Intergenerational Effects of Wealth Confiscation: Evidence from Sweden's Great Reduction of 1680*

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Abstract

This paper examines the intergenerational effects of the Great Reduction of 1680 in Sweden. During this episode, the Crown confiscated about half of all noble estates, marking the largest wealth redistribution in Swedish history. Despite its prominence in historical accounts, the long-run economic effects remain unquantified. We address this gap by providing causal evidence on how the large-scale confiscation affected wealth and elite status among affected families. Using a novel dataset constructed by linking noble genealogies to detailed landholdings across Sweden, Finland, and the Baltic provinces from the 16th to 20th centuries, we exploit quasi-exogenous variation in which families were subject to confiscations to estimate short- and long-run effects on wealth, human capital, and status. We find persistent effects of the Great Reduction on wealth: up to five generations later, descendants of affected families hold significantly fewer manors than comparable nobles, implying stronger persistence than standard intergenerational correlations suggest. In contrast, we find no meaningful effects on broader socioeconomic outcomes, such as demographic traits, military careers, marriage patterns, or human capital, indicating that the long-run impact operated primarily through wealth rather than lasting changes in social status.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Historical upheavals such as the French Revolution, the Dissolution of the Monasteries during the English Reformation, and the Oprichnina under Ivan the Terrible in Russia often dismantle existing social structures, with elites bearing much of the disruption. Yet elite families show remarkable resilience, maintaining status and influence across generations. This persistence is reflected in the long run prominence of elite surnames and in the continued social standing of elite lineages even after transformative events such as the Chinese Communist Revolution (Clark, 2014; Alesina et al., 2020).

Estimating the persistence of elite advantage across generations is difficult because it requires two ingredients that rarely coexist: quasi-random variation in family resources and genealogical data that follow descendants over many generations. We overcome this challenge by studying the Great Reduction of 1680, one of the largest asset confiscations in Swedish history. The Reduction generated a large shock to noble wealth, while newly digitized genealogical data allow us to trace affected families and their descendants over three centuries. Linking these genealogies to detailed biographical information and manor ownership records, we estimate how strongly ancestral wealth shapes descendants' wealth and broader socioeconomic status.

In seventeenth-century Sweden, the Crown financed its military campaigns by granting fiefs to the nobility in return for military service. In 1680, however, King Charles XI staged a royal coup that abruptly ended this system of enfeoffment. Through the subsequent Great Reduction, Charles XI, with support from the peasantry, clergy, and burgher estates, confiscated roughly half of the nobility's land and dismantled both parliament and the Privy Council. This reform led to a dramatic shift in land distribution. The nobility's share of land ownership fell from 65 percent in 1655 to 33 percent by 1700, while Crown and freeholder lands expanded.

We construct a new dataset covering the universe of noble individuals in Sweden from roughly 1600 to 1900, which we link to detailed records of manorial holdings. Drawing on genealogical sources, we combine large language models with extensive manual work to extract biographical information, including information on birth, death, education, occupation, and marriage patterns. Unlike studies that infer persistence from shared surnames (e.g., Barone and Mocetti, 2021), our data record exact genealogical links, allowing us to follow individuals and their wealth across several centuries with unusual precision.

We find substantial and persistent intergenerational effects of the Great Reduction on wealth. Up to five generations later, descendants of those affected hold fewer manors

relative to otherwise comparable individuals. These findings are robust across specifications that vary the controls, sample restrictions, and treatment definition. We benchmark our estimates against the effects implied by conventional intergenerational correlations and find effects on descendant wealth that exceed these predictions, suggesting that such correlations understate how strongly wealth in one generation predicts wealth in later generations. We find virtually no effects along broader socioeconomic dimensions, measured using a range of variables capturing demographic characteristics, military careers, marriage outcomes, and human capital. We probe this result in two ways. First, we show that wealth co-varies with these broader socioeconomic outcomes. Second, we consider an alternative treatment, belonging to the political elite during the period of the Great Reduction, and find that descendants of these families were much more likely to hold high-status administrative and political offices. Taken together, these exercises indicate that the outcomes capture meaningful dimensions of socioeconomic status beyond wealth. The absence of effects on these outcomes therefore suggests that the long-run consequences of the Reduction were concentrated in landed wealth, rather than reflected in broader changes in career paths, marriage patterns, or social status.

Related Literature Our study speaks to the same broad question through two complementary literatures. The first studies the intergenerational consequences of wealth shocks among elite families (Bleakley and Ferrie, 2016; Ager et al., 2021; Alesina et al., 2020; Shiu and Keller, 2025). Relative to this work, we directly observe wealth in descendant generations rather than relying on wealth proxies or status markers. In addition, our census-like data allow us to examine adjustment along other margins, by tracing how affected families adapt in terms of occupational choices and marital patterns.

The second studies intergenerational mobility across multiple centuries (Barone and Mocetti, 2021; Clark, 2014). Like us, this literature is concerned with the persistence of elite status, but it typically relies on descriptive correlations in status markers such as surnames. We complement this work by combining a quasi-exogenous wealth shock with precise genealogical links across multiple centuries. This allows us to quantify the extent to which inequality is transmitted across generations and to ask whether long-run status correlations reflect parent-child transmission, broader group-level factors, or the causal persistence of family wealth.

We also revisit the literature on the economic history of the Great Reduction and the Swedish nobility (Svedelius, 1849–1851; Heckscher, 1935–1936; Ågren, 1976; Prytz, 2013; Bengtsson et al., 2019). Our data allow us to study the rise and decline of the nobility

during the early modern period and its role in the dissolution of the medieval political order in Sweden. Historians have long viewed the Great Reduction as a central event in Swedish history, but its social and economic consequences remain difficult to assess. Indeed, Ågren (1976) notes that, despite their presumed importance, the social and economic consequences of the Reduction had not been systematically assessed, including how it weakened the economic position of the elite.

