

**THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMONS IN AN INTEGRATED PEASANT ECONOMY IN EARLY  
MODERN NORTHERN SCANDINAVIA**

Jesper Larsson

Research Fellow at the Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, Agrarian History,  
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Box 7012, 750 07 Uppsala, Sweden  
[jesper.larsson@slu.se](mailto:jesper.larsson@slu.se)

and

Visiting Scholar at the Ostrom Workshop, Indiana University, 513 North Park Avenue,  
Bloomington, IN 47408, USA  
[larslars@indiana.edu](mailto:larslars@indiana.edu)

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMONS IN AN INTEGRATED PEASANT ECONOMY IN EARLY MODERN NORTHERN SCANDINAVIA**

As described in other chapters in this volume, the peasant economy in early modern upland Europe became more integrated, and Northern Scandinavia was no exception. Here, however, the increased use of common-pool resources (CPRs) is a key to understanding how the integrated economy developed. This chapter explains and analyses the role of the commons in this change by discussing the development in three steps.

The first step explains how commons became a fundamental part of the economy and why users in Northern Scandinavia could exploit the new opportunities that commons provided. This part of the chapter discusses three geographical areas in Northern Scandinavia where user groups utilised different natural resources to produce commodities for self-sufficiency and trade.

The second step explores more closely how the changed and intensified use of CPRs came to alter peasants' lives and broadened their livelihoods to include a variety of income sources. The key concepts here are farm division and labour division. The chapter will show how farm division proceeded without loss of economic viability for the peasants. With more resources coming from outlying land, households' dependence on production from arable land was reduced and land fragmentation was not a problem. Labour division in animal husbandry, the backbone in the agrarian economy of Northern Scandinavia, made it possible to work on other tasks.

The third step explores how production on these small farms developed into a vibrant regional market with local specialisation and exchanges of commodities between parishes despite land fragmentation. Many of the resources used in the integrated economy depended on the commons. The focus here will be on Dalarna, a region in central upland Sweden. This part will discuss how the peasants' integrated economy was also connected to the global market by producing firewood and charcoal for mines and ironworks. With less arable land for each household, the region became more dependent on grain trade.

### **1. Expansion of the use of common-pool resources**

The vast forests and mountain areas in Northern Scandinavia have been utilised as commons since people settled the area thousands of years ago. However, in the early modern period, a new use of the commons emerged: large-scale utilisation with connections to the demands of state and global markets. This expansion ultimately led to all land, private and common, being used in the nineteenth century and was highly dependent on self-governance and collective action (J. Larsson 2016). In that sense, it was part of a European trend started in the medieval period when collective action was a characteristic feature of the peasant economy that peaked before the liberal reforms changed management to favour private property during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (de Moor 2015). In Northern Scandinavia, the commons were an essential part of the economy up to the late nineteenth century, when changes in production and property rights profoundly changed the society (J. Larsson 2009). Sami societies dependent on reindeer husbandry were the exception. New legislation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries declared Sami villages as legal entities for reindeer breeding, giving legal support to their CPR management (Lundmark 2006; Lantto 2012).

The expansion of the economy on common land started during the recovery from the medieval crises in the late fifteenth century and took off in the seventeenth century (Lindegren 2001; Söderberg and Myrdal 2002; Myrdal 2011; J. Larsson 2016). An expanding global market provided opportunities to change production using available resources that had been used in more limited ways before. Demands for iron, copper, cattle, butter, hides, tar, charcoal, and reindeer meat—commodities that could be extracted from or produced by using the wooded and mountainous upland areas in central and northern Scandinavia—fuelled the change. Looking closely at exports from Sweden during that time yields two striking facts (Lindegren 2001). First, exports from Sweden, to a large extent, were dependent on resources from CPRs; mining, ironwork, and forestry all depended on CPR resources, such as charcoal and firewood. Second, expanding exports profoundly changed management of many commons, as exemplified by four brief case studies of intensified production in three areas of Northern Scandinavia.

