mine’s oeconomy was suffering from. One point in which they differed was when it came to where they placed themselves in the town’s hierarchy, what they considered their duties, and whom they considered the householders superior to them. In other words, it is interesting how they defined themselves and others. Taking into account the fact that they needed to do so meant that there was room for doubt. There was clearly a certain level of flexibility in how one could place oneself in certain groups and hierarchies. Flexibility meant that there was the possibility for movement and change. In this chapter, the rapidly shifting status and practices of the Bergsmän are highlighted. The ambiguity of their situation allowed Swab, Grossman, and the others to be able to articulate what they thought about power, and what they thought the purpose of the mine’s activity should be, and how it related to the idea of oeconomy.

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20 See RA ÄK 408, Vol. 2, Akter, handlingar, p. 163, in which the miners state that although not all of them were forced to take payment from the warehouse, they believed they soon would be.
21 Ibid, pp. 875–877.
5.4 What constituted the oeconomy of the Great Copper Mine, as outlined by the Commission

Outlining, investigating, and possibly reforming the oeconomy of the bergstad was the Commission’s general purpose. The specific topics that were of interest were steered by the need to answer a list of different complaints sent in by many different actors.

Oeconomy came to be defined as a certain set of economic issues that were prioritized differently and would be solved in different ways according to what the commissioners decided constituted ‘good’ oeconomy at the Commission’s conclusion. The contents of the list and how the issues were prioritized were based on where and who it originated from. From the outset, the Commission was established in order to answer the complaints of Immanuel Grossman. Grossman can be seen as the individual who decided which economic issues were prioritized by the Commission. He thus was influential regarding what oeconomy was to the bergstad Falun in 1724.

However, Grossman did not have the power to decide which conclusions the Commission would draw from his list. He set the agenda, but he had little formal power at the mining court. His opponent, Anders Swab, was the head of the town’s and mine’s joint administration, and was a member of the Board of Mines. Since the reforms under review by the Commission were based on his economic plans, Swab can also be seen as an originator the list of priorities for oeconomy presented by the Commission. In order to find the topics specifically related to oeconomy in the Royal Commission of 1724, Swab’s texts are also practical to study, since they most frequently discuss the concept and give enough detailed descriptions to infer what he and his supporters connected with that term. Swab was perhaps the actor on the Commission who spoke about the most about hushållning or oeconomie in that way. The ideals and practices he mentioned in connection with the word in his lengthy opening statement also recurred in the other texts he presented to the Commission, even when he did not extrapolate on oeconomy itself. Since he kept bringing the same points forward, his definitions of oeconomy set the tone for how it was discussed.

However, not even Swab could decide how the commissioners would interpret the list of issues. Other than Swab’s view, the list that the commissioners compiled tells how oeconomy was conceived by the Swedish Diet, which in this arena represented the level of the state. In short, the list cannot be said to have had a single author. All of the actors present who discussed, and were subject to discussion at the commission’s hearings, interpreted the issues presented on the list in different ways. That also means that this list represented what was considered relevant to discuss in relation to oeconomy in 1724 by most, if not all of the actors concerned. However, there was one point on the list whose relevance to the oeconomy of the bergstad the commissioners disputed from the start: the point about the manufactory and children’s house.
The whole list is presented here, then I discuss why that point was controversial.

The commission had the stated purpose of examining oeconomy. As it was carried out, the topics that fell under that umbrella were noted in twelve points:

1. The lack of coin in Falun;
2. The lack of charcoal;
3. The lack of wood;
4. The complaints directed against the warehouse for grains;
5. The use of tokens of credit;
6. How to solve the debts of the bergsmän;
7. The petition from the bergsmän;
8. The letters of complaint sent in by the burghers;
9. The letters of complaint sent by the miners;
10. The letter of complaint sent by the people in Avesta, where the copper was shipped and minted;
11. Problems with the bureau of transportation of the copper to Avesta;
12. The question of whether to keep funding the manufactory and children’s house in Falun.

This list covered the entire infrastructure of the Great Copper Mine and touched on its dependence on the connection to the refining that happened in Avesta, a neighbouring town that was subject to the same mining court. To begin with, the Commission set out to investigate the problems laid out in the complaint by Grossman, namely the lack of coin, the lack of charcoal and, in connection, the lack of wood, and the institution of the warehouse. There was a separate investigation about the use of tokens, known as poletter. The commissioners eventually ruled that they should not be used. Additionally, their previous use had not caused any great damage to the Great Copper Mine’s economic structure, nor had it been illegal. They judged the tokens to have had the same practical function as bills of payment. As long as the person handing out the tokens gave an open and accurate estimation of his holdings and debts, there was no reason why the system of using tokens should be seen as criminal. This ruling presupposed that Falun’s merchants and bergsmän had used the tokens honestly in trade to symbolize the wealth that these actors possessed at a time of crisis, when the town’s supply of coin was low.

In this thesis, the particular discussions about the use of tokens in the Commission are not a central focus. This is because this investigation’s purpose is to outline dynamics between different groups in the bergstad that came together, the ways that they used their status to argue their causes though petitions, and the different ways that they defined oeconomy. The discussion

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23 RA ÅK Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar pp. 1–4
24 RA ÅK 408 Vol. 1 Kommissionsprotokoll, pp. 969–971, pp. 983–984.
about the *poletter*, although interesting on its own, was seldom directly related to these issues. The issue of the lack of wood and charcoal, and the lack of coin, are touched on whenever they relate to the discussions surrounding the different groups.

The Commission dealt with a number of complaints that the commissioners dismissed. The petitions of the *bergsmän*, the burghers and the miners received special hearings, however. There was also a lengthy investigation and discussion about a clothing manufactory for children that was founded in 1720 on Swab’s initiative. This discussion, along with complementary legal documents, bills, and inventories, constitutes the main source group that reveals something about how women at the Great Copper Mine were brought into the Commission’s investigation of oeconomy. However, this institution was also discussed in such a way that it is easy to overlook the fact that the work of young women and girls was the topic at hand. The manufactory was mostly referred to as being for the children of miners, or for orphans in general. Only Swab explicitly mentioned that it was meant to be a place to educate girls in order for them to be able to support themselves. The list of names of the people employed there also shows that that was the case in practice.25

When the list of issues investigated by the commission was compiled, the manufactory was mentioned as something to be discussed “apart from the general oeconomy”, meaning that its relevance was explicitly questioned from the start.26 Did they not see women’s work as a concern for the whole oeconomy of the *bergstad*? If not, why? The Commission avoided the topic of women’s work. There were widows who sent petitions to the Commission, mainly to claim they were being cheated out of their miner husbands’ inheritance. A miners’ widow named Margareta Anagria was such a woman. She complained to Swab that she had been promised to have her husbands’ debts removed after he died in the mine. Her husbands’ estate was managed by the mining court, as all miners’ estates were. Swab answered her letter briefly, denying her accusation in strong terms.27

This was one of the few cases where a widow’s petition was met with a response in the commission’s documents. Widows who sent complaints to the Commission were otherwise referred to the local mining court, so their concerns were not seen to be a part of the Commission’s investigation of the oeconomy of the *bergstad*. The Commission did not follow the widow Anagria’s case any further after Swab’s reply.

The manufactory and children’s house was still a point of discussion on the list. This means that it was relevant to the topic, even though the commission-

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25 RA ÅK 408 Vol. 2 *Akter, handlingar*, pp. 835–843, Swab’s pro memoria about the manufactory and children’s house. Ibid, pp. 849–851 for the list of the children who were assigned there.

26 Ibid.

ers expressed ambivalence about its relevance. The reason why the manufactory and children’s house was discussed by the Commission was because Swab had wanted to institute it in the first place. In spite of the fact that he dismissed the widow’s complaint against him, Swab saw the miners’ widows’ upkeep as an economic problem for the whole town that should be dealt with on the level of the bergstad rather than on the level of private households. This was apparent with some of his reasons for wanting to create a manufactory and workhouse for children, which are outlined in Chapter 7. The commissioners also apparently did see this manufactory as a topic worth discussing. It is perhaps significant that it was not stated in the list that the manufactory was meant to educate girls. The question about this institution was regarding whether the bergstad could afford to manage its upkeep, if it was an economic issue that should be dealt with on that level of oeconomy. It was not seen as essential. The question was not about how it could be managed better. It was about whether it should be kept at all.

Swab disagreed with the Diet on the point about the manufactory and children’s house’s role in the oeconomy of the mine. He also disagreed to a certain extent about the relevance of the burghers’ claims. Other than that, his priorities seemed to align with the Diet’s regarding which topics were of interest when it came to oeconomy. For the other parties who sent complaints, it is more difficult to find views that specifically state what fits the definition of oeconomy, because they did not use that word and concept to describe their own activities. Since the complaints usually only touched on the Great Copper Mine’s economic administration as it related to the complainers’ own economic practices, it might be inferred that oeconomy in the context of this document only denoted the preservation and management of the bergstad from an elite standpoint, a management comprising all of the work’s economic practices viewed from above. However, many of the petitions and complaints were related to the economic problems facing the bergstad as a whole because they concerned many of the topics listed by the Commission. The petitioners saw themselves as more qualified to discuss their own areas of work than some people who were appointed by the Board of Mines.

Ultimately, some of the petitioners were arguing for a greater autonomy for their private economic practices at the expense of the local- and state-level oeconomy, while other petitioners were taking the local and the state representatives to task for not acting according to what they perceived to be their responsibilities. Therefore, for the petitioners, the Commission still amounted to a discussion about levels of hierarchy according to notions of an ordered oeconomy, even though they might not have actually agreed with the definition of what good oeconomy was, as defined by the commissioners and Swab.

Referencing the Royal Commission, how relevant is it to discuss the concept of oeconomy on different levels when definitions of that term cannot be

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found on any level other than that of the state? This is not necessarily a problem. In order to discover how different actors might have argued for different viewpoints, Swab’s descriptions of his goals and ideals when it came to oeconomy will have to be compared to the ways that the complainers described a similar reality, from their points of view, regardless of whether they used similar terminology. The conclusions the different actors and groups came to about practical matters is what is important here. In particular, Grossman’s views will be examined in this way.

5.5 Arguments on oeconomy between Grossman, the bergsmän, and Swab

Immanuel Grossman took issue with many of Swab’s economic reforms and the ideas behind them. The reforms had had the backing of the Board of Mines, meaning that they had received legitimacy from the Diet. However, Grossman’s complaints were, in a way, also acknowledged by the Diet, since they led to the Commission. This did not mean that his views were judged to be right, but Grossman’s complaints demonstrate that it was possible for actors to put policies implemented by representatives of the state into question. As is shown here, the way for Grossman to do this was to use his ambiguous position as a bergsmän within the society of the bergstad to try to enhance his own status.

It is clear that the shifting status of the bergsmän and economic practices were a key part of his argumentation; they were also what he based his claim to legitimacy on. Grossman’s economic arguments are presented together with those of a group of ten petitioning bergsmän in order to show similarities and differences. Swab’s responses, outlining his economic theories, are also included. Next, I show how the different parties claimed responsibility and legitimacy as the basis for why they held authority over the oeconomy of the Great Copper Mine. In general, this part of the investigation deals with the questions posed in the introductory chapter regarding whether it was possible to question the established norms of oeconomy.

The economic arguments

Grossman’s first letter to the Diet and a private letter outlining his strategies in posing the complaint have survived as copies in the Commission’s documents. He also co-signed a number of different texts, among them a complaint he wrote together with a number of bergsmän. In this longer, more detailed text he described his views on how the economic hardships of the bergstad were tied to the loss of status of the bergsmän. The arguments presented there can easily be compared to Swab’s defence of his economic reforms, since he
also placed a particular emphasis on the role of the **bergsmän** in the oeconomy of the mine. Grossman’s views on whom in the town hierarchy held the ultimate responsibility for the **bergstad** are examined together with Swab’s views. The text of the **bergsmän** presented here is not the same as the one co-signed with Grossman. These **bergsmän** come across as acting more independently.

In the first, short list of complaints, Grossman did not use the word oeconomy. In some ways, he held contrasting views on the issues that Swab connected with that concept. For instance, Grossman was strongly critical of the warehouse for grains, which he viewed as unnecessary and a waste of the mine’s resources. He saw this spending as an example of the wasteful practices that had caused the mine its present economic woes. The one to blame for this wasteful institution was Swab, who had also issued many of the reforms that were subject to Grossman’s criticism.²⁹

Although Grossman belonged to many different groups and was most notably identified as a field surgeon, Birgitta Ericsson takes particular note of his status as an ally to the cause of the Falun burghers.³⁰ An investigation of one of Grossman’s more detailed reports about the economic issues facing the **bergstad** shows that he was more concerned with the problems relating to the mine than has been previously supposed, and related his complaint directed at the warehouse to the way it affected the **bergsmän**. He saw the problems of the **bergsmän** as the core reason for the entire mine’s problems, and revealed that he had plenty of detailed insights and opinions about their practices and the challenges they faced. He also explicitly identified himself as a **bergsman**.

When it came to the warehouse for grains, Grossman argued that it caused problems for the whole **bergstad**, in part because it supplanted individual **bergsmän** who had previously provided food and clothing for their miners themselves. Since the miners bought these wares from the warehouse—something that Grossman said they were now forced to do—they demanded to receive their wages in money rather than in such goods. Grossman contended that it had been better when the miners had received two-thirds of their payment in kind, the **bergsmän** providing them with clothes and food. It was impossible for the burghers to compete with the new warehouse, and thus it became impossible for the **bergsmän** to buy wares at the market that they could use to clothe and feed their own workers. Now, the miners no longer worked under the **bergsmän** in practice, even though they still formally belonged to the work teams of the **bergsmän**. Instead, the miners worked under Bergslagen, a conglomeration consisting of a grouping of rich, influential **bergsmän** who owned estates and were buying up shares from the smaller-scale, working **bergsmän**.

²⁹ For a full transcription of Grossman’s letter see RA ÄK 408, Vol. 3 Akter, suppliker, pp 2–40.
Grossman criticized the wealthy bergsmän buying out the shares, whom he claimed hired poor, worn-out bergsmän to work their shares for them. These tired, impoverished bergsmän could not supervise the work with the same vigour—Grossman used the word ‘force’—when supervising shares that they did not themselves own. The waning of the wood supply, the chronic shortage of charcoal, and the increasing anger of the miners did, of course, not help them in their work.31

For Grossman, it was not ideal that the miners now demanded payment in coin, but he seemed to see it as pragmatic to support them in this case. He claimed that it was rational of them to demand payment in coin since they would then be able to decide how to make their own purchases. The miners ought to be able to make their own purchases since they, rightly according to Grossman, distrusted the management of the warehouse for grains, believing that they were being cheated there. Grossman also argued that the miners would be capable of making the best purchases for themselves, if the bergsmän were unable to do so, since they knew the nature of the work they were doing. He consistently argued that the newly appointed overseers and administrators of the bergstad did not know enough about the practical aspects of mining to evaluate the work there accurately.32

Although Grossman did write at length about the warehouse in his complaint, the main issues he confronted also related to his own work as a bergsman rather than his identity as a burgher. The starting point of his original complaint was that the mine was in decline. The mountain was not yielding enough copper ore, and this is what has caused Falun’s economic collapse. He then related this problem to the lack of coin in Falun, which meant that the miners could not pay the farmers for grain; he brought up the lack of charcoal, before finally criticizing the warehouse.33 The reason why his status as a bergsman is important to note is that, although his complaints about the warehouse might have gained him allies among the burghers, strengthening their cause was not the only or even the main motive for his actions. Reinstating the authority and autonomy of the bergsmän was his aim.

Being a bergsman also granted him the right to have a say in the general management of the mine. The commissioners affirmed this when they asked elders among the bergsmän about how much they knew about the accounts of the treasury of the bergstad. This was something the bergsmän should be aware of according to the commissioners, because the whole mine’s oeconomy was under threat. Being a bergsman meant having a certain amount of power over the economic administration of the mine. Knowing this, Grossman

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33 See RA ÅK 408, Vol. 3 Akter, suppliker, pp. 2–40.
made the demand that the accounts of the treasury should be made available and examined by the Commission.34

The ten bergsmän who petitioned the Commission framed their text as focusing on the concrete problems they experienced in their work. Even though their text represented a criticism of many of his reforms, they were less openly accusatory of Swab than Grossman was. These bergsmän identified a number of different causes for the mine’s decline that had also been discussed by Grossman. They saw the lack of wood as one of the main causes. It was not only necessary for the smelting process, but for the fire-setting in the mine before mining could commence. They recounted how they bore daily witness to the mining guards and the miners rushing to collect the wood as soon as it was available, fighting amongst one another for valuable fuel:

… Luck comes to the one who either has the greatest strength, or the greatest favour of the officials of the mine. The bergsman who wishes to put his work to his own and the public’s use is then hindered simply by lack of wood: yes, the miner, who whether he works or not still has to eat, is then often forced to go idle, to his own detriment and the damage of the whole town, and the fruit and usefulness of the mine is held back and neglected.35

They recounted how the old Mine Inspector Harald Lybecker had provided wood with the help of day labourers from a commonly owned forest. He had ensured that the fuel of a few thousand stavrum wood was available to them, cut up and read; stavrum was the way to measure wood in Swedish copper- and ironworks during this period.36 One stavrum could measure 1.5 feet in length, by 1.5 feet in width and 0.5 feet in height, although this measurement was far from exact.

The reason for the lack of wood, as perceived by the bergsmän, was that those who were responsible for wood-cutting did not dry it out quickly enough, forcing the bergsmän and their miners to cut it up themselves in the winter. This slowed their other work in the process. This ‘raw wood’ was not as efficient as a form of fuel as the dried wood provided by the day labourers.37 The slowness of the woodcutters created a domino effect for the entire oeconomy of the mine. As a remedy for this, the bergsmän suggested that the responsibility for providing and cutting wood be transferred back to the bergsmän and the mining guards again, as it had been under Lybecker.38

37 Ibid.
The bergsmän acknowledged that the mine was suffering from economic strains, and the fact that the quality of the ore had declined in recent years. For this reason, they stated that a more careful economic approach to the mine’s spending was needed. This prompted their suggestion that the bergsmän should resume the responsibility of transporting copper ore to the smelting and refining places. The nature of their work meant that the bergsmän needed to keep horses in any case, so they might as well use them to transport their takings, they said.39

These were the most elaborate arguments presented by the bergsmän. They also touched on some of the other points that were discussed by the commission. Though they said they knew nothing about the workings of the treasury of the bergstad, the bergsmän were in favour of the Commission investigating its accounts, since the treasury represented the wealth of the entire bergstad and was thus everyone’s concern. When it came to the warehouse for grains, the bergsmän saw no reason for its continuation, stating that they had always had better prices in the town market. They also saw no reason for the founding of a manufactory and children’s house, arguing that it would have been better to invest this money in new mining ventures.40

The bergsmän were not entirely critical of Swab’s reforms. They thanked him for one of the more recent reformations that simplified the working order of the pairs. They were grateful for the abolishment of the use of tokens in the place of coins, since by their estimation, the tokens had done nothing to improve the economic situation of the bergstad.41

Swab’s first text for the Commission was written as an elaborate defence against Grossman’s accusations. It also referred to the writings presented by bergsmän who supported Grossman. As such, it is much longer than Grossman’s concise list of complaints and the missive of the bergsmän. Swab repeatedly mentioned oeconomy throughout the text. In the text, it was connected to how the economic problems facing the mine would be solved. In some cases, he also mentioned the wrong type of oeconomy that would plunge the work into ruin.

The main accusation Swab levelled against Grossman, and against all his critics, was that they put their own private interest above the interests of the public. Swab further developed his economic arguments in the next text he sent to the Commission, which concerned the warehouse for grains. The bergsmän and the role that their private economic practices played in the oeconomy of the bergstad were important to him. He pointed to the mismanagement of shares by certain wealthier bergsmän as a reason why the utilizing the shares of the bergsmän were more difficult to maintain.42

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41 Ibid, p. 157.
42 Ibid, pp. 40–43.
As shown in Chapter 4, his warehouse had been intended as a temporary solution to the problem of starvation, and his other reforms were aimed at creating equality among the bergsmän. When arguing for the necessity of the warehouse, Swab gave a description of what he believed ailed the economy of the mine. He used the example of bergsmän who collected profits from their shares while not managing their workspaces themselves, with their own hired labourers. He compared these new bergsmän with the working bergsmän of the past, who had invested their earnings back into the mine, providing their own workers with wages and clothing, as well as working to the refine the ore that they had extracted themselves.43 Imagine, he told the Commission, a father who divided his property between many heirs:

… which his children should manage together as a company, so that each and every one should have his own work to do, and how it then was split between the children and in that way dispersed, how it declined in value and could not support itself. If now the siblings between themselves so practiced oeconomy that one took his share, and another his, and did not place it back into the nest44 again, but rather that one tried to keep from the other what rightfully belonged to the whole nest, what kind of agreement and unity could such a household have? Or how long could this kind of oeconomy in such a way be kept? After this it so happened, that when something should be accomplished for the commonly owned nest’s reparation and enrichment, there were no common resources to use. Those of the siblings who had pulled the profits to themselves away from the others made the proposition in their own best interest that each and every one should come together and help the nest. What else could happen then but that those of the siblings who had profited on the others’ shares, laid out their capital, but the others who had acted more honestly with regards to the needs of the house, and worked more faithfully for their father’s house and company, had no resources left to put out, because their siblings had enriched themselves with resources that should have belonged to the common nest, and so the poorer siblings must eventually leave, and lose their shares for lack of the money that should have rightfully belonged to the whole work.45

43 RA ÄK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, pp. 40–43.
44 The word used here is ‘nest’ in order to make the text comprehensible, but the word Swab uses is actually ‘boet’ that could just as easily be translated as ‘dwelling place’, carrying with it an association with the house.
45 "Jag ponerar att en fader lämbnade en sådan ägendom, hwilken des barn skulle drifwa tillsammans i ett Bolag, så att hwar och en skulle hafwa sitt att syssla och förestå, och hur där den barnen emellan dehltes och således förskingrades, förföllo till sitt wärde och kunde sedan inte hafwa bestånd. Om nu Syskonen sin emellan så hushållade, att den toge sitt stycke, och den andre sitt, och lade det intet tillbakars i Boet igen, uthan den ene sökte att undangå den andre hwad hele Boet med rätta tillhörde, hwad sämia och enighet skulle wähl då i ett sådant hushäld föras? Eller huru länge skulle en sådan hushåldning på det sättet stå wijd lag? Där på fölgde ju nödvändig, att när till allmänne Boetz reparation och förkåfring något skulle uträttas, wore inge Commune medell att tillgå, uthan dhe af Syskonen som dragit profiten till sig undan dhe öfrige gjorde för sitt eget bästa den proposition, att hwar och en skulle sköta tillsamman och upphielpa Boet. Hvad hände däraf annat, än dhe af Syskonen, som hade profiterat af dhe andras dehlar, lade uth sitt Capital, men dhe andre som gådt redeligen tillwäga i
What Swab was describing here could certainly have been the process in which a new group of bergsmän were pushing out an older group. This new group, he claimed, saw the mine as a source for personal enrichment rather than as a place to work as a duty to the kingdom. The more diligent group Swab was speaking of could have been no other than an idealized version of the working bergsmän who led their work teams in both mining and smelting. The greedier group in his parable did not know anything about the practical work at the mine, and saw the shares that had previously signified sites of work as capital investments.

Swab was describing how even while the self-interested bergsmän withdrew their investments from the work of the mine in order to enrich themselves, diligent bergsmän found it difficult to survive as their work came to require more and more capital. Eventually, they had to sell their shares to the richer bergsmän and either leave town or work as miners, a development that was taking place at the Great Copper Mine and in Swedish ironworks during this period. In Swab’s view, it was greed and self-interest that pushed out the diligent bergsmän.

With his description of the work of the ‘good’ bergsmän, Swab gave a hint of what he believed proper oeconomy should be, as well as what constituted bad oeconomy. It was the view of a cyclical economy in which the bergsmän had the duty to reinvest the riches they gained from the mine back into it in order to keep it functioning. Swab did not openly state what the final goal of this economic cycle was, but it would seem to be preservation and survival rather than enrichment of either the bergsmän or the crown.

This specific text amounts to a defence of the warehouse for grains. The warehouse was instituted with the intent to provide for miners who were starving. It was Swab’s way of providing for them, a part of his duty to take care of them. In this context, it might not have been possible for him to state that oeconomy had another goal than preservation—another goal such as enriching the crown’s wealth and prestige, for instance. In a discussion specifically dealing with the warehouse, Swab stressed his role as a caretaker, and the purpose of the oeconomy of the bergstad, was to manage and preserve.

This might help to explain the contradictions that are apparent in the views that Swab expressed to the Commission. His view of the aim of oeconomy

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46 Ibid, p. 50.
47 Heckscher (1940), pp. 41–47. See also Isacson (1979), Sjögren (1993), Florén (1995).
48 See Chapter 4 of this thesis. Swab reaffirmed that this had been the original intent behind the instituting of the warehouse in a timeline of the warehouse’s activities he presented to the royal commission. See RA ÄK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, p. 444.
here seemingly elevates the idealized hard-working, self-sacrificing bergsman of old. Swab’s respect for authority derived from his own “hands-on” knowledge of the work, something that would also be up for discussion when the miners presented their complaints. At this point, there was a tension in Swab’s own views about hierarchies in oeconomy, and that tension was around what the criteria were for those allowed to hold authority. This leads to the question of how Swab positioned himself in the hierarchical order, and whom he acknowledged as a householder. In the parable he made, at least, it seems that Swab considered the working bergsmän to be householders in their own right, although they were in the service of the higher father who had entrusted them the mine as an inheritance. It is unclear who the father was, whether it was the Diet or the crown, or Swab himself. It could also be God, who had entrusted the Earth to humanity to cherish and utilize according to good oeconomy.

The process in which a more-modern kind of shareholder would buy out bergsmän who invested more in the upkeep of the mine has been written about by historians like Eli Heckscher, and has been outlined in Chapter 4. As shown in this chapter, Grossman also wrote about that process in a similar way, identifying the same problems as being caused by the same culprits. Swab differed from Grossman in how he viewed Grossman’s claim to legitimacy; he contrasted it with his own. In his role as the foremost overseer of the mine and representative of the Board of Mines, Swab stated that he obviously knew more about the administration of the entire mine, and stated that even holding the argument was unnecessary, as well as damaging. Allowing for an argument threatened his authority, and threatened hierarchy. Swab constantly argued that the stable order of hierarchy was of fundamental importance to the successful management of the bergstad. According to Swab, this was what good oeconomy entailed.

Who held responsibility and legitimacy regarding oeconomy?
The bergsmän who wrote to the Commission based their claim to authority on their practical experiences working in the mine. As a reflection of this, they were careful to not claim authority in the areas in which they had no experience, such as how to use the town treasury’s accounts. In other areas, such as the issue of the warehouse for grains and the tokens, they argued according to what they said were their limited experiences. This careful humility could only have served to strengthen the arguments that they made in the areas in which they did claim expertise, such as fire-setting and managing the wood supply. These complaints of the bergsmän have been lumped together with Grossman’s and the burghers’ in other accounts of the Commission, which have elevated the importance of the warehouse for grains as a catalyst. However, in this petition the bergsmän only briefly mentioned the warehouse for grains. The focus of their complaints was the management of the wood supply, the
working teams and the transportation of copper, and their own role in these things. They praised and thanked Swab for reforms that they approved of.

In their letter, there was also an underlying trend in how the bergsmän positioned themselves and what they considered the role of the state to be in relation to their position. They had their own conception of levels of hierarchy. This conception is discussed in more detail below, but first Grossman’s views on legitimacy are presented.

