Poor relief, taxes and the first universal pension reform

The origin of the Swedish welfare state reconsidered

Per Gunnar Edebalk
Mats Olsson

Per.Gunnar.Edebalk@soch.lu.se
School of Social Work
Centre for Economic Demography
Lund University

Mats.Olsson@ekh.lu.se
Department of Economic History
Centre for Economic Demography
Lund University
By the year 1900, Sweden probably held the oldest population in the contemporary world. Sweden was also the first nation to implement a universal pension system in 1913. The universal character in early social legislation has certainly been decisive for the development of the Swedish welfare state. This alternative was, however, not self-evident. Why did the reforms turn universal, when the continental model, the Bismarck social security system, was exclusively directed at industrial workers?

Research has concentrated on demographic factors and growing demands for social security, or on the fact that Sweden still was a predominantly rural society with about 2,400 local authorities. In this article we will study the development of social legislation in the light of local government expenditures and incomes, and suggest an overlooked possibility: The designation of the first universal national social security reform was a redistributional response to uneven distribution of incomes and general expenditures among the rural districts in Sweden.

The aim of this paper is to study the implementation of the Swedish pension system and its causes. The analyses are effected on national level, but with exemplifications from three rural regions in southern Sweden, with different economic characteristics, and comparisons between countryside and towns.¹

**Poor relief in a society in transition**

In the Swedish poor laws of 1847 every parish and municipality held an unconditional responsibility for supporting its destitute. Local poor relief included, however, at that point in time, a minor share of the population. The traditional retirement systems, founded on family, property and employment, included most inhabitants and were in that sense efficient, though not laid down by law. The residual of poor people, receiving support from local government, included by 1850 a small fraction of the population. After reports on increased cost for the local communities the 1860s saw a change in attitudes towards poor relief. With the poor laws of 1871 support was no longer an unconditional right for persons without resources, but up to the local authorities to decide upon.

The number of elderly in Sweden increased substantially from the 1860 until 1900, and by the turn of the century there were proportionately less workers and more elders than ever before (Figure 1). The situation had been created by the nineteenth century decrease in infant mortality and a subsequent decrease in fertility rates in the second half of that century. This classic demographic transition effect was reinforced by high emigration rates. Between 1870 and 1900, from a population of 4.2 million, net emigration was about 670,000 people, most of them in their twenties.

Emigration was strongest from the countryside, at the same time as the growing towns attracted foremost young people. Figure 1 shows a widening rural-urban gap in terms of demographic composition until 1900. In the countryside the ratio between the population aged

---

¹ The rural districts are:  
Skåne, plains: Sireköpinge, Hög, Sövde, Anderslöv  
Skåne, forests: Kågeröd, Tossjö, Röke, Örkened  
Småland: Nöbbele, Elmeboda, Dädesjö, Kalvsvik, Tolg, Asa  
The districts have been selected to reflect varying natural and socio-economic characteristics.
65 years or more and the population aged 15–64 increased from 8.0 to 15.7 percent in the second half of the nineteenth century, but only from 5.7 to 9.1 percent in the towns.

Figure 1 about here

The growing elderly population was still largely supported by the traditional institutions of the preindustrial society – family support, farm retirement systems or by support from former employers. Those who lacked own resources, supporting families or employers, had to rely on poor relief from local authorities. In contemporary debates, the financial situation for rural communities was described as “insufferable” (Riksdagens skrivelse 1905:131; Edebalk 2003, p. 133).

It could thus be expected that the number of rural poor increased dramatically during the last decades of the nineteenth century. When the old people increased in numbers and share, and simultaneously a smaller and smaller fraction of the population owned land, the prerequisites for the families to take care of their elderly would shrink. In Figure 2 the fraction of the population that was subject to poor relief is shown. The national figure increased somewhat, from 4.4 percent to a maximum of 5.3 percent in the early 1890s, but then fell back again, near its original share by the turn of the century and onwards. While the fraction of the city dwellers in poor relief was more volatile, the countryside was more stable, with a clear decreasing trend after 1892, ending up with a share of 3.5 percent in 1913.