### ***1.1 Nomadic reindeer pastoralism***

The economy of the Mountain Sami society changed from an economy based mostly on hunting and fishing to an economy based on large-scale nomadic reindeer pastoralism, but the period in which this change occurred has been intensely debated (Hultblad 1968; Arell 1977; Lundmark 1982; Aronsson 1991; Marklund 2004; Bergman, Zachrisson, and Liedgren 2013). Scholars argue that the change took place within a span from the eight hundreds to the seventeenth century. Without going into the debate too deeply, there are good reasons to believe that a major change in the economy occurred during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and that this led to an expansion of nomadic reindeer herding in the mountainous parts of Lapponia, now Swedish Lapland.

Swedish historian Lennart Lundmark (1982) has forcefully argued that the change was rapid during the first decades of the seventeenth century. When a decline in fur trade coincided with the introduction of a new and burdensome tax, the pressure on Sami families became too great. The solution was a profound change in the Sami economy from hunter and gatherer with some draught animals and a few reindeer for milk production to large-scale reindeer herding. Lundmark has been heavily criticised for his view, and the sources are indeed difficult to interpret. Nevertheless, it remains clear that a shift in the economy occurred during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and by the end of the seventeenth century a fully developed nomadic reindeer pastoralism was in place. Written sources from the sixteenth century do not support that nomadic reindeer herding was practiced at that time, but studies of reindeer DNA reveal a distinct transformation from wild to domestic reindeer during the early modern period (Bjørnstad et al. 2012). The new economy was more labour intensive, but the yield was higher. Once a large-scale nomadic reindeer husbandry system had been introduced it was impossible to go back to a hunting and fishing economy with only a few domestic reindeer (Lundgren 1987). For more about an integrated Sami economy, see Eva-Lotta Päiviö's Chapter X.

### ***1.2 Tar distillation***

While the introduction of large-scale nomadic reindeer pastoralism has been debated, the introduction of large-scale tar distillation is a more straightforward story. In Ostrobothnia, western Finland, formerly part of Sweden, a remarkable increase in tar production for shipbuilding took place during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) (Villstrand 1992, 2000). The sharp increase would not have taken place if peasants had not been under pressure from

the state, which demanded taxes to continue and pay for the war and men to fight in the war. It was difficult to avoid conscription, but a man could pay someone else to take his place. However, the fee was determined by supply and demand, and it was a seller's market. To obtain money, one had to produce a commodity that was in demand, and the natural resources in Ostrobothnia were perfect for large-scale tar distillation. The vast pine forests provided raw material, a relatively flat landscape with streams, rivers, and lakes facilitated transport of the heavy product, and the cost of production consisted solely of the peasants' own labour. They self-organised and used the forest as commons. The demand for tar was high in Europe, and tar and pitch were established as the third most important Swedish export commodity after copper and iron. The more intense use of commons changed the economy for centuries to come, but tar distillation in Ostrobothnia began to disappear after 1870 when ships were increasingly built of metal instead of timber (Kuvaja 2001).

### ***1.3 Charcoal, firewood, and transhumance***

In northern central Sweden, use of the commons changed to produce charcoal and firewood and to support an emerging transhumance system. The sharp increase in production of copper and iron required large amounts of charcoal and firewood. Large-scale firewood production was a necessity for the mines, and charcoal was mostly used in ironworks. To obtain large amounts of firewood and charcoal, the state collected those products as part of its tax. In the region of Dalarna, which this chapter will examine more closely in section III, taxation previously based mainly on arable land and production of furs from squirrels changed in the 1580s and more radically in 1606. From the latter date onward, the tax could only be paid in charcoal and firewood (Ersgård 1997). Similar to tar distillation in Ostrobothnia, economic matters outside the local community became increasingly important in determining peasants' production. There was a reciprocal benefit between peasants and mine owners.

The sharp increase in firewood and charcoal production coincided with the establishment of an Alpine transhumance system (compared to Mediterranean transhumance), which in Sweden was called *fäbod* (*summer farms*) (Davies 1941; J. Larsson 2012). Peasants had started to establish summer farms in the early sixteenth century, but the system took off in the seventeenth century, and by the end of that century they were part of a vibrant agricultural system. The connection between charcoal and firewood production and expansion of the transhumance system stems from the large collection of resources. The forests were opened up and conditions for pasturing within the forests improved, which facilitated communication and made them safer places to work (J. Larsson 2016).