Outline The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides historical background. Section 3 describes the datasets and sources. Section 4 details the empirical strategy and presents results on the effects of the Great Reduction among the generation whose manors were confiscated. Section 5 documents the results on intergenerational effects among descendants of affected individuals. Section 6 concludes.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Land Grants to Nobles Before the Great Reduction

During the 17th century, Sweden emerged as one of the dominant powers in Europe. The country engaged in significant military campaigns against Russia and the Holy Roman Empire during the Thirty Years' War and successfully conquered important territories, including lands that had previously been under the control of Denmark—Sweden's long-standing rival. To a large extent, warfare was funded by granting fiefs to the nobility in exchange for their allegiance and commitment to provide military support to the Crown (Prytz, 2013, p. 67). Granting fiefs in exchange for a modest monetary payment allowed the Crown to convert in-kind revenues from Crown lands into liquid assets—while also reflecting the belief that the nobility were better than the Crown at managing agricultural estates and raising long-run revenues (Nilsson, 1958, p. 72). This politics of enfeoffment caused the share of land owned by the nobility to double, from approximately 30% to 60%, between 1570 and 1650.

These transfers continued into the mid-seventeenth century, when weak royal authority further strengthened the nobility's position. Queen Christina, who abdicated and converted to Catholicism in 1655, showed little interest in pursuing a more restrained enfeoffment policy. As the Swedish economic historian Eli Heckscher observed:

> Thus, the government of Gustavus Adolphus, Christina's guardians, and above

> all Christina's own rule had, in essence, altered both the position of the Crown, the nobility, and the peasants. One had ended up with a drained state treasury, a ruling, feudally thinking nobility, and a peasant estate that, in a fundamental respect, had ceased to be self-owning. (Heckscher, 1943, authors' translation)

Charles XI became king at the age of five in 1660, and his reign began under a regency that lasted until 1672. This period was characterized by continued grants of fiefs to the nobility, as leading nobles used their control over the Crown during Charles XI's minority to secure material gains (Ågren, 1976, pp. 55–56). Figure 1 displays the number manor alienated and families ennobled across time. The number of manors alienated started increasing already in the late 16th century when Erik XIV established countships (*grevskap*) and baronies (*friherreskap*) that were granted to the old nobility. Sweden's entry into the Thirty Years' War marked a sharp expansion in the number of noble families, a pattern that reappeared during the Great Northern War (1700–1721). In both periods, ennoblement was closely tied to military service, as commissioned officer positions were effectively reserved for nobles. However, many individuals ennobled during the later war years received noble status primarily as a title, without accompanying land endowments.

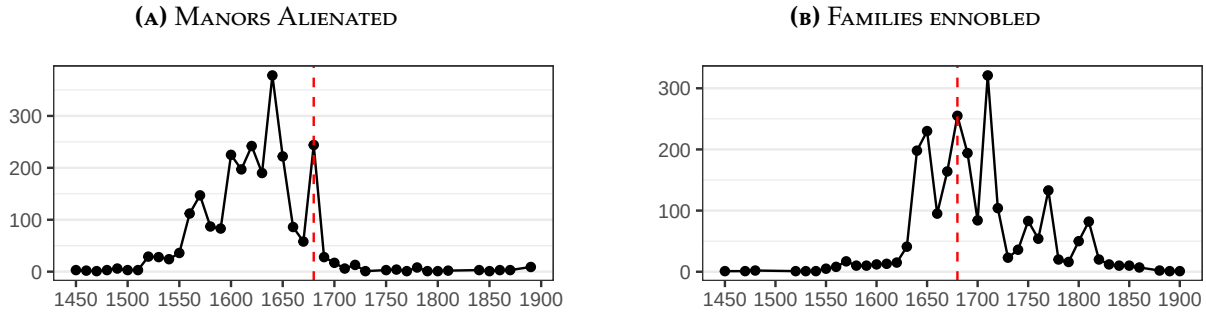

Figure 1: Transfer of Economic and Political Power

Notes: Panel A shows the decadal number of fiefs granted. Panel B shows the decadal number of families ennobled. Dashed vertical lines at the 1680s marks the beginning of the Great Reduction. Data from Ulväng (2024) and Elgenstierna (1925–1936).

2.2 The Great Reduction of 1680

Reclaiming alienated fiefs to improve state finances had been discussed since the 1640s, and there had also been earlier attempts by the Crown to reclaim such estates. In 1655, the three non-noble estates allied with King Charles X and decided on a smaller predecessor

to the Great Reduction. It was clear that those who had benefited most from the politics of enfeoffment were to bear the main burden of restoring state finances. The question was whether this should occur through confiscation or through higher taxes and the removal of tax exemptions (Nilsson, 1958). Opponents argued that a reduction would place an unfair burden on a small number of individuals, while proponents maintained that it would fall precisely on those who had benefited disproportionately from earlier enfeoffments. In fact, a majority of representatives in the noble estate supported the Great Reduction. To a large extent, this support reflected that the reform was accompanied by changes to the military system, which reduced the nobility's obligation to participate in future wars.

The issue was finally settled in 1680, when the monarchy had become strong enough to undertake a large-scale recovery of estates that had been donated or sold at deep discounts to the nobility over the preceding decades. With support from the lower nobility and freeholders, Charles XI successfully implemented the Great Reduction through the Riksdag of the Estates, decisively ending the growing power of the nobility. The essence of the bill was that properties granted in fief during the previous century should be returned to the Crown. Notably, the rules did not formally target particular families, although they emerged from fierce political conflict and negotiation within the Riksdag.