Figures 2 and 3 about here

Notwithstanding there was no increase in the share of the population in poor relief in these crucial years, the fraction of the population that was subject to poor relief could diverge substantially among the parishes (Figure 3). While the fertile plain land in Skåne until 1896 only had a little above 2 percent, a share that later sank to well below that figure, the forested Småland, with its spare and meagre soils, for most of the period had between 3.5 and 4.5 percent. Following the national urban pattern, Landskrona show the highest rates, by 1910 almost 5 percent.

However, the diverging figures of uneven distribution of persons on poor relief are not alarming in any way. All the rural shares are well below 5 percent at any time, and the differences are not increasing, rather decreasing. The variation coefficient between the 14 rural parishes almost halved during our period of investigation, from 52–59 percent the first three years, to 31–32 percent the last. It seems, thus, that both contemporary debaters and modern researchers have underestimated the vitality of the traditional rural security systems. Since the old people were not subject to poor relief, in spite of the fact that they proportionately grew in numbers, they must have been taken care of within the families, or by means of retirement contracts or by their former employers. However, the needs of the elderly poor were neglected in many parishes, which is documented in contemporary sources (Edebalk, 1991, chapter 2).

For the poor who were in need of assistance, support in form of small amounts of cash or in kind could be offered. Especially in the countryside four other forms of support could be: boarding out (which showed its worst sides when the old person was no longer able to take part in the day-to-day work), auctioning out (whereby those who requested the lowest payment from the municipality, often other poor people, became “care providers”),
ambulatory care (whereby the recipients of care had to move from one farm to another), and institutional care (poorhouses and workhouses in which different kinds of inmates were mixed: the old and feeble, the chronically ill, mentally ill, orphans, alcoholics, etc.). There was a distinct tendency in the forms of support: institutions were growing in importance.

If anything, the situation in the towns stands out. This was in the midst of the first industrial revolution in Sweden, and the towns were growing fast. For the new town dwellers there were hardly any traditional means of dealing with social problems in an urban context.

Local expenditures and local taxes

Poor relief was entirely a local government responsibility, it was up to each parish to handle and finance. But the local authorities had other expenditures as well. Besides the landholding peasants’ obligation to build and maintain roads and bridges, which were organised in separate road districts, the principal obligations were the primary school (folkskolan) and the parish church, with personnel. For the primary schools a certain state subvention was granted, which provided for roughly a fourth of its costs, otherwise the costs in its entirety fell on the local taxpayers (Olsson 2005, p. 85).

To investigate the relative weight of the expenditures we look at contemporary national estimates, which we compare with regional analyses of the 14 parishes in our sample (Tables 1–2 and Figures 4–6). The annual estimates in regional analyses are disturbed by the fact that no separate books on capital accounts were kept. Thus, an investment e.g. in a school building or a poor house affected the running expenses in its entirety and could result in huge deficits during investment years.

The three regions share some common features with the national estimates. The overall expenditures almost doubled in 30 years, estimated in deflated prices, from 25.8 to 50.0 million kronor. As the Swedish rural population was stagnant during this period, local expenditures per rural inhabitant increased almost in phase with this, from 6.7 to 12.4 kronor per head. The costs for primary schools increased substantially, in absolute number as well as shares of expenditures. Until 1907–13 the total school expenditures tripled in deflated prices, and its share of all Swedish parish expenditures increased from 31 to 43 percent. From a higher initial share the schools in Skåne by then held over 50 percent. The increases in school expenditures was not caused by a growing portion of young in the nation, but by reinforced legislations on the local districts obligations to maintain schools. Six years in primary school became compulsory in 1878, with two additional voluntary years. From 1850 to 1900 the number of primary school pupils in Sweden increased from 270 000 to 702 000 and the number of teachers from 3 500 to 15 000 (V. Fredriksson, 1940–71). Reversely, the fraction that went to the churches and the priests’ salaries decreased, from a third to a fifth of total expenditures. This development was more pronounced in Skåne. In Småland secularisation of society went slower.

The roll of poor relief was almost constantly a forth of total expenditures 1880–1913. In all the three regional analyses its fraction was decreasing, in the Scanian plain to a fifth of expenditures. In absolute figures, however, costs for poor relief increased at the same rate as the rural districts’ total expenditures, which meant a doubling in deflated prices.