## **2. Common-pool resources and an integrated peasant economy**

How did the growing importance of CPRs link to an integrated peasant economy? The shift to a more intense use of CPRs coincided with the division of farms and farm labour, resulting in diversification of livelihoods. The commons, mainly woodlands, were providing more resources, which allowed farm division without losing economic power. To understand how farm division could be so dramatic, one has to look at how peasants organised their stockbreeding with its division of labour (see the next subsection for a detailed explanation of farm division). This section will look more closely at the development of an integrated

economy in north central Sweden, where charcoal and firewood production were important and a transhumance system developed.<sup>1</sup>

By expanding animal husbandry using the vast forests for grazing it was possible to increase the number of animals. Cows, sheep, and goats were the most common animals at farmsteads that were part of an agricultural system with summer farms. In earlier studies of how the numbers of animals changed over time, it is clear that areas with a transhumance system on commons differed from the plains, which had limited area to use as common land for grazing (Gadd 1983; Dahlström 2006; J. Larsson 2009, 2012). This pattern is observed in three parishes using an alpine transhumance system when comparing how the numbers of animals changed from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. During this time, CPRs were important for economic development and had a large impact on the organisation of production. Three main trends appeared in this development: growth in numbers of animals, farm division, and efficient use of labour.

First, the number of animals expanded greatly from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. The large increases in sheep and goats are striking: while the number of cows increased four to five times, the number of goats increased six to eleven times and the number of sheep increased even more, from seven to sixteen times. At the household level, the composition of the herd was transforming. During the sixteenth century, the cow was the most common species in the herd, followed by goat and sheep. In the mid-eighteenth and up to the mid-nineteenth century, sheep was the most common animal in a peasant's herd, followed by goats (J. Larsson 2009). This change in herd composition shows a closer connection between animal husbandry and market integration. Hides and wool had become important raw materials in occupations outside agriculture, and the large increase of goats and sheep was a huge factor in development of the integrated peasant economy in the area.

Second, farms in the region underwent widespread division among household members. It is important to note that farm division endured to the second half of the eighteenth century, at the same time the number of animals increased. By the mid-nineteenth century, the number of animals per farm had decreased, but not as rapidly as the size of the farm measured in taxation assessments. This means that the relative wealth held in livestock increased at the farm level. In 1851, the average farm in Klövsjö Parish in the region of Jämtland measured in tax was one third of its size in 1633. Its number of cows was unchanged but each farm had on average four times more sheep and almost three times more goats (J. Larsson 2009, 172, table 3:11). Counting animals per capita among the whole rural population, including landless people (who often owned animals), the number of animals was stable until the beginning of the nineteenth century. While a minor decrease of cows per capita is observed, the numbers of sheep and goats increased. During the nineteenth century, a rapid increase in population took place, resulting in an increase in number of households and a decrease in animals per capita, especially after 1850, when the number of goats and sheep decreased rapidly. However, during this era came the industrial breakthrough, around 1870, and the integrated peasant economy became more dependent on wage labour and forestry.

Third, the rapid growth of animal husbandry in the transhumance system was possible only because labour became more efficient. The key to understanding labour organisation at the

---

<sup>1</sup> Nomadic reindeer pastoralism will not be considered here, because its development differed substantially from agricultural development in Northern Scandinavia.

summer farms is to analyse labour division. A new organisation for animal husbandry emerged in early modern upland Scandinavia, where herding animals had been the work of men until the late Middle Ages, when women and children took over the task, except in Denmark. Milking animals and processing milk had always been women's work (Simonton 1998; Myrdal 2012). The summer farm system became efficient since women combined herding and milking, and all households using summer farms sent one woman each to work there for the summer. A recent study of Orsa Parish in Dalarna shows that at the end of the seventeenth century households commonly sent a daughter between the ages of 11 and 21 to the summer farm. However, many households did not have a daughter, or the daughter was not an appropriate age. The household's second choice was to send the wife or a close relative. However, 25 to 30 percent of the households did not have any of these options. They solved that by employing a maid for the summer, and a labour market among subsistence peasants developed. The maids were usually poor women from small households (J. Larsson 2014).