Grossman shared an idea with the bergsmän that political authority over how oeconomy was regulated should be connected to practical authority over the work. Furthermore, Grossman stated that he possessed such authority when he aligned himself with the bergsmän. Through his detailed outline of the causes for the economic problems facing the mine, Grossman was also making the claim that he himself possessed such knowledge, meaning he had enough legitimacy to have a say in how the mine should be administered, including its treasury. The other bergsmän who presented petitions made similar claims, even though they sometimes held forth different practical solutions to the mine’s woes. However, it was on this point that their views differed the most from Swab’s: on what the source of legitimacy was. Swab’s views on oeconomy were tied to his ideas about ordered hierarchy.

Grossman revealed some of his less-guarded opinions in a private letter to Anders Göransson, an influential member of the mining court who had previously opposed Swab on a number of issues. Grossman seemingly wrote to him in order to ask for support, but Göransson had changed his alignment and presented the letter to the commissioners. This letter shows how Grossman worked to convince bergsmän in positions of authority to see his complaints as legitimate, by characterizing himself as equal to them in status.

In the letter, Grossman described his stay in Stockholm in 1723, when he presented his list to the Diet. He wrote that his sister had visited him there. She told him that the economic situation in Falun was now so dire that a bookkeeper named Munctell had to keep guards outside his house, since angry crowds of people threw stones at his window. Based on this report, Grossman argued that someone was failing to maintain order and control in Falun. At such a moment, the Diet might be open to listening to his opinions on how the mining town could be saved. Grossman stated emphatically that nobody could stand by and watch the copperworks fall into ruin. He also called Göransson his brother. In other words, Grossman expressed that he felt a personal responsibility for the mine’s upkeep, and presented himself as equal to the member of the mining court, Göransson. The fact that he shared this sense of responsibility placed him on the same level as other bergsmän.49

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The historiography of the ‘Grossmanian tumult’ has focused on the warehouse for grains as the catalyst and the main point of contention for Grossman.\(^5^0\) This places the ‘tumult’ in the context of the emergence of the burghers as a politically active group with a separate identity during the Age of Liberty, as a precursor to that group’s political dominance during the following century.\(^5^1\) However, Grossman had dual roles, and this is evident in how he worked to establish that his arguments were based on authoritative claims. He was a member of the burgher estate who allied himself to the interests of that group when it came to the issue of the warehouse, but his main occupation was as a surgeon. As a surgeon, he wished for the Board of Mines to employ him at the mine’s hospital.

The Board of Mines employed this type of position at the mining hospital specifically to tend to miners who suffered accidents in the mine. This post was a part of the infrastructure of Falun which was centred on the mine, and more so when the town and mine became unified in 1720.\(^5^2\) While Grossman was a burgher, he only openly allied himself to the burghers’ cause after failing to get this coveted job from the Board of Mines. His anger at his failure to get it is what other historians see as the reason why he went to the Diet.\(^5^3\)

For the purpose of this investigation, it is less important what his emotional state was and how this might have governed his actions. What is of interest is the fact that he believed himself to have the mandate to present his complaints about the economy of the mine to the Diet, and that the Diet sent a commission to investigate his claims. In doing so, they officially granted his standpoints some validity. He was granted further validity when his demand to present the accounts of the treasury was discussed by the commissioners.

The Diet responded because of a shared conception of which level of hierarchy he belonged to and what rights and duties this entailed within the economy of the bergstad. The reason why Grossman had a mandate was because he was a bergsman. This status was more important to him than has previously been presumed. In his letters and petitions, it is clear that he used his position and sense of belonging to this group to argue that he had first-hand knowledge of the issues he discussed. He called himself a bergsman in his longer text about the mine’s economic problems, counting himself among “us impoverished bergsmän”\(^5^4\). He based the authority of his argument on this status.

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\(^{50}\) See Lindroth (1955), Vol. 1, p. 365 for a description of Grossman the member of the burgher estate. See also Ericsson (1970) pp. 111–114 in which she describes the groups that sent complaints to the commission.

\(^{51}\) As depicted in Ericsson (1970). K. G. Hildebrand has the same narrative in Hildebrand (1946), although about the period before 1720.


\(^{54}\) RA ÄK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, p. 450.
The particular nature of Grossman’s work as a *bergsman* is unknown. He might conceivably have employed miners, and might have overseen the work and utilization of copper ore from its extraction to its refinement in a smelting hut. One of the reasons why he needed to work as a surgeon was that he could not support himself as a *bergsman*. Grossman identified the enrichment of a few *bergsmän* who could afford to supplant their earnings from mining with other kinds of work as the reason why the work of the more single-focused, working *bergsmän* became impossible. He stated that they could not compete with the wealthier ones for shares and investments.

While emphasizing his status as a *bergsman* to bolster his claims, Grossman also argued that Anders Swab fell short in his role as a Mine inspector, that he lacked that legitimacy. The source of the mine’s economic problems was, according to Grossman, Swab’s reforms, and his leadership. He did not avoid depicting Swab as conspicuously greedy, as well as incompetent, for spending the town’s resources on buildings and institutions it did not need. Grossman’s argument for travelling to the Diet hinged on the idea that Swab was weak and prone to moral failings. Where he failed, Grossman had a moral duty to step up to a higher level as a *bergsman* representing the economy of the *bergstad*, and help save the Great Copper Mine.

For his part, Swab claimed that Grossman had questioned the honour of public officials and members of the mining court, including Swab himself, by accusing them of putting their private interests above that of the *bergstad*. Swab cited the oath he and his colleagues had given to the king as a proof that they worked for the common good. At one point, he hinted that his authority came from God. Swab also took issue with the way that Grossman’s complaints had come about. This was one way for him to attack his legitimacy: by disputing the legality of the complaints. It was a dangerous topic for Swab to touch on, since it meant that he indirectly questioned the Diet’s decision to respond to the complaints. The commissioners would eventually call him out for this.

Swab argued that Grossman, and the mining guard Eric Erichsson who aided him, had both acted illegally, leaving their posts at the mine without permission. He used the fact that they had left their posts as proof that they did not place the Great Copper Mine above their own self-interests, since their posts at the mine stood idle while they were gone. That they had promised the commission funding from the mine was seen as further proof that they both

57 Ibid.
59 ÄK 408 vol. 2 *akter, handlingar*, pp. 20–22.
60 See Chapter 6, p. 123.
took the work at the mine lightly, but above all, that they claimed to have authority over its resources that they did not have.61

Swab questioned Grossman’s claim to authority further when he accused him of not being a competent enough bergsman. Swab mentioned cryptically that Grossman used a special ‘method’ when working his share at the mine, which apparently meant that he was not qualified. Elsewhere in the text, Grossman was referred to as “the field surgeon” in a way that suggested it was a negation, perhaps emphasizing that he did not have the authority to comment on the mine’s affairs.62

Swab evidently saw Grossman’s perceived elevation of his own status as the most fruitful point to attack him on. He said that Grossman’s notion of grandeur had led him to deceive myckenheten, or in other words ‘the many’, with his words.63 Swab characterized ‘the many’ as an easily led crowd, simple and emotional. He referred to the previous commission held in 1720, in which 300 miners had signed a protest against the way that they received wages. According to Swab, it had been proven that just one man had tricked these 300 into protesting, and now Grossman was doing the same.64 The lack of unity he could cause in this way would bring the whole mine into wreck and ruin.65

In Swab’s view, there was simply no way that Grossman could have the legitimate support of a majority. On the other hand, it was imperative for him to state that he himself always had the best interest of the population of the bergstad, and its most vulnerable people, at heart.66 ‘The many’ could never be allowed to run the Great Copper Mine, to make decisions that they were not qualified to make. Swab referred to them as ‘limbs’, connecting to the view, common among those who wrote about oeconomy during this period, that the population were like limbs of a body while the monarch who Swab had sworn fealty to was the head.67 When Swab depicted Grossman as a duplicitous, selfish leader, and himself as a generous one, he envisioned ‘the many’ as limbs in both cases. At the same time, it seems to have been important to him to use ‘the many’ as a source of legitimacy, even though he also

61 RA ÄK Vol 2 Akter, handlingar, pp. 21–23 regarding the fact that the public officials had sworn oaths to the king and were therefore more fit for this responsibility. On p. 25, there are hints that they have that authority from God.

62 Ibid, p. 16, regarding the fact that Grossman had not behaved as an honest man who put the interests of his patrons first. On pp. 20–21 regarding Grossman’s status as a field surgeon and not a Bergsman. On p. 25, regarding the fact that Grossman did not know his place.

63 He also referred the ‘the many’ as pluratas personarum. Ibid, p. 19.

64 It is possible that the man in question was a brassmaker named Christopher Ulberg, who was noted in the protocols of the 1720 commission as having organized the protest. A number of other miners were also named as ringleaders, but Ulberg received more attention. See RA BkH E 2c: 4, Bergsverksrelationer Stora Koppberget 1720–1724, p. 6, p. 18, p. 29.


66 Ibid, p. 40 regarding the warehouse.

believed they should be disenfranchised. In one part of the text, Swab mentioned that he believed he had, or would have the support of the majority.\textsuperscript{68} Swab and his supporters had to equalize this need for support among the wider populace with the need for their authority to seem untouchable.

Where did Swab position Grossman? Here, it is relevant to compare Grossman’s and Swab’s opinions. According to Swab, Grossman’s complaint was not only an affront to his honour, but to Grossman’s own honour. Swab thought that Grossman degraded himself by setting himself up as superior to Swab, because he was disobedient and did not do his duty.\textsuperscript{69} Overstepping the bounds of hierarchy was a sin against virtue. Furthermore, since Swab and his colleagues at the Board of Mines were the rightful householders of the mine, the insubordination of Grossman would disrupt hierarchy. By disrupting hierarchy, he destroyed the unity and order of the oeconomy of the \textit{bergstad}, and disunity was the surest way to ruin.\textsuperscript{70}

There were similarities to be seen in Grossman’s and Swab’s argumentation, especially in what they saw as the proper actions to take. I have written about Grossman’s position as a \textit{bergsman}, contrasted to the way he has been characterized as a member of the burgher estate in previous research. It must be stressed that this is how he appears to characterize himself at different times. Ericsson and Lindroth are not wrong when they describe Grossman as a member of the burgher estate who allied himself to many of their causes. However, Grossman himself stated that the rescue of a mine in economic decline was his motive for going to the Diet and frequently put his experiences as a \textit{bergsman} at the forefront. He claimed that a good man could not stand idly by. He presented himself as someone who would put the whole mine before his own interest and well-being. In that respect, he resembled Swab’s ideal \textit{bergsman}, the diligent son who would sacrifice his own resources for the sake of the mine.

How did Grossman then view the hierarchical order of society, and whom did he acknowledge as his superior? According to Grossman, he himself was a \textit{bergsman} with a certain amount of authority on a smaller level, and the Diet had the authority on a higher level. In between stood Swab and the mining court, who had failed in their duties to take care of the mine. Both Grossman and Swab could agree on the importance of unity and the common good, but they interpreted the situation and their own roles in it in different ways.

At this point, it is necessary to bring up the arguments made by the ten \textit{bergsmän} as a contrast. These \textit{bergsmän} concretely illustrated the kind of argument that was referred to more vaguely by Swab and Grossman: that they and only they knew the workings of the mine. By contrast, these \textit{bergsmän} were careful to present their arguments with a show of humility:

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid, p. 25
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid, pp. 12–29.
Though with the expressed reservation, that we with this have no desire to start a process, or lord over any person, but only after the greatest good sense to keep to justice and the pure truth, that we on our consciences believe ourselves to be answerable not only to each honest man and fair judge, but to God’s court on judgement day.  

The bergsmän are difficult to establish as a united group, and the ten men who wrote the petition analysed here cannot be representative of the group as a whole. In the sources, as mentioned, it is impossible to establish who is speaking for this elusive group as a whole collective, since many of the writers both on the side of the complaints and on the side of the administration were or had been bergsmän. This included Grossman, who had drawn together the group whose complaints had started the commission in the first place, and Eric Sjöberg, a leading voice among the burghers who complained about the warehouse.  

All of the elders of the mining court, as well as many representatives of the Board of Mines, would have been bergsmän. Mining guards could also be bergsmän. It makes a certain amount of sense to discuss miners and burghers as unified groups due to the way their petitions were phrased and the ways in which they were received, but bergsmän as a group did not represent one interest in this particular conflict. It is more relevant to differentiate between the frequently impoverished working bergsmän and wealthier bergsmän who might have been elected to be members of the local bergslag, owned estates outside of town, were members of the mining court, and sat in positions of authority in the mine’s administration.  

The bergsmän who sent this petition were of the working kind. They phrased their arguments as resting on the authority which came from their practical knowledge of mining, and it is apparent that their conception of themselves in this role fits Swab’s and the commission’s view of that role well. It is then possible to compare these arguments of the bergsmän to Swab’s. This letter also makes it possible to show that the hypothetical bergsmän constantly discussed by the other groups present were real, took part in the discussion and acted to further their own point of view on oeconomy. They said that they sent a petition to the Royal Commission because they wanted to offer the mine their help by helping to identify the reason for the mine’s economic woes. They argued that their opinions were valid because their experiences working in the mine provided them with unique insights.

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74 Ibid.
As mentioned earlier, the *bergsmän* presented their petition with a show of humility. However, as shown in the previous section, they still argued that the handling of the wood supply should fall to them individually rather than to *Bergslagen*. They also wanted to handle the transportation themselves, rather than leaving it to the new transportation company that had been created in 1722. They presented their arguments as grounded in their knowledge of their own practices. The *bergsmän* further argued that the warehouse ought to be shut down because they could get better prices for their individual wares, and that that the manufactory ought to be closed because it would be better for *Bergslagen* to invest in the mine.

The *bergsmän* allocated the following responsibilities to the level of the state: to invest in further mining excavations, and to manage the monetary supply of the *bergstad*. For the level of the private households, as shown, the *bergsmän* wanted a greater autonomy. They wanted the responsibility of overseeing mining operations and transporting the ore. They wanted to provide tools and food for their own workers, a reversal of some of Swab’s reforms. They disapproved of institutions that could be deemed charitable, such as the warehouse and the manufactory, dismissing them as an unnecessary investment for the *bergstad*. This was not something that should be a concern at that level of oeconomy. They argued that town and mine was an enterprise with the purpose of reproducing itself and providing a space for the *bergsmän* and miners to work.

With this, the *bergsmän* rejected Swab’s arguments that the institutions of the warehouse and the manufactory were necessary to help impoverished miners who in turn were vital for the sustenance of the whole mining enterprise. According to the *bergsmän*, the warehouse and the manufactory were simply not a part of oeconomy on the level of the *bergstad*, as a matter of fact. They did not discuss in detail why they thought these ventures were unnecessary. However, the warehouse and the manufactory both supplanted the oeconomy of private households in different ways: the warehouse provided the miners with food, grain, and clothing that they had previously obtained from the *bergsmän*, and the manufactory educated girls in crafts that they would otherwise have learned in the home. Practices and authority, which had belonged in the sphere of the private household, was supplanted by a larger, local oeconomy managed by the administration of the *bergstad*, and the authority of the *bergsmän* over their own households became hollowed out.

5.6 The ambiguities of authority within the oeconomy of the *bergstad*

Immanuel Grossman and Anders Swab were in conflict because Grossman exploited the fact that oeconomy demanded that every member of society had the
responsibility to act for the collective common welfare, while Swab stressed unity as subordination to one hierarchical vision. Their differences were a manifestation of the complexity of the household model itself, the society as a grand household comprised of smaller households. This household model of oeconomy was meant to encourage responsible practices on a private level because that private level mattered to the whole. The private level of oeconomy was a smaller part of oeconomy on the local level, which in turn was in the service of the state. This both meant that each household was important to the whole and that each was worth saving, and that each household was subordinate to a grander one. However, if a householder failed in his duty to provide and protect those under his authority, people on a lower level could complain to someone on a higher level. As important parts of the larger household, it was also their duty and responsibility to do so.

Swab and Grossman interpreted the same situation in different ways, but they still both used the language of oeconomy, of mutual duties and obligations within a hierarchical society, to explain their actions. Neither was arguing for a change of this culture within the pages of the Royal Commission’s documents, but their argument still illuminated a change that was happening in the oeconomy of the bergstad.

The illustrative story he used, and his musings about the bergsmän of earlier times, revealed Swab’s views on what constituted good oeconomy, as well as the bad. Swab mentioned that the former bergsmän had hired members of their own family as an ideal practice, perhaps because the family-structure would have ensured loyalty and continuity. The key was that everything that was produced by the bergsmän should be reinvested in the work, including their offspring.

That the bergsmän should provide for those that were directly subordinate to them, like the miners, was also a facet of this idea, despite the effect that the reforms of 1716 had had on the arrangement between bergsmän and miners in practice. This reinvestment of earnings into the work was the right type of oeconomy according to Swab. This was also a type of oeconomy managed by the right overseers. On the national level, these were the honourable men who were appointed by the king; on the private level they were the working bergsmän.

In practice, however, Swab’s reforms meant that he, and through him the Board of Mines, had stepped down from the higher level of the state to change the oeconomy of the bergsmän. This was where he, Grossman, and the bergsmän who sent the petition disagreed. Swab argued that this was a necessary action because the working bergsmän fell short of their responsibilities. The petitioning bergsmän, on the other hand, identified the state’s stepping into their practices, descending to their level, as one of the causes of the wasteful ventures of the bergstad and a hindrance to its economic recovery. Grossman went a step further and argued that the state’s expansion was a root cause of the mine’s distress. One of the main contentions between Swab and his
critics, as well as Swab and the Diet, was whether the petitioners were mutineers, or whether it was Swab and the Board of Mines who had overstepped their boundaries and become oppressive.\textsuperscript{75}

In all of the arguments presented to the Commission, a perception was affirmed that actions on the level of the private household could cause chain reactions that affected the town, the mine, and eventually the entire kingdom. If one type of private economic practice did not function well, the whole structure was weakened. This view was essential to the idea of oeconomy. However, the people who were arguing in support of the autonomy of the private household also claimed that the fact that their practices had such large implications was a reason as to why they had a right to state opinions about the proper functioning of the whole structure. The rhetoric of oeconomy became a legitimization for their right to state views that were different from the views held by people who formally held authority over them.

\textsuperscript{75} See, for example, the complaints of the miners in RA ÄK 408, Vol. 2 \textit{Akter, handlingar}, pp. 166–172.
CHAPTER 6.
The complaints of the miners

This chapter is a presentation and an analysis of the petitions a group of miners sent to the Royal Commission, along with Anders Swab’s response, as well as the discussion that followed at the Commission’s hearing. The main points of contention for the miners are recounted, and Anders Swab’s and the commissioners’ responses are presented. A discussion follows about what implications this exchange had for the miners’ position within the social hierarchy of the berghstat.

6.1 Introducing the forms of criticism

As mentioned Chapter 1, the Swedish term for the miners is gruvdrängar. The word dräng shows that their status was similar to that of other drängar, or farm hands and servants. The gruvdrängar were legally classified as legohjon: a servant class. This meant that they were obligated to work, either as members of the pairs of bergsmän, or directly under Bergslagen. According to their legal status, they were considered to be a part of someone else’s household, and were thus a part of a segment of the population who did not have the position of householders, with the authority to speak for themselves that that entailed.¹

The focus of the miners’ complaints was the centralization of the mine’s administration and where this left them. When the bergsmän lost their authority over their work teams, this left a power vacuum that either the miners and mining guards or the crown’s appointed bailiffs had to fill. The miners’ complaints focused on four different points of contention that are studied more closely in this chapter. They discussed whether they had the right to assemble and act as a collective. They presented a demand for their wages paid in cash. They also complained about being forced to take payment at the warehouse for grains. Finally, they criticized the bailiffs who oversaw and evaluated their work.

All of these points amounted to a criticism of the way Bergslagen as a conglomerate was taking over the individual roles of the bergsmän as managers.

and overseers—in the language of the time, taking over their role as the miners’ householders. The miners questioned the competence of the Bergslagen as a householder, arguing in support of the bergsmän and mining guards instead. In spite of their legal status as servants, they also used their claim to knowledge of mining practices as an argument for a strengthening of their own status. Ultimately, this was a discussion about what proper oeconomy was, and who should administer it.

The miners’ historical relationship with the bergsmän

The working relationship between the miners and the bergsmän was stable in theory. Miners who worked on the teams were placed on mining rosters that noted the pairs they belonged to, along with their names. Such rosters do not survive from the period when this study takes place, but using taxation lists, historians have been able to make rough estimates about how many miners actually worked in the pairs of the bergsmän. One such estimate shows that about 600 miners worked under independent bergsmän at the turn of the eighteenth century, while Bergslagen as a conglomerate hired 200–300 miners. Along with temporary labourers, the total number of miners present at the mine was certainly over 1,000, perhaps as many as 1,200. Miners who held stable positions in the pairs were not representative for the whole work force at the mine, however. The bergsmän and Bergslagen also used day labourers. In spite of the dangerous nature of the work, the mine was a lucrative workplace that attracted outsiders to the town. Convicts could also use under a system rooted in the Middle Ages known as bergsfriden, in which they could exchange their prison sentences for a lifetime of labour in the mine.

In the discussions and memorial relating to the miners, the convicts are not mentioned. It is possible that the mine had become such a popular place to seek work during its period of greatness that there was no longer an economic necessity for them. It is also possible that they were not relevant to the discussion at hand because they belonged to a different level of jurisdiction. Day labourers were not mentioned in the Royal Commission’s documents either, though they were certainly an important part of the mine’s work force. However, the contents of the miners’ petition to the Royal Commission can still be understood in light of the fact that there were other labourers in the mine who lacked their relative freedoms but still shared their work. The petitioning miners were in more stable positions, and were thus able to feel more entitled to certain protections and rights. They might also have had reason to fear being put in the same position as the less privileged people who shared their work.

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2 One such roster survives from the period 1738–1744 in the Great Copper Mine’s archive. See STORA Grudrängsrulla 1738–1744.
3 See Chapter 3, p. 57.
in the mine. In some of the miners’ complaints, they expressed the worry that their freedoms would be restricted. For example, they complained that they were being forced to purchase cloth and grain at the warehouse.\(^5\)

The fact that many of the miners were outsiders in Falun—and that some were convicts—might explain why some writers characterized the miners negatively in writings from the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. The nature of the work also meant that their skin was covered in soot. Carl Linnaeus described the dark passages the miners moved in that had never seen the sun, and called them “wretched people” when he visited the mine in 1734.\(^6\) Travellers from France and England, who observed the work at the mine, saw it as a place of horror. They had trouble imagining any human being able to endure it. This affected their perceptions of the miners.\(^7\) The frightening image could be used to the pairs’ advantage during certain negotiations. Bertil Boethius observes that the bergsmän were familiar with the popular perception of the miners as fearsome people. During the sixteenth century, some bergsmän used this as a tactic to further their advantage in dealing with crown bailiffs. They would bring blackened miners who would stand guard during negotiations, posing a silent threat as the bailiffs signed the contracts papers.\(^8\) This practice ended when violence ceased to be a viable means for the bergsmän to further their ends during the reign of Gustav Vasa in the mid-sixteenth century.\(^9\)

**The miners’ shift from servants and householders during the early eighteenth century**

The miners of the Great Copper Mine lived in their own homes in certain areas of town that were designated for them. Many of them were married and had their own families to support. The miners’ wedded state was acknowledged in literature of the period. In the late seventeenth century, the Swedish poet Lasse Lucidor (1638–1674) wrote a wedding poem where he drew an explicit link between work in the mine and romantic love, having an ancient Nordic God of love bestow his blessing on a miner who rescued him from the mine. In the early eighteenth century, similar wedding poems depicted the necessity for miners to have wives who supported them when they came home from a day of labour in the mine.\(^10\) A system of “conserving the widow” was practiced in the early eighteenth century, in which a miner hoping to gain a place in the pair of a bergsman would have to marry the widow of the miner who had previously held that position. This was also a practice among the clergy and in some cases among soldiers. In several ways, the miners’ vocation was

\(^5\) RA ÄK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handingar, p. 166.
\(^6\) Fördömda folket, Linnaeus (1734), published by Ewald Ährlingin (1889), p. 223
\(^7\) Travelers’ accounts quoted in Sahlin (1897), pp. 5–10. See also Dunér (2008), pp. 209–233.
\(^8\) Boethius (1951), p. 42.
\(^9\) Ibid.
closer to a soldiers’ than to a servants’. 11 However, as mentioned earlier, the miners held the legal status of servants.

This was a valid state of events within household culture because the servant status was seen as transitory in Western Europe during the early modern period. 12 At the Great Copper Mine, this perception was the case with the gruverängar during the early eighteenth century. Although it was rarely the case in practice, there was still an expectation that miners working in the pairs were either sons or relatives of the bergsmän who led their working team. One of these miners could then inherit the title of bergsmän upon his death. Before they completed this final step towards independence, they were subordinate to him in the same way that members of a household were subordinate to the householder.

Both the commissioners and Swab expressed the view that this had been the ideal work structure of the mine, and they lamented that it was disappearing in practice. During the Commission’s hearings, an elderly miner also claimed that this older practice had existed, and that it had been a better practice than the current one. 13 From this, the conclusion is that the commissioners, Swab and at least one representative of the miners shared a view of what the ideal relationship between superiors and servants should be—an ideal that was not practiced in the 1720s.

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, many miners in Falun joined a pietistic movement, being some of the earliest groups of people in Sweden to do so. The theological historian Urban Claesson observes this and speculates that the promotion of the individual within pietistic doctrines might have appealed to miners at the Great Copper Mine who lacked a clear household structure that could order their lives. 14 For instance, they lived in houses that were segregated from the rest of the town, together with their own families, rather than being servants that were of the households of the bergsmän. Although they had the status of legohjon they did not live like legohjon, but like householders. 15 The foundation of a mining village in the part of town

11 OlofNaualer likened miners to soldiers in his thesis about the mine from 1702. He considered mining to be worse than soldiering because mining accidents lead to certain death, whereas soldiers had the hope of escaping it. Naualer (1702), translated by Engelbert Nordenstam (1941), pp. 142–144. AnnaSara Hammar depicts a social dynamic among sailors in the Swedish fleet that was similar to the miners’ in Falun during the same period. See Hammar (2014).

12 See Berkner (1972) p. 411, Laslett (1977), p. 45; Hajnal (1983), p. 96. Swedish historian Börje Harnesk argues that this was not common at all in practice in Sweden during the eighteenth century. See Harnesk (1990) Chapter 3. However, the documents from the Royal Commission in Falun in 1724 reveal that it was still upheld as an ideal and that it was believed to have been practiced in former times.

13 See RA ÄK 408 Vol 1 Kommissionsprotokoll p. 561, the commissioners mention that this would be the ideal state. The older miner is quoted in Ibid, p. 576. See RA ÄK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, pp. 40–54, where Swab discussed oeconomy relating specifically to the warehouse for grains and the role of the bergsmän at the Great Copper Mine.


15 Ibid, p. 58.
known as Elsborg proved unfortunate; it was so close to the mine that it suffered the worst pollution. The practical intention was that it was a way for the miners to live close to their place of work. The fact that miners owned their own plots of land there signified that they had privileges. However, with time, Elsborg became a slum.\textsuperscript{16}

Based on cultural histories such as Claesson’s, and inferences drawn from other studies of the mine’s administration, a process of proletarianization was happening to the miners from the late seventeenth century onward.\textsuperscript{17} There is not enough data as of yet to determine whether their conditions grew worse during that time due to this change. The fact that some of them turned to pietism implies that they were looking for a different type of social structure that could accommodate them.\textsuperscript{18}

6.2 The miners’ complaints and the reciprocal responses

Four specific subjects have been mentioned as the main points of contention for the miners who wrote the petition to the Commission in 1724:

- The question of their right to assemble;
- Their demand for wages paid in cash;
- The way they were forced to take payment at the warehouse for grains;
- Their criticism of the newly appointed bailiffs who oversaw their work.