The Reduction implied that the surplus, the feudal rent, accrued to the Crown rather than to feudal lords from the point at which a farm was confiscated. How much this flow of income to the Crown increased as a result of the Great Reduction is to large extent unknown. To the best of our knowledge, Svedelius (1849–1851) remains the most comprehensive attempt at quantifying the scope of the Great Reduction and the revenues it generated. Svedelius estimates that the Great Reduction brought in an annual 1.6 million *daler silvermynt*. A back-of-the-envelope calculation would suggest that this amounts to 3% of GDP at the time. The bill targeted specific categories of property, most importantly all fiefs in newly conquered territories, which accounted for the largest share of Svedelius's estimated revenues, but also allodial donations and countships and baronies. The manors we study are likely concentrated in the latter two categories.[1] By 1700, the nobility had lost almost half of the land that they owned by the 1650s (from around 65% to around 33%).

Svedelius (1849–1851) describes the Great Reduction as an extensive administrative investigation. The commission sat in Stockholm but relied on governors in the counties to compile lists of estates (Svedelius, 1849–1851, p. 251–252). In practice, decisions were made case by case and often depended on what evidence could be assembled. Deeds and older land records were frequently missing or scattered across offices and private hands,

[1]See Table B.1 for the types of confiscated properties.

sometimes even abroad, forcing ad hoc searches. As a result, outcomes could hinge as much on the availability of records as on the formal rules. Svedelius writes:

> But with the allodial donations, the same situation arose as with the Norrköping resolution estates, namely that some had been transferred through purchase from man to man. [...] The Reduction Commission did not know where to find the sellers, nor whether they still owned the estates, how large they were, or where they were located. (Svedelius, 1849–1851, pp. 253–255, authors' translation)

Table 1 reports the distribution of land across cadastral categories at selected dates from the early sixteenth to the late nineteenth century, based on cadastral registers as compiled in prior work. The figures should be interpreted as best-available approximations, but they suggest a pronounced rise in the noble share during the seventeenth century, from about 23 percent in 1560 to roughly 65 percent by 1655, followed by a sharp decline to around one-third by 1700, consistent with the timing of the Great Reduction. From 1700 onward, the noble share appears broadly stable in the aggregate. Nor is there much to suggest large redistribution within the nobility.

Table 1—Distribution of Land

	Cadastral Category			
	Noble	Ecclesiastical*	Crown	Freehold
1520	25	25	6	45
1560	23		30	47
1655	65†			
1700	33		35	32
1750	33			
1825	33		13	54
1878	32		8	60

Notes: *Ecclesiastical land is Crown land after the Reduction of Gustav I of Sweden. †Refers to the nobility's right to tax and collect revenue. Data for 1520 and 1655 from Myrdal (1996), and data for 1560, 1700, 1750, 1825, and 1878 from Gadd (2020).

2.3 Aftermath and Shifting Regimes

Noble families appealed the confiscation decisions well into the eighteenth century, highlighting that the Great Reduction constituted a substantial financial shock rather than merely a change of ownership on paper. These petitions typically invoked long possession, prior investment in land, and compliance with established legal norms, such as vigilance in defending rights and the responsible management of estates. Although the overall success of such appeals is largely unknown, they illustrate how the Great Reduction was contested in both legal and moral terms (Prytz, 2013, pp. 205–208).

The Great Reduction coincided with major institutional changes in political governance. In 1680, the Privy Council was dissolved and replaced by the Royal Council (*kungliga rådet*). Unlike its predecessor, the Royal Council assumed a more restricted role, serving only to provide counsel when requested by the king. These institutional changes were also reflected in the composition of political elites. A handful of individuals were dismissed from the privy council in direct relation to the Great Reduction. In Figure A.4 we display the tenures of privy council members between 1600 and 1800. Red lines represent individuals directly affected by the Great Reduction, while light red lines denote their descendants and ancestors. Before 1680, a large share of council members belonged to a small number of lineages that would later be affected by the Great Reduction; after 1680, only a few members came from families that had previously dominated the council. This pattern highlights a shift from what some historians refer to as a "Privy Council aristocracy" toward a more inclusive political system.

The nobility enjoyed only limited political rights up until 1719. The losses of the Great Northern War, the death of King Charles XII, and the uncertain succession that followed marked another critical juncture. Absolutism ended abruptly, and the nobility once again gained a more substantial role in political decision-making through the estate parliament and the privy council, a position it would retain until 1772.

One potential complication for our analysis concerns property rights in the post-Reduction period, since differential post-Reduction property regimes could affect the interpretation of our results if descendants of affected families faced less secure property rights than those not affected. The Great Reduction applied to fiefs that had been granted under different ownership conditions. For example, allodial property and baronies could freely be transferred to a son, whereas fiefs under the Norrköping decree faced greater restrictions. In general, the fiefs that were confiscated during the Great Reduction likely had more secure property rights than fiefs that were not confiscated. However, after

the Great Reduction, property rights across different estates stabilized. The abolition of countships and the Noble Rights Act of 1723 introduced more standardized conditions governing the transfer and alienation of property.