Since animal husbandry was the backbone in agricultural production in many areas where CPRs were important for the economy, a few things about its organisation must be stressed to understand how an integrated peasant economy could develop. First, all women over the age of 10 worked; 25 percent of them worked at summer farms each summer. This allowed the rest (75 percent of the women and all men) to do other tasks during the busy summer season (see also Netting 1981, 65). During the summer, many were busy collecting winter fodder for the animals, a task that was defining for alpine transhumance, and doing other agricultural chores. However, this change in labour division also opened up the possibility for working in non-agriculture jobs. Second, for animal husbandry to work, subsistent peasants needed to employ maids, thus creating a labour market to maintain the system. Hence, peasants were open to hiring people to maintain their household economy, as well as working outside the household to bring in money and other assets.

The final important aspect is that production itself at summer farms was part of the development of an integrated economy. Even though most of the products made at summer farms were used for subsistence, some of them, mostly butter, were sold at markets. More important, though, was the production of hides and wool, products that entered commerce in the forms of fabric, clothes, leather, blankets, etc. Section III provides more details.

## ***2.1 Settlement development and farm division***

Here we look more deeply into aspects of settlement development that affected the rise of a more integrated economy: first, the increase in specialised use of landscapes, and second, the connection between rapid farm division and forest resources.

During the seventeenth century, a structural change in landscape use occurred in Dalarna region, resulting in a more specialised landscape. The number of homesteads in villages in the central areas of each parish increased, while permanent settlements in more wooded areas were abandoned or decreased in number. At the same time, the settlements in central areas changed character. They went from a more scattered distribution of homesteads located in the infields to denser villages located in the transition from arable land to outlying land (Ersgård 1997). In the wooded areas, the abandoned settlements were replaced by many periodic settlements, summer farms. Arable land around former farmsteads was replaced by meadows and grazing land (Lange 1996; J. Larsson 2009, 2012). The more populated villages facilitated cooperation among households and became arenas for social and economic

collaborations in agriculture, animal husbandry, and secondary occupations (Ersgård 1997; Larsson 2009).

As discussed earlier, a larger proportion of resources for households came from CPRs during the seventeenth century compared to before. Thus, the households' dependence on arable land decreased and it became easier to divide the farms without losing economic viability. The forests' instrumental role in the rapid farm division and expansion of the economy was not unique to central Sweden. Lars-Olof Larsson (1989) has shown that the national and international demands for commodities from the Småland region in southern Sweden were dependent on forest products. Charcoal for ironworks, potash for making detergent and glass, and tar, pitch, mast tree, and oak timber for vessels were most important. Larsson points out that the period from 1500 to 1750 saw some new farmsteads, but was mainly characterised by rapid farm division, most pronounced in Småland's forest areas after 1600. This development was spurred by forestry's larger role in the peasant economy.

L.-O. Larsson (1983) argues that agriculture production from the 1550s to the 1620s kept pace with farm division according to a study of three regions in southeastern Sweden and that farm division was more common in the plains than in the forest regions. The rest of the seventeenth century saw a shift to more farm division in forest regions than in the plains. The farm division in the forest region was faster than the increase of agricultural production and is explained by the fact that forest products gained a larger share in the peasant economy. The farm division continued between 1700 and 1750 but at a slower pace. Larsson stresses that it is almost impossible to measure forest production's direct impact on the peasant household economy during the seventeenth century, but his impression is that income from forest production compensated losses in decreased agriculture production. An argument for that is that farm division did not lead to pauperisation.

In the three regions L.-O. Larsson (1983) examined, the number of farms increased 55 percent on average from 1627 to 1750, mostly by farm division. However, the differences between the areas are huge, and while the number of farms increased by 126 percent in Kumla, it increased by only 56 percent in Kinnevald, and it actually decreased by 6 percent in Valkebo. In Kumla, the number of farmsteads decreased by 20 percent within the following 100 years (Rosén 1994). This development was very typical for southern Sweden, where a process of amalgamation of farmsteads started in the mid-eighteenth century. Similar to the trend in Kumla, the number of farmsteads decreased in many places by around 20 percent (Winberg 1975; Olai 1983; Peterson 1989; Ulväng 2004).