Tables 1 and 2 about here
How did then the local communities pay for their doubled expenses? After a glance at Table 3, the answer is obvious: Through raised taxes. Certainly the state contributions to local schools increased, but not at all in phase with the costs. Of the 15.7 million kronor increase in primary school costs, the state only contributed with 3.7. Likewise the local taxes on distribution of alcohol only increased income with 1.7 millions, in spite of immense drinking. The local taxation was 1861–1910 built on a complicated system called fyrk, which also ranked the electoral weights of those who were entitled to vote. The fyrk was a number which was derived either from rateable values (farmers) or annual income (others). Each local government then decided how much to tax each fyrk.

The taxes’ share of farmers’ incomes, including national taxes, tithes and local taxes, was continuously reduced in Sweden from the early eighteenth to the late nineteenth century. A rigid national tax system, combined with inflation and increased agricultural outputs, led to a real tax reduction, from roughly a third to less than ten percent of an average farm’s gross output (Olsson 2005, p. 172–175). During this period the nature of taxes also changed. The bulk of what the taxpayers had to give away in the early period went to either military expenditures or to support consumption of persons of rank. By the year 1900 more than half of the dues were local, and principally aimed at education and social assistance.

This pattern of continuous real tax reduction was broken in the early twentieth century. The rigid state tax system on land was replaced by progressive taxation on income in 1904, and simultaneously local taxes tended to increase. Furthermore, now there were huge and growing differences between regions and districts. A rough estimate indicates that while the top quartile of the parishes in Sweden 1909 taxed more than 10 percent of the parishioners’ incomes, the bottom quartile taxed less than 5 percent (derived from Söderberg 1911).

In our regional samples similar patterns of diverging tax burdens appear. In Figures 7 and 8 incomes from agriculture and local tax rates are compared 1881–1913. On the rich and grain producing plains in Skåne the average ratable value of farmland increased substantially, whereas the value of the meager soils in Småland stagnated. In deflated prices the ratable values in Skåne increased by 17.2 percent and in Småland by 4.6 percent.

Not surprisingly, it was just the reverse with the local tax rates. While the inhabitants in Skåne continuously paid between 4 and 5 percent of their incomes in local tax, the rates in Småland increased from 3 to almost 9 percent. For single parishes the differences could be even more striking. While Sireköpinge in Skåne in 1913 only taxed 3.0 percent, Kalvsvik in Småland taxed 13.4 percent. In the latter case one third of the local expenditures went to poor relief.

This uneven distribution of tax burdens among the local districts was the target for contemporary debates. In 1911 Ernst Höijer, who later became director-general of Statistics Sweden, stated that the figures show how “…extremely uneven the distribution of the taxes are” (Höijer 1911, p. 246). Höijer argued that the economically weak communities were the once with the highest taxes, and suggested that the financial burdens of poor relief, primary
schools and church expenditures must be transferred from the local authorities to Government finance.

We have shown that there was no explosion in expenditures for poor relief 1880–1913, in spite of Sweden’s ageing population structure. This implies that the traditional rural social security systems, founded on family, property and employment, were more vital than we have been led to believe. In contrast to the towns, the average number of subjects of poor relief in the parishes did not increase. The costs certainly increased, but only in phase with the overall costs for local districts’ expenditures. Instead it was the expenses for primary schools that rose rapidly. Notwithstanding that the share of young in the nation did not increase, the quality and costs of their education increased. But at the same time huge differences emerged between different regions and districts in terms of local tax rates. Some parishes went into a vicious circle of stagnant taxable incomes, considerable out-migration and raised taxes.

At the turn of the last century there were two burning issues in Swedish domestic politics: reforming the degrading poor relief and spreading the financial burden for local authorities. These two issues eventually became interlinked.