3. DATA

Nobility The House of Nobility (*Riddarhuset*) maintained detailed handwritten family trees of the entire Swedish nobility.[2] These records formed the basis for the extensive work done by the Swedish genealogist Gustaf Elgenstierna (1871–1948). Expanding upon the original family trees, Elgenstierna (1925–1936) incorporated comprehensive biographical details, drawing on the seminal work of Anrep (1858–1864) and a wide range of primary sources, including church records, university registries, and military archives. The House of Nobility OCR-scanned Elgenstierna's work in the 1990s, and a private crowdsourced initiative made it available online in the early 2000s (Adelsvapen, 2015).[3] This online version serves as our data source.[4]

Processing the structured biographical text in Adelsvapen (2015), we compile a dataset of over 116,000 individuals from 2,897 families introduced to the House. For each title-holding father (men alive in the 1600s and later, following the agnatic tradition), the source provides detailed biographies.[5] From these biographies, we extract key variables such as names,

[2]The Swedish nobility consisted of families formally introduced to the House of Nobility. Until the dissolution of the Riksdag of the Estates in 1866, only members of these introduced families held political rights and representation there. The unintroduced nobility, meaning those granted titles after 1748 without introduction and noble immigrants who became citizens without introduction, did not enjoy these rights. Each introduced family was represented in the Estate Parliament by its head, typically the eldest son. In the 1700s, disputes over this position became common. Consequently, the House required families to submit genealogies for verification. This requirement is a major reason why the genealogical records we use exist today.

[3]Figure C.4 shows an example family tree from Elgenstierna (1925–1936). The corresponding entry in Adelsvapen (2015) appears in Figure C.5.

[4]There are issues with using Adelsvapen (2015) that need to be highlighted. First, modern genealogists have shown that Elgenstierna (1925–1936) contains numerous errors, particularly incorrect dates and missing individuals; many of these were addressed in two supplementary volumes published in 2008 (Elgenstierna, 2008). Second, the OCR process introduced typographical errors into the extracted text (Lundholm, 2019). Third, information added by private contributors to the online database may contain inaccuracies. An updated edition of Elgenstierna (1925–1936), incorporating the 2008 supplements and additional work by the chief genealogist at the House of Nobility and research assistants, is scheduled for release in 2026. We will update our dataset once this edition becomes available.

[5]Thus, families drop out of the data only when a male heir has no known sons.

birth year, occupation, education, partner, and death places using regular expressions and large language models. This information extraction is a key component of our dataset and we provide an in-depth description of the extraction in Appendix C.4 and a description of the variables that we construct based on the text in Appendix C.5.

A key contribution of the dataset is the construction of father–son links for all individuals for whom a father can be identified. These links are established both within noble families and across families when fathers and sons belong to different noble families. We recover these relationships using regular naming and formatting conventions in Adelsvapen (2015), complemented by extensive manual cleaning and verification.

Manors Economic historian Ulväng (2024) has compiled the most extensive database of historical manors (*herrgårdar*) in Sweden and Finland, drawing on a wide range of primary and secondary sources.[6] It covers all properties ever classified as manors and their ownership chains, using a broad definition that includes manor houses, manor and estate farms, seat farms, estates, fiefs, and castles. The definition captures all the major types of properties owned by the landed nobility but overlooks the smaller or less significant farms (*strögårdar*) that are also part of their holdings. Thus, data on a specific farmhouse may only be included if the recorded manor originally began as a simple farmhouse or was later converted into one.[7]

By scraping this online resource, we compile a dataset of 15,719 manors in Sweden and Finland, spanning the Middle Ages to the 20th century. The full panel dataset contains 130,167 property-event records, each with a specific name and location, with at least one event identifying the property as a manor at some point in time. Events record the start of ownership and include details such as the start year; property type; land registry type (e.g., if registered as noble or Crown land); ownership type (tenant or de facto owner); transaction type (e.g., if the manor has been transferred by inheritance or enfeoffment); owner's name and title; and the name and title of the owner's partner. An example of the manor *Läckö* in West Gothland, Sweden is displayed in Figure C.6.

We supplement this source with a comparable database, Europeana Heraldica, assembled from the holdings of the Finnish National Archives. The database records estates held by prominent noble families across Finland, Karelia (today part of the Republic of Karelia),

[6]The database is available at https://www.svenskaherrgardar.se/. Its contents and construction are described in Ulväng (2023).

[7]A collection of smaller or less significant farms has been entered into the database by Ulväng (2024), though it remains far from comprehensive.

and Ingria (today part of Leningrad Oblast).[8] The Finnish database contain 3,071 manors and 15,675 property-event records.

We merge the Swedish and Finnish databases, removing duplicate farms identified by name, to obtain 140,689 property-event records covering 17,996 manors.

The Great Reduction Our database on manors allows us to classify a manor as seized in the Great Reduction if it was recorded as confiscated by the Crown between 1680 and 1717.[9] We then manually link the last observed owners of seized manors to nobles. Using these links, we classify a noble as affected by the Great Reduction if they were the last observed owner of a manor seized during the Great Reduction and held the manor after 1640. This yields a set of nobles inferred to have been affected by the Great Reduction. We describe the manual linking in detail in Appendix C.1.

The main data challenge of this paper is ensuring that the inferred set of affected nobles aligns with those actually affected by the Great Reduction. To assess the accuracy of our classification, we consult a wide range of primary sources. These materials are limited, difficult to access, and often ambiguous; the full scope of the Great Reduction remains imperfectly documented. Nonetheless, they represent the most authoritative accounts available prior to our own reconstruction.

While our approach extends and improves on Svedelius (1849–1851), measurement remains complicated by negotiations between fief-holders and the Crown. In some cases, families successfully challenged decisions by the Reduction Commission by exchanging smaller, less significant farms, likely unregistered by Ulväng (2024), to prevent the confiscation of their manors (Prytz, 2013).