The changes in the number of farmsteads in northern Sweden was quite different from the changes in the south, even though there were similarities, such as the extensive division of farms up to 1750 in both regions. In some regions, farm division was slower in the north, whereas it was more rapid in other northern regions. For example, the increase in farm division in Rättvik Parish in Dalarna was around 200 percent from early seventeenth century to 1750 (J. Larsson 2009). The large difference between southern and northern Sweden was due to the development of an integrated peasant economy after 1750. While farm amalgamation occurred in the south, farm division continued in the north.

The development after 1750 was characterized by an increase in population, a more intense use of natural resources, and an expanding agriculture production that utilised every corner of the landscape. This, in turn, created local and regional demands for commodities and tools.

At the same time, there was an external demand for products and services. Supply and demand were in place to create and develop an integrated peasant economy.

### **3. Local specialisation and market integration**

The expansion of this integrated peasant economy can be divided into two phases. In the first phase, up to the first half of the seventeenth century, a more intense use of the commons took place, and production of charcoal and firewood were important and expanded rapidly. This development coincided with the expansion of a transhumance system and more efficient and intensive agriculture production. In the second phase, the production of charcoal and firewood continued, but to protect the commons from overuse, access and withdraw rights had to be restricted, and the peasants developed institutions for management in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (J. Larsson 2016). The commons continued to play an important role by providing raw material for much of the secondary production, and peasants increased the production of tools and commodities for the market. To ease the burden on the commons and maintain household income, migration of labour increased considerably (Rosander 1967). At the community level, the agricultural economy continued to expand into the mid-nineteenth century, but at the household level, this expansion ended earlier and secondary occupations became a necessity. Traveling within and outside their regions to sell commodities or labour, the peasants brought home many things; most important were money and grain.

By looking more closely at Dalarna, we can see how this integration unfolded from the seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth century. The integrated peasant economy had certain features that made it vibrant and extremely important: (1) local specialisation; (2) commodities for a regional market; (3) labour and commodities for a national and Scandinavian market; and (4) a connection to the global market. Hence, products were diverse and included tools to facilitate agriculture production, commodities, clothing, construction, etc. In this section, I present a few examples of secondary production that illustrate the integrated peasant economy but do not provide a complete list of their market-oriented activities.

#### ***3.1 Tools for agriculture production***

The agricultural expansion in the area created a demand for tools for better management of arable, meadow, and pasture lands, as well as for animal husbandry. The secondary occupations that arose from that demand were often connected to favourable natural resources. One of these tools was the grindstone, for which Orsa Parish, north of Lake Siljan, became famous. The grindstones were mined from an open pit that was collectively owned by the villages, whose shares in the quarries were based on their shares of assessed taxes. As in many other activities in Dalarna, the users were organised in teams, and mining grindstones was performed as collective action. Grindstones were necessary to keep the scythes sharp when mowing hay and can be linked to the great increase in animals in the region and their demand for winter feed. But grindstones were also required for various agricultural tasks throughout the country, and during the winter season, peasants from Orsa travelled great distances to sell them. In exchange, they brought home grain, money, and other commodities (Hülphers 1762; Levander 1944; Linné 1984).

Sharpening stones or whetstones were also in demand for honing scythes. Transtrand Parish in western Dalarna stands out for production of sharpening stones. These stones were mined on common land in the mountains and were sold at markets far from Transtrand. This trade



impacted the peasant economy, and in many villages all peasants were involved in production (Levander 1944; J. Larsson 1989).

Production of millstones is known to have occurred in only a few places in Dalarna, most prominently in Malung Parish in the west. The mines were located on common land but each pit was individually owned and was inherited like other immovable property. The millstones were sold at regional markets as well as in other nearby regions such as Värmland in west central Sweden (Hülphers 1762; Levander 1944).

Early modern Scandinavian agriculture required iron tools, and a regional specialisation took place in Älvdalen and Lima parishes, where peasants produced scythes, spikes, horse shoes, axes, spades, and other items. In his journey through Dalarna in 1734, Linneus noted that peasants in Lima travelled to 'faraway' places to trade their sythes. In exchange, they got grain; one scythe was worth 1/8 barrel or 20 litres of grain (Pettersson 1982; Linné 1984). Abraham Hülphers (1762) is more specific and points out that most scythes were sold in Norway and nearby Hälsingland region, but also within Dalarna. An account from 1764 mentioned by Levander (1944) and Pettersson (1982) estimated that Lima produced 7,000–8,000 dozen scythes and that two-thirds of the iron in these parishes was used for scythes. The same account mentions that 200 people from Lima Parish went to Grundset market in Norway to trade scythes. The iron for the scythes was smelted from bog iron and, according to Hülphers (1762), scythe production in Lima was so high they had to buy iron from neighbouring Särna Parish.