These were made in service of a larger point: that the relationship between the miners, the bergsmän and to Bergslagen had shifted, so that Bergslagen had supplanted the bergsmän as the miners’ immediate superiors. In the next section, I recount the way that the miners argued these different points of contention. The miners’ arguments are presented along with the questions and rebuttals made in the Commission’s hearing. Then, arguments pertaining to the wider point about the miners’ shifting relation to the bergsmän and to Bergslagen are presented in a similar way. Finally, I discuss the wider implications of these arguments.

\textsuperscript{17} Boethius describes bad harvests and the resulting turmoil during the first two decades of the eighteenth century as a motivation for the protests and uprisings orchestrated by the miners, and he also notes that they had secret meetings during the entire period, about which little is known. Boethius 1951 pp. 226–227, and pp. 244–246. Sennefelt describes a similar political culture among the peasants in Dalarna around the same period in Sennefelt 2001.
\textsuperscript{18} Urban Claesson argues that the miners were attempting to find new masters of the household to replace the old when they turned to Mine inspector Lybecker with their complaints about the administrative capabilities of the bergsmän in the strike of 1696 in Claesson 2015 pp. 58–59.
The question of the miners’ right to assemble

When the miners petitioned, there was a question of who had the right to appear before the Commission and why. Anders Swab brought this up concerning the miners, and individual actors Immanuel Grossman and one of his closest cohorts, Erich Erichsson the mining guard.

The mining guards’ work consisted of supervising the mining and sending reports to the bergsmän. Their role was ambiguous, in flux between two different groups with slightly different interests. Some mining guards had the economic status of miners, while others took part in the mine’s administration. Claesson interprets their growing presence at the mine during the seventeenth century as a sign of how the bergsmän in Falun were being distanced from work at the mine, such as through the hiring of overseers to do work that had previously been theirs.19 When a group of mining guards sent their own complaint to the Commission, they mentioned that they now had the same obligations that the bergsmän formally had, but they were granted none of the privileges of the bergsfälse.20

According to Eric Erichsson’s account, Swab confronted him about his work after the first meeting of the Commission.

… [b]efore the Assessor21 had gone back to his estate, he had asked [Erichsson] if, should something happen to him, he would ever hear told of Erich Erichsson becoming a Mine inspector? In addition, Erich Erichsson had replied that he did not understand such matters, but only understood the common work at the mine, which he was used to doing. After which the Assessor is said to have asked again, if not the mine would yet stand, even if Erich Ericsson today or tomorrow should die? To which Erich Erichsson said he had replied, that so long as they were allowed to fire-set places which previously would have cost them their necks, it would be alright; then the Assessor had gone in and said, that such a thing would be proven.22

With this wording, Erichsson claimed that Swab had implied a threat to his life by saying that they should see whether the mine could survive without him. However Swab, in Erichsson’s account, had only made a delicately worded, and implicit threat, which had allowed Erichsson to act guilelessly in

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20 See the mining guards' petition in RA ÄK 408 vol. 2 Akter, handlingar pp. 200–202
21 Though he was a Mine Inspector, Swab was frequently referred to as “the assessor” in the Commission’s protocols. At the mine, Swab was the inspector; at the Board of Mines, he held the title of assessor.
response. Erichsson was also careful to include in his story an affirmation that he was a miner who only knew and was only interested in mining. He said that Swab had accused him of wanting to usurp him, which was certainly characteristic for Swab to do—Swab agreed that he had said this in his own account of the conversation, although he denied that he had made it as a threat.\footnote{RA ÄK 408, Vol. 1 Kommissionsprotokoll, p. 57.}

It is impossible to know whether Erichsson told the truth about the threat—both Swab and the miners accused the other party of violence during the Commissions’ hearings. Irrespective of its validity, this story achieved its objective of granting Erichsson, the mining guard, the legitimacy to speak to the mining court. In their reply, the commissioners immediately guaranteed his right to be present at the court, assuring him that he had a right to speak, after he had recounted this implicit threat made by Swab.\footnote{Ibid, p. 45.}

In contrast to how they responded to Erichsson, the commissioners questioned the miners’ right to present their petitions together. The commissioners debated whether to recognize the miners as a collective group with any formal power— they were not an estate and lacked a guild, and they were even forbidden from convening together.\footnote{Boethius (1951), p. 260. In RA ÄK 408, Vol. 1, pp. 620–625, Swab argued with the Commission over whether the miners’ petition could be considered legal.}

Even when their petitions were subject to a hearing by the Royal Commission, they were discouraged from entering the court as a whole group, since they might be unruly. The miners were granted permission to be present after they had presented an assurance that they would be well behaved.

\[\ldots\ \text{the miners asked to all be allowed to be present, and be heard at once, making the statement that they would let three or four of them speak for all, and that the others would be silent, as long as they were allowed to be present and make sure that nobody said anything which the others either did not agree with or had better knowledge of.}\footnote{“...det Gryfve-drängarne begärte samtel. få wara tilstädes, och höras på en gång. med utlätelse, at de wähl wilde låta 3. a 4. af dem föra ordet, men de andra tiga, allenast de finge wara tilstädes, och höra det de icke talade något, som de andre antingen icke wille eller hade bättre kundskap om.” RA ÄK 408, Vol. 1 Kommissionsprotokoll, p. 573.}]

At one point in the Commission’s hearing, the miners mentioned that they were constantly treated with suspicion in connection to presenting their complaint that the mining laws were no longer read out to them as a collective group. The question of whether the mining laws were read out was brought up. The miners said that they were no longer read out, which was a problem for them. Although the statutes were available to read, the miners could not read The statutes were not read out because that would mean the miners would congregate in large numbers to hear them. The miners complained that they could not gather without being suspected of treason:
They [the miners] said that they were nowadays silenced, when they wanted to speak; and that they were never allowed to talk together, but were immediately said to be making mutiny, and were promised red shirts with blue stripes, when they complained about their want.

It was said to them [by the Commission], that they could not suffer from much want, since anyone could see, when a miner died or fell away, how many came and announced themselves as wanting to take their places.

The miners replied that since it was a free town, many sought their way there.27

There miners continued to bee seen as a threat because they had threatened to use of violence, as shown by the strike in 1696, and the unrest reported in 1720 and in 1723–24.28 However, the Mine Inspector Harald Lybecker had managed to convince 300 striking miners to desist in 1696 by speaking to them, showing sympathy for their plight and arguing for gentler punishments on behalf of the strike leaders to the Diet.29 Swab was less successful in communicating with them during the protests in 1720 and 1724. In both 1720 and during the time the Royal Commission was held in 1724, Swab expressed fear of their restless talk. He perceived the threat of violence hanging in the air.30

This suggestion that the miners posed a threat might have stemmed from genuine fear on Swab’s part, but he could also have characterized them as an unruly mob as a way to delegitimize their cause. At one point during the Commission, the commissioners subtly rebuked him when he defined the miners as *hooten*, or in other words ‘the rabble’. After being asked why he had not ordered guards to quell the protests, Swab explained that “the many” and “the rabble” protested in a silent way, using signs and making noise; they appeared in such large numbers that it was difficult to prosecute them all.31 The protocol stated: “It was asked of him [by the Commission], whether the Assessor thought that one should prevent the subjects from showing the superiors their poverty, and whether such a thing would be illegal?”32

Using “subject” to identify the miners in this context, immediately after Swab had described them as an angry rabble, might have been a way for the commissioners to acknowledge that the miners had a place within the structure of Swedish society. They belonged to that larger structure in which they were

29 Boethius (1951), pp. 226–228.
32 The Swedish word is *undersåtar*. RA ÄK 408, Vol. 1 Kommissionsprotokoll, p. 624.
subjects to the Diet, something that granted them dignity and certain rights. In both 1720 and 1723–24, the miners had acted through legal channels when they had written letters and petitions to the mining court and the royal commissions. There were discussions at the time about whether these actions were legal, but the records show that the commissioners listened to and considered the complaints.\textsuperscript{33} Swab also appeared to have received the commissioners’ question with regards to the “subjects” as a rebuke, since he immediately modified his description in his reply to the commissioners’ question.\textsuperscript{34}

Ultimately, the commissioners still questioned the relevance of the miners’ complaints. It is possible that the way the complaints were received depended on how the miners were perceived: whether they were subordinate “subjects” or whether they came across as something closer to the angry mob that Swab described when they appeared in court. In this discussion, the commissioners cast doubt on the legitimacy of the miners to make a common cause as a group. This could be because they viewed them as a collective group of subordinates that were considered \textit{legohjon}, a rowdy rabble. However, the miners had their own priorities when it came to the oeconomy of the mine. This included the roles that should be taken by the state, \textit{Bergslagen}, the \textit{bergsmän}, as well as what fell under their own jurisdiction. They were able to present these views to the Commission in 1724. A comparison between their views and Swab’s shows how oeconomy on different levels was argued through an interaction between these different levels.

**The issue of modes of payment**

The issue that the miners focused on in their first, short petition to the Commission regarded how they should be paid. The miners who signed the first petition described how they now received monthly payments amounting to the sum of twelve \textit{daler} kmt, but that a portion of this payment was given to them in kind. This followed an older stipulation under which miners were to receive a third of their wages in kind, such as in wares described as \textit{nötande och tärande}; wearable and consumable goods such as food, grain, and cloth. The miners stated that they would rather accept a payment of eleven \textit{daler} kmt as long as they would receive it in cash. Part of the reason they gave for this preference was that they did not want to be forced into taking payment in kind from the warehouse for grains. Their assertion that they could find better wares for better prices at the marketplace in Falun was also a way of saying that they could act independently, and that they did not trust the agents of \textit{Bergslagen} to act for them.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{33} RA ÄK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, pp. 166–172 shows the miners’ complaints and their signatures. RA ÄR 408, Vol. 1 Kommissionsprotokoll, pp. 573–585 deals with the hearing of the miners.

\textsuperscript{34} RA ÄK 408 vol. 1 Kommissionsprotokoll p. 624

\textsuperscript{35} RA ÄK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, pp. 166–167.
Swab did not address this request for monetary payment directly, but his opinion on how the miners’ wages should be administered can be detected in his discussions about how the mine’s cash surplus should be managed in a more general way. One of his recurring arguments was that wealth brought out of the mine ought to be reinvested in it. He also mentioned that earlier bergsmän had bought wares for the miners at the market and the miners did not need to do so themselves. Providing had been one of the obligations of the bergsmän; it was a natural part of their duty to work the allotted shares in the mine. If they could do so, the miners would have no need of monetary wages.36

During the hearing after their petitions had been presented, the Commission had the opportunity to clarify a few points regarding the miners’ complaints and interview them further. The commissioners then presented the argument that the miners’ demands could not be met because the miners could not be trusted with money. The miners were told that if they received what they wanted, they would soon ask for more and never be satisfied. The commissioners also argued that if the miners received money, they would spend it on drink.37 They accused the miners of working for very short periods, meaning that they did not earn the money that they demanded. To this, the miners replied that they did not have enough work to do.38

The commissioners also asked the miners how the takings of copper ore had been taxed previously. The miners replied that before, everything that was subtracted went to the king, while what is subtracted now went to Bergslagen. With that, the subtraction has become larger.39 The commissioners replied that this larger contribution to Bergslagen went back into the support of the same point, as well as of the bergsmän. The miners replied that the enlargement of the tax meant that their work was heavier and that they gained less from it.40

The miners made the distinct complaint that they did not receive accurate sums of money at the mining court when they auctioned off their copper ore. In his response, Swab insisted that they were not only paid the correct amount, but that they sometimes received higher payments than the bergsmän who owned the shares they were working. After saying this, he outlined how he thought the miners and the bergsmän should and should not be in relation to each other in the oeconomy of the Great Copper Mine:

37 RA ÄK 408 Vol. 1 Kommissionsprotokoll p. 580
38 Ibid, pp. 579–580
39 Ibid, p. 573
40 Ibid.
... and if these complainers have no other intention here, than to bring what is instituted to help the common good back into its former disorder, then their desire to be allowed to sell the ore themselves is unreasonable and damaging to the activity of the work; for the more the labourer forces the bergsman and without reason and to the highest and lays claim to the last penny, the more the bergsman loses, and the less liveliness is left in him to pursue the work, and again when the labourer gets more than he has truly earned and has a better provision and a better daily wage than the bergsman, the less industry he uses in his work.

In short, Swab believed that the reform instituted for the common welfare by Bergslagen should be beyond the sphere of the miners’ influence. The miners earning more than the bergsmän would destroy the whole oeconomy of the Great Copper Mine because then they would not have the incentive to work. This shows that Swab’s views correlated with one of the commonly held perceptions of mercantilism; this was the view that the large working population had to be kept poor in order to be an asset to the nation’s economy. At the same time, in his writings to the Commission, Swab fluctuated between characterizing himself as a caring householder whose main concern was the welfare of the poor and the miners to that of a sterner figure upholding hierarchy, depending on which argument he was making or which of his own reforms he was defending.

The issue of monetary wages was particularly salient for the miners since the discussion centred on the Great Copper Mine. A great deal of the copper produced there was converted into money in the nearby town of Avesta. The miners were not simply asking for money; they were asking for some of the material they harvested themselves. The fact that they demanded their wages to be paid in cash and that Swab and the Commission argued against this had wider implications. In 1723, Swedish servants’ statutes were intensified, enforcing servants’ obligations to work and to stay at one workplace for a set amount of time. This moment, administrators at the Great Copper Mine

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41 This is a translation of the word ‘arbetskarl’. The word ‘labourer’ also has modern connotations that might be misleading. It should be seen here as a literal translation.

42 ‘Fyrcken’ is the word used here, a word denoting one-fourth of an öre, or a copper coin. It might have been used to mean small values of money in general, like penny can sometimes be. See ‘fyrck’ in Svenska akademiens ordlista över svenska språket, p. 200.

43 “... och hyss a desse klagande inet annat afseende härunder, än att bringa i förra oredighet, hwad som till det gemensamma bästas fortsättande är fastställt, warande i så mått to deras begäaran, att sielfve få föryttra mallnen mycket oskiäflig och för Brucket drift skadelig; Ty ju mehra arbetzKarlen tvingar Bergsmannen och utom skählikheten och till det högsta påstår ytstera fyrcken, ju mehr förlohrar Bergsmannen, och ju mindre lîjfachtighet blir hos homon till bruk uhtfohrandet bijbehällen, och åter når arbetzKarlen får mehra än han wärckeligen förtient och har såledz bättre uthkombst och dagpenning än som Bergsmannen, ju mindre fljt använder han i grufwearbeitet.” in RA ÄK 408, Vol. 2, Akter, handlingar, p. 176


45 Harnesk 1990 p. 33. The regulations from 1723 were not generally followed by either householders or servants. Tighter restrictions were imposed in 1739. Ibid, p. 37
were arguing that their servant class did not need monetary wages because their overseers could go to the market for them.

Were the miners forced to take payment at the warehouse for grains?

The issue of payment was related to another point of contention for the miners: the warehouse for grains. When they discussed payment, the miners also expressed a worry that the administration would force them to take their wages at the warehouse, as some of them already did. In relation to this issue, the miners brought up different ways that they thought the warehouse was cheating them. I have noted that it is not obvious that any of Swab’s reforms in 1716 actually did force the miners to take payment at the warehouse, or whether the warehouse in particular had such far-reaching implications for the miners’ changing status in the bergstad. However, the petitioning miners used the example of the warehouse to make a reflection on their powerlessness within the hierarchy of the bergstad:

Though some miners are not now bound to the warehouse, it can happen soon enough, since, with us, changes are frequently made.46

When the commissioners questioned them further about what problems they experienced with the warehouse during the hearing, the miners who were present claimed that they did not receive the right amount of provisions there. For one thing, Bergslagen was not providing them with enough wood, rope and tools through the warehouse, because they did not know how much was needed.47 In the hearing that followed, the miners elaborated on this, stating that the lack of wood meant that they could not work; they needed the kindling in in the fire-setting and smelting processes. When questioned further by the commissioners, they mentioned that fights had broken out over the supply of wood; they risked starvation, as there was not enough work while they were waiting for fuel for the fire-setting. They also believed they were being cheated out of grain.48

At the warehouse, the grain was portioned by scales and new systems of measurement that the miners did not understand, compounding their distrust.49

It would be well, they said, if the warehouse had been used exclusively for

48 RA ÄK 408, Vol. 1 Kommissionsprotokoll, pp. 578–579. ‘Tillmakning’ was the method used to break out ore from the mountain by heating the stone with fire until it became fragile.
49 Ibid, pp. 572–573. According to Bertil Boethius, objective proof that the miners were cheated is difficult to establish. See Boethius (1951), p. 308.
aiding impoverished miners, but since it was open to all customers, rich buyers got the best grain while the miners were left with tarnished wares.\textsuperscript{50}

A recurring theme in the miners’ complaints was that there had been a change in the mode of communication between them and their immediate superiors. The agents at the warehouse could not provide them with the right amount of tools and wood because they did not know what was required for the work. They lacked the practical knowledge of the previous providers. The new use of scales caused another communication problem. The miners were used to weighing with a steelyard. Since the agents at the warehouse were not measuring goods in a way that the miners could understand, the miners could not know if they were being given the right amount. This failure of communication was further evidence of the fact that the agents of the warehouse did not know the miners’ practices; this was an example of a greater distancing between work and management of the mine that was a common thread in all of the miners’ complaints. Another example was that the rules and regulations pertaining to the miners were no longer read aloud, meaning the miners could not partake of them if they could not read.\textsuperscript{51}

At the Commission’s end, responding to the fears the miners had expressed, the commissioners resolved that they did not have to take their payment at the warehouse. However, the warehouse remained an institution in Falun throughout the period of the town and mine’s unification as a \textit{bergstad}, 1720–1769, and the Royal Commission acknowledged its role in aiding the miners through times of economic hardship; this was a vindication of Swab’s original motives for instituting the warehouse. With this ruling it was also acknowledged that the miners should be paid in money rather than in food and clothing. When the commissioners announced this, they did not present it as a response to the complaints in particular. They rather placed this point along with other suggested reforms to the practices of the warehouse for grains.\textsuperscript{52}

The issue of the appointment of new bailiffs

New bailiffs had been appointed by the Board of Mines to oversee and document the miners’ work as a part of the reforms in 1716. The complaint against these mining bailiffs was the closest the miners came to open defiance. Reflecting on the change between the old system of evaluation and the new one under the bailiffs, the miners wrote:

\textsuperscript{50} RA ÅK 408, Vol. 2 \textit{Akter, handlingar}, p. 166, pp. 167–172.
\textsuperscript{51} RA ÅK 408, Vol. 1 \textit{Kommissionsprotokoll}, pp. 572–573.
\textsuperscript{52} The Commission ruled that the warehouse should continue but restricted its trade in Ibid, pp. 855–857, pp. 973–976. Swab’s original motive for founding the warehouse was expressed in Bergskollegium huvudarkivet, protokoll (1715), p. 2261. See also Ericsson (1970), pp. 85–104 for a thorough history of the warehouse’s economic activity, 1724–1769.
Before this we have, after the few days when our work in the mine has finished, quickly been given a bill by the mining guard representing our payment by the pairs or by the rotelag; but now, since the mining guards are given no faith, we have to wait for long periods of time, sometimes a whole month, before we are given our bills by the young and newly appointed bailiffs, who little understand our difficult work, or sympathize with us.

The mining guard’s role of evaluating the completed work and ensuring that the wages were paid accordingly had now been assumed by bailiffs who, according to the miners, had no practical experience working in the mine—they sometimes even rejected entering it because they “disliked the dust”. The added administrative work that these bailiffs had to do meant that they were slower in evaluating the miners’ work, which meant that the miners’ wages were delayed. The mining guards did not need to do any such administrative work, the miners argued. They simply had to be present to witness the mining and evaluate the miners’ accomplishments based on their own personal expertise.

When he addressed the miners’ complaints, this was the criticism Swab answered first. He rebuked the miners for criticism he saw as reckless: “When it so happens at such a large and delicate work that the miners, for the sake of some ill will, begin to explain and set aside those who are really ordained to have insight and keep watch over how well they work in the mine and that it is done rightly”; the new bailiffs might choose to leave, and he did not know who else might complete such dangerous work.

Swab condemned this complaint in harsh terms, viewing it as evidence of the miners’ power-hungry intentions. It was in this instance that he wrote:

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53 “Så hafwa wi ock för detta, när vårt arbete i grufwan på sina wissa dygn blifwit fulgiordt, straz fåt sedel af wachtaren på wår betalning utaf paret eller rotelagarne; men nu, sedan wachtaren intet widare är betrodt, måste wi wänta långa tider, på, ibland hela månaden, innan wi få wära sedlar utaf de unga och nyl. Tilsatta Bergsfogdarne, hwilka vårt swåra arbete föga förstå, eller behierta wilja.” RA ÅK 408, Vol. 2, p. 167. The miners also claimed that they had previously been provided with tools by the mining guards in RA ÅK 408, Vol. 1 Kommis- sionsprotokoll, p. 573.

54 RA ÅK 408, Vol. 2, p. 167. Mentioned again in the commission’s hearing, RA ÅK 408 Vol. 1 Kommis- sionsprotokoll pp. 577–578. The smoke from the mine and from the smelting huts nearby was in fact poisonous. See Sjölin (2004) for an investigation of the death statistics from Falun and their relation to the smog from the mine. See also Johan Browallius contemporary description of the Falun smog and the lung-disease it caused in Falun to the Royal Science Academy, in Browallius (1743)


There is something wrong with society when the common men want to become rulers and take a stand on issues which they do not understand or have the right grasp of, to want to change everything according to their whims, to libel and accuse the foremen and the servants of the state, to place blame on everything that is built for the common good, and more such things which pave the way for the wreck and ruin of these costly and important works. God prevent such miserable consequences of this unruliness, mismanagement and noise!58

In the hearing after Swab’s text had been read out, the miners did not reply to the accusation that they wanted to become rulers themselves.59 However, they brought up their own ability to evaluate their work during the Commission’s hearings. When it came to the complaint about the bailiffs in relation to the mining guards, the miners admitted that some mining guards’ management was also lacking. Some never entered the mine because they were too old. However, the miners argued that in such cases, elders among the miners could co-operate with the guards:

They also said, that an old miner would be so knowledgeable about the mine, and would send a good load of ore60 forward as quickly as the guards, and often sooner; and, that so long as the guards had given them payment quickly, as in Lybecker’s time, it had worked better.61

Here, the miners revealed that when the guards failed to inspect and approve of their work, the miners did so themselves in collusion with the guards. The presence of the mining guards had in part been advantageous to the miners because it had allowed them to work more independently, and had given them more authority. The miners stressed that they had the knowledge of how work was performed in the mine, and criticized bailiffs who lacked that knowledge.

58 “Det står och i denne Societeten intet wähl till, när gemehne men willia blifwa regerande och taga sig tillfälle i saker, som dhe intet förstå och hafwa rätt begrep om, att willia ändra alt efter sitt tycke, förtahla och anklaga förmännen och Betienterne lasta alt hvad till allmän nytta är anlagdt och mehra sådant, som alt bahnar vägen till detta kästbahre och angelägne Wärcketz rum och undergång, hwilken beröfwelige efterföljd på denne oroo, misshållighet och oväsende Gud nådeligen afwärie!” RA ÄK Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar p. 179.
59 RA ÄK 408, Vol. 1 Kommissionsprotokoll, p. 573.
60 The Swedish word used here is ‘skuta.’ It generally means ship or boat, but can also mean a large stone block that has been loosened by an explosion. I have interpreted this to mean something similar to a shipment or a load of ore in this case.
The miners’ distancing from the bergsmän and the new role of Bergslagen

All of the points of conflict that the miners identified in their petition were united by a common theme: the way that the bergsmän were being supplanted by Bergslagen as masters over the miners. In practice, this shift meant that miners who had been working in the pairs of the bergsmän, and had been taking their payment from them, began to work under Bergslagen as a conglomerate instead. The warehouse administered their payments and mining bailiffs, appointed by the Board of Mines, evaluated their work. Rather than answering to an individual householder, the miners answered to an administration consisting of many householders. It was increasingly unclear to them who held the utmost responsibility for their welfare. In their petitions and at the Commission’s hearing, they were given the chance to explain how they saw themselves in relation to the bergsmän, and what type of authority they acknowledged.

First, the employment status of the miners who wrote the petition was unclear. When the miners’ petitions were brought up for discussion at the Commission’s hearing, Swab described whom the miners were representing. Specifically, he mentioned that a majority of the miners who wrote the petition were already employed by Bergslagen as a conglomerate, while a smaller number worked for individual bergsmän. The miners themselves did not directly contest Swab’s description of the nature of the petitioning miners’ employment, but they did describe their situation in a different way. This difference revealed a slight variation in how the miners saw themselves compared to how Swab saw them.

Additionally, the developments that were set in motion by the institution of the warehouse for grains in 1716 were not as clear as they have been depicted in previous histories. This is a case in which the actors’ perception of the nature of their employment did not appear to match with changing practices. However, the miners’ perception of the type of structure that they belonged to—a private household rather than a public one—affected their choices and actions. The choices and actions in this case were to choose to protest a change in practice that did not match with their perception of themselves.

The first letter sent to the Commission was an introduction to the complaint, signed by 41 miners. Two hundred and fifty-nine miners signed the second, longer petition. In his reply to this one, Swab mentioned that out of these signatories, 212 took their payment at the warehouse; this meant that it is reasonable to assume that Bergslagen directly employed them.62 However, the fact that they took payment by the warehouse does not tell us whether these miners worked under the bergsmän or not. The group of miners who remained

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62 RA ÄK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, p. 177.
with the bergsmän were a part of the gruvskifte, meaning that they were members of the teams known as the fourth-parts. However, even miners who were parts of the gruvskifte were apparently obliged to have their payment administered to them via the warehouse. So, both types of miners were taking their payment at the warehouse by the 1720s. However, this reform did not prohibit the miners under the bergsmän from also making deals to get payment separately from them. This could have been the case with the 47 miners who had signed because, according to Swab, they did not take their payment at the warehouse.

It is also possible that these miners were family members of the bergsmän who employed them, or a part of their private households. At any rate, since the 47 who signed the second petition did not receive their payment from the warehouse, it can be assumed that they, by Boethius’s definition, were gruvskiftesfolk.

In practice, the majority of the miners who signed the complaint were apparently dependent on the warehouse to get wares and wages. However, when it comes to how the miners saw themselves, the picture becomes murkier. There are indications that the other 212 miners also saw themselves as gruvskiftesfolk. In the first introductory letter, signed by the 41, they wrote that they wanted to “command our working wages ourselves, which we have earned by the bergsmän…”

It read bergsmän, not Bergslagen. In the longer list of complaints, signed by the 259, there are several specific complaints about how things related to their work that had previously been handled by the bergsmän were now being mismanaged by Bergslagen. Foremost among these were about the bailiffs of Bergslagen. As mentioned earlier, the miners also complained that Bergslagen failed to provide them with barrels and rope. The miners claimed that the bergsmän had previously had the right to provide them with kindling, and that there had always been enough for their work then; but “since the servants of Bergslagen have been given this task, our work is often hindered for lack of kindling, and we come up short in our provision.”