However, a few back-of-the-envelope calculations can provide a rough sense of our ability to detect those affected by the Great Reduction. First, Ulväng (2024) includes all manors classified in Almquist (1931–1976).[10] The underlying source material in Almquist (1931–1976) provides a comprehensive overview of manorial holdings in Sweden from the 16th to early 18th century over a significant geographical area, as shown in Figure A.3. This region represents approximately 41% of the total taxable land (*mantal*) in Sweden around

[8]The Finish database is available at https://heraldica.kansallisarkisto.fi/index.html?lang=en

[9]Nearly all confiscations occurred within the first decade, although the reduction process formally continued until 1717, when the reduction commissions were dissolved. The policy determining which manors were to be confiscated did not change with Charles XII's accession in 1697, but the process slowed as the Great Northern War (1700–1721) intensified.

[10]Email correspondence with Göran Ulväng, 29 January 2025.

1700.[11] Furthermore, roughly 52% of the total monetary value of the manorial holdings in Sweden confiscated in the Great Reduction occurred within this region.[12]

Manors of the Nobility To measure wealth among the nobility over time, we link individuals in our database of the nobility of Sweden to owners of manors in our database of manors in Sweden and Finland as combined from Ulväng (2024), compiled from Ulväng (2024) and the Finnish Europeana Heraldica. The linking procedure is done using full names with harmonized versions of last names (i.e., similar surnames are assigned a canonical form), while blocking on the first letter of the first name, and whether the individual was alive at the start of ownership. For manor posts that match multiple individuals with similar name string distances, we use a large language model to incorporate richer contextual information, such as details about spouses, to identify the correct noble owner.

To evaluate the quality of the matching procedure, we use the 772 manually matched "reduction-entries" that we use to identify individuals who had manors confiscated.[13]

Figure C.1 displays how the matching procedure performs for different candidate blocking conditions as well as different string distance threshold in terms of recall (the share of true matches successfully recovered) and precision (the share of proposed matches that are correct). we pick the string distance threshold that maximizes the harmonic mean of recall and precision—F1. In Figure C.2, we trace out the recall-precision trade-off for the chosen blocking conditions and show how the performance increases after using an LLM to discriminate between candidate matches with similar string distance.

Our preferred matching method achieves a recall rate of 72% and a precision of 89% among the manually matched entries.[14] The linking procedure is described in further detail in Appendix C.2. Summary statistics for the resulting linked sample is presented in Table B.2. Overall, 23,850 noble individuals (20.4%) are matched to at least one manor, and 60,456 property-event records (43%) are linked to noble individuals.

[11] Calculation based on Table 3 and 5 in Gadd (2020).

[12] Calculation based on county-level estimates in Svedelius (1849–1851).

[13] We focus on these 772 entries for practical reasons rather than drawing a random sample. Because these manors were owned by more prominent individuals, about whom more biographical information is available, the matching procedure is likely to perform somewhat better for this group than it would for a random set of entries.

[14] Although our setting differs, a useful benchmark is linkage across adjacent full-count U.S. censuses. In Price et al. (2021), linking 1900–1910 and 1910–1920 yields match rates of about 68–71%, with a precision of around 88%, very close to our numbers.

Other We construct a measure of political influence by manually matching Privy Council members to our dataset using Lewenhaupt (1962), identifying 368 members of the nobility who served as members of the privy council between 1600 and 1791.

4. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

4.1 Empirical Strategy

To estimate the effects of the Great Reduction, we use a selection-on-observables design and estimate the following model:

$$y_{ilg} = \beta \, \text{Confiscated}_{il} + \boldsymbol{\gamma}' \boldsymbol{X}_{ilg} + \epsilon_{ilg}. \tag{1}$$

Here, y_{ilg} denotes the percentile rank of noble i in lineage l and generation g in the wealth distribution, defined as the distribution of the number of manors held among nobles of the same generation and birth decade.[15] Generation g of i is defined relative to the index father (with $g = 0$), where the index father is the last-born ancestor of i who was alive during the Great Reduction and is either affected or unaffected by confiscation. $\text{Confiscated}_{il} = 1$ if i in lineage l has an index father who owned at least one manor confiscated during the Great Reduction, and zero otherwise. $\boldsymbol{X}_{ilg}$ is a vector of controls. We use a binary indicator rather than the number of confiscated manors, as the latter is measured with greater error. The specification compares outcomes between affected and unaffected nobles, capturing both direct exposure and indirect exposure through intergenerational links to affected ancestors. Standard errors are clustered at the lineage level.

Our sample includes 1,086 of 2,850 index fathers for whom a father and at least one child can be observed. Only 140 are affected by confiscation. Among the 897 observed fathers of index fathers (index grandfathers), only 40 link both an affected and an unaffected index father. This limited overlap rules out a difference-in-differences style design with index-grandfather fixed effects. Within-index-grandfather variation is too limited to deliver meaningful statistical power. We therefore control parametrically for grandfather characteristics rather than exploiting within-grandfather comparisons.

To identify the causal effect of the Great Reduction, Confiscated_{il} must be exogenous. This assumption is plausible for two reasons. First, the reform did not target specific

[15]The choice of percentile rank over alternative transformations (e.g. levels, logarithms, or the inverse hyperbolic sine) is that rank differences are invariant to scale changes and insensitive to changes in the shape of the underlying distribution of manor holdings. Given the 300-year horizon of our study, this improves the comparability and interpretability of coefficients across generations.

lineages or nobles but aimed to return previously granted fiefs to the Crown. Although some prominent nobles were disproportionately affected, Rystad (2003) argues that such cases were rare. Confiscation may proxy for changes in political power, as the reform weakened the high nobility relative to the Crown. However, affected nobles remained among the most powerful in Sweden, and few were removed from the privy council during the reform period, as shown in Figure A.1. Estimates are therefore unlikely to reflect changes in political influence. Second, as discussed in Section 2, implementation, depended heavily on the availability of documentation. Contemporary accounts describe missing or dispersed land records, such that confiscation could depend as much on record availability as on formal rules.