There were lots of suggestions of how to reform the Swedish poor relief system. Some suggestions aimed at reforming poor relief in general, others aimed at governmental support to poor communities or simply that poor relief should be handed over to the state or the counties. But there was no strong interest-group pressing for changes until the so called “Poor law people” entered the scene in 1904. They were urban upper-class people, very energetic and committed. A private donation to this group made it possible to make a thorough investigation of the situation for poor people. They produced reports and radical reform-proposals. In 1906 they arranged the first poor law congress in Stockholm which was attended by nearly 1 000 persons coming from all parts of Sweden. The inquiry by the “Poor law people” resulted in a report on desirable reforms of Swedish poor relief, presented in 1907. Here, as in lectures and statements at the congress, their ideology of social policy is seen clearly. Abolishing poverty was viewed as being ultimately a matter of fostering the people. This meant, for example, that a standard benefit without the obligation to do something in return was not to be a part of social policy. From this it followed that social insurance, one aim of which was to reduce the expenses of poor relief, was to be designed strictly as a form of insurance. For old people in poor relief, a reform was supposed to entail that the individual was clearly entitled to poor relief. In addition, ambulatory care and auctioning out were to be prohibited. It was suggested that the right to act as legal guardian of recipients of poor relief should be eliminated and a state poor relief inspector was to be appointed. Institutional care was to be given a thorough boost and the mixing of different clienteles was to cease. It was suggested that this take place by making the county councils responsible for providing institutional care for the mentally ill and chronically ill (Edebalk, 1991). The congress represented the starting-shot for welfare reforms in Sweden. The congress addressed the government demanding reforms of poor relief and also regarding social insurance.

The Swedish government responded quickly to the demands. In 1907 two committees were set up: one for investigating implementing old age pensions and the other for investigating a general reform of poor relief.

Spreading the financial burden had been brought to the fore already in the 1890s but the demands became really heavy at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the Parliament motions were submitted 1904, 1905, 1907 and 1908. A committee was set up and a
Government bill was presented in 1912. According to the bill, the financial situation for the poorest communities should be facilitated by means of state taxes. The Parliament, however, refused the bill and so this way of helping the poorest communities was closed. A possible way, it was said, would be to implement a pension reform.

The pension reform

In 1913 the Swedish parliament decided to introduce a general pension system. This was the world’s first universal public insurance system (Elmer, 1960; Heclo, 1974). Already in 1884, the question of pension insurance was raised in the Swedish parliament by the liberal politician Adolf Hedin. The motion he introduced, concerning work injury and old age insurance for workers, was inspired by reforms in Germany at the time which Bismarck had been decisive in bringing about. Twenty years after Hedin presented his motion in Parliament, however, there was still no solution to the question of pensions, despite two public investigations having considered the questions involved and various government initiatives having been taken. Shortly thereafter, in the early years of the twentieth century, the issue of pensions appeared on the political agenda again.

In 1905 various motions aimed at initiating a new investigation of pensions were introduced in the Swedish parliament. The pension issue was also incorporated into the party platform of both the Liberal and the Social Democratic Party in the election campaign later that year and into the platform of the Conservative Party as well in the elections in 1908. Count G. A. Raab, who had led a privately financed campaign for old age pensions since 1896 presented a highly specified pension proposal in 1906. Also the important Poor law congress demanded an investigation. Late in 1907, the conservative government commissioned a new investigation, to be conducted by the Committee for Old Age Insurance. The Committee submitted its recommendation in 1912 (Ålderdomsförsäkringskommitten 1, 1912). This was acted on very quickly at both the governmental and parliamentary levels and was accepted by a largely unanimous Parliament in May 1913.

The general pension insurance thus established basically encompassed the entire population. Those unable to work because of disability or having reached the age of 67 received a pension. The pension consisted of two parts:

1. A pension financed by the individual’s own contributions, which were based on his/her taxable income; the higher the income, the higher the contributions. Since the size of this pension was related to the total value of the contributions the person had made, it could only assume a socially acceptable level after he/she had paid into the system for a considerable number of years.

2. A tax-financed, income-based supplementary pension intended for those either not covered or not covered adequately by a pension of the first type. This pension aimed at removing elderly or disabled persons from poor relief.

In discussions and proposals preparatory to the decision taken in 1913, five alternative models were considered (Elmer 1960; Ålderdomsförsäkringskommitten 1, 1912). Two of them had little support and can be regarded as unrealistic. One involved the type of state-subsidized voluntary insurance found, for example, in Belgium, France and Italy (Gordon, 1989). Experience had shown that few people selected voluntary insurance of this sort, and that those who did were scarcely those most in need of it. It appeared obvious, therefore, that pension insurance had to be compulsory. The other impractical model was a universal tax-financed pension with a flat rate. There was no financial basis for a pension of this sort sufficient in
size and no country in the world had such a pension system. This left three alternatives that could be regarded as realistic:

1. A model introduced in Germany in 1889 as part of Bismarck’s insurance system for workers. This system was financed by contributions of both employers and workers.