### **3.2 Woodwork**

The area northwest of Lake Siljan became well known for its woodwork. Wooden containers were used in all households for many purposes: farming, animal husbandry, and domestic work. In Venjan, Mora, and parts of Älvdalen parishes, wooden containers were made for the market. The raw material came from pine trees from the commons, and eighteenth-century authors lamented that the peasants used a very small part of the tree for wood containers and left the rest of it to rot. During the winter season, some of the peasants travelled to sell the containers and returned with grain (Hülphers 1762; Levander 1944). Regional centres of specialisation in woodcraft emerged as the peasants developed special tools that made their products more efficiently. Parish residents benefited from the collective knowledge of producing certain commodities. For example, the production of reeds for weaving existed only in a small area of upper Dalarna. Some villages in this region did not produce the entire reed; they made the dents (teeth) and sold them to reed makers (Levander 1944). Production of large rowing boats with eight to ten pairs of oars for transportation to the local church were made at Sollerön in Mora Parish, and rowing boats sold to neighbouring parishes were made in Transtrand (Hülphers 1762).

### **3.3 Clothes and hides**

Early modern society demanded more clothing. The raw material usually came from animals that grazed the commons during summer. Sheep delivered wool for making fabric and skins, and goats produced leather and hair used to make strong and long-lasting garments, such as socks and mittens. Hides and wool were part of the commercial market, and traditional clothing made partly from leather and hides from goats were popular (Odstedt 1953). While we do not know much about this market integration or the importance of traditional clothing

in the integrated peasant economy of Dalarna, we do know a lot about the specialisation that took place in Malung Parish.

Malung Parish became a hub for production of hides, leather, and furs during the early modern period and continued into the twentieth century to be a vibrant centre for these products. Although production took place within Malung, it was more common during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for teams of tanners to travel to different districts where they performed their work in customers' households. Many teams worked in populated areas and fewer worked in less populated areas. There were no formal rules regarding which district a team could work in or finite borders for these districts, but informal rules were established that made it possible for a team to work in the same district and with the same customers year after year. The district belonged to the team master and could be inherited from father to son. They received informal 'property rights' to these districts, and a team could have a monopoly in a district. Sometimes tanners competed with each other by bidding a lower price. However, this practice was not well regarded (Matsson 1976).

The teams from Malung combined the skill of tanning with the skill of making clothes and other commodities from hides and furs, such as fleece blankets. The connection between the increase of sheep and an integrated peasant economy becomes clear when analysing how many sheep blanket production required. To make the most common fleece blanket, a two-person blanket, they needed the skins from six sheep. Most household members had their own blankets, and a wealthy household had fleece blankets for guests. In fact, households manifested their wealth by the number of fleece blankets they had and often displayed them in the home. Additional bedding was required, and the tanners from Malung also made sheets and pillow cases out of hides. Many other commodities and garments were also made from hides, such as sacks for flour, jackets, and other fur clothing (Matsson 1976).

The exclusive districts where skimmers and tanners worked were scattered over a large area covering most of central Sweden and part of Norway. Hülphers (1762) wrote that three to four hundred people left Malung Parish with the teams every year in the fall and did not return until spring, when they would grow crops. They received money for their work, but payments could also be in kind as well as hides they brought back to complete and sell. The teams consisted of a master, farmhands, apprentices, and boys.

### ***3.4 Firewood, charcoal, and transportation***

Before 1750, charcoal and firewood production was the main activity outside agriculture in many parishes. This production was more pronounced in areas closer to the intense mining and ironwork area called Bergslagen and the large copper mountain in Falun. In some ways, production continued into the twentieth century. The parishes of Järna, Nås, and Floda along Västerdal River (Västerdalälven) produced an enormous amount of firewood for the mine in Falun. Trees were cut down during winter, then taken by streams to Västerdal River and floated to Falun in the spring. Charcoal, on the other hand, was most commonly transported on land by sledges in the winter. It was also possible to put the charcoal on rafts and transport by river to Tuna, where it was unloaded for further transport to Falun (Hülphers 1762).