Nonetheless, to address remaining concerns about pre-existing differences, we focus on the characteristics of index fathers. We condition on characteristics that capture their economic and political status: birth decade; manors owned before 1680; number of children; father characteristics, defined as index grandfather characteristics; and dynasty characteristics, including indicators for high nobility and privy council membership.

Figure 2 compares affected and unaffected index fathers along these dimensions by reporting normalized differences. We report these differences both unadjusted and after inverse probability weighting (IPW) using three predictors: pre-1680 manorial holdings, number of children surviving to age 18, and birth decade. The dashed lines at ±0.25 indicate a common rule-of-thumb threshold; values outside this range may signal meaningful imbalance and warrant further scrutiny (Imbens and Rubin, 2015, p. 277). The reweighting is intentionally parsimonious and substantially reduces imbalance, with most covariate differences falling within the ±0.25 band. This suggests that a small set of predictors explains much of the differences between affected and unaffected nobles and yields good balance on observables.

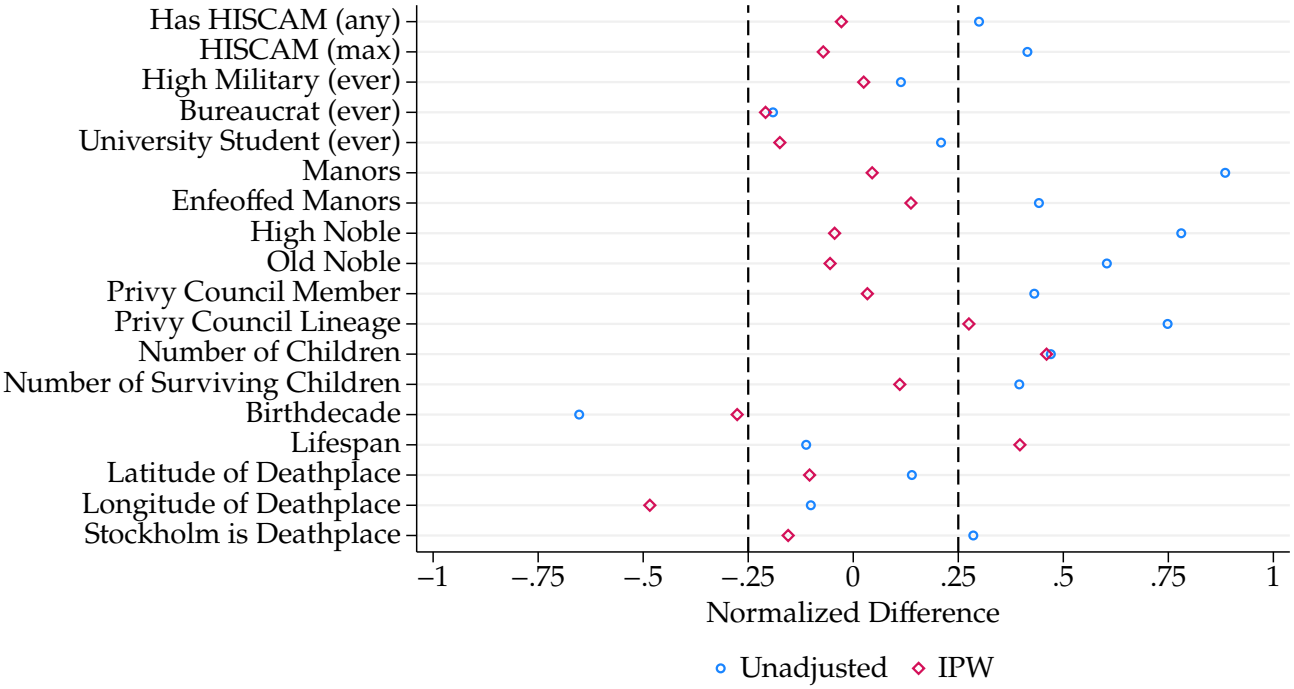

Figure 2: Balance in pre-determined characteristics

Notes: Figure plots normalized differences between characteristics of affected and unaffected index fathers. The normalized difference is defined as $\frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_0}{\sqrt{(s_1^2 + s_0^2)/2}}$, where $\bar{x}_1$ (s_1^2) and $\bar{x}_0$ (s_0^2) denote the sample mean (variance) of x for affected and unaffected nobles, respectively. The comparison sample is restricted to nobles born in the same birth decades as the affected group. "Unadjusted" reports raw differences, while "IPW" reweights observations using pre-1680 manorial holdings, the number of children surviving to age 18, and birth decade.

4.2 Effects on Wealth in the Confiscated Generation

To document the first stage, that is, the extent to which the Great Reduction reduced wealth among confiscated nobles, we estimate its effect on manor ownership among affected nobles. Following Kleven et al. (2019), we estimate the following event study specification:

$$y_{ist} = \sum_{j \neq -1} \alpha_j \, \mathbb{1}[j = t] + \sum_k \beta_k \, \mathbb{1}[k = \text{age}_{is}] + \sum_y \gamma_y \, \mathbb{1}[y = s] + \epsilon_{ist}. \tag{2}$$

Here, y_{ist} denotes the number of manors held by noble i in calendar year s at event time t, defined relative to the year of the first confiscation. Nobles remain in the sample after death, when any remaining manors are held by their estate, although recorded holdings typically drop to zero at death. The specification omits event time -1 and includes indicators for all other event times, along with age and calendar year fixed effects.