They complained about how they were not allowed to decide how to use the copper ore granted to them as a part of the mining take. Previously, they said that “we had been allowed to sell it ourselves, if we could not agree about the bergsmän about the purchase”. They also stated that while they had been able to buy food, clothing, and tools from the bergsmän and the local traders

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63 This definition of gruvskifte is found under gruva in SAOB
64 “… at siefwa disponera vår arbetzlôn, som wi af Bergsmännen förtiena…” RA ÄK 408 Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, p. 163.
66 “… men sedan Bergslagens bettiner fät denna sysslan om händer, kommer vårt arbete ofta, i mangel av wed, at stå tillbaka, och wi uti wär näring högeligen til korta; ” Ibid.
and sellers—or had been able to ask their *bergsmän* to go to the market for them in the past—they were now forced to use their wages at the warehouse; this was where they believed they were being cheated.\(^{68}\) An old miner who was present, who had worked in the mine for 39 years, was asked how he had perceived the nature of his work to have changed over four decades. He said that it had changed a lot, because in his earlier days “each and every *bergsman* had kept his own miner and worker in his mining room.”\(^{69}\)

When it came to the nature of their employment, these miners were consistently comparing working closely with the *bergsmän* to being forcibly distanced from them due to various economic reforms. However, there is no sense that they were not still formally *gruvskiftesfolk*. These complaints reveal that these particular miners still described themselves as working in the pairs belonging to *bergsmän*. They expressed themselves as working under *bergsmän* at the time of writing, taking payment from them and at one point referring to them as “our *bergsmän*”.\(^{70}\) However, many of their complaints were about the fact that these *bergsmän* were losing authority over them, supplanted by *Bergslagen*. While the miners were still technically working the shares of the *bergsmän*, *Bergslagen* provided them with tools, oversaw and evaluated their work, and made them pay for grain and other wares at the warehouse. Their argument was essentially that, while the *bergsmän* retained the status as owners of the shares, *Bergslagen* had replaced them as providers and leaders of the work teams in practice.

The question of who the miners’ immediate superiors were was increasingly difficult to answer. Who had the responsibility to provide for them? To whom did they have a right to complain about to the Commission? The miners at the Great Copper Mine had the same legal status as servants in agrarian households, but in practice they did not belong to households in the way that the farming servants did.\(^{71}\) That the miners were heard in 1724 could be read as an example of the Commission recognizing that these miners were a group with their own agenda, rather than just subservient members of a working team. The fact that they were brought to the Commission to present and discuss their complaints as a unified group could be seen as an acknowledgement that they were now apart from the households of the *bergsmän* and had been so for a long time.\(^{72}\)

At the same time, Swab tried to question the legitimacy of this new group. It is also unlikely that the miners could have argued this directly. However, it is possible that the miners used a holistic view of oeconomy as a way to argue indirectly for a removal of their subordinate status. Since they perceived a power vacuum where the *bergsmän* had formerly been, they might have seen

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\(^{68}\) RA ÅK 408 Vol. 2 *Akter, handlingar*, p. 163, pp. 168–169.

\(^{69}\) RA ÅK 408, Vol. 1 *Kommissionsprotokoll*, p. 576.

\(^{70}\) Ibid, p. 168.

\(^{71}\) Cleasson (2015), p. 57.

\(^{72}\) For the miners’ complaints, see RA ÅK 408, Vol. 2 *Akter, handlingar*, pp. 166–172.
their knowledge through experience as something that allowed them to take
the mantle of bergsmän, with the privileges that it entailed. This was certainly
how Swab interpreted the contents of their petitions when he accused them of
wanting to be householders.

If the miners wished to be recognized as householders in their own right,
the distancing of those in authority from the work performed in the mine pre-
sented a threat to this. Although it was possible for a miner to, in theory, ad-
tance to the position of a bergsmans in the early eighteenth century, it was
much harder for him to achieve anything like the high positions of the state
officials who were his new masters; it was also difficult to gain insight into
the even more complex ways that they administered oeconomy at the mine. In
fact in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, many poorer
bergsmän sold their shares and became miners, climbing down in the hierar-
chical system rather than up. This process was occurring in contemporary
iron-making communities as well.73

To summarize, the miners did not see themselves as working under
Bergslagen after the reforms, since they still described themselves as working
under the bergsmän. They affirmed their working relationship to the bergsmän
in parts of their complaints. The system of distributing payment through the
warehouse for grains might have meant that Bergslagen took ownership of the
miners’ work in practice, but that differed from the miners’ perceptions of
what their relationship with the bergsmän ought to be. A substantial part of
the miners’ complaints dealt with the problem of the physical distance be-
tween those who were in charge and the work in the mine, which meant that
the more centralized administration passed reforms over their heads. The min-
ers complained that the mining articles, laws, and statutes that regulated work
and wage setting at the mine were no longer read out to them, meaning that
they did not know their own rights and duties.74 They said that decisions were
being taken regarding them and their work that they did not have a say in it.

The miners criticized the use of new systems of measurement that they did
not understand, and the communication of laws and regulations through the
medium of the written word, as they could not read. They criticized the ap-
pointment of new bailiffs who did not know the requirements of their work
and were not physically present in the mine. They complained that they were
forced to buy wares at the warehouse that regulated prices in a way they were
not familiar with instead of being allowed to bargain at the market in Falun.
The sources of their complaints were administrative reforms that prevented
communication between the miners and the administration of the mine, creat-
ing a distance between them.

The miners believed they had a right to obtain knowledge of the adminis-
trative structure of the mine. Such administration should be communicated in

74 RA ÄK 408, Vol 2 Akter, handlingar, p 167.
a way that they knew. They also only recognized overseers who were present in the mine and had gained knowledge of the work there through experience. This reveals that the miners argued according to a conception of oeconomy as something holistic, in other words something that people belonging to different levels of hierarchy practiced in similar ways. Everyone on every level of society ought to possess a practical knowledge of the work performed if they were to claim an authoritative position over the workers. Knowledge through experience legitimized whoever was placed in a position of authority.

The miners’ complaints were eventually mostly dismissed at the end of the Commission’s hearings in the summer of 1724. However, before that, a long discussion had taken place in the mining court, where the commissioners questioned Swab about his role as a person in authority, and his views on the people in his care.

6.3. Levels of hierarchy

At various points during the Commission’s hearings, Swab presented his ideal vision for how oeconomy ought to function at the Great Copper Mine. This contained a vision of a hierarchical order rooted in agrarian household practices. He saw it as his obligation to preserve the traditional group of working bergsman. This group not only owned shares in the mine but oversaw the mining themselves. They were nominally responsible for the process from transportation of the ore to its refinement, in co-operation with local peasants and smelters.\(^{75}\) The commissioners described former practices in which the bergsmän would hire members of their family, like their sons and sons-in-law, to work for them as miners.\(^{76}\) According to this practice, there was a similarity between the pairs and private household units, since the bergsmän would have had the roles of fathers as well as overseers of their work teams. They held authority as masters of the house over the oeconomy of their allotted shares, and as managers of the miners. This was how Swab and the Royal Commission’s deputies characterized the working order of the mine before its period of economic turmoil had begun.\(^{77}\)

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\(^{75}\) Boethius (1951), pp. 231–234.

\(^{76}\) See RA ÅK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, pp. 41–42, in which Swab described how such an order had existed since the days of the medieval King Magnus Ericsson and until the great cave-in of 1687, which restructured the landscape of the mine. See also the protocol from the Commission’s hearings in RA ÅK 408, Vol. 1 Kommissionsprotokoll, pp. 561, in which the Royal Commission asked Swab whether it would not be better if the bergsmän continued to hire their own relatives to work in the mine as they had done in the past. See Heckscher (1940), p. 49–51 for statistics regarding the numbers of bergsmän during the eighteenth century.

\(^{77}\) RA ÅK 408, Vol. 1, Kommissionsprotokoll, p. 561, and by Swab in Vol. 2, Kommissions-handlingar, pp. 41–44, pp. 49–53. Birgitta Ericsson also describes the career of the bergsman and member of the burgher estate Eric Sjöberg as having had this trajectory. She claims this background was common among bergsmän, but does not back up the claim. See Ericsson (1970), pp. 12–13.
The vision of the pairs as family units had a direct relevance to the miners since it painted them as willingly subordinate in a work unit held together by a familial sense of trust. The problem was that this ideal had no relation to practices at the mine during this period. The discrepancy between their legal status and their practical conditions lay at the heart of their complaints to the Commission.

The levels acknowledged by Anders Swab

In the texts he gave the Commission, in which he defended his version oeconomy, Swab still characterized this household structure of the work teams as ideal. Swab had aimed to support the poorer bergsmän economically when he instituted the reform redistributing the ore, in part so that they could afford to return to working within this household structure. In this, Swab saw his duty as to ensure the mine’s proper oeconomy. This role entailed taking care of the miners as well as the poorer bergsmän, securing the provisions they needed.

When he made the argument that he was fulfilling this obligation, Swab was positioning the crown, Bergslagen, the bergsmän and the miners in a hierarchical order within the oeconomy of the bergstad, with himself representing Bergslagen. A common theme in his replies was that any kind of criticism from the miners could be viewed as mutiny, since it was not their place to argue with their superiors. In those instances, he would describe them as rabble. It also threatened his authority. An upset like this would mean the ruin of the whole venture, which would inevitably backfire on the miners. He was acting as a caretaker on their behalf.

Swab did not explicitly argue that the miners should be kept poor and oppressed. However, Swab did seem to argue that the miners should be kept out of the monetary economy. This is clear when the miners demanded to receive their wages in cash. His viewpoint was also supported by the commissioners, to a certain extent. This does not necessarily indicate that they thought the miners ought to be lacking provisions for survival, but it instead reveals how they saw their placement in the social hierarchy of oeconomy. Swab saw the miners as the responsibility of the bergsmän. They were the servants of the bergsmän, and the bergsmän ought to be their householders. The problem was that the bergsmän fell short in this role. Swab argued that Bergslagen had to step in, expanding its public oeconomy at the expense of the private oeconomy of the bergsmän. It was relation to this that Swab stated that “you need a different remedy for someone who is sick than for someone who is well.”

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78 RA ÄK 408, Vol 2 Akter, handlingar, pp. 41–44.
79 Ibid, pp. 13–29. Swab wrote his defense against the first criticism he received by his accusers at the Royal Commission, and in doing so outlined what he believed to be the proper oeconomy.
80 RA ÄK 408, Vol 2 Akter, handlingar, p. 50.
Swab was defending the oeconomy of his reforms by painting the private oeconomy of the bergsmän as having failed. In particular, they were unsuccessful when it came to providing for the miners and reinvesting their takings in the work. When he presented the simile of the father bequeathing his household to his sons, which has been quoted in Chapter 5, Swab had created a picture of how a new group of greedy bergsmän were pushing out an older group and taking over ownership of the mine. Swab asked the Commission: “What kind of agreement and unity could such a household have? Or how long could such oeconomy in such a way be kept?”

The older group had supposedly worked their shares in the mine alongside members of their own households. The new group, Swab said, saw the mine as a source for personal enrichment rather than as shares to work as a duty to the kingdom. The new group did not know anything about the practical side, and saw the shares that had previously signified sites of work as mere value papers. When the poorer bergsmän lost their shares, they lost authority over the mine, which meant that their structure of work also disappeared. Swab claimed that miners hired by the new bergsmän did not have the same close connection to their masters, which in his view meant that they were less to be trusted.

With his reforms, Swab was in effect attempting to bridge the distancing between the head and the hands at the mine. He saw it as his duty as a household on a higher level to step in where the householders on lower levels had failed, and provide for the miners.

The levels of hierarchy acknowledged by the miners

The miners’ view of which level of hierarchy they belonged on can be inferred from the criticisms they made against their immediate superiors. Through these criticisms, they expressed a view of the basis of authority and where it ought to rest. This was knowledge through experience. Erich Ericsson, the mining guard, characterized himself as a miner who knew only the workings of the mine and did not strive for a position of higher authority. With this, he made an appeal to the Commission by positioning himself as a humble subordinate, asking for the commissioners’ protection against Swab. At the same time, he asserted that he possessed the particular, practical knowledge of the miner.

The miners also used this claim of knowledge through experience as a way to criticize the administration of the mine. Without utilizing the knowledge gained from experience, the mine could not be administered correctly. It was

81 RA ÄK 408, Vol 2 Akter, handlingar, p. 50
82 Ibid, pp. 50–53.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid. See also Ibid, pp. 40–54.
not possible for the miners to make direct claims that they possessed the authority of householders, since such a statement would be seen as a threat to established hierarchy, vindicating Swab’s accusation of mutiny. However, in describing the ways that the lack of knowledge on the part of the bailiffs and other administrators made them incompetent overseers, the miners demonstrated their own knowledge, while claiming that authority ought to be recognized based on practical knowledge.

The mining guards’ ambiguous status meant that the miners could see them as allies. The mining guards were closer to bergsmän in certain ways since they were in positions of authority, working as overseers. They were also close to the miners by virtue of their claim to experience since they were present in the mine when they reviewed the work performed. According to the miners, the reforms ousted the guards from the position they had held by virtue of their knowledge of mining, replaced by bailiffs who were there by virtue of having been appointed by Swab. The miners claimed they were also being moved without their consent, forced to take wares and payment from a warehouse whose systems of measurement they did not understand, simply because Swab had ordered it. They were forced to accept mining statutes they could no longer understand because they were not publicly read out and the miners could not read.

The miners might have used a commonly held conception of oeconomy as holistic to argue that they deserved to know how the whole mine was administered, as well as take part in this administration. Swab interpreted their petition as a grab for more political and economic power, accusing the miners of wanting to be rulers of the mine. The miners did not make such an outright statement—such a thing might have been impossible for them to make within the normative and legal framework of the mining court. However, they described how they regulated their own work in co-operation with the mining guards, and how this system had worked more efficiently, as well as granting them fair, regular wages. This was as close as the miners could come to stating that the knowledge they claimed to possess ought to grant them the rights of householders within the oeconomy of the bergstad.

6.4 The divided and the holistic oeconomy: Conclusion

There were many groups within bergstad who sent complaints to the Royal Commission in 1724, but the case of the miners most clearly illustrates a clash between different conceptualizations of the levels private households, the bergstad, and the state.

On the one hand, Swab and the Commission ultimately did not entrust the miners to have a say in the administration of the mine, despite their stated practical knowledge of mining. According to Swab, and eventually the Commission, the miners’ obligation was to concentrate on work and trust the
knowledge of their supervisors. The Commission judged the criticism that the miners offered as subjective and mistaken. Swab treated it as a criticism of the whole hierarchical structure of oeconomy, rather than a criticism of how this particular oeconomy was managed. Swab’s outburst about mismanagement and noise indicated that he saw their criticism as evidence that the miners wanted to supplant either him or the bergsmän as ultimate householders of the mine. The conclusion to the miners’ complaints was that the commissioners disregarded most of them. This could lead to the interpretation that their complaints had little historical consequence.

On the other hand, the commissioners discussed the petitions at length. As sources, they reveal how the miners spoke about their lives and work. The miners’ petitions show that they had an awareness of the various strategies employed by Swab, Bergslagen, and the Board of Mines. They also knew how to compare their present situation with their own work patterns and rights in the past, in order to reflect on and criticize the changes that had occurred. Their statement about older miners having the ability to evaluate the mining shows that the miners could argue for their competency as figures of authority and agents of their own survival.

Perhaps this was the foundation for their belief that they could speak to the Commission about the how the mine should be managed, even though they did not own any shares in the mine. They also argued that they ought to receive monetary wages, and that they should be able to spend it as they pleased. What gave them legitimacy were their work, and the knowledge through experience it gave them.85

While Swab and the commissioners seemed to portray them as subordinates within the confines of a household, they presented themselves as competent agents, with the obligations that that entailed—not only to be provided for by bergsmän, but also to provide for themselves. When the bergsmän then failed in their obligation as householders, the miners suggested they could step up to defend their own interests, and even have a say in how the mine Bergslagen managed the mine by complaining about the bailiffs. Another key complaint was that measurement systems and ways of disseminating information were changed. Their immediate superiors were also replaced, shifting from the warehouse supplanting the bergsmän as providers, to the bailiffs replacing mining guards as overseers; with this, the miners also lost access to knowledge of the oeconomy of the bergstad.

In many ways, their work became simpler because of these reforms. Their duty became to perform their tasks and not concern themselves with anything else. This was a way to divide and organize work according to a highly regulated form of oeconomy, as has been described by Maria Sjöberg in her study

85 In RA ÄK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, p. 169, they end their letter by stating that they risk their lives in a hard, dangerous form of work.
of ironworks from the same period. The logic of the regulated oeconomy meant that tasks were performed more efficiently if they were divided up; if someone had the most knowledge of a certain type of work, he dedicated himself to performing it, and left governing to the appropriate body—the ones who had sworn oaths to the king, such as Swab. To the miners, however, this task division meant that they lost the means to gain basic knowledge of their place in the oeconomy of the bergstad.

This viewpoint followed a different line of thinking: the logic of holistic oeconomy. According to this, oeconomy was supposed to function in a similar way on all levels, following the same principles. If it worked in this way, households on the lowest level should have some understanding; they would be able to apply their common sense to the highest level. This system could only work if there was a mutual trust and exchange of knowledge between householders and subordinates, and this trust appeared to have eroded at the Great Copper Mine.

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CHAPTER 7.
Women’s work at the Great Copper Mine

The object of many of Anders Swab’s reforms was to ensure the mine’s survival by providing for its workers. In 1718, Swab identified another particular group that required aid. As a way to teach orphans from mining families handicrafts, Swab proposed a plan to institute a manufactory and children’s house, a type of workhouse financed by the town’s administration that would be run for profit. Although it was not outright stated, the main purpose of this manufactory was to teach girls. According to Swab, young women and girls had to learn handicrafts at such an establishment because they would need those skills to support themselves if their fathers or husbands should perish in the mine.

When he was called to defend this manufactory and children’s house at the Royal Commission in 1724, Swab identified the large population of widows in the town as an economic liability for the bergstad.¹ He argued that one of the reasons why these widows were impoverished was that they had not learned to work with their hands. He also broached the issue of what type of work was suitable for women in general. Specifically, he claimed that the types of work the widows undertook, mongering at the marketplace and keeping alehouses, brought the bergstad to ruin. From the context, it is clear that he was not talking about all women, but about the widows of miners; however, the discussion between Swab and the commissioners indicate the way gendered divisions of work were conceptualized within the culture of the household economy, and how these idealized conceptions clashed with the practices of mining families.

7.1. An introduction to the manufactory and its purpose

Officially, the creation of the manufactory was motivated by the fact that the bergstad was home to a disproportionately large number of women without husbands. They were impoverished and also not supporting themselves in the way that Swab thought they should. In the discussion that followed, he outlined the ideal type of work for women affiliated with the mine. Different ideas

¹ RA ÅK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, p. 835.
about what sphere of oeconomy this work belonged in were emphasized in his ensuing discussion with the commissioners. The question was whether women’s work ought to be practiced within the realm of the private household or if it was a matter of public concern. The problem existed because, according to the ideal model for supporting oneself espoused in economic texts, women and men should work side by side with each other in productive household units led by a husband and a wife. A woman’s social status was determined by her position within the household.

The type of titles accorded to women showed this as they revealed their marital status rather than their occupation. In Sweden, women received the prefix ‘wife’ or ‘widow’; this indicated what type of authority and agency the individual might have. For women, working on their own in public was a sign of low respectability. Swab seemed to have accepted this normative conception. Yet, single households were fairly common in Sweden during the early modern period. Women in Falun had to support themselves however they could. The issue of the manufactory was related to a wider concern: how could and should women work to support themselves?

In order to see how this was discussed in Falun in 1724, I have studied the Commission’s documents relating to the creation of a ‘manufactory and children’s house’ that was in operation 1720–1724. In this chapter, I examine the miners’ daughters and widows in relation to the place of work they were supposed to have in the oeconomy of the new bergstad, according to Swab and the commissioners. This question is related to a bigger issue of how the oeconomy of the mine diverged from agrarian economic norms and practices, the effects this divergence on the people of Falun, and how they acted in response. In particular, this chapter deals with how the practical changes to the town’s oeconomy in the 1710s and 1720s affected the normative gender divisions of work related to the structure of the household. It also shows how social norms regarding gender and work, rooted in oeconomy, affected policy decisions.

Women at the Great Copper Mine: The problem of the widows

Here I present a summary of how previous historians have discussed women’s work at the Great Copper Mine, as well as work in other Swedish mines, during this period. This is combined with some statistics regarding the ratio of men and women in Falun, and the various occupations women could hold in the bergstad in the mid-eighteenth century. The goal is to establish how many women lived in Falun and the potential ways these women might have had to support themselves. It is then possible to compare the mining women’s situations in practice to the way Swab and the commissioners discussed them.

4 Ågren in Ågren (ed.) (2017), p. 4,
In order to interpret Swab correctly and understand what the manufactory and children’s house was intended to accomplish, some context about women in Falun is needed. It is necessary to distinguish between the social groups that these women could have belonged to, as well as outline how the different groups were related and how large they were, in order to appreciate the type of conditions that the women lived under when they resided in proximity to the Great Copper Mine and how they could support themselves. This is difficult to do for the 1720s, since there was no reliable population census for Falun until 1749. In that year, the town had a population of over 6,700 people, making it a very large town by Swedish standards. In order to estimate how large the population might have been in the early 1720s, Birgitta Ericsson combines two limited sources: a letter written by the Mayor Appellin in that year in which he claims the population of Falun to be 6,000 people, and an estimation of whether the recorded deaths would be matched by an equal number of births. She concludes that the mayor’s estimation is quite plausible, even though he might have exaggerated in the letter as way to petition to the crown for aid; the death records from that time were inexact at best. But from this, it can be stated that Falun in 1720 probably had a population of around 6,000 people.

There is evidence to show that the female population outnumbered the men in Falun. In the census from 1749, the numbers were close to equal, with the women at 3,537 and the men at 3,312, but in the following ten years, the gap widened considerably. On average, women in Falun outnumbered men by close to a thousand in the years 1749–1760. This is not necessarily explained by the high casualty rate among miners. Although the mortality rate of males was certainly higher than that for females, the male birth rate was also higher, according to the census. Most of the deaths that were recorded in these censuses were for children. However, these do not account for the fact that, on average, the number of widowers for both church districts in Falun between the years 1749 and 1760 was 62, while the average number of widows was 644. This was a large discrepancy, but it was unremarkable when compared to the kingdom at large; there were 107,634 more women than men in Sweden according to the 1749 census. On a national level in 1750, there were 77,000 more widows than widowers in Sweden. Outside of mining towns, the cause of this discrepancy was unlikely to be related to high death tolls. The more likely causes of the gap can be explained by the fact that women on average lived longer than men, and that widowers more frequently remarried. If such

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10 Ibid, p. 69.
a disparity existed during the seventeenth century, the death toll caused by incessant warfare would also have played a part.\textsuperscript{11}

The census from 1749 does not give a complete picture of why this difference existed, as it does not acknowledge the high mortality rate among the miners. The censuses for Falun did have a separate category for deaths in mining accidents; although between 1749 and 1760, it was only filled out once: in 1749. In that year, four men apparently perished in the mine according to this census. This does not present a likely picture of how many casualties there were in the mine during the 1710s and 1720s.

Sigvard Montelius, who has studied sources from an earlier time-period relevant to this thesis, adds to these statistics by using different sources.\textsuperscript{12} He studies the lists of so-called verifications in the accounts of the mining court from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, in which funeral payments were made to the families of perished miners. These accounts show that 101 miners died in the mine between the years 1687 and 1698, a far higher number than the later census records would indicate. Monetlius also notes that these numbers are not a reliable indication of how many actually died in the mine, since they mainly indicate the deaths that were compensated. In order to receive miners-widow’s pensions, the widows had to prove that their husbands had died in the mine. The burden of proof on the widows was so high that they seldom received monetary compensation for the miners who died of injuries related to mining but who did not perish in the mine, or miners whose bodies were not found.\textsuperscript{13}

Montelius has compiled figures for the causes of death from the church books of the parishes surrounding the mine during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He finds that although the general life expectancy of the population of the town was not considerably lower than in other Swedish towns, the miners’ work was hazardous during the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, when there were many cave-ins. In total, the most brutal cave-ins during the years 1688, 1697, 1705, 1707, 1708 and 1736 resulted in a total of 108 deaths in the mine.\textsuperscript{14} Again, this does not account for deaths caused by injuries related to mining. Nor does it account for non-lethal injuries that could ruin the miners’ chances of getting work and thus meant that the work of their wives was of greater financial importance.

There are indicators that miners’ widows, wives, and daughters were barred from working at the mine. Two sources relating to the Great Copper Mine in the early eighteenth century make a claim that women were not allowed in the mine during that time. The most well known is the description given by French

\textsuperscript{11} Mentioned by Magnus Perlestan as a likely cause of many women taking over the management of farms in the Swedish Mantalslängder from the 1640s to the 1670, and again in the 1710s. Perlestan in Sjöberg (ed.) (1997), p. 139.
\textsuperscript{12} Monetlius (1968), pp. 159–173.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, pp. 161–162.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, p. 162.
pastor Rengaud Outhiér, who visited Falun in 1737. He noted that singing and whistling and women were not allowed inside the mine. He saw these rules as a probable explanation as to why the miners appeared to be sad. The other source is a transcription of a meeting at the mining court in 1718, in which Anders Swab mentioned that women were not working in the mine. This is the earliest known evidence that women were prohibited from mining at the Great Copper Mine.

In practice, women might still have worked in the mine as gruvpigor, or ‘mining maidservants’, the female equivalent to the male gruvdrängar. A mining roster survives from the period 1739–1746, counting the people who worked in the mine and their servants, along with the dates they left their employments or died. This document is often difficult to interpret. It does not reveal much about the division of work, or what the difference was between the miners and the hjon, or their servants. When it comes to women, the roster has a few references to widows, under their husband’s names rather than by their own. It is vague on whether these women were sending their own servants, or if they sent miners who happened to be under their employ to work in the mine. This roster can be compared to similar rosters from Swedish iron mines in the eighteenth century. Håkan Henriksson has shown that the iron mine rosters reveal gruvpigor working in iron mines during the same period. At least in the case of the iron mines, this work was documented. Therefore, it can be concluded from the surviving mining roster in Falun that some women owned shares in the mine, but did not apparently work in the mine themselves.

Gudrun Dingsjö-Åsberg has studied surviving rosters not only for the mining but for smelting, transport, and the Crown Machinery from the 1720s to the 1830s; she reveals that very few women performed work that would get them signed to the rosters in any of these areas. I have found no evidence of an actual law that forbade women from working in the mine, however. Dingsjö-Åsberg’s findings support this, showing that a small number of women did in fact work in and around the mine. However, her findings show that it was not the norm for them to do so. If there was no law, there was an apparent bias against women working in the Great Copper Mine.

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15 Outhier (1737), translation in Sahlin (1897), p. 10.
16 This court document was copied for the Royal Commission of 1724. See RA ÅK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, Handlingar, p. 831.
17 See STORA Gruvdrängsrulla 1739–1746.
19 Sundström, Olsson (1975) p. 16, p. 23, p. 29. See also Dingsjö-Åsberg (2003) Kvinnorna vid Kopparberget. She finds two women as servants to the miners in a miner’s roster from 1738, but they did not work their own shares in the mine, and were struck from employment later that year.
20 Bertil Boethius claims that women in Falun did this. See Boethius (1951), p. 211. Urban Claesson repeats this assertion in Claesson (2015) p. 53.
There were few alternatives to support oneself if one did not work with something related to the mine in Falun. Because of the pollution of the soil, it was difficult for miners’ wives to keep kitchen gardens. Like many parts of the Swedish kingdom, bergstad had a surplus of women. How could they then support themselves? There are a varied number of tasks that were never documented in official rosters that women might have performed, such as helping with the roasting and smelting. Bertil Boethius notes that women also worked with transportation of the ore and acted as day labourers.\(^\text{21}\) In the context of other mines in Sweden during the early modern period, however, the Great Copper Mine’s rosters are notable for excluding women from the mine itself.