The peasants also worked in transportation and charcoal production outside their home parishes. Peasants from Gagnef Parish went to the southern part of Dalarna, around Ludvika, to make charcoal and do transportation work at the iron works. Peasants from Leksand Parish travelled during winter to ironworks and mines for transportation work. At the mine in Falun,

they also chopped wood and produced charcoal (Hülphers 1762). Peasants in Rättvik Parish received cash for transporting ore between mines and ironworks in neighbouring parishes, but also went further south. All secondary occupations in Ore Parish stayed within the parish, according to Hülphers (1762). In Ore, they had lime kilns and sold lime to the region of Hälsingland. They also produced charcoal and worked in transportation at the Furudal ironworks, located in the parish.

### ***3.5 Migration of labour***

To protect the commons from overuse, to increase cash incomes in the peasants' households, and to bring home grain, migration of labour became important. The earliest account of labour migration from Dalarna dates back to the sixteenth century and involved people working at the copper mine in Falun. However, migration of labour first became an important income source for peasants in the region during the eighteenth century and evolved to be an intrinsic part of the peasant economy during the nineteenth century. The increasing importance of labour migration coincided with the period when expansion of the agricultural economy was no longer possible and a sharp increase in population took place. The migration further diversified the household income in a time when the use of commons had reached its limit. Until 1800, migrant labourers were mostly men, but during the nineteenth century more and more women participated. By the end of the century, mostly women migrated on a seasonal basis. Men had started to find work in forestry in their home parishes (Rosander 1967).

Up to the nineteenth century, migration of labour was rooted in activities performed in the home parish and was a result of skills peasants already had. This could be agricultural work, where peasants from Dalarna were well known for clearing land, ditch digging, etc. Migration of labour also included chopping wood and constructing buildings; a few peasants were skilled decorative painters and carpenters (Rosander 1967). Many of the occupations mentioned earlier, such as production of hides, were also part of the labour migration. Households in different areas became known and sought out for specific skills. The peasants migrated to workplaces with people from the same area and maintained close social ties.

In the nineteenth century, migration of labour became a hallmark for Dalarna. Men continued to migrate to work, but were now joined by a large number of women. Women's migration was not rooted in the occupations they had in their home parishes to the same extent the men's was. Examples of women's work include gardening, rowing (e.g., small passenger boats in Stockholm), brewing beer, and candle making in factories. While men worked in occupations that had been around for a long time, women found work in emerging industries. Women worked and stayed with women from their home parish. It was easy to recognise them, because they wore traditional clothing unique to each parish in Dalarna.

## **Conclusion**

It is clear that peasants in the region of Dalarna created an integrated economy as defined by Panjek (2015). It was an economy in which households made their living by combining agriculture and market-oriented activities, and the latter clearly represented a substantial part of their income. The peasants had activities in all three economic sectors: primary, secondary, and tertiary. They were active players in this development, and local specialisations produced and traded commodities, tools, and equipment. They were also consumers and brought home commodities from their trade journeys. These non-agriculture sources of income created a

complex and comprehensive economic strategy. In the creation of an integrated peasant economy in Dalarna, the commons came to play a vital role.

## **Final remarks**

In this chapter, I have described how corporate, collective actions developed concomitantly in a rural setting. In particular, the case study of Dalarna demonstrates how labour specialisation, including migration of labour and intensified use of commons, developed as the peasant economy diversified and became increasingly integrated. Taking a closer look at how agriculture, including animal husbandry, and market-oriented activities were organised, it is apparent that collective management was important in both and that these activities built on each other. The market-oriented occupations were often regional or local specialisations where households worked together in teams. Producers from a certain area could also divide the market among its members, as in the case of hide skimmers and tanners from Malung Parish. Similar to the silent revolution in medieval Western Europe (de Moor 2009), institutions for governance of CPRs and labour specialisations emerged at the same time. This highlights the connection between peasants' commons and market-oriented activities in early modern Dalarna.

## **Acknowledgments**

This chapter is part of the project Self-Governing and Globalization funded by the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities. Thanks to freelance editor Joanna Broderick.