Figure 3 reports estimates of equation (2), restricting event time to the window $[-20, 20]$. The baseline, shown in thick blue, plots the coefficients on the event-time fixed effects, which trace the average number of manors owned relative to the first confiscation, net of age and calendar-year effects. Prior to the first loss, ownership rises gradually, consistent with life-cycle accumulation. At the event, affected nobles lose about 0.8 manors on average, from a pre-treatment mean of 2.7. After the confiscation, ownership does not recover through exchange or compensation, and declines little further, consistent with most confiscations occurring in the first decade of the Great Reduction, in the 1680s.

To assess whether this pattern could arise mechanically from the data or from arbitrary treatment timing, we conduct a randomization exercise. We repeat the procedure 1,000 times. In each run, we randomly assign placebo confiscation years to 355 nobles, matching the number treated in the original data, by sampling from the empirical distribution of confiscation years. The figure plots each resulting event study path in gray, along with the median across placebo draws in thick red. The median placebo path shows no systematic effect, and the baseline estimates lie well outside the distribution of randomized paths, indicating that the Great Reduction effect is real and statistically meaningful.

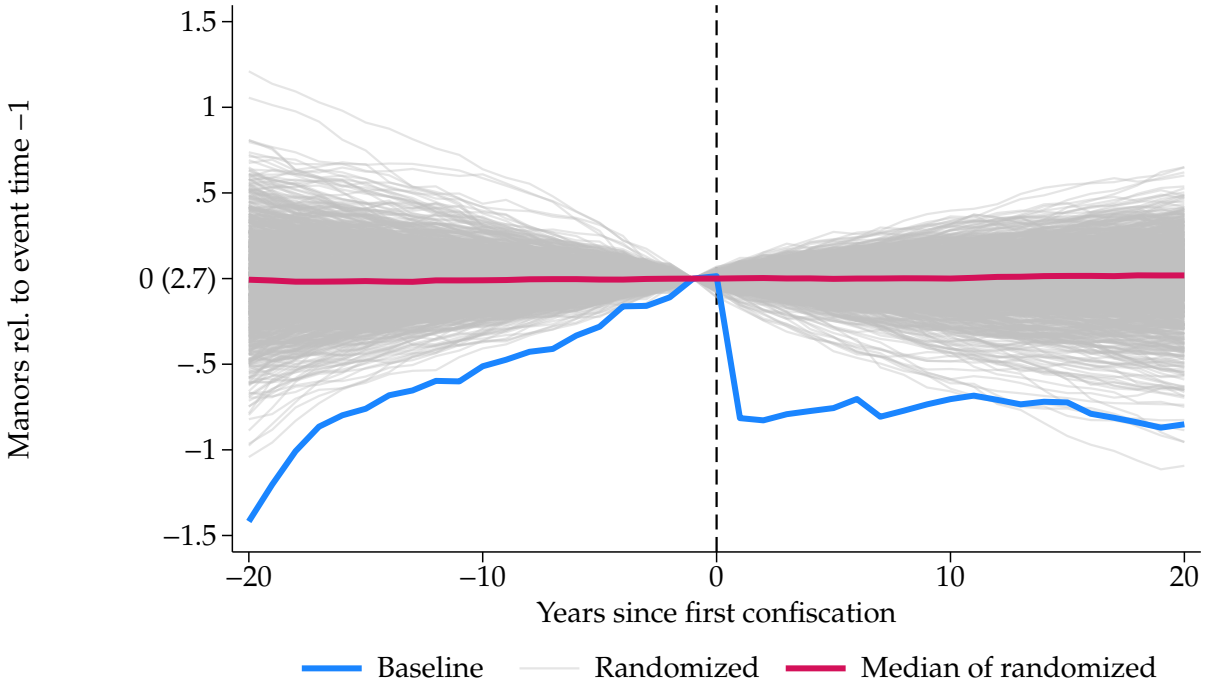

Figure 3: Effect on Wealth in the Confiscated Generation

Notes: Figure shows event study estimates from equation (2) of the effect of the Great Reduction on the number of manors held by affected nobles. The thick blue line shows coefficient estimates using the actual timing of the first confiscation. Grey lines show coefficient paths from placebo assignments. In each draw, we randomly select 355 nobles, equal to the number of treated nobles in the data, and assign them a placebo first-confiscation year drawn from the empirical distribution of confiscation years. We then re-estimate equation (2) and plot the resulting estimates. We repeat this procedure 1000 times. The thick red line reports the median coefficient across placebo draws at each event time. Parenthetical next to 0 reports the sample mean number of manors one year before the first confiscation.

5. INTERGENERATIONAL EFFECTS

This section presents the main results. First, we show that the Reduction has substantial and persistent effects on wealth, measured by the number of manors owned (Section 5.1).[16] Second, we show that these effects are robust to a wide range of sensitivity checks (Section 5.2). Third, we relate our estimates to benchmarks from the intergenerational mobility literature (Section 5.3). Fourth, we show that the Reduction has little effect on marriage market outcomes, human capital and other demographic attributes (Section 5.4).

[16]Throughout, we use wealth and manors owned interchangeably. However, equating these is not unproblematic. Using probate inventories, Bengtsson et al. (2019) shows that perhaps half of the assets held by the nobility were unrelated to manorial holdings.