If they deliberately were excluded, what could have been the reason? Daniels Sven Olsson speculates that there might have been enough male workers available to satisfy the demand for labour there, and that this was the reason why women workers were not needed. A roster from 1743 shows that there was an excess of applications for work at the mine, for example. The miners received certain privileges that other men of servant status did not have. They were provided with places to live on their own plots of land. They had their own parish with a church near the mine; the Stora Kopparberget parish was separate from the Kristine parish, which was centred around the church Kristinekyrkan in town.\(^\text{22}\)

As mentioned, widows whose husbands had perished in the mine received pensions from the mining court, although accidents were sometimes difficult to prove.\(^\text{23}\) Mining was sometimes compared to soldiering, partly because the miners risked their lives for the country’s cause.\(^\text{24}\) There was a combined miners’ hospital and public house near the mine. The crown’s appointment of surgeons working for the mine was a testament to the particular status that mining held in Falun.\(^\text{25}\) During the seventeenth century, the Great Copper Mine had a reputation as a place full of riches. This was carried on into the early eighteenth century. According to Olsson, all of these circumstances encouraged a large force of men to want to work in the mine, although it is difficult to prove that this was the reason why women did not work there when their work was documented in other Swedish mines during the same period.\(^\text{26}\)

This large influx of male workers is supposed to have coincided with a surplus of women and a surplus of widows. From a purely economic perspective, it is unclear how the mining company benefited from excluding women

\(^\text{21}\) Boethius (1951), p. 172.
\(^\text{22}\) The Kristine-church’s parish was still the larger parish, with around 4,000 members. Stora Kopparberget had about 2,000. See Ericsson (1970), pp. 177–185.
\(^\text{23}\) Ibid, See also Hildebrand (1946), pp. 667–672 for a description of the Falun hospital during the seventeenth century.
\(^\text{25}\) For a detailed history of Falun’s hospitals and doctors, see Pontén (1971).
\(^\text{26}\) Olsson (2010), pp. 69–76. See also Olsson (ed.) (1975).
from working there during the early eighteenth century, especially considering
the way Swab and his allies stressed the need for the bergsmän to hire their
own family members to work in the mine.27 The exclusion of women from the
mine during the eighteenth century might have been a cultural residual from
the time when the mine was more prosperous; this would have been something
that became so entrenched in society that it would have been difficult to undo
even when Falun faced an economic crisis. Although women worked along-
side their families in other mines during the same time period, Swab did not
question or explain why women could not work at the Great Copper Mine
when he discussed this fact during the Royal Commission. However, as he
explained to the Commission, these surplus women still needed to be sup-
ported or to find ways to support themselves. All of Falun bore a responsibility
to feed them, at least according to Swab.28

There is evidence again to suggest that women could find alternative ways
to support themselves during the eighteenth century, despite the town’s de-
pendence on a singular resource. From the mid-eighteenth century, the Swe-
dish census again reveals how the bergstad Falun was structured. Two cen-
suses from Kristine parish and the Stora Kopparberget parish, taken in 1749,
show that 267 women over the age of fifteen worked as maidservants to people
of higher estates. The men who worked as servants in a similar position were
165. As servants in burgher households, women over fifteen numbered 118
while the men were only 43. In the category of “the peasants’ children and
servants over 15”, there were 565 women while the men numbered 432.29 This
final category is uncertain because it lumps the children of peasants together
with servants. Taken together, 950 women over the age of fifteen worked as
servants, while 640 men over fifteen did the same. In the 1740s, there were
certainly ways for women to work outside of the mine. When it came to wid-
ows, the main avenues in which they could support themselves were to sell
things in the town market, or to open an alehouse. These were the activities
that the impoverished widows of the Great Copper Mine undertook in order to
survive.30

This situation has a parallel in the social developments in Swedish iron-
works during the eighteenth century, although they might have occurred at a
slightly later date there than they did in Falun. The economic historian Anders
Florén has specifically studied women in Swedish iron-making societies, with
a focus on Jäders bruk between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries.
Florén discusses the economic importance of women’s work in iron-making
households during the seventeenth century, and how they went on to become

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29 Source: Tabellverket 1749: Stora Kopparberget Församling and Falu Kristine kyrka för-
samling, 1749.
an economic liability during the eighteenth when their work was legally restricted. They also became a hindrance as an effect of developing centralization and industrialization. It was difficult for women to find supplementary work within households when those households no longer functioned as production units. Women had to go outside the household in order to look for work, since their supplementary work was important for the households’ economic survival. The problem was that this brought the moral respectability of their households into question. It was lamented that the women in iron-making households did not know how to work with their hands, and that they only knew how to brew strong spirits.31

An almost identical discussion to the one Florén uncovered in Jäders bruk was held in Falun in the 1720s. It is investigated here, in connection to the establishment of the manufactory and children’s house and its role in the economy of the bergstad.

7.2 The creation of the manufactory

In this section, Swab’s characterization of the manufactory and children’s house as a place that combined utility and virtue is recounted. There is also a description of how the manufactory actually functioned during the brief period of its existence, based on the bills and rosters included in the Commission’s documents related to the manufactory. Finally, there is an analysis of the manufactory’s stated purpose and the discussion surrounding it.

The manufactory’s purpose: A solution to the widow problem

The Commission of 1724 collected and transcribed all existing documents relating to the construction of a manufactory and ‘barnhuus’, or a children’s house. This was a place where children might learn useful and productive work. It might have been an orphanage as well, although this is not apparent in the existing documents. This manufactory had, in fact, started a modest production of clothes and textiles in 1720. It was discontinued in 1724 because it was seen as expensive and unprofitable.32 In this section, I discuss the arguments as to why it was instituted in the first place, and the economic ideas as to why it was deemed necessary.

The discussion about the manufactory and children’s house that took place during the Commission’s investigation did not directly concern the mine, but it was still linked to it. One is clear: there was a need for a place for women to work because there was a surplus of women in Falun due, in part, to the high

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32 RA ÅK 408, Vol. 1 Kommissionsprotokol, pp. 985–988.
casualty rate among the miners. Another connection is the way that Swab related his arguments for the manufactory to the way oeconomy was practiced in the mine on a more abstract level. In his arguments, Swab revealed his own idea of what ought to motivate the practice of oeconomy under the responsible rule of the crown. He contrasted this with what he characterized as the greedy notions of the burghers, the bergsmän, and, to a certain extent, the miners. In this argument, Swab once again drew a line between the “right-thinking” bergsmän and a threatening group that wanted to use the mine until there was no ore left and did not care to preserve the fabric of society surrounding it. Swab’s notions of social responsibility and Christianity were closely connected to his views on economy and profit.

Swab explained to the commissioners why he had suggested the manufactory in 1718. He first touched on the issue of the lack of means for the miners’ widows to support themselves. Here, it is evident that both Swab and the commissioners assumed that these women did not work in the mine; they could not take over their husbands’ placements in the pairs upon their deaths. Swab went on to outline different types of work that they could undertake that he considered unsuitable for them. Selling diverse wares, for example, would entail that the women would have to go to the market, which he opposed. He said that not only would this lead to “rudeness, laziness, begging, gossip, quarrels and such that is not healthy or gainful for youths”, thus damaging to the whole bergstad. Swab did not mention why this would be dangerous, and this stands in contrast to the practices of many women in other parts of Sweden during the same period. The historians Erik Lindberg and Sofia Ling have shown that women were encouraged by the laws of Stockholm to sell fruit at the marketplaces there. The fact that Swab thought it was wrong for women to sell things at the market could have been a particularity on his part, but it was also indicative of how he saw Falun as different from other towns. Falun was not a market town, but a copper town.

Swab believed that keeping alehouses also presented a danger to the miners’ widows, and to the whole bergstad. He claimed that the widows were forced to keep the company of unruly miners and encouraged their drinking, which in turn made these miners’ work in the mine more difficult and caused them to act unruly.

A third alternative for women who inherited placements in the pairs of bergsmän was to hire miners to work in the mine in their stead. As mentioned,

33 See RA ÅK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, p. 44.
34 Ibid, p. 836
35 Women’s roles as sellers on the market during the early modern period is discussed by Lindberg & Ling (2014), pp. 3–30.
36 Swab might also have recalled that the miners who had organized a protest in 1720 had discussed their plans in an alehouse owned by a mining widow. RA BkH E 2c : 4, Bergsverksrelationer Stora Kopparberget (1720–1724), p. 18, p. 29
a surviving mining roster from 1739–1744 shows that some women did this, specifying that some miners were the *hjon* of mining widows.\(^{37}\) According to Swab such miners could be “dangerous for the whole town”, not just the women.\(^{38}\) Swab did not explain how these men, hired by widows, would have differed from other miners. It is possible that he assumed they would not have been a part of the mining women’s households to begin with, and therefore strangers to be held under suspicion. At any rate, he assumed that the commissioners would understand why miners’ widows hiring miners to work in their stead was a problem. It is unclear whether it was the miners, or the fact that widows were hiring them, that constituted the issue, according to Swab.\(^{39}\) This was the point where he argued that the matters facing the miners’ widows would cause further problems for the rest of the town and the mine. It has his clearest motivation as to why a manufactory should be established through state funding, under the direction of deputies of the Board of Mines.

Swab might have used the economic hardships facing the miners’ widows as an argument for why the manufactory had to be established, but he did not see this institution as a way to employ the women already widowed by the Great Copper Mine. The idea was instead that the manufactory should become a place to teach the local youths to work with their hands, so that they might be find useful employment in the future. “Youths” were mentioned, but the true purpose of the institution was to mainly educate young women and girls in sewing, knitting, and weaving. These girls were the daughters of miners. According to Swab, they were not being taught how to work with their hands at home at the time. This was the reason why they could not support themselves in useful ways when they were adults.\(^{40}\) The following description he gave of the situation for women in Falun was condemnatory of the idea that mining women should be dependent on their men:

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\ldots \text{[t]hey do nothing else in their youth but trust that when they are married, the man will feed them, without that they can help or support the upkeep of themselves or their own in the smallest way. I considered the causes for why our bergsfolk are so impoverished compared to others, and found among other things, that it really is the biggest cause, that few of them when they leave their workplaces know how to do anything with their hands, and even less so their wives, and the mine and bergsmän have to pay for everything.}^{41}\]

\(^{37}\) See STORA gruvdrängsrulla 1738–1744.


\(^{39}\) In RA ÅK 408 Vol 1 Kommissionsprotokoll, pp. 620–626, Swab used the words “hopen” and “myckheten”, and describes threats made against him.

\(^{40}\) RA ÅK 408 vol. 2 Akter, handlingar pp. 835–843.

\(^{41}\) “...taga dhe sig intet annat förr i ungdomen, än lijta därpå, att när dhe blifwa gifte, skall maffen föda dem, uthan att dhe till sin och dhe sinas underhåld det ringaste därtill kunna hjeloa och understödia. Jag eftertänkte och orsakerne, hwarföre vårt Bergsfolk här äro så dyrlagde emot amorstädés, och fann ibland annat, att det wärkelnén är den störste orsaken, att fåaaf dem, när dhe komma utur sine arbeten wetta någon ting med sine händer att arbeta, och än mindre deras hustrur, uthan alt skall grufvan betaha och komma på Bergzmannens
He gave examples of how the people in the mining towns he visited in Saxony and Bohemia had supplementary incomes aside from mining, and that this was a successful economic arrangement. The fact that mining women might work in the mines was again not mentioned, nor the exceptional position of the Great Copper Mine in Sweden compared to the German mining communities. German metal dominated the European market before the Thirty Years’ War, but no single mine there had the unique position of Falun, by supplying the whole continent with one particular type of metal. However, the German mines had been a source of unique inspiration for the Swedish mining communities. German administrative models had been instated in Falun during the reigns of Karl IX and Gustav II Adolph, the era when Swedish copper began to dominate the international trade and the German mines simultaneously declined.

German structures and German terminology held a well-established place in the mine’s administration, with the presence of geschworner, of berghauptmän and markscheider. As noted in Chapter 2, German-Lutheran ideas of household culture had strong similarities to Swedish ideas as well. Swab certainly did visit Bohemian and Saxon mining communities, but alluding to German places as models for success was also a simple way of bestowing legitimacy on a project. In practice, the work at the institution he had in mind was something different from the types of supplementary work he described as happening in German towns. When he talked about supplementary incomes there, Swab never mentioned the establishment of manufactories that were supported and controlled by a centralized Board of Mines. He merely mentioned that there was a culture in place in German mining towns in which the people who worked in mines had supplementary incomes.

The manufactory was supposed to be a place where people were educated so that they eventually would be able to do handicrafts at home. Swab’s vision for the future of the manufactory was unclear, whether he thought it would one day become unnecessary if learning handicrafts at home would once again become a common practice, or if the institution would become a fixture in the bergstad and turn a profit. This lack of clarity weakened his argument in favour of the costly manufactory.

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42 RA ÅK, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, p. 836. Swab’s belief that such women’s work was of economic importance to the sustenance of households was not unreasonable. See Fiebranz (2002), a dissertation that thoroughly describes the supplementary work that women did in proto-industries during the mid- to late eighteenth century.

43 Olsson in Ångström-Grandien & Jansson, ed. (2012), p. 134, in which the decline of the mines in Mansfeld and the Tyrol are described as contributing to the prominence of the Great Copper Mine. See also Hecksher (1936).


45 See Chapter 2, p. 31

The structure of the manufactory, 1720–1724

An employment roster from the manufactory, covering the whole of its existence 1720–1724, shows that it employed one tailor and one cloth cutter. Working under these two, four journeymen were employed. Apart from these craftsmen and student-workers, there were two young boys; the rest were women of undetermined age: 34 unmarried and two of them wives.47 These were the youths from miners’ families who were signed to the workhouse during its short time of operation. The women were either married or unmarried. Widows are usually determined as such in this type of material. Thus, it can be concluded that no widows were employed by the manufactory, even if the mine’s tendency to create widows was given as the reason why the manufactory had to be started in the first place. According to Swab it was important to teach people when they were young.48 This was given as the reason for the significance of an institution for children, and could also suffice as an explanation as to why there was no employment for widows there.49

Although the employment roster shows only men in positions of authority—the tailor, the cutter and their journeymen—a bill of expenses from the same manufactory shows that women were in fact employed as overseers and teachers as well. According to this document, two women were employed as “knitters”, an almost professional title for women who performed that task.50 Maidservants were also employed to help the tailor and cutter, who lived in the manufactory. The fact that the knitters did not appear on the employment roster can be explained by the fact that they were apparently not employed full-time, but on a weekly basis: “for fifteen weeks, with six copper coins per week”.51 Yet another bill, for the cost of tools, had spinning women who were there to teach the girls to spin. The expenses bill mentioned “3 womenfolk”, perhaps the spinners.52

The bill for tools shows that the majority of the young people employed—in this case, the girls—being taught there learned how to card, to spin yarn, and to knit socks. The amount of tools purchased for these tasks corresponds to the number of women or girls employed at the manufactory. There was only one loom though, and one tub for dyeing cloth.53

The journeymen appeared to have worked for the tailor Jonas Dahlberg; they also lived at the manufactory with him, as evidenced by the purchase of beds for that number of people. Provisions were made for both Jonas Dahlberg and the cloth cutter, Mr Wessman, to live there.54 Travel costs for Dahlberg

48 Ibid, p. 840.
49 As explained by Swab in Ibid, pp. 835–843.
50 “The Swedish term is ‘stickerska’ and would be more accurately translated as ‘knitteress’.
52 Ibid, p. 864.
were also accounted for. Swab made a contract with Dahlberg himself, appointing him the overseer of the manufactory with the responsibility of administering payment for the other workers’ wages, and offering him 750 daler kmt yearly until the manufactory was in full working order. After the manufactory was deemed functional, the yearly wage for Dahlberg would stop, and he and the others would be paid in accordance with how much they managed to sell. This functional stage was never achieved, but the costs for the construction of the manufactory amounted to about 6,000 daler kmt yearly from 1720 through 1723. When the construction was finally halted, Swab complained bitterly about the waste of money for something that had not even been properly tried.

The bills only show the manufactory and children’s house at its potential stage. For instance, although Swab mainly discussed the plight of girls and widows in his defence of it, he also frequently used the gender-neutral term “youths”, and mentioned how supplementary incomes would be necessary to all, not exclusively to women. There were only two small boys and four journeymen at the manufactory, but there might have been plans to provide more employment for boys.

On the other hand, the journeymen held titles relating to their status as practitioners of a trade within a guild system. Their number was necessarily limited and subject to control. Apart from Swab’s concern for the specific plight of miners’ women, this could be the reason why a greater number of girls were employed at the manufactory. The knitters’ weekly employment shows their lack of status, due to that fact that they did not have the protection of guilds in the same way as the male overseers. There is also a lack of evidence that they were recruited from different towns, like Dahlberg. The bills for the inventory show that while Dahlberg and his journeymen received room and board at the manufactory, the knitters did not.

The idea of the manufactory as a particularly Christian institution, due to its utilitarian function, could be compared to similar ideas motivating the orphanages that appeared in Sweden already during the early seventeenth century, as well as to contemporary German and Dutch institutions. An orphanage in Stockholm from the mid-seventeenth century was also constructed according to the idea that children ought to be employed in useful pursuits. This was both to teach them to be productive in the future and to make use of their work in the present. It carried with it the notion that utility was inherently

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56 “Memorial” Ibid, p. 843.
58 The way the Swedish guild system has affected women’s opportunities to work has been discussed by Dag Lindström in the anthology Levebröd, Ågren (ed.) (2011), pp. 185–196.
59 See Blom in Sjöberg ed. (1997). Regarding Swab mentioning what a “Christian” institution the workhouse was, see RA ÅK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, pp. 830–843 in which he mentions this eight times.
virtuous, a notion frequently expressed in literature about oeconomy during this period.\textsuperscript{60}

There was an important difference between these two establishments: the Stockholm house employed housemothers as well as housefathers. The housemothers had to live at the orphanage and pledge their lives to the children there.\textsuperscript{61} The male overseers of the Falun manufactory lived with their journeymen but, as mentioned, there is no evidence that any of the women in the manufactory’s employ lived there at all. Instead of living together in a household-like establishment headed by a mother and a father like in Stockholm, men and women were separated at the Falun manufactory.

During the early modern period, it was common to see men referred to with titles relating to the nature of their work, while women’s titles corresponded to their marital status. The fact that the female overseers were accorded the title of ‘knitters’ in the bills, rather than the more customary ‘wife’ title, is interesting. This can be compared to women of the servant class, whose title “maid” might be prefixed by something relating to her work, like “miner maid”.\textsuperscript{62} However, the knitter-title contained no information about the women’s marital status.

This venture had the purpose to educate women and girls in order that they could give supplementary incomes to their households and eventually support themselves, as Swab stated, if they were to become widowed miners’ wives.\textsuperscript{63} Although there is no statement in the plans that alluded to anything upsetting regarding any present gender hierarchies, the logical action to take when educating girls in a formal manner was to hire a woman and give her the authority of a title, and to organize the girls in a kind of working school funded by the Board of Mines.

\subsection*{7.3 The manufactory in relation to Swab’s views on oeconomy}

This section deals with Swab’s arguments regarding how the manufactory fit into the oeconomy of the \textit{bergstad}. It takes the general statements about economic practices in relation to morality that he made in his defence of the manufactory and children’s house, and how they fit with his ideas of good oeconomy as outlined in previous chapters. I compare his arguments to those made by the commissioners. The discussion about whether the manufactory ought

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid, p. 171.
\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Grupigor} in Swedish. Younger maidservants were called \textit{pigor} which originally meant ‘young girl’, compare to the etymology of the word ‘maid’. Older servants were sometimes called \textit{mamseller}, from the French word \textit{mademoiselle}, directly related to the word maid, an unmarried woman.
\textsuperscript{63} RA ÅK 408, Vol. 2 \textit{Akter, handlingar}, pp. 835–837.
to exist was mainly conducted between Swab and the commissioners. The miners had also expressed reservations regarding the manufactory and children’s house. These are taken into consideration in the analysis, but I do not elaborate on them further.

According to the commissioners, the main problem that the institution of the manufactory and children’s house presented was that it was too costly at a time when it could not be afforded.64 A harsher criticism than this regarding the manufactory cannot be found in the Commission’s documents; at the most, the miners complained about the fact that they had been made to work with furnishing the manufactory without being paid for it. They mentioned that “they would not like to see their children in such an establishment”.65 The nature of the manufactory as an institution might have worried them. It was meant as a type of workhouse for young girls, and possibly also for young boys. The manufactory apparently had no beds for the girls, meaning they were possibly not forced to stay there. But to what extent were they forced to work? Swab’s attitude to the impoverished youths was positive; in his defence of the institution, he called them “the kingdom’s most valuable treasure”.66 However, the manufactory’s emphasis on utility and eventual profit from the labour of the people it employed was a characteristic it shared with a contemporary orphanage in Stockholm.67

The manufactory and children’s house would have been more lenient in its control of its subjects than the Stockholm orphanage, if the youths were not forced to stay there. However, the sources do not reveal how the young women, the girls, and the two small boys gained employment there. It cannot be determined what they signed up for with their contract or how many hours they worked. It is possible that the miners who complained about the manufactory were worried about the women who worked there, even if these fears were unsupported.

While his conflict regarding the funding of the manufactory was with the commissioners, Swab could not directly criticize their reasoning. He was harsher when it came to the people who had raised the issues that had generated the commission in the first place. Swab expressed incredulity that anyone could complain about such a useful and Christian institution as the manufactory.68 He showed little understanding for the people who had criticised it and accused his critics of being driven by “envy, ill will and ignorance”.69 He thought it was shameful for his critics to be so motivated by their own self-

64 See the conclusion of the Commission, RA ÅK 408, Vol. 1, pp. 850–851, in which it was decided that the institution is too expensive to keep up.
65 RA ÅK 408, Vol. 1, Kommissionsprotokoll, p. 582.
69 Ibid, p. 843.
interests that they would destroy this good work. He stated that their ill will brought shame on Bergslagen overall.

Swab’s main argument was that his opponents were motivated by self-interest. This echoed how he defined bad oeconomy in his replies to Grossman; owners, driven by self-interest, destroyed unity and caused the wreck and ruin of the whole work by forcing hard-working owners to sell their shares. This argument is also similar to the one he made when he had first gathered the elder bergsmän and took them to task for having mismanaged the oeconomy in 1714.70 When it came to discussing the manufactory, he saw no political reason for holding back harsh words. Perhaps this was because he saw this criticism in particular as the clearest example of what was wrong with the oeconomy of the mining enterprise that he was committed to saving. He listed his argument in different points, following the style of most of the Commis-sion’s collected works. In point five, for instance, he compared the expansive digging in the mine to his own idea of a sound investment:

When Bergslagen throws itself over a new mine it is not abandoned as long as there is some hope to find something, even if some thousand cmt are lost in the venture. A wealthy father supports his son for twenty or thirty years, purposing to eventually make him wealthy as well. But for such a praiseworthy establish-ment as a manufacture and orphanage, after some time must flourish, the worried people want it to quickly make a profit, something that is impossi-ble while it is still under construction.”71

According to Swab, many customary forms of long-term investment existed, with the most common being the investment that parents made in their children. Why, then, could people not invest in a manufactory with the purpose of aiding the children of the bergstad? Swab claimed that his many critics among the burghers, the bergsmän, and the miners could not see his long-term vision because they were blinded by their self-interest. In contrast, he described the manufactory as a “useful and Christly work”.72 Self-interest would eventually destroy the Great Copper Mine according to Swab. The manufactory and children’s house were doing God’s work, by taking care of those parts of the pop-ulation in Falun who were not cared for otherwise.

When it came to the town’s impoverished population, the commission-ers questioned this line of argument, raising a different type of moral perspective. The view they posited was less utilistic; it was obvious that the poor should

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70 See Chapter 1. pp. 15–16
72 Regarding the suggestion to build a manufactory to the mining court. Ibid, p. 831.
receive aid, and they were not to be helped on the premise that they were a potential resource. The commissioners stated to Swab: “It should not be asked (as in scripture) whether the poor should be helped”.73 To this, Swab replied that that he then assumed that the commissioners were there to help restore the mine so that it could provide resources to help the poor.74

Swab did present economic arguments that were beyond the moral kind in order to support the construction of the manufactory. For example, the women had to be taken care of and taught to work the right kind of work. if they engaged in useful ventures, they could earn money for themselves and not be dependent on their men for support. Then, when there were no men to support them, they would not be an economic liability to the Board of Mines.75 A more moralistically tinged argument was that their work was an end in itself, helping their characters and preventing them from lazy pursuits. The moral status of the Great Copper Mine would in turn be helped if the miners’ women refrained from “rudeness, laziness, begging, gossip, quarrels” and other ungainful pursuits.76

Swab also brought up how the subsistence of the manufactory was tied to the existence of the warehouse for grains. When he talked about the decision at the mining court to begin the construction of the manufactory, he mentioned that he had suggested its funding would come from the surplus earnings of the warehouse.77 This is notable because the warehouse was one of the main subjects of criticism against Swab. It was criticized for making a profit, selling wares it should not sell, and competing with an unfair advantage. However, its surplus went to the funding of this “useful Christly work” of the manufactory, meaning that it invested its earnings back into the bergstad and the mine, as Swab thought all of the mine’s institutions should do.78 Through this, Swab also claimed that he had made a promise to God to complete the manufactory and workhouse; this was a promise that “[s]hould be kept, and never without punishment be moved.”79

He said that the miners had collectively agreed to help him build the manufactory.80 This contradicted the miners’ statements. In a similar way to when he argued with Grossman, Swab saw the need to establish the legitimacy of the decisions that he made by claiming he not only worked in the miners’ best interest but he had their support, while at the same time disregarding the statements made by the miners.

73 RA ÅK 408, Vol. 1 Kommissionsprotokoll, p. 638.
76 RA ÅK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, p. 843.
77 Ibid, p. 837.
78 See chapter 5, p. 105.
79 “…som hållas bör, och aldrig uthan straff och hembsökning kan rubbas.” RA ÅK Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, p. 837.
80 Ibid.
Swab’s final, pragmatic argument was that they had already invested so much in it, and that they could not let it fail without attempting it.⁸¹ This was not enough to convince the Commission to maintain the manufactory.

The levels of oeconomy acknowledged in the debate about the manufactory and children’s house

In all of the discussions held during the Commission, the question of which levels were acknowledged and what economic practice belonged where indicate the main issue of contention between those who sent the complaints, the Royal Commission, and Swab. In this case, the commissioners and Swab disagreed about how the women and children fit into the oeconomy of the bergstad; they were responsible for them and bore the utmost responsibility for them. Since the commission specifically noted the discussion of the manufactory and children’s house as supplementary to the investigation of the oeconomy at the Great Copper Mine, they appeared to place the sphere of women and children’s work outside of the public oeconomy of the bergstad.⁸² At any rate, they viewed the workhouse as a charitable institution rather than as the economic necessity for the bergstad that Swab depicted it as. Swab saw the work of women and children as integral to the subsistence of the whole town, and this was a line of argument that the commissioners eventually disregarded.

In his defence of the manufactory and workhouse, Swab discussed the reason why he believed the workhouse was necessary. It was because the householders of each individual household that the women and children belonged could not provide for them in the way that they were meant to. In turn, these women and children could not provide for their own families. Instead, they wandered out into the street to peddle and gossip, and founded alehouses that caused disruptions among the miners.⁸³ In a sense, he argued that the women caused trouble for the oeconomy of the bergstad because they had left the oeconomy of the private household and entered the sphere of the more public sphere of the bergstad: The oeconomy of the state. The manufactory and children’s house had the ultimate aim of teaching them crafts that would allow them to work within the private households as productive wives and widows.

Swab’s belief that women’s work belonged to this alternate sphere was in accordance with commonly held beliefs about the ideal oeconomy. However, Swab used the idea that the mine had particularly high death rates as an argument as to why women and children’s private oeconomy no longer functioned, as he believed it should. When the householders died in mining accidents the state, in the form of the Board of Mines, had to step in as a higher authority.

⁸¹ RA ÅK Vol 2 Akter, handlingar, p. 843.
7.4 Conclusion: Women’s agency and the mine

At the Royal Commission in 1724, the young women, the widows and children from mining families were the subjects of a discussion that they were not present for. Although several widows presented complaints to the Commission, these were dismissed and referred to the more local mining court. The daughters and wives discussed are absent from the commission’s documents, even those related to the manufactory and children’s house.