2. A model introduced in Denmark in 1891. This was a pension system having basic rules for the level of support provided, but without its having the character of poor relief. The system was administered at community level and was financed by the community and the state. Elderly persons were provided a pension depending on their financial situation.

3. Raab’s model. In determining the size of a person’s pension, account was taken of his/her income and compensation should consequently be provided to those of low income. An important aspect of Raab’s model was that the size of the contributions the individual made was the same for all (i.e. flat rate).

Many forces were at work in Sweden driving the development of a social insurance system onwards (Baldwin 1990; Heclo, 1974). During the 30 years that had elapsed since Hedin raised the question of pensions, Sweden had undergone rapid economic development. Industrial expansion had been very strong, particularly since the 1890s. Industrial workers had become both unionised and very much politically involved. They demanded social rights and to not be degraded to the role of being recipients of poor relief. The rural population was in the majority, yet in many rural communities the support for the poor that was needed made it difficult for the communities to assume sufficient responsibility for elderly people. Economic developments of this sort were accompanied by social and political changes, among these the introduction of general voting rights for men in 1911. The various developments just described can help explain pension insurance being introduced as an alternative to the ill-regarded and degrading poor relief. Yet how can one explain the model selected being one of a universal pension system financed by the individual’s own contributions rather than its being one of the models described above?

The influence which Sweden’s highly agrarian structure had on many of its early decisions regarding social policy has been referred to frequently (see e.g. Baldwin, 1990). Also, the Social Democratic Party, anxious to gain new members, sought to appeal to "farm folk." These people were not taken account of in a Bismarck-type model, whereas they could be dealt with more adequately in a Danish or a Raab-type model. The latter models involved assessing the needs or the income of the individual. This made these models better able to handle problems of the poor. The question still remains, however, why Sweden chose a universal pension system financed by citizens’ own contributions rather than choosing one of the latter models.

Sweden’s special demographic situation at the turn of the century is one important factor to consider. One should note the marked increase that had occurred in the proportion of older people in the population. The percentage of elderly persons (65+) had increased from 4.8 in 1850 to 8.4 in 1900. A comparison with countries that introduced an old-age pension system before Sweden did indicates the age structure in Sweden to have been unique. For e.g. Germany and Great Britain the figure was about 4 at the turn of the century.

Another factor to consider is that of the possibilities for financing such a system. Other things being equal, a pension insurance system should be considerably more expensive in Sweden than in other countries due to the demographic situation. A Danish model with the tax financing this would have involved thus had difficulty gaining acceptance. Raab’s model had
specifically taken financing costs into account through its proposal of equal contributions by all, these representing in effect a regressive tax. There was a serious drawback to his proposal, however: a flat rate contribution was far too harsh on persons of low income, especially rural but also urban workers.

A new possibility for financing appeared with the introduction of income taxes in Sweden (Rodriguez, 1980). As the country developed economically and a monetary system became thoroughly established, individual incomes began to be taxed. At the beginning of the 20th century the basis was laid for the present Swedish tax system through the introduction of a progressive income tax, and with that for the submission of individual income tax reports. It became possible then for taxes and insurance contributions to be determined on the basis of income. This created a financing opportunity that had not existed during earlier discussions of pensions. The income-based insurance premiums the individual was to pay became a special tax earmarked for pensions and thus an integral part of the taxation system. It could be said that a person was taxed so as to be able to avoid, in one’s period of old age, being a recipient of poor relief (or being dependent upon one’s children). This produced a kind of spreading out of the financial burden for different communities regarding their costs for care of the poor. It was an early form of inter-community redistribution of income, i.e. from rich to poor communities.

**Pensions and local expenditures**

The general pension system decided upon by the Swedish Parliament in 1913 was the first of its kind anywhere. According to the reform about 80,000 old and handicapped persons were relieved of poor relief. The pensions provided, however, were low. Although all the parties involved realised that pensions would initially leave much to be desired, they considered the direction taken to be the right one and expected improvements to come (Elmer, 1960).