The manufactory moving in on private oeconomy: Women’s work elevated to common oeconomy

Due to their silence in these types of sources, it is difficult to determine how much agency women had. Did women and girls want to work in the manufactory and children’s house, or did they have the same opinions as their fathers among the miners, who said that they did not want to see their children working in such establishments? While this is unknowable, they did act to support themselves in other ways. These actions put pressure on Swab and the mining court. The fact that women were supposedly supporting themselves through selling things at the market, and by opening alehouses, was given as a reason for the establishment for the manufactory. In this way, the consequences of their relative agency drove the discussions and the decisions taken by Swab and the Commission.

The women were also useful examples to bring up in a debate about the moral purpose of oeconomy. The economic and moral problems they were said to cause, and the ways of solving them, became major issues of contention for the Commission. This is a rare source from the early modern period in which women’s work and its place in oeconomy were discussed; this was because their work had invaded the oeconomy of the state. They had encroached on the sphere of the common oeconomy because of actions taken by Swab and his allies to keep their work within the conceptual realm of the private household.

After hearing Swab’s case for the manufactory, the Commission eventually decided that it was too costly to uphold. They stressed that this was indeed a very good, Christian establishment. However, the investment in it by Bergslagen could not be justified because the bergstad had already accumulated far too much debt. The widespread, potentially dangerous use of tokens and bills in Falun was clear evidence of this. In their final statement on the subject, the

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84 See RA ÅK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar pp. 638–641 for an example of a letter sent in by the widow Amrgaretha Anagria that Swab dismissed because it accused him personally of not providing her inheritance.

commissioners said that there would be no objection to the venture continuing if it could be funded through private means.86

The Commission made the decision to shut the manufactory down because it was deemed too expensive. In the 1720s, it was not yet deemed possible that women and children could be moved from the sphere of private oeconomy to oeconomy in the realm of the bergstad, although trying it and discussing it opened up for that possibility in the future. In the 1740s, a cotton-spinning house would be established, again experimenting with this idea. This venture was more successful. The discussions about women and their role in the oeconomy of Bergslagen, and the role of Bergslagen in their lives, would be continued.

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CHAPTER 8.
The burghers and the oeconomy of the 
*bergstad*

What was the role of burghers in the oeconomy of the *bergstad*, or in the oeconomy of the state? There was no easy answer to this question in Falun in the 1720s. One of the changes that occurred in the administration of town, when it was unified with the mine in the winter of 1720 – 1721, was that the people holding posts there had to be *bergsmän* as well as burghers. This meant that at the top of the hierarchy of the *bergstad*, the lines between burghers and *bergsmän* were blurred. Immanuel Grossman’s dual role as a burgher and *bergsman* exemplified this. His petition might have been sent in collusion with a unified group of burghers in Falun, as Birgitta Ericsson has asserted. Some of the discussion about it afterwards, however, was related to his status as a *bergsman* as well as his status as a burgher. It also touched on whether this dual role gave him the authority to intervene in the mine’s business. As shown in Chapter 5, although Grossman co-operated with the burghers of Falun when he criticized the warehouse for grains, he also co-operated with *bergsmän* to restore their lost status within the mine’s administration. The burghers’ own petition to the Royal Commission was their attempt to assert their collective status as something separate from both the town’s administration and from the *bergsmän*, the miners, and other people who worked and lived close to the mine. Once they had done so they could present an argument for why their particular existence and work was necessary. This chapter investigates the issue of the position that the burghers were placed in the *bergstad* in 1724, and where they placed themselves.

8.1 Introduction

In the petition called “The complaint of the burghers”, the people who signed were unambiguous about who they were and what they represented. Their authority rested in that they were burghers who were defending the work of the burghers as a distinctive, natural part of the oeconomy of the *bergstad*. They
also consistently characterized themselves as poor, in contrast to wealthy traders of their own estate.\(^1\) In Falun, wealthier burghers were likely to also own pairs in the mine, both as an investment and a way to take part in the administration of the *bergstad*. In the *bergstad*, the complaining burghers’ poverty could work as a signifier that they were unambiguously burghers and not burgher-bergsmän.

On the other hand, one notable feature of the estate system of this period was the danger for wageworkers and people with low incomes to fall out of it. Although servants could work within both towns and the agrarian sector of society, they were not represented as a separate group in the Diet. Peasants who did not own the land they worked on were also excluded. Property, income, and the ability to provide revenue for the crown guaranteed rights and privileges. In a highly regulated economy, special privileges—such as exclusive rights to trade—were also necessary in order to gain or keep property, have an income, and maintain the ability to provide revenue. The Falun burghers who sent the complaint were defending a status that was threatened. The poverty of these burghers puts their political aspirations in a different light than the political actions of, for example, the wealthy Stockholm traders during the same period.

The burghers’ complaints to the Royal Commission in 1724 have been studied more than the complaints presented by other groups. The historiography dealing with the Commission of 1724 and the effects of it tends to focus on the role that the burghers played in starting it, and how its conclusion affected them. Birgitta Ericsson saw the Falun burghers’ actions in the early 1720s as an important step in the forging of their political identity during the eighteenth century. The burghers’ complaints amounted to a protest that they sent directly to the Diet without contacting any closer authorities. According to Ericsson, this audacious move established what types of political actions were possible for the population of the *bergstad* during the following decades.\(^2\)

The previous chapters have shown that the Falun burghers were hardly the only groups to act in this manner. The 1724 Commission was not the first time a group had directly contacted the Diet, in the process bypassing the local mining court. Miners had triggered a Commission in 1720 by acting in the same way. When they did this again in 1724, it was a part of a series of similar actions they had taken since the strike they had staged in 1696. Furthermore, although Ericsson links the burghers’ actions to Grossman’s petition and their interests were closely aligned, the burghers’ own text detailed complaints specific to their status and work. Unlike Grossman, they did not discuss the status of the bergsmän or offer opinions about the state of the mine’s economy. So, although they were allied with Grossman, their petition seems less daring than

\(^1\) See the burghers’ complaint, RA ÅK 408, Vol. 2 *Akter, handlingar*, pp. 873–880.

\(^2\) Ericsson (1970) pp. 111 - 114
his and more in line with typical petitions as a form of protest in early modern Sweden. Their act of complaining to an authority that was higher than their immediate superiors was common within household culture, as Karin Hassan Jansson has defined it.

The presentation of this complaint was not necessarily an exceptional action for a group in this period of Swedish history, nor for the burghers of Falun in particular. This also means that the action can be better understood. In this chapter, the aim is to analyse the burghers’ complaint in the same way that the miners’ petition is analysed in Chapter 6. The burghers’ action was not merely reactive to the harsh new conditions they had been placed in through the instituting of the warehouse for grains and the bergstad. It was a calculated and informed act of protest following the nature as similar petitions and protests that other groups had sent to the Diet. In the complaint, the burghers clearly showed they had knowledge of their historical rights and privileges, and they condemned what they saw as attempts by the local administration to withhold information about changes to those rights. Like the miners, they had a tradition of protesting and petitioning, meaning that they knew what they were trying to communicate with their complaint. I believe that it is in this light that the complaint can best be evaluated as a window into how the Falun burghers saw their role within the oeconomy of the bergstad. In their respective responses, Anders Swab’s and Johan Holenius’s stated views of the burghers’ role within this oeconomy can also be studied.

I have divided the presentation of the burghers’ complaints and the responses to them into four parts according to the four separate themes I have observed in these texts. First, I outline the complaints that were discussions about the warehouse for grains and the bergstad. Next, I will present an issue closely connected to complaints about these institutions: the miscommunication that happened between the local administration and the burghers and whether it was deliberate. Thirdly, I relay the discussions about Falun’s right to town privileges and the burghers’ right to control trade there. Finally, all of these different points coalesce into a discussion about what type of town Falun was and how it compared to others, and whether the Falun burghers had a place there at all. The actors’ views on what type of entity Falun was can be connected to their views on how oeconomy should function.

The burghers’ historical role in Falun and Sweden, 1600–1720

The burgher estate, borgerskapet in Swedish, was an estate that had a seat in the Diet alongside the estates of the peasants, the clergy and the nobility. This estate represented craftsmen, shopkeepers, and traders who lived and worked in towns and were organized in guilds. In Falun the number of people who

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4 Hassan Jansson (2014)
belonged to the estate of the burghers was very small compared to the population at large. At the time of the Commission, town privileges had been granted for eighty years; from the beginning, these had been continuously contested by the local mining authorities. However, marketplaces had existed in Falun before it had received town privileges, while burghers’ practices had been in place before the burgher estate did. These marketplaces had provided shoes, cloths, grain, and other necessities of life for the people who worked in the Great Copper Mine. They had also functioned as the sites where the copper was traded. Karl-Gustaf Hildebrand recounts how the copper passed by way of these markets and through a slow, complex network of Swedish traders, before finally reaching a port where they could be exported to Amsterdam, the centre of European trade in the mid-seventeenth century. When the Swedish copper trade exploded during that century it was necessary for the crown to find a more efficient way to harness the wealth generated by the trade.

From its inception, trade had always been a contentious issue in Falun. During the better part of the seventeenth century, the bergsmän were forbidden from selling their ore directly to foreigners and were thus dependent on the local burghers and other travelling Swedish traders. The crown tried to generate a monopoly on the copper trade in 1614, when they were forced to pay a large sum to Denmark, known as Älvsborg’s ransom; this payment was primarily made with copper coins. In the 1620s and 1630s the Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna experimented with different regulations to make trade in Falun pass through fewer channels, in order to make it more effective and gainful to the crown. In 1624, there was another attempt to instate a crown monopoly over the trade, but these never lasted very long. They were undermined because the burghers could get special permits to trade with the bergsmän privately. Smuggling also flourished. During a brief experimentation with deregulated ‘free trade’ in the 1630s, the bergsmän complained that they were forced to trade with the burghers and preferred to sell to the crown, since the crown could pay in cash. However, they also presented complaints during the time of the state monopoly in 1624 that asked for trade to be made free. In this way, the bergsmän could set the interests of the burghers against the crown in order to earn benefits and retain some autonomy.

When the monopolies ended and the burghers were allowed to trade copper in 1641, Falun was finally granted the privileges of a town. As a result, the burghers were granted an opportunity of burskap, or in other words to obtain the privileges and responsibilities of being members of the burgher estate. The

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5 Two hundred people were registered as burghers in the censuses from 1749. See Ericsson (1970), pp. 186–187.
7 Ibid, pp. 30–32.
8 Ibid, pp. 44–46.
letter of privileges for the town contained many reforms, in order to concentrate the trade to one marketplace and to make control easier. The new plan for the town was drawn in 1646. On this projected map, several market places would be condensed into one at the heart of town near the Kristine church.10 From the crown’s perspective, this would make trading at the market easier to oversee and control. During this period, there were also discussions about reshaping Falun into a bergstad. The crown needed to control the copper output, but the bergsmän also owned shares of the mine through the pair system that gave them the right to take part in its administration. The bergstad was meant to fuse the crown’s interest with that of the bergsmän. A bergstad would also make the burghers participate in the upkeep of the mine, since they would have to become bergsmän themselves in order to be members of the town’s administration.

The crown’s growing interest in and focus on the management of the mine at the cost of other local businesses is the simplest explanation as to why the burghers became increasingly marginalized in Falun over the course of the seventeenth century. This process culminated in an act in 1688 that opened up the Falun marketplace to foreign traders. The burghers had their right to control the trade in Falun eradicated, and viewed the foreign traders as unfair competition. During the following decades, they continuously tried to have this act repealed.11

Artisans and shopkeepers in Falun were also negatively affected when the warehouse for grains was instituted in 1717 according to Swab and the Board of Mines’ directive. When the unification of the mine and the town’s administrations occurred in 1720–1721, the status of the burgher estate in Falun was also undermined officially in almost every capacity. It was after this act that Grossman felt prompted to send his protest to the Diet, allying himself with, among others, a trader named Abraham Sundblad. The warehouse for grains’ unfair competition with local trade was presented as one of the main causes for the complaint.

With the establishment of the warehouse for grains and the bergstad it became possible for the Falun burghers to find a common cause. As mentioned earlier, Ericsson focuses on this in her thesis about the history of the bergstad Falun from 1720 to 1769. This is understandable, since the creation bergstad heavily affected the rights and privileges of the burghers; they were marginalized and their interests were put in direct conflict with the interests of Bergslagen and the crown. Ericsson reveals the ways that the bergstad and the Royal Commission of 1724 galvanized and unified the burghers.12

10 The process of granting Falun town privileges is described in Hildebrand (1946), pp. 50–92. See also Olsson in Ångström-Grandien & Jansson, ed. (2012), p. 148.
Although Ericsson’s study stays within the borders of Falun, this galvanization occurred parallel to the same estate gaining a more powerful voice in the Diet, along with the beginning of the Age of Liberty. In Stockholm, the burghers were regaining power over Stockholm’s administrative body at the same time that Falun’s burghers appeared to be losing authority in Falun. In 1720, the Diet had instituted a series of reforms at the behest of Stockholm burghers. At that time, this group influenced the Diet to grant them the right to administer the burghers’ tax, known as the “contribution”\(^{13}\). This tax had previously been collected and distributed by Stockholm’s administration, which consisted of officials who generally did not belong to the burgher estate. During the Great Northern War, the contribution had been used to finance the war effort. It was an increasingly heavy burden to bear for the burghers in Stockholm, just as it had been for the burghers in Falun.\(^{14}\)

The abolishment of the contribution was an important victory for the burgher estate in the Diet. The Falun burghers seized the moment to also argue for an abolishment of the heavy contributions that they had to pay. The Falun burghers compared the heavy taxation of their livelihood to the different conditions of the warehouse’s operations. The warehouse was not burdened by that particular tax.\(^{15}\) When Grossman travelled to Stockholm in 1723, he helped to further strengthen the connection between the Falun burghers and the Stockholm burghers. This connection meant that the two groups were members of one estate; they should have the same rights and privileges that being a burgher granted them. The act of protest by burghers of Falun could be viewed in different ways according to what level of oeconomy they were seen to belong to during this period, and why they belonged to a certain level. As members of an estate, burghers with *burskap* could claim not only to be a part of the oeconomy of the *bergstad*, but of the whole state through the Diet.

It is unclear whether explicitly belonging to an estate was the reason why the Falun burghers pleaded their case, however. The Commissions’ documents reveal that there was not a large distance between those in Falun who held *burskap* and those who lacked it. The burghers who sent the complaint and talked about the right to control trade in Falun were certainly either members of the estate or people hoping to advance to that position, since they argued that they possessed burghers’ rights and privileges.

However, craftsmen who were explicitly said not to belong to the burgher estate also petitioned the Commission. A group of shoemakers in Falun sent a separate complaint in order to criticize the warehouse for competing with their trade. In his reply to the burghers’ complaint, Swab condemned simple craftsmen for wanting to become burghers, and said that this would mean that they

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13 *Kontributionen* in Swedish.
had a say in the town’s administration.\textsuperscript{16} This was almost certainly a reference to the shoemakers, who in their petition had demanded to take part in burghers’ assemblies on the same premises as those who had earned burskap.\textsuperscript{17} The shoemakers’ argument, combined with the burghers insisting that they were impoverished and had separate interests from members of their own estate in the town’s administration, show that traders, shopkeepers, and craftsmen in Falun could view their status as depending on something other than burskap. Instead, they discussed practices and the conditions those practices were dependent on. They also relied on patrons in positions of higher authority to strengthen their claim. The specific type of arguments they used to support their claims is investigated more thoroughly in the following section.

8.2. Defending their right to exist: Analysing the burghers’ complaints

Here is presented the burghers’ views on the warehouse for grains, miscommunications with the administration, their defence of their privileges and their placement in the bergstad. Their views are presented concurrently with Anders Swab’s and the Mayor Johan Holenius’s replies to them. What unites the four themes I have divided this analysis into is the question of how the burghers characterized themselves in their petition: who were they, who were they opposed to, and who were they beholden to? It was necessary for them to both assert themselves, as well as define who they were not, when they claimed the rights and privileges that they set out to protect. The burghers characterized themselves differently than Anders Swab did. At the heart of this difference were the different ways that they envisioned Falun and its oeconomy.

The bergstad and warehouse for grains: Infringing on the burghers’ livelihood

The burghers’ complaints focused on the creation of the bergstad and the instituting of the warehouse for grains. They had specific arguments as to why they thought the warehouse in particular was both economically and politically unsound. The legitimacy of the project was closely tied to whether they could function economically, according to the burghers.

When it came to the warehouse, the burghers discussed the rights and privileges granted to them according to the town’s statutes, and how the new warehouse had been granted free trade with everyone, thus losing its purpose of providing only for the miners. They observed that it was strange that town

\textsuperscript{16} RA ÅK Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar p. 910
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid, p 1000, RA ÅK 408, Vol. 1 Kommissionsprotokoll, pp. 850–851.
privileges protecting the burghers’ right to trade existed, at the same time as the warehouse was allowed to compete with them the way it was.\textsuperscript{18}

Swab wrote two documents in response to the burghers’ criticisms: a direct response to their complaint and more general defence of the warehouse that also addressed some of the complaint’s arguments. In his defence of the warehouse, Swab explained why it needed to compete with the burghers and make a profit, as well as support the miners. The profit could be used to reinvest in the mine. As an example of the warehouse functioning like this, Swab described a failed venture to explore the mine. He invoked God, claiming that it had not been God’s will to find ore that way, but it was still a sound economic venture as it was directed by \textit{Bergslagen} that worked for the well-being of the whole town.\textsuperscript{19} Swab then compared this undertaking to how a similar one would have been practiced by owners of capital, such as wealthy \textit{bergsmän} or members of the burgher estate. He explained that they would have suffered a great loss because they would have staked their own shares, while \textit{Bergslagen} merely used the profits of the warehouse to finance the venture. The warehouse needed to make a profit in order to finance risky excavations in the mine. Such undertakings could not be left up to wealthy private actors. In general, Swab argued that the profits of the warehouse served the cause of common welfare, something that gave it more legitimacy in selling and trading than the burghers. For this reason, Swab argued, the warehouse had a right to compete with the burghers on the market for wearable goods.\textsuperscript{20}

Although Mayor Johan Holenius was more sympathetic to the economic practices and needs of the burghers than Swab, and had criticized his reforms in the past, he still aligned with him during the Commission.\textsuperscript{21} His justification as to why the warehouse for grains should get to compete with the burghers selling wares in the marketplace was similar to Swab’s. He stated that while the burghers represented their own private interests, the warehouse represented everyone working at the mine—possibly the whole \textit{bergstad}. Should a united congregation of so many people not have the same right to compete as one burgher in the marketplace? Holenius also mentioned that the people connected to the warehouse—the miners, the \textit{bergsmän}, and \textit{Bergslagen}—contributed more to the economy of both the town and the nation than the burghers did.\textsuperscript{22} This claim constituted an undervaluing of the economic role that trading burghers had played in facilitating the copper export, although its lack of truthfulness did not necessarily need to have a bearing on how harsh and effective of an accusation it was. The legitimacy of their existence was put into question. If the burghers did not contribute to the common good, what right did they have to exist in the \textit{bergstad}?

\textsuperscript{18} RA ÅK 408, Vol. 2 \textit{Akter, handlingar}, p. 878.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, pp. 52–55.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{21} See Chapter 4, pp. 74 - 75
\textsuperscript{22} RA ÅK 408, Vol. 2 \textit{Akter, handlingar}, p. 893.
Swab continuously placed a higher value on the economic and social contributions of bergsmän and miners than the contributions of the burghers to the economy of the bergstad. He characterized the mine as the sole ‘visthus’, the ‘pantry’ of Falun.\(^{23}\) Swab wrote at length about how the purpose of a proper economy was to ensure that the riches of the ‘pantry’ were distributed equally among the subjects. To this end he made a reference to the Bible:

> This does not happen, brothers, with the purpose that others should have enough, but that it should be equal. That your riches should serve the others’ poverty in this time of need, and that others’ riches remedy your poverty in return.\(^{24}\)

Swab went even further in his questioning of the burghers’ rights in his more direct reply to the burghers’ petition, where he stated that there were perhaps too many burghers present in Falun.\(^ {25}\) He also made it clear that the profits gained from the warehouse for grains and from the mine were not meant to line the burghers’ pockets, and stated that he regarded the unification of the town and the mine as a way to directly hinder the burghers from making a profit from the mine.\(^ {26}\)

When it came to the bergstad, the burghers heavily criticized the way that it had been instituted. This criticism is dealt with more thoroughly in the next section. In a more general criticism, they mentioned that the bergstad was founded with the intent to create a unified purpose between the burghers and the bergsmän by making them share the administration of the town and mine. However, the burghers argued that such unification was not at all necessary. They and the bergsmän had co-operated amicably in the past. Instead, they said, the union of the town with the mine was one between the foremen of both entities, because they had quarrelled. The burghers claimed that their rights were sacrificed for the sake of resolving a conflict within the town elite.\(^ {27}\)

**Miscommunication and manipulation**

The burghers’ criticisms against the warehouse and the bergstad were entwined with complaints against the process that these had been created by, as well as how they were run. Both institutions’ legality was put into question.

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\(^ {23}\) “Hvad orten i gemen angår, kan ingen gitta med skiähl neka, att icke grufwan är fundamentet till all rörelse härstädes, Sin bu den här visthuset, där ifrån alltsammans kommer…” RA ÅK Vol 2 Åkter, handlingar., p. 49.

\(^ {24}\) “Icke skier detta kära bröder! I den mehning att andre skohlen hafwa nog, och i trång, uthan att det ska gå lika till. Att idar rijkedom tienar theras fattigdom i thenna dyra tijden, och att theras rijkedom hielper idar fattigdom.” Ibid, p. 54.

\(^ {25}\) Ibid, p. 909.

\(^ {26}\) Ibid, p. 910.

\(^ {27}\) Ibid, p. 873.
Through this, the burghers affirmed the ways that they kept their own practices of manufacturing and trading. They questioned the legality of the bergstad and the practices of the warehouse by highlighting how Swab, Holenius, and others had twisted language and withheld information to suit their purpose. In describing this, the burghers showed themselves to be adept at sharing and comparing information among themselves, and made what amounted to an argument for being allowed to take part in the town’s political life their own terms.

To begin with, in the second point of their list of complaints, the burghers made a claim similar to one made by the miners: that they had been asked to vote for something they had not been allowed to discuss. The decision to create the bergstad was made in connection with a discussion about whether Falun should retain its town privileges or not. When this decision was taken, the burghers had been called to vote on it. In their complaint, the burghers said that they had been barred from the debate about creating the bergstad that had preceded the vote. They even had to struggle to persuade the court to read its reports to them. They also said they had not been allowed time to consider the new plan after it had finally been relayed. Echoing the miners, they stated that they were not allowed to hold meetings among themselves in which they could discuss how to act. In connection with this complaint, the burghers described themselves as “humble and simple people” in contrast to the men of the administration. They indicated that their lowly status meant that they had been kept from taking part in the discussions.28 They said that while the clause about the institution of the bergstad stated that the burghers had agreed to it of their own free will, this agreement was “a thing that is not in any way beneficial to the burghers.”29

Mayor Johan Holenius’s account of the debate about whether Falun should retain its town privileges, and how this debate led to the decision to create the bergstad, differs from the burghers’ in certain crucial ways. The process that the two texts describe is broadly similar: a Royal Commission was called to Falun in 1720 to resolve various economic problems affecting the mine. During this time, the magistrate met with the mining court at the grufwestuga—the mine’s court house where the mining court usually convened. Representatives of the burgher estate were eventually called to consent to the unification of the town and the mine. After some discussion, they agreed to it.30 Unlike the burghers, Holenius depicted this discussion and agreement as having been agreeable.

Holenius also did not characterize the question of revoking the town’s privileges as having been a deciding factor in the burghers’ decision to agree to

28 RA ÅK Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar. p. 875.
29 Ibid.
the *bergstad*. Holenius described the question of Falun’s right to town privileges as a separate issue from those discussed at the meeting where the *bergstad* was created. He also depicted the question of revoking the town privileges as being caused merely by concern for the town’s economic survival. The discussion had been about whether it had been “gainful” for the town to retain such privileges. The discussion was simply a discussion. After ruminating on the idea and talking about it, the monarch (via, presumably, the Board of Trade\(^3\) and the Diet) decided that revoking the town privileges would not be a tenable solution to Falun’s economic problems, putting the matter to rest.\(^3\)

Early in his reply, Holenius also alluded to the fact that the burghers did not possess enough information in order to make informed decisions on their own. He mentioned this in support of the actions he had taken independently on their behalf. As noted, the burghers also described the process for reaching the decision to institute the *bergstad* very differently than Holenius, arguing that they had not known what they had agreed to.\(^3\) With this, the burghers used the fact that they had received little information as support for the claim that their vote had been invalid and should be retried.

Another issue of miscommunication had to do with the terminology that was used at the warehouse. The burghers expressed caution about the addition of a new word to the vocabulary of shopkeepers in Falun. In the third point of their list, they mentioned that the warehouse had begun to sell so-called *drogerier*. The burghers complained that nobody could seem to agree to what *drogerier* was—when Holenius was asked, he said that the word referred to woollen cloths. When Swab was asked, he said it meant works of metal forgery, such as nails and locks. The baron and county governor Strömfelt argued that *drogerier* meant fripperies. From this, the burghers said they had come to the conclusion that nobody knew what *drogerier* were, but that the word covered many of the items that craftsmen, artisans and shopkeepers among them were creating and selling.\(^3\) *Drogerier* meant that the warehouse could compete with all of them.

This complaint was also similar to those made by the miners that new terminology was being used at the warehouse that could not be understood by common people. The miners complained about the use of new systems of measurement, and the burghers complained about the selling of *drogerier*, a word that could mean any number of things. In both cases, the complaining parties raised the suspicion that this confusing new language was being used to manipulate and cheat them. The burghers brought up *drogerier* to show that the warehouse

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\(^3\) *Kommerskollegium* in Swedish

\(^3\) RA ÄK 408, Vol. 2 *Akter, handlingar*, p. 887

\(^3\) This account is in fact backed up by Holenius, who also said that the burghers were not allowed to meet separately to talk it over, but he claimed that this was due to lack of time and that the magistrate wanted to keep order. Ibid, p. 888.

\(^3\) Ibid, pp. 876–877.
could compete with every ware that they sold; it no longer served the basic purpose that it had been created for: to aid starving miners. The story of their quest to find the word’s meaning also revealed the confusion and possible dishonesty of elite members of the town’s administration. This was a line of argumentation with which the burghers could get sympathy from the commissioners, who eventually ruled to limit the type of wares the warehouse was allowed to sell to “wearable” goods such as grain and cloth.35

Town privileges and the burghers’ right to control trade

The burghers recounted how they had petitioned the Diet in 1719 in order to get royal confirmation for the town privileges that had been granted in 1641, because they were worried that the privileges would be revoked.36 When discussing the uncertain status of Falun’s town privileges, they were possibly referencing a threat to revoke the privileges that had been made in order to convince them to agree to the creation of the bergstad. Birgitta Ericsson mentions that it was in order to avoid losing the town privileges that the burghers eventually agreed.37 As shown previously, Holenius characterized this order of events differently, stating that the issue of town privileges was not connected to the creation of the bergstad. At any rate, when and if the threat was made, the burghers did not immediately recognize that Swab possessed the authority to influence such a change. They appealed to the higher authority of the crown in order to get the town privileges affirmed. While they were waiting for this, Falun’s town magistrate dropped the issue.38

The affirmation had apparently arrived shortly before the commission started. At the end of their list of complaints, the burghers referenced a promise that had recently been granted to them by the crown, through the intervention of the Board of Trade. They stated that the crown and the “higher authorities” had promised, in a royal resolution from 1723, to support their trade; this included rejecting anything that could damage it and support whatever monopolies were held by the local burghers of Falun.39 The burghers apparently interpreted this resolution as a royal affirmation of their rights and privileges that they could use as an argument against Swab’s reforms and the creation of the bergstad.