The social insurance system in Sweden developed in what was a specifically Swedish context, characterized by the rapid industrialization and mechanization that were occurring at the time. Sweden was on the way to becoming a rich country, but the developments created social tensions. Background factors of particular relevance were the largely agrarian structure of the country and the fact that the help provided for those in need consisted largely of a highly stigmatizing form of poor relief. We have shown that the number of subjects of this help did not increase with the number of elderly in the countryside. This was due to still vital traditional support systems, based on family, property and employment, but there are simultaneous evidences of severe mismanagements of the old.

Around the turn of the century, many small communities had considerable financial difficulties. As we have seen, this was foremost due to increasing costs for primary schools, but also increasing costs for poor relief in some communities. The problem of helping the poor and the less prosperous communities thus came up on the same political agenda.

At a time when the tax system was not yet well developed, a pension insurance system could serve as a means of balancing out the expenditures of different communities. The pension system of 1913 was a compulsory one in which the individual’s contributions were related to the size of a person’s income, making them an earmarked tax. Thus, a general pension insurance became part of the general tax policy. The introduction of a universal pension insurance system paved the way for establishment of insurance for work-related injuries 1916, which became a general form of insurance and was based on the loss-of-income
principle. While this latter form of insurance was in preparation, a Social Insurance Committee was appointed to consider possibilities for establishing a general sickness insurance.

Considerable changes in social policy thus occurred during the decade of the 1910s. Income security came to be viewed as a social right for all, replacing the degrading system of poor relief. The new system was also to have the function of spreading the financial burden between communities and was likewise to have a preventive function. In contrast, in a system of poor relief, compensation was first provided when a person became destitute.
Figure 1. Ageing in rural and urban Sweden 1760–1980, ratio of population aged 65 years or more, over the population aged 15–64.

Sources: Bengtsson & Fridlizius 1994, p. 203.
Figure 2. Fraction of the population that was subject to poor relief 1874–1913, national figures for rural and urban population.

Sources: Derived from BiSOS, series U.

Figure 3. Fraction of the population that was subject to poor relief 1874–1913, regional rural series and one town.

Sources: Derived from BiSOS, series U.
Figures 4–6. The rural districts’ expenditures, regional analyses 1881–1913 (SEK).

Sources: Derived from BiSOS, series U.
Figures 7–8. Taxable incomes from agriculture (SEK/parish) and local tax rates (percent of incomes), regional analyses.

Sources: Derived from BiSOS, series U.
Table 1. The rural districts’ expenditures in Sweden 1880–1907 (% and SEK).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1907</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priests’ salary</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other church expenses</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor relief</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads and bridges</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expenditures</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditures</strong>&lt;br&gt; in millions</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Per rural head in 1907 prices</strong>&lt;br&gt; (SEK)</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Expenditures from Söderberg 1911, p. 27; deflated with consumer price index from Statistics Sweden, rural population figures from BiSOS, series A.

Table 2. The rural districts’ expenditures, regional analyses 1881–85 and 1909–13 (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Skåne, plains</th>
<th>Skåne, forests</th>
<th>Småland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church and priest</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor relief</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expenditures</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditures</strong>&lt;br&gt; in percentages</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Derived from BiSOS, series U.

Table 3. The rural districts’ incomes in Sweden 1880–1907 (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1907</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local taxes</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State contributions to primary schools</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other state contributions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local sales taxes on spirits</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rents</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others incomes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total incomes</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Söderberg 1911, p. 28.
References


BiSOS, *Bidrag till Sveriges Offentliga Statistik*.


I. Flodström (1908). *Om det komunala skatteväsendet i Sverige och våra direkta skatter i allmänhet*. Ekonomisk tidskrift 12: 403-446

V. Fredriksson (1940 - 71). *Svenska folkskolans historia* 1-6


E. Höijer (1911). "Landskommuners och köpingars ekonomiska bärkraft". *Svenska Stadsförbundets tidskrift*, 246-249.


Riksdagens protokoll jämte bihang


Socialförsäkringskommitten (Social Insurance Committee) (1919). *Betänkande och förslag angående allmän sjukförsäkring*. Stockholm
E. Söderberg (1911). Landskommunernas och köpingarnas ekonomiska bärkraft. Förberedande statistisk undersökning. Stockholm

Ålderdomsförsäkringskommittén I (Committee for Old Age Insurance I) (1912). Betänkande och förslag angående allmän pensionsförsäkring. Stockholm