Another privilege that the burghers sought to have restored was their exclusive control over trade in Falun. In their complaint, they criticized the opening of the town to foreign traders in 1688, with references to laws drawn up in 1649 that were supposed to protect the local traders’ exclusive rights over foreign traders’ claims. While the sovereign and the Diet were considering this

problem, the Falun magistrate had “anticipated” the royal resolution and referenced the legislation from 1688 when planning to institute the bergstad. According to the burghers, this law encouraged illegal trade by foreigners and inflated prices. Foreign traders also enjoyed the rights of burghers in many different towns and the Falun burghers claimed they lacked these rights, something that put them at an unfair advantage when it came to forging connections for trade.

With this point, the burghers proved that they had studied the different laws and statutes that were meant to be available to the public. Unlike the miners, the burghers did not claim that they were prevented from accessing relevant documents because they were illiterate. They displayed knowledge of both current and historical laws, and used this to describe how the town magistrate continually bypassed decrees issued by the crown.

Both Holenius and Swab wrote about the recent historical changes in its regulations of trade, and both questioned the criticism brought forth by the burghers. Holenius’s reply to this was the lengthiest, since he had personally taken part in many of the discussions and decisions that the burghers mentioned. As mayor, Holenius had been the head of the town magistrate in Falun since 1690. He was the foremost representative of the Falun burghers at the Board of Trade in Stockholm, and had also been a member of the Diet during the 1710s. In his reply to the burghers’ complaints, he depicted himself as a long-time defender of the burghers’ rights and privileges. He physically exerted himself to defend them by working day and night. He explained that he had seen the act that opened Falun up to foreign traders in 1688 as a mistake that allowed competition with local traders. In particular, he stressed that the act had allowed foreigners the freedom to withhold wares, until the prices were increased. This particularly included perishable resources such as food and grain. This gave the foreign traders, more power over the market prices in Falun than they were due.

According to Holenius, the man who was Mine Inspector in 1688 had immediately sent a letter to the Board of Mines petitioning them to revoke this new law. Holenius provided a copy of this letter to be read to the Royal Commission. He had himself travelled to Stockholm and presented another petition to the crown in 1690, after he had taken the seat of mayor. The king had delegated the issue to the Board of Trade, and it was debated throughout 1691 and 1692, although it resulted in no change.

40 RA ÅK Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, p. 880.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid, see also point 8 in which they argued that a law in 1700 promised them that they would retain their exclusive privileges to sell their wares at the marketplace, and drew a reference to the town privileges of 1642. Ibid, pp. 879–880.
43 Ibid, p. 884.
44 RA ÅR Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar p. 885.
In 1697, King Karl XI died and his son Karl XII ascended the throne. Holenius noted that as a state servant he had attended the royal funeral and had been present at the coronation of the new monarch. After this regime change, Holenius petitioned the crown again on the Falun burghers’ behalf, asking for a restoration of the town’s original privileges as they had been established in 1649. The Great Northern War “interrupted further inquiry into this cause” according to Holenius.

During the late stages of the war, when the king returned to Sweden, Holenius said that the question had arisen about whether town privileges were necessary for Falun at all. The town magistrate had invited the burghers to defend their position. The question was resolved after Karl XII died in 1718 and his sister Ulrica Eleonora ascended the throne in 1719. She issued a decree ensuring that Falun’s town privileges remained intact and reaffirmed the constitution from 1649, eradicating the law from 1688. In short, the regime changes and the Great Northern War delayed a resolution to the conflict, but Holenius had been working tirelessly on the Falun burghers’ behalf to upend the 1688 law since 1690.

With this account, Holenius explained to the commissioners how his role as an intermediary between the local level and the level of the state could work, and gave insight into the wider national concerns of the Diet. He stressed his allegiance to the burghers’ cause by describing how he had worked on their behalf to his physical detriment. He also asserted his position as a trusted servant of the state by relaying his close proximity to the Kings Karl XI and Karl XII at pivotal moments of their reign. He might have mentioned his proximity to the kings in order to prove to the burghers that he had the trust of the highest authority in the land. This was despite the fact that they had appealed to this higher authority in order to criticize his and Swab’s leadership.

What the bergstad was and the burghers’ place within it?

Holenius stressed that he worked to protect the Falun burghers’ interests in the face of competition from foreign traders. He had also been a critic of the warehouse from its inception. However, by the time the commission had started, he appeared to shift to supporting the warehouse’s right to compete with the burghers at the Falun marketplace, stating that it represented a larger group of people than the burghers did. When he supported this idea, he also compared

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45 Falun received town privileges in 1642, but the statutes of these privileges were reworked in 1649. A petition related to this event was presented to the commission along with Holenius’s text. See RA ÄK 408, Vol. 1 Kommissionsprotokoll, pp. 914–918.
46 RA ÄK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, p. 885.
48 This decree was presented to the Royal Commission. See RA ÄK 408, Vol. 1 Kommissionsprotokoll, pp. 898–901.
Falun to other towns in Sweden. In so doing, he touched on the question of what sort of entity the bergstad was. He also raised the idea of how it functioned in relation to other towns. This also reflected the sort position that the burghers had there when compared to other towns in the kingdom. This was the fundamental conflict between the burghers and Swab and his allies.

Holenius compared the Falun burghers’ demands for a monopoly on the trade in town to similar demands burghers had recently made in Gothenburg. During this period, traders in Gothenburg held the right to act as a channel for iron ore produced in ironworks in the nearby area of Värmland. Gothenburg had held the privilege of that seaport exclusively, but the town of Uddevalla had recently acquired the same right. The burghers there had petitioned the Diet. Since Gothenburg had important fortifications, the burghers there had gained the support of the admiralty through the Board of the Admiralty to further their cause. However, Uddevalla retained its new privileges. If the burghers of Gothenburg, who had such prominent patrons in the admiralty, failed to secure their privileges, Holenius questioned how the burghers of Falun, who had no supporters, hoped to get a hearing.49

With this, Holenius denied that the burghers in Falun could act as members of an estate. Instead, he emphasized that they were acting on their own. Because they had no support, they only had been acting in self-interest, in opposition to the common good. In his role as the mayor, Holenius was the foremost representative of the ‘town’-side of the town-and-mine bergstad; although he had a different alignment than Swab, he eventually used similar arguments.

Swab’s recounting of the historical process that had brought them to this point did not differ much from Holenius’. It was far less focused on the period 1688–1720, possibly because Swab only became a Mine Inspector in 1714 and lacked knowledge of the earlier period. It is also evident that Swab was less interested in portraying himself as furthering the interests of the Falun burghers

49 RA ÅK 408, Vol. 1 Kommissionsprotokoll, p. 894.

Connected to this argument, he mentioned that the highest order had seen to it to allow burgher trade in order to aid Bergslagen; by this order he presumably meant the crown. This was a reference to the affirmation of Falun’s town privileges that the burghers had petitioned the crown for in 1719. Unlike the burghers, who characterized it as a royal protection of their rights, Swab described it as a gracious boon granted by benevolent superiors. He further argued that such a “costly and rare piece”, such as the mine could not be subject to burghers’ laws and regulations.51

In his general defence of the warehouse, Swan explicitly criticized not only the actions of the burghers when it came to the Commission, but the idea that they would have a say in the administration of a town of such importance to the crown’s economy. As long as shoemakers and bellow makers made money from practicing the crafts and artisanship they had been taught, they were making an honest and useful living, but:

[...] soon a Metamorphosis happens, and a shoemaker in a market town wants to abandon his handiwork and become a burgher, which he has not learned. A bellow maker wants to do the same and another something else, and those who have led oxen to the town, want to become burghers in Falun and the Bergslag, and with this believe themselves to have won the same rights, to keep a reputable and for the King and kingdom important town by force, as if they were dealing with Enköping, Hjo and Askersund or other small towns. It is insupportable.52

“These people”, the burghers with notions of grandeur, flattered and promoted themselves in the selfish luxury that they had come to expect. They could not understand the needs and necessities of the whole town and kingdom, according to Swab.53 In the bergstad, as it was defined by Swab, the burghers were not an estate that belonged in the political sphere of “high authority”.54 Their role was to provide wares for Bergslagen without influencing it.

In certain parts of his writing, Swab seemed to view burghers in general as a flawed, self-interested caste. He could have also imagined a national oeconomy in which production was situated in some towns, while others acted as trading centres. This meant that the burgher estate did not have a place in his vision of the bergstad. However, the copper trade remained necessary for the survival of the oeconomy of the bergstad, and someone must practice it. This was where the warehouse for grains was important. Holenius described it as

52 “Men så snart en Metamorphos skier, och en skomakare i en Up stad will öfwergifwa sitt handtvärk och blifwa Borgare, det han intet lärddt. En Belgemakare will giöra det samma sampt en annan ett annat, sampt om dhe som fölgdt oxar till orten, willia blifwa Borgare i Fahlu stad och Bergslag, och mehna sig därigenom winna samma rätt, att hålla en så anseelig sampt konungen och riket angelägen orth under tvång lijkasom dhe hade att giöra med Enköping, Hio, och Askersund eller andra små städer.” Ibid, p. 910.
54 RA ÅK 408 vol. 2 Akter, handlingar. Höga överheten in Swedish.
an actor on the marketplace; it was on equal footing and had the same rights as the burghers. He also depicted it as superior to the burghers because it represented all of the workers connected to the mine, while the burghers represented themselves. The warehouse for grains was a trader with pure motives. When discussing the warehouse and the burghers’ criticism of that institution, Swab made the analogy about the mine as an estate bequeathed to two sons: one deserving and one undeserving, as has been quoted in Chapter 5. Under the direction of Bergslagen, with its profits reinvested in mining ventures, the warehouse for grains could represent the good son who inherited the estate and reinvested in it in Swab’s analogy. The burghers could represent the greedy son who brought the whole estate to ruin.

Swab and Holenius seemed to be arguing for a new attempt at a trade monopoly, directed by the state but also involving local bergsmän and miners whose loyalty and legitimacy was assured by their connection to the mine. Unlike the attempts at state monopolies made in the seventeenth century, the warehouse would push the burghers away from the marketplace through competition; this was a more efficient way to lessen their influence over Falun’s trade than regulations. However, unlike in the seventeenth century, Swab did not have legal support for such a monopoly, while the burghers had ensured a royal protection for their right to trade. They only needed to get the commissioners to accept that Swab, through the warehouse, had overstepped his authority and created unfair competition for them. Swab had to get support for his vision for it. For this reason, the debate between the burghers and Swab came down to an argument about separate ideal visions for Falun, and what constituted a moral economic practice.

Who had the right to practice trade and under what conditions? What type of town was the bergstad? Whether it was primarily a site of copper production or a marketplace, it was shaped by the burghers’ role within it. Both Holenius and Swab compared the bergstad Falun to other towns when they defined the burghers’ status in Falun, while the burghers used their letter of support from the monarch as a reference to how their status could be understood in a wider context. If it was like other towns, with privileges that secured the burghers’ exclusive rights over trade, then the burghers had a say in the administrations’ decisions and could petition the crown if competitors intruded on their protected rights. For Swab, however, the town was unlike others. It was primarily a site of production, a bergstad, and he could not conceive of either a political or an economic role for the burghers. The warehouse, as directed by the Board of Mines, could overtake their task.

8.3 The varying visions of oeconomy: Conclusion

In response to the complaints of Grossman and the burghers of Falun, the commissioners made some resolutions concerning the warehouse for grains.
One was that it was no longer permitted to sell *kramvaror*. These were any wares that could not be classified as necessary for the sustenance of the miners. It is also possible that they were synonymous with the *drogerier* that the burghers had criticized. The warehouse was no longer permitted to purchase its wares from local providers.55 The burghers were also not completely appeased by this resolution that aimed for a balance between Swab’s arguments for the warehouse and their demands to abolish it.

From the texts and discussions reviewed here, it is apparent that the burghers, Swab, and Holenius had wildly different ideas about the role that the burghers ought to have. They differed in ideas about what type of entity the *bergstad* should be, and what type of oeconomy should be practiced there. The burghers saw themselves as natural parts of the town’s economic life with, among other things, the role of trading and supplying the miners with clothes and food. Swab’s suggestions that there were too many burghers in Falun, along with his accusations against them and attempts to marginalize their influence through various political reforms, suggests that he saw no role for the burghers in his conception of the *bergstad*. According to Swab, the purpose of the *bergstad* was to be something other than a trading town. The main conclusion to draw from the way Swab characterized the decision to institute the *bergstad* and the warehouse is that he saw them as means to help the mine so that it could benefit the whole nation. As a state servant, he envisioned Falun’s place in a larger oeconomy when he discussed its economic situation.

By contrast, the burghers primarily focused on their own survival in their complaints. This was what Holenius accused them of doing when he said they were acting for themselves rather than for the common good. However, the burghers’ petition can be viewed differently, as them acting as a part of a larger collective. Their use of their connections to the monarch and the monarch’s assurance that their trade was protected shows that they conceived their status and practices as being tied to the status and practices of other burghers in the kingdom. Their knowledge of how laws and statutes had changed throughout Falun’s history, and how words were altered, shows that they were knowledgeable in the ways that the administration’s politics functioned. The burghers were not just writing about their concerns with their own survival, even if that might have motivated their complaint. Nor were they merely reacting to a negative turn of their fortunes. They were critiquing a political system and using comparisons to their own history and the ideal status of burghers to outline how things ought to be.

Below, I summarize my findings after questioning how the role of the burghers in the oeconomy of the *bergstad* was perceived, and what their role in oeconomy was. However, this chapter also touches on the question asked in the introductory chapter: How were ideas about oeconomy implemented at

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the Great Copper Mine? How was it possible for different groups in Falun to criticize these ideas, and how they were negotiated and argued over?

Karin Hassan Jansson’s study of household culture has been cited here a few times. There, she demonstrates how actors on different hierarchical levels of society used norms associated with the household to manipulate court cases in their favour. The burghers’ complaint can be seen as a similar type of practice. However, the burghers had claims to belong to an estate. They were also placing themselves in positions of power. The type of oeconomy they were arguing for also differed from Swab’s vision in some ways.

Swab and Holenius differed, both in their depictions of sequence of events, and in their visions for the burghers’ role in the bergstad. Swab mentioned that the burghers gave their consent to this bergstad. This was acknowledged by all parties. The mayor, the burghers and the Mine Inspector all had different interpretations of the process about brought about the meeting at the mine’s court house in 1720, when Falun’s town privileges were discussed and where the decision was reached to institute the bergstad. This reveals how the different groups came together there to use history to further their own arguments. It was considered important to establish the facts of what had occurred, who had been present, whether people had acted in good faith, who were authorized to make decisions and who were not. The legitimacy of the recent changes to the laws in Falun was being called into question. The fact that everyone who had taken part in this process had acted honourably and with enough knowledge had to be established.

Who were authorized to make decisions is a crucial point that was also related to which level within oeconomy the actors belonged to. Being connected to an estate, the burghers saw themselves as having the right to turn to the Diet, and to apply to their representatives within the Board of Trade. Swab, in turn criticized, the burghers for overstepping the boundaries of their level by appealing to the level of the state. He brought up other towns in which he did see the burghers in charge of the town’s administrations, but argued that the bergstad Falun was unlike others due to its economic significance; this clearly meant that the burghers had no privileges there. He also argued that the burgher traders were incompetent and would bring ruin to the town. Therefore, the burghers were exceeding their authority and, like the miners, committing mutiny for self-interested reasons.

What were the burghers attempting to accomplish when they presented their complaint to the Royal Commission in 1724? First, they were safeguarding their rights as Falun burghers against the infringement on trade by foreign actors. Second, they described a conflict of interest between their group and the town magistrate, who they depicted as colluding with the mining court in order to create new divisions between the bergsmän and themselves. Finally, the burghers opposed the warehouse and the reforms that were instigated by

56 RA ÄK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, p. 911.
Swab and the court. The burghers who sent the petition cast themselves as a group that had separate interests from the magistrate, Swab, and the mining court. They did this by aligning with another, larger group: the burgher estate. They did this by taking similar actions to those taken by the miners and the *bergsmän*, and by Grossman: bypassing their immediate superior to plead with the Diet. If the nesting-doll model of a household economy could be applied within a town, the burgers answered to the elected members of the town magistrate. In Falun, these were prominent local members of the burgher estate, such as Johan Holenius who was a man that was entrusted with caring for their interests and could expect respect and obedience from them in return. However, should the nesting-doll model of the household be applied to a larger area, the burghers were a part of the burgher estate of the Swedish Diet. If necessary, the Falun burghers could appeal to the Diet directly as the highest authority rather than trusting the local magistrate that was by now part of the mining court. When they cited the royal resolution from 1723 that protected their privileges, which had come to pass through the intervention of the Board of Trade, the burghers appealed to the Diet’s direct authority. Citing this resolution, the burghers did not acknowledge the fact that Holenius and Swab both represented them on the level of the state but also represented the state to them on the local level. Instead, they used the Diet’s promise to protect their privileges as a way to argue against Swab’s and Holenius local authority, and safeguard their own authority.

When the burghers invoked the crown as a higher authority than Swab and Holenius they also elevated themselves by stressing their own privileges and rights with reference to legal and historical statutes. They said that in Falun’s oeconomy, their own trading, selling and manufacturing had a place. They argued that the new rules and regulations of the *bergstad* only served to create differences within its population that did not exist before. By implementing the warehouse for grains and the *bergstad*, Bergslagen displaced the burghers and attempted to take over their businesses. It also destroyed a sense of unity between the inhabitants that already existed. Untouched, the burghers’ trade had been a part of the organic, economic structure of the kingdom, while the imposition of the *bergstad* was artificial and caused disunity and destruction. This was the core difference between the burghers’ vision for oeconomy and Swab’s vision.
CHAPTER 9.
The end of the Commission and the aftermath

The Royal Commission concluded in July 1724. The commissioners passed decrees about the functions of the warehouse for grains and the use of tokens, and stipulated a resolution to a quarrel between Holenius and Grossman concerning the review of the town treasury’s bills. The commissioners decided to defund the manufactory and children’s house. The miners’ right to take their payment directly from the bergsmän and buy their wares outside of the warehouse was affirmed. There were discussions and resolutions when it came to the general role of bergsmän in the economic administration of the Great Copper Mine.

9.1 Epilogue: The effects of the reforms

The reduction of the warehouse’s operations was a sort of victory for the burghers of Falun. However, the warehouse remained and Falun was a bergstad for more than four decades. The burghers continued to send petitions to the crown, complaining about the ways that these institutions prevented them from earning their livelihoods. The pressure that the Falun burghers continuously put on the bergstad contributed to its abolishment in 1769.1

Swab continued to argue that his reforms of the 1710s had been economically sound and that they were motivated in order to preserve the mining enterprise. He bitterly regretted the fact that some of his grander ideas, such as the establishment of the manufactory and children’s house, had been dismissed as too expensive. As late as 1730, he continued to grapple with the problem of how to equalize the bergsmän, defending his reforms at length.2 Some historians view Swab’s reforms as enlightened but also too hasty and ambitious.3 However, the warehouse eventually became operational and successful. In the mercantilist 1740s, a spinning workshop for miners’ daughters was also established that had the same aims as Swab’s manufactory.

2 Swab’s writings on this topic can be found in RA BkH E 2 c vol. 8
It is difficult to know whether all of Swab’s reforms would have worked as he had imagined in the 1720s if he had received the full backing of the Commission. At the time, the commissioners had the task of managing the economy of the bergstad efficiently, which included maintaining its hierarchical structure and keeping the peace. With these considerations, the commissioners ruled that Swab had tried to change too much without having enough resources at his disposal.

For his part, Swab continued to express a sense of betrayal about how the people of the bergstad had turned on him during his last decade as Mine Inspector of the Great Copper Mine. In 1726, he wrote a pamphlet containing a fictional dialogue between an honest bergsman, Sempronius, and a man named Titus, who asked him questions about what occurred during the Royal Commission in 1724. In this dialogue, Grossman was referred to as a man whose work was to heal individual parts, but instead tried to change the entirety of Bergslagen instead. He had tricked both the townsfolk in Falun and the king with his lies.4

The pamphlet also identified one council member, a bergsman and burgher, who had argued in favour of the burghers being labelled as Judas figures, while the burghers and mining guards were held up as enemies of the bergstad.

Birgitta Ericsson sees this pamphlet as an attempt to influence the Diet to rule in the favour of Bergslagen when the burghers sent them new petitions to abolish the bergstad in 1726. In the autumn of 1726, Swen Lagerberg spoke to the Diet and defended Grossman, saying that he had been right about certain things, which was something that Swab might have become aware of.5 Swab eventually left his post as mine inspector in order to become a council member at the Board of Mines and moved to Stockholm in 1731. At this time he was gravely ill, and he died a few months later.6

When it came to women in Falun, the successful establishment of a spinning workshop for the daughters of miners in 1740 has been mentioned. This establishment had a more specific aim than that of the manufactory and children’s house. Unlike the manufactory, which had housed two small boys, the spinning workshop only admitted girls and there is no indication that it could be compared to an orphanage.7

The work of the alehouse-keeping widows was threatened when widows were finally forbidden from selling strong spirits in 1731. A number of tearful widows gathered outside of the mine’s court house to protest this new law. They received some support and sympathy among the elders of the court, but the law came from the higher governing body of the Diet and could not be overturned at the local level. This new regulation created a problem for the

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4 Ericsson (1970), pp. 159–161
5 Ibid.
7 The workers of the spinning workshop are listed in STORA Stora Kopparbergslagen bomullsspinneriet (1744).
widows, although they continued to keep alehouses and sell their goods at the market, possibly through deception or by restricting themselves to only selling beer.⁸

“The seed of an old uprising”: The Riot in Falun in 1743

The petitions sent to the Diet in 1723 were not the final acts of protest by the miners. There was a small uprising at the Great Copper Mine in 1743 that has few mentions in previous histories. When it has been described, it has been in connection to a larger peasant uprising in the same region.⁹ When peasants from Dalarna gathered in Falun, in order to march from that town to Stockholm in protest, they were housed in the homes of the Falun population. The mining court were called to the town square, where the bergsmän who were present were advised about how to avoid being drawn into the peasants’ cause. However, the on-going problem of the fluctuating status of the inhabitants of Falun became clear as many of the owners of the fourth-parts present were apparently classed as miners, although they could also be considered bergsmän. The miners used this confusion to encroach on a meeting in which they had no formal right to participate. By now, a change in practice had made the regulation of who had the right to political representation at the mining court archaic and weak.¹⁰

Although there was little political sympathy shared between the inhabitants of Falun and the peasants of Dalarna, a group of miners were inspired by the peasants to start their own riot.¹¹ The court record of the Board of Mines does not show how many of the miners actually rioted, simply calling them Gruwedrängs menigheten or the “miners’ crowd”; it instead identified the initial leaders as the miners Pehr Larsson Biörck, Anthon Anthonsson, Hans Albrechtsson, Hans Jeremiasson “and the so-called German-Anders”.¹² The bergsmän and mining guard Anders Lehus apparently became a leader in the violent revolt later that day.¹³

On June 7, 1743, the miners gathered around the mine’s court house, demanding to know why the rioting peasants, who were housed in Falun, were receiving provisions that ought to be given to the miners, and suggesting that they ought to march with the peasants to Stockholm.¹⁴ During this riot, one of the miners was said to have told a preacher to go home and read his books, and not trouble himself with their cause.¹⁵ The miners then entered the court

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¹⁴ Ibid, p. 228.
house, forcing some members of the mining court to flee out a window. The threat of lethal violence was clear. The governor stayed in the house because he had a foot injury; a miner, in turn, threatened him with an axe. Finally, the rioting miners stormed the warehouse for grains.16 Once there, they stated that they ought to tear it to pieces and stomp on a geschworner-council member who was the particular target of their wrath. They said that the penalty for his murder could be no more expensive than the penalty for killing a dog.17

According to the Board of Mines’ witnesses, at least, this was how the riot of the miners in 1743 had transpired. Eight of the leaders received capital punishments, but a higher court commuted the sentences to public whipping. The bergsman and mining guard Anders Lehus, who had led the attack on the warehouse, went on to become council member in the administration of the bergstad; he also married Barbara Moraea, a member of the locally prominent Moraeus family and a relative of Carl Linneaus’s wife.18

With this uprising, the miners abandoned the idea of using legal means to protest. They showed no apparent consideration for laws or norms of behaviour. However, in substance, their complaints were similar to what they had presented in the protests they had staged in 1696, 1720, and 1723–1724. They complained about the inadequacy of their wages and wanted the mining guards to handle wage distribution. They suggested that the entire work of mine ought to be regulated by the miners and mining guards.19 In order to discuss these problems and organize a revolt, they had met regularly at an alehouse in a manner similar to 1720. The miners who owned fourth-parts who were present at the meeting at the town square had also quickly spread word to other miners, and created a large angry gathering in town, suggesting that a type of association already existed between them.20 They had then seized on the moment offered by the larger peasants’ riot in order to press for their own demands, and in the short term, they had succeeded.

In its account of the uprising, the Board of Mines’s protocol shows that the members of the mining court acquiesced to the miners’ demands in an attempt to placate them. However, a few days later, there was a suppression following the violent stifling of the peasants’ uprising in Stockholm. The grants to the Falun miners were then rescinded. The fact that Anders Lehus escaped relatively unscathed and gained a prominent position in Falun’s administration could be attributed to his higher social status as a bergsman, although his journey from violent rioter to respected council member still seems unlikely and is worthy of an investigation of its own.

The fact that the miners had similar complaints was not the only thing about this riot that harkened back to the Commission of 1724, and the miners’ previous protests. They had also stormed the warehouse as a culmination of their riot, indicating that it continued to be the focus of their ire. In their protocol documenting the case, the deputies at the court of the Board of Mines also acknowledged that there was a link between this uprising and the protests that the miners had staged in decades past:

[...] this occurrence, that is referred to as the mining guards’ and the miners’ rule over the mine, is the seed of an old uprising that has brought a lot of unrest with it, and has always been met with harsh punishment. 21

The events recounted in this aftermath are an epilogue for this thesis, but they are not the final answer to the questions raised. These events are not entirely a sufficient explanation of how the reforms of the 1710s were implemented and received. They also do not explain how the hierarchies of the town settled or how oeconomy was practiced and understood. In the next, I present some of the conclusions I have reached by this investigation of oeconomy, as well as those regarding the way that social status was related to practices at the Great Copper Mine, 1716–1724.

21 “... thenna omständigheten, som skall syfta på wacktarens och Grufwedrängens wåld öfwer Grufwan, varo ett gammalt uprors frö, som fördt mycken olägenhet med sig, och alltid med alfwarsamt straff blifwit anseut.” RA BkH B3: 21 Privilegium, domar 1744. p. 233. I translated the word wål into ‘rule’ because the word is related to the word välde meaning rule and I believe that is what it means in this context. However, the word is more commonly used to mean ‘violence’, and that double meaning is significant in this case.
CHAPTER 10.
The changing discourse of the household economy: A conclusion

This thesis concerns how a form of oeconomy was implemented at the Great Copper Mine in the period 1716–1724. It discusses what the motivations for this oeconomy was, the views expressed by the people protesting it, and what all of this reveals about the different ideals and social mores that were prevalent at that time. The central aspect that differentiates this thesis from previous research into this time and place is its methodological approach: this is a micro study. Discourse is found at the micro level and different ideologies and viewpoints can be studied and questioned at this level. It is also where the viewpoints of the disempowered can be brought to light.

10.1 Investigating power and agency in early modernity

The late seventeenth and early eighteenth century has been viewed as a time when Falun and the Great Copper Mine took on many features of modernity. The owners’ distancing themselves from the work they owned, and the proletarianization of those who had practical knowledge of it, are developments associated with this period. This modernization was a part of the heightened centralization of Sweden’s national economy. The new reforms and regulations implemented in the 1710s and 1720s were clearly consistent with those that were implemented at Swedish ironworks during the same era, as well as with the mercantilist policies of the eighteenth century.

These reforms implemented by the Mine inspector Anders Swab and the Board of Mines could be understood as a way for the state to expand its control of the mine at the expense of the miners’ and mining widows’ autonomy, the ownership rights of the bergsmän, and the trade of the Falun burghers. In the introductory chapter, there was a recounting of the previous research into the history of the Great Copper Mine in 1716–1724. This research documented the implementation of the reforms and their economic effects thoroughly.

These histories, however, did not examine the cultural context in which the reforms and the commission could occur. Although they documented the agency of groups such as the bergsmän and the miners, there was no specula-
tion about how they could have such agency. This thesis delves into the following questions by looking more closely at the petitions and court records connected to the economic reforms of this period. Under what presumptions did the miners petition the Diet? Did the rebellious bergsman, burgher and surgeon Immanuel Grossman have a case when he travelled to Stockholm in 1723? What made that case so compelling that the Diet sent one of its highest-ranking members to head a Commission in Falun for several months the following year? The history of this period becomes more nuanced when these questions are studied using the micro-historical approach.

This thesis started with the presupposition that the economic reforms of the 1710s and 1720s were a vehicle for a vision for how the town and mine should prosper according to the ideology and culture of the household economy. This perspective also has wider implications regarding the nature of discourse and power in Sweden during the early modern period. My aim was to show how groups on various hierarchical levels of a seemingly rigid hierarchical system could use their positions to forward their own interests. I show how there could be slightly different conceptions of what constituted good oeconomy, and how it was possible to organize around principles that were contrary to a dominant ideology.

Crucially, I have written with the idea that actors like Immanuel Grossman, the miners, the bergsman, and the burghers, had their own rationales for acting the way that they did, rather than them being merely reactive to harsh conditions, or misled. Reading Swab’s texts, it is apparent that he wanted to characterize his opponents as misinformed, misled, or lacking in legitimacy. This was in order to weaken their claims. Some of his arguments against his opponents amounted to ideas such as a lack of the status to have a say in the oeconomy of the bergstad.

Given the imbalance between the amounts of sources left by these opponents relative to Swab’s writings, it would be easy to accept his characterizations and assume that they lacked fully formed viewpoints. The Mine Inspector Swab and his allies’ writings dominate the source material left from this period. For this reason, their voices also have dominance in the research almost by default. The depiction of events is a result of the person with the loudest voice or most influential position shaping the subsequent historical record. The writings left by the other groups that this thesis concerns are very limited in comparison, but this work attempts to give them more weight than they have previously received.

After my introductory chapter, I started out with knowledge of the divine order of the Holy Household as it was described in normative texts from the early modern period. I then approached the protocols relating to the 1716 reforms, and the documents of the royal commission in 1724, looking for evidence that this ideology, as well as the set of structures and social conventions that came with it, were more flexible than they appeared to be in these texts. I found this by looking for how Swab’s reforms were combatted and discussed. In that way, the thesis is a discourse analysis that revealed the shifting power
dynamics at the Great Copper Mine in the early eighteenth century. The local officials and the national government hid their exercising of power in socially and morally acceptable terms, using the common notion of good oeconomy to support reforms that encroached on the traditional rights of other groups. At the same time, these other groups were able to use knowledge and customs relating to oeconomy to attempt to shift the power dynamics in their favour.

To some extent, they succeeded. They were well informed and their arguments held weight. Even though the normative system of that time demanded they be obedient and keep to their tasks, the contradictory status many of them held within the household economy meant that they could claim to be householders in their own right. They could characterize themselves as both obedient subordinates and as householders with a responsibility to act, according to the type of argument they were making. By showing how the actors manipulated their shifting statuses, this thesis reveals how the seemingly rigid structure of the household economy was inclusive, adaptive, and subject to change.

10.2 Different oeconomies or different aspects of a common normative system? A summary of the results

The first of my research questions was: how were ideas about oeconomy implemented at the Great Copper Mine? In asking this question, my aim was to investigate how a set of economic notions and theories, which were rooted in agrarian practices, and notions of hierarchy tied to the household, could be adapted to a situation where they should not apply. This was also one of the motivating factors in selecting the Copper Mine as a sight of micro investigation.

The oeconomy of Swab and its application at the Copper Mine

At the Commission, both Swab’s and his allies’ arguments in favour of the economic reforms implemented between 1716 and 1720 were expressed in the language of oeconomy. This was evident when Swab made the parable about the mine as an estate or a “nest”, in which he discussed it as an agrarian household, and saw proposed economic solutions from that perspective. With his parable, Swab stated that the purpose of the mine was to reinvest its surplus wealth in the mining operation rather than for it to go into the pockets of individual bergsmän. Swab argued that the mine existed to enrich the Swedish state. Its role in Falun was to preserve the town and its inhabitants. There was no place for personal enrichment in this vision of oeconomy. Swab wanted to support the bergsmän and the miners, but he was also convinced that they had to place common welfare over their own personal gain. This was necessary not only in order to prevent the wealth of the mine from running out, but also
because it was the proper order of things in the system of oeconomy he aimed to implement.

According to this view, hierarchies were based not around wealth, but on an estate system that was inherited from feudal times. By equalizing the bergsmän, Swab attempted to create order and equilibrium according to this notion of oeconomy. This is an initial answer to my first research question: Swab’s view of implementing oeconomy was rooted in this hierarchy and the idea of reinvestment in order to help the greater oeconomy of the nation. Swab’s view of oeconomy as connected to the hierarchy of the household is evident in how he legitimimized his own authority. The household economy was based around a household unit headed by a householder. His servants obeyed him, and he ensured that they were provided for in turn. In the oeconomy of the Great Copper Mine, Swab’s duty was to protect the people under his administrative care.

The quote in the introductory chapter shows clear example how he interpreted the criticism against his reforms. He believed that those who argued against them were not only wrong about their practical effects, but that they were trying to upset a certain order of household hierarchy by complaining. They wanted to “become rulers” themselves.\(^1\) Swab was consistent in his accusations against those who opposed him: they were mutinous, and they wanted to be a part of a sphere of responsibility that they did not have a right to. They wanted to upset the order of a regulated oeconomy.

The motivation as to why this hierarchy was necessary was because people on different levels had different duties. These duties were outlined in the writings on economic theory that were predominant in economic literature during the eighteenth century. The public maintenance of hierarchy was a way of upholding the social order of the Lutheran hustavla. Among other things, the hustavla outlined an ideal hierarchical order between masters and servants, where the masters took care of the servants, the servants obeyed the masters and there was a bond of familial trust between them.\(^2\) The household, and society as a whole, was conceptualized as a body, with the housefather as the head and the subordinates as the limbs. By extension, the ruling elites were the head of the societal body, while the subordinate working population were the limbs.\(^3\)

At the same time, recent research into the practices of everyday survival in Sweden show that the normative framework did not restrict people’s activities so much. The Uppsala-based Gender and Work project has discovered a remarkable flexibility in the choice of work undertaken by men and women in spite of how heavily gender-coded many types of work were according to the social mores in early eighteenth century Falun. The household as a unit had to

\(^1\) See the quote in chapter 1, p. 15.
\(^2\) The concept of the hustavla is described in Chapter 2.
be constantly maintained through the act of “doing house” by Joachim Ei-
bach’s definition, both maintaining and opening its borders, and manifesting
social hierarchies, through social interactions.

If Swab was a householder, the bergstad had to be a household unit with its
own form of oeconomy. Swab had the perspective of an official on the level
of the state. He saw how the town and mine fit into the larger oeconomy of
the kingdom. In his vision, oeconomy on all levels of society were interlinked.
When unified with the mine, the bergstad Falun’s oeconomy had the purpose
of aiding the prosperity of Bergslagen and the kingdom as a whole. The source
of the town’s wealth was the mine. The town’s role was not to be a trading
town, but a centre of production. This meant that the oeconomy of the
bergstad Falun had no place for a burgher estate according to Swab’s view.

Together with the Mayor Johan Holenius, Swab revealed the most clearly
how he saw the oeconomy of the bergstad in the way they talked about the
warehouse for grains. They claimed that the warehouse for grains represented
the people who worked to produce copper at the mine: the bergsmän and the
miners. According to one of the tenets of good oeconomy—that everything
should serve a function of utility—these people had proven their worth
through their productive work. The fact that the warehouse represented these
productive people meant that it had the same right to trade and sell all manner
of wares as a burgher had.

The burghers who complained about this were accused of self-interest, and
of wanting to upset hierarchy and dominate the town. This is also part of the
answer to my initial research question: the initiation of the warehouse was not
meant to disrupt the order but enhance life for those contributing to the oecon-
omy of the mine, the region, and the nation. When this was meant with re-

gistance, the ideas of mine’s oeconomy—and thus the larger oeconomy of the
nation—were challenged. The burghers viewed their role in the oeconomy
differently and thought that their rights should receive protection. With the
bergsmän, Swab had worked to ensure that some of them would not be able
to enrich themselves at the expense of others, through the abolishment of the
game of dice and the redistribution of their takings between them in 1716. If
the mine was prosperous and public order was maintained, these bergsmän
would also be preserved. Swab did not show this concern for the burghers,
however. Instead, as mentioned, his argument against their complaints per-
tained to them having had no place in the oeconomy of the bergstad. Other
towns were trading towns; in the bergstad all economic activity aimed to
maintain the mine.

The oeconomy of the burgers

The other research questions I asked were: in what ways did the different so-
cial groups living and working in Falun criticize these ideas? This helps draw
out the conclusions regarding Swab’s vision for the miners, burghers, and the
Finally, in order to understand both of the previous research questions, I dealt with a final overall question: *What norms and social mores did they use when making their arguments?* These questions are an attempt to find out how it was possible to disagree in an environment that did not permit open ideological opposition. As mentioned, the burghers in particular were excluded from Swab’s vision for the oeconomy of the *bergstad*. For that reason, their way of opposing him is presented first.

Swab frequently said that some people were enriching themselves from the mine’s profits, and acting only out of self-interest to the detriment of the whole town and mine. The burghers who petitioned the Commission suspected the administration of the *bergstad* of the same thing. In their complaint, they emphasized how mismanagement and miscommunication had eroded their trust in the administration. They gave examples of how they were shut out from the administrations’ decision-making process. They were excluded because they had to be shareholding *bergsmän* as well as burghers in order to take part in the new administration of the town. For them, this was mainly an economic issue. Rich burghers could afford to buy and maintain shares, but the petitioning burghers could not. To partake in the town administration became contingent on private wealth rather than belonging to an estate. This shows how the hierarchy could be flexible, but not always to the benefit of all.

Swab’s repeated accusations against the burghers, as well as the miners and the wealthier *bergsmän*, was that they were trying to enter a sphere where they had no knowledge and thus held no authority. For their part, the burghers said that they only lacked knowledge because they were denied it. The administration’s use of new terminology like *drogerier*, without a proper explanation, was one example. The fact that they were not given information about the administration’s proceedings was another. The burghers might have agreed with Swab that they lacked the knowledge necessary to take part in decision-making, but they reversed it and questioned why that knowledge was denied them.

Swab’s arguments, however, came from a defensive position. The Royal Commission had been set up because Grossman and his allies among the *bergsmän* and the burghers had accused Swab of mismanaging oeconomy. Pointedly, they had accused *him* of overstepping *his* boundary of authority, of extending his sphere of influence, and overtaking theirs. Social groups in Falun had to argue their ideas from both positions of work, wealth, and influence. When it came to his conflict with the burghers, this was connected to the new laws of the *bergstad*, which limited the burghers’ influence in the town’s administration.

However, the clearest accusation of Swab overstepping was related to the business of the warehouse. The warehouse signified oeconomy on the local level reaching into the level of the private oeconomy of the burghers, by competing with them at their own businesses. When the burghers tried to rise to the level of the state—the level of politics—Swab and Holenius along with the town’s administration and the mining court attempted to bar them from
entering. The existence of the Royal Commission in 1724 was Swab’s and Holenius’s failure to prevent this perceived mutiny by not only the burghers, but by almost all of the different groups of the bergstad.

The manufactory and children’s house: A different way of organizing women’s work

Some of Swab’s reforms were in effect the installation of social safety nets for the people whose work was connected to the mine. These new safety nets, such as the warehouse and the workhouse for training girls in useful skills, could replace safety nets otherwise provided by private households. Swab’s view of Falun and the mine as a unit practicing its own form of oeconomy—a type of large household—was particularly evident when he discussed the manufactory and children’s house. The criticism this establishment received revealed that Swab, the commissioners, and the miners all held the view that women’s work belonged within the realm of the private household, however. Their disagreement lay in how it should be kept in that realm. The debate surrounding the subsistence of the manufactory and children’s house showed how the actors involved attempted to establish borders and spheres of responsibility for private and public households in the wake of Swab’s reforms. The issue was who was responsible for the work of the women and children and tied to that, what kind of a productive role they had in the oeconomy of the new bergstad.

Returning to my third research question, this manufactory and children’s house was established according to the norms and social mores of the household economy, yet somehow subverted those norms. It was built according to a patriarchal notion that it was the householder’s responsibility to care for and control the poorer population. Its purpose was to encourage female productivity within the borders of a private household. It owed its existence to the idea that there was a right and a wrong type of employment for women. The wrong type had lonely women working for themselves, away from household structures.

The manufactory might also have been organized according to nascent mercantilist ideas about the state’s interventions into manufacturing. Its supposed aim was to bring women, or “youths”, into the organic oeconomy of the bergstad, from which Swab claimed they were in danger of falling away. The discussion about the manufactory highlighted that there was a conception at the Board of Mines, voiced by Swab, that miners and miners’ wives were in danger of being separated, not only because that they worked with separate

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5 Ra Åk 408, Vol. 2 Akier, handlingar, pp. 835–843.
tasks, but also because they worked in separate spaces since women were apparently not welcome within the mine. While men left the household to work in the mine, women in mining families also began to move outside of it to make their own living. The manufactory was meant to teach them the skills necessary for them to be able to work productively within the household again. It did so by extending the oeconomy on the level of the bergstad to encompass the oeconomy of private mining households, because Swab and his allies believed that girls were not learning crafts at home.

Oeconomy on a private level did not function, so the oeconomy of the bergstad had to expand. Its long-term aim might have been to preserve the oeconomy of private households, but in the short term, women from mining families began to work within a publicly owned establishment that looked and functioned differently from a private household. They gathered in a common area resembling a factory or a school. There, they were taught by a taylor, by journeymen, and by women with titles referring to their skillset rather than their marital status. While there was little proof of the women making these arguments themselves, there is evidence how they acted with and against the norms of oeconomy.

Such a venture as Swab’s manufactory inadvertently helped make it possible to discuss women as agents within a more public sphere of oeconomy. In the Commission’s debate about that establishment, women and men were characterized as separate economic agents, outside of the shared household. This was a way of discussing women’s work that defeated Swab’s aim of establishing the manufactory in the first place. A contradictory discussion such as this opened for the possibility that women’s work could be seen as something happening outside of the private household. It already did so, had done so for many years, but with the manufactory there was an attempt to regulate, and inadvertently, encourage it.

The bergsmän, the miners, and the legitimacy of experience

Investigating different social groups and their use of norms involves looking at important sites of conflict. One of the greatest conflicts between the different views of oeconomy expressed by different parties at the Royal Commission in 1724 was on what grounds that they claimed to have authority. Groups belonging to a lower level of hierarchy consistently argued that their practical knowledge and risk-taking tasks gave them the legitimacy of authority over the oeconomy of the bergstad. For instance, the ten working bergsmän who petitioned the Commission argued for more autonomy, claiming it would be beneficial to the mining operation.

The bergsmän backed up their statements with a series of arguments that showed they had ideas about the practical implications of transfers of authority, and the different functions private oeconomy and state oeconomy ought

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6 RA ÄK 408, Vol. 2 Akter, handlingar, p. 835.
to have. They bolstered their arguments by claiming that they knew the work of the mine through experience. Knowledge was one of their most important argumentation tools, since it could, in some ways, be proven through hard work within the oeconomy.

Another actor used experience to argue his status and legitimacy. In his texts to the Commission, Grossman sometimes emphasized his status as a bergsman. In doing so, he also stated that he felt a responsibility to act to preserve the mine. This was how he was able to make demands about the oeconomy of the mine. Swab disputed his Bergsman credentials several times, thereby acknowledging that they would strengthen his arguments. In tying himself to the bergsmän, Grossman made an assertion that he possessed the same type of legitimizing experiences that the working bergsmän possessed. He gained some support because there was an idea that those who owned shares, as well as managed and evaluated work and takings of ore at the mine, had a right to a certain amount of authority over it. The Swedish Diet acknowledged the claims of the bergsmän to legitimate authority over the oeconomy of the mine in 1724. Superior hierarchical status was contingent on knowledge and practical experience.

This was not true of all petitioners. Among the different groups who sent petitions to the Commission, the miners stood out because their presence at court was questioned, as they did not have the right to convene. This questioning was related to the issue of how someone could claim to be in a position of management, and what this entailed. They had a legal status as servants, but were the miners really servants? In their case, changing practices complicated their status. In practice, the miners’ status became ambiguous. As a result of both long-term economic developments and of Swab’s reforms in the 1710s, their living conditions and work had begun to resemble that of independent householders. However, their servant status still afforded the miners a kind of protection. As servants, they could petition the higher level of authority of the Diet when they believed that representatives of a level with a more immediate authority over them, their local administration, had failed to protect their interests.

Like Grossman and the bergsmän, the miners used the idea that hierarchical superiority was earned by practical knowledge to argue for their cause. They also used their position as subordinate beleaguered servants to argue their case to the commissioners. The trust they placed in their masters was conditional, whether these masters were bergsmän or the town’s administration. In criticizing the bailiffs for incompetence, the miners as a group were saying that representatives of the bergstad and the state should know their work to the same degree that they did if they wanted to regulate it. They did not trust in authority based on rank, but instead in authority based on demonstrable competence in their craft.

With their complaint, the miners repeated their actions in 1720. They showed that they would go over their immediate householders’ heads if they lost their trust in them. If their householders did not possess enough practical
knowledge to regulate their work, the miners stated that they could regulate themselves, suggesting that they could overstep hierarchical boundaries because of their merits to become householders themselves.

The commissioners’ concluding decisions showed that, unlike the complaints of the bergsmän and the burghers, the miners’ complaint was treated as potentially mutinous. Legitimacy through experience only went so far. The miners were not legal householders. However, it is noteworthy that they apparently believed that they could move their positions forward and evaluate their work themselves. This illuminates the cause behind the riot the Falun miners staged in 1743.

10.3 Advantages of studying microhistory and discourse

This investigation is a micro study because of its narrow focus, on a small geographical area over a short period. It is a discourse analysis in part because it is an examination of arguments presented; it sometimes looks at the way they were formulated. Nuances of speech could reveal what type of discursive framework the actor in question was operating under. The focus is on the way things are presented, in order to see what the social framework of the arguments reveal about oeconomy, social hierarchy, and agency during the period of study.

One instance in which the nuance of language is important is in Swab’s exchange with the commissioners regarding the miners’ right to protest. While Swab emphasised their status as a collective rabble, the commissioners referred to the miners as “subjects” in their reply. This revealed who protected the miners, and was a subtle manifestation of the commissioners’ superiority over Swab. However, it was not the focus of the commissioners’ reply. I found it because I looked for such details, showing the importance of my approach. Other things I have noted are Swab’s use of words like oeconomy, rule, and nest, as well as the way he referred to Grossman as a field surgeon, while Grossman called himself a bergsman. There were also general trends in the way people expressed themselves. Holenius emphasized his personal connection to kings and historical events, and his tireless work on behalf of Falun to the detriment of his own health. In doing this, he established his rank and closeness to the monarch, but also his legitimacy through experience and love for the people in his care. The bergsmän were most careful to show that they had no interest in ruling over anything. The miners were careful, but erred when they argued that they could regulate themselves.

Even though the temporal scope of this study is narrow, it is also a depiction a process of change. The events in 1716 and 1724 were parts of several long-term developments. One was the centralization of the mine’s administration, and the proletarianization of miners and poorer bergsmän. Another was the slow decline of the Great Copper Mine. The events were also part of the burgh-
ers’ long struggle for Falun to gain and then retain town privileges. The economic reforms in 1716 may have been the mere formalization of a process that had occurred over several decades. The Commission of 1724 was an evaluation of these reforms, which the commissioners ruled to modify. These events can still be classified as turning points in a historical process that motivates a narrow study. Grossman’s choice to petition the Diet had practical consequences for the way oeconomy functioned in the 

This oeconomy was reshaped in small and large ways by the rulings the commissioners made at the Commission’s end. The actions that certain actors and groups took in stepping forward were clear instances of how these groups could put pressure on the administration of the bergstad in order to remind them of their rights and demands.

However, the reforms and the ensuing Commission do not only represent a piece of a larger pattern of developments, and this is not the only reason they are formative events. The main value of studying the discourse of oeconomy in relation to the period 1716–1724 is that it invites a closer look at an event situated in a longer process of change, according to how the actors involved might have characterized it. These actors had no way of knowing where the developments they were a part of were going to lead. They acted according to knowledge that was available to them, the ideologies, the rationales and the social mores of their times. By examining their discourse, I expose these ideologies, rationales, and social mores. It illuminates the world of all the people who lived and worked near the Great Copper Mine, including those who did not belong to elite groups. This approach brings creates greater understanding as to what motivated them take the actions that they did, and thus, how and why the event transpired. This perspective is relevant since it shows how paradigms shifted and how policies changed on the micro level.

10.4 Final discussion: Actors and oeconomy

Studying early modern history is looking at the actions of actors who always represented others, whether it is their corporations or guilds, their estates, or their personal households. It is not enough to look at the actions of Anders Swab, or the actions of Immanuel Grossman, and say that they alone represented certain points of view. In this thesis, their actions have been used as a way to look for the perspectives of actors from the other segments of society that were both subject to and took part in their dispute.

The limits of power within the Holy Household

To begin with, both Swab’s and Grossman’s different positions can show what the notion of oeconomy meant to the Great Copper Mine. Swab outlined its purpose of reinvesting in and reproducing the ‘household’ of the mine, and its
dependence on a system of mutual trust and responsibility over hierarchical borders. His view was clearly that private interest had no place in a functioning oeconomy, but that every form of work was in service of the collective suste-
nance of the people working, and the nation as a whole. He viewed the bergstad as a piece of a larger economic system, the oeconomy of the nation state. Immanuel Grossman and the burglers opposed this view. The bergsmän and the miners argued that the centralization of the mine’s administration robbed them of authority they had previously held.

As Mine Inspector, Swab was powerful in the administration and public life of the bergstad. However, whenever he is cited throughout this work, I am aware that he represented a certain type of authority, dictated by a set of norms and social mores. This was something that he had to act in relation to, and that caused others to interpret his actions in certain ways. As mentioned, one understanding of power during this time was that the person holding it had the responsibility to provide for the people in his care. Unequal power relations-
ships could be upheld as long as they were based on a sense of mutual responsi-
bility and trust.

At the Commission, this was perhaps most apparent whenever Swab was confronted by the commissioners during discussions about the miners’ peti-
tion, or when he was accused of making threats against the people levelling complaints against him. Swab defended himself by noting his status as a man who had sworn an oath to the king. He was criticised for trying to override the rights of people who were hierarchically inferior to him. He was perhaps the most powerful person in Falun, but according to the norms and mores of the household economy, his power was conditionally bestowed on him by a power on a higher level. This left him vulnerable, and also granted those who were subordinate to him a certain amount of agency.

The purpose, and the results of the events of 1716–1724

This thesis covers a short span of time, beginning with the implementation of a series of reforms, and ending with the reaction to these reforms. Within this period, power shifts that had already happened over several decades, and the change in oeconomy that those power shifts would entail at the Great Copper Mine were exposed, discussed, and evaluated. Each group that was tied up in the oeconomy of the bergstad had its own practice of oeconomy; when one group gained or lost political power at the Great Copper Mine, the practical preconditions and policies for oeconomy in the town at large would alter slightly. If they altered, the oeconomy was changed. In the discussions during the Royal Commission, different actors and groups revealed their notions of what good oeconomy entailed, and in doing so, forced a confrontation be-
tween differing viewpoints. Small shifts in status between actors and groups can be observed when the process of this confrontation is followed in detail.

It is difficult to know the true opinions of the people who were present at the Great Copper Mine in 1724, although this thesis brings us closer to that
knowledge. The miners might have subscribed to the idea that the relationship between masters and servants should be based on mutual trust. They also argued for more autonomy. Their complaint could be interpreted as a manifestation of their desire to have more power at the expense of the ever-expanding state bureaucracy of the bergstad. Seen in that light, their text might lend support to Swab’s argument that representatives of private households such as the bergsmän were not capable of understanding the oeconomy of the whole town and mine, or the entire kingdom, because they only knew their own sphere of work. Indeed, the letter of the bergsmän can also be interpreted as a purely complaint with acquisitive motives, since they mostly argue for an instatement of a system that meant they might expand their operation. Whatever their true motives might be however, the motive for this research has been to look at the way they discussed, and what kind of common perceptions they exposed through discussing oeconomy at the Copper Mine.

Swab and his allies did not disparage the argument that legitimate authority was gained from experience. Nor did the miners say they held no regard for status. There were no open, clear-cut ideological clashes. It is apparent, however, that there were different trends in different actors’ lines of argument that ultimately led them to present different visions for oeconomy. This was the result of them emphasizing different customs and ideals in their respective texts. Each group said the economic problems of the town and mine stemmed from different causes, and that different solutions were necessary. The Commission in 1724 represented a shift. It was not necessarily a drastic shift when it came to economic policy, but it was a shift in discourse. The exposition and evaluation of different forms of oeconomy represented the peak of a long, ongoing conflict between the different perceptions of what legitimized power.

Whatever the true motivations were behind the sending of these petitions and complaints, they were written in a style that was in accordance with common ideals and mores. They could not challenge the predominant ideology. However, their purpose was to subvert the status quo, to cause a change in practice. In service of this, the contradictions inherent in the ideal of the household economy were exploited. This economy contained the supposition of an ideal, fixed hierarchy, a hierarchy that had to be upheld through constant performance. People were in some ways also subverting it. Practices differed from ideals, which meant that there were grounds for those who were in subordinate positions within the bergstad to ask a higher level of authority for aid. Swab and the Board of Mines changed the oeconomy of the mine through the implementation of reforms, although Swab’s stated aim was to preserve it as it ought to be. For those who petitioned the Diet, their duty to maintain the mine as well as maintain their own households, served as acceptable reasons. Therefore, in petitioning, they were also practicing oeconomy. The interactions and power-plays between levels meant that the household economy was both maintained and changing with the times, until it eventually changed beyond recognition.
Glossary

*Bergslagen* – the conglomeration of *bergsmän* working with mining and metalworks in Sweden, as well as the geographical area where such mines and works were located.

*Bergsmän* – owners, administrators and supervisors of mining and metalworks

*Bergstad* - A mining town where the town’s administration was unified with the mine’s administration, modeled after similar towns in the German lands.

*Brukande bergsmän* – “working” bergsmän, who oversaw the process of metal extraction from mining to smelting and refinement. They had the right to make use of smelting huts.

*Burskap* – having the right to practice trade in a town, and other legal rights of a member of the burgher estate

*Daler Kmt* – Copper coins, a part of the monetary system implemented with the copper standard in Sweden.

*Dubbel* – the game of dice that determined the order of the *Gruvskifte*

*Gruvskifte* – the order in which the mining teams worked in the caverns

*Gruvskifte* – the order in which the mining teams entered the caverns

*Gruvskiftesfolk* – miners who had steady employment with individual *bergsmän*’s *par*

*Par* – the *bergsmän*’s mining teams, possibly named so after the two bellows they traditionally carried with them

*Rotar* – New work teams, which were not ordered according to the *gruvskifte*

*Roterum* – Unknown, or previously abandoned caverns which the *rotar* mined
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