Fifth, we show that these null results are informative rather than driven by noisy measures by validating that these outcomes capture meaningful variation in socioeconomic status and demographic characteristics in our setting (Section 5.5 and Section 5.6). We close with a brief discussion of remaining concerns (Section 5.7).

5.1 Intergenerational Effects on Wealth

Table 2 displays our main results. We display coefficient estimates for the effect across five generations of descendants. The analysis is restricted to individuals who reached at least the age of 18. The outcome variable is defined as the percentile rank of manors owned where ranks are computed within birth decades.

We refer to (index) fathers as those who were affected by the Reduction and their corresponding control individuals who, by virtue of the birth-decade fixed effects, are individuals from the same birth decades as those affected by the Reduction. Gen. 1 denotes their children, 2 their grandchildren, and so on. We provide summary statistics of the regression sample in Table B.4. The fifth generation is on average born around 1830—150 years after the Great Reduction. We restrict the analysis to five generations of descendants, as the number of treated lineages decreases sharply with each generation such that only a few treated lineages remain beyond five generations. Since surviving lineages branch out, the number of treated descendants, however, remains stable across generations.

Column 1 includes father birth-decade fixed effects, the father's number of children, and a linear control for his pre-Reduction wealth rank. Column 2 additionally includes a linear control for the grandfather's pre-Reduction wealth rank as well as an interaction between the father's and grandfather's wealth ranks. Column 3 further adds indicators for whether the father belonged to the Privy Council and to the high nobility in 1680, together with their interaction, as well as controls for the father's birth order and partner status. The coefficients are stable across these three specifications, showing almost no sign of attenuation as more controls are added.

Children of those affected by the Reduction own about 5 percentage points fewer manors compared to similar children whose fathers were not affected. Our main finding is that this effect does not fade over time but remains remarkably constant: five generations later, descendants of affected individuals are still less wealthy, as measured by the number of manors owned. The persistence suggests that noble families maintained their relative wealth rankings across generations following the Great Reduction.

Table 2—Effect of Reduction across generations: Wealth Rank

Gen.	Obs.	Mean dep. var.	(1)	(2)	(3)
1	3,683	55.99	-5.48 (2.19)	-4.94 (2.26)	-4.63 (2.24)
2	3,777	57.94	-6.81 (2.28)	-6.31 (2.27)	-6.07 (2.30)
3	3,938	58.23	-8.97 (3.02)	-7.38 (3.08)	-6.90 (3.07)
4	4,026	58.36	-14.46 (4.59)	-12.90 (4.63)	-12.30 (4.56)
5	3,727	57.53	-10.11 (4.98)	-9.05 (5.18)	-7.90 (4.87)
Controls					
Birth decade FE			✓	✓	✓
Father characteristics			✓	✓	✓
Grandfather characteristics				✓	✓
Dynasty characteristics					✓

Notes: Birth decade FE refers to fixed effects for the birth decade of the index fathers. *Father characteristics* include number of manors owned before the Great Reduction and number of children of the index father. *Grandfather characteristics* include number of manors owned and the number of children for the father of the index father and an interaction term between the father's and the grandfather's number of manors. *Dynasty characteristics* include indicators for high nobility and privy council membership, their interaction, and controls for the father's birth order and partner status. The unit of observation is an individual descendant. Standard errors clustered by index father are in parentheses.

Interpreting the Persistent Effects The results need to be understood in light of the prevailing institutional features. The fact that the Great Reduction was followed by a relatively peaceful era of gradual progress rather than stark upheavals, during which the nobility's overall share of manors remained broadly stable, likely contributes. As Bengtsson et al. (2019) points out, this stability was likely reinforced by the Noble Rights Act of 1723 which reaffirmed the nobility's control over their estates and limited state interference in how noble land was managed.[17]

Furthermore, Dackling et al. (2025) emphasizes how the land-owning nobility established inheritance arrangements aimed at keeping property intact and securing the material basis of the lineage; manorial wealth remained central to noble status, giving families strong incentives to preserve and consolidate what remained of their estates across generations.

5.2 Robustness Checks

Alternative Treatments In our main specification we focus on descendants of individuals who had a manor confiscated. As an alternative, we also include descendants of individuals whose female spouse had manors confiscated, since descendants of affected women are often also descendants of the affected individual herself but are not always directly observed as such in our data. While, the preferred treatment definition yields 381 treated progenitors, this alternative definition yields 545 treated progenitors. We display these results in Table B.5.

Including Children Because many of our outcomes, such as occupation, are only meaningful for adults, our main specification restricts the sample to individuals who survive to age 18. As a robustness check, we instead include also individuals who die before reaching adulthood. As shown in Table B.6, the results remain largely unchanged.

A common pattern in the landed nobility is that the eldest son inherited a disproportionate share of family wealth. This would suggest focusing the analysis on eldest sons only. However, as shown in Figure A.2, first-born sons are only modestly more likely than later-born sons to own a manor, by roughly 5 percentage points, suggesting that inheritance was not so strongly concentrated in the eldest son that restricting the analysis to these first

[17]Interestingly, in stark contrast to the period of the Great Reduction, the Noble Rights Act of 1723 introduced explicit constraints on Crown appropriation of noble land. §24 commits the Crown not to acquire or remove noble estates in ways that would weaken the nobility, and §25 stipulates that such land, if taken, must be redeemed back into noble ownership. This settlement likely reflects the legacy of the Reduction.

born sons alone is warranted.

Restricting to Linked Sample The effect in generation k can be understood as a combination of the transmission from generation $k-1$ to generation k as well as a compositional change between generations, stemming from lineages dying out. To isolate the intergenerational transmission of wealth, we consider an alternative version where we restrict the sample to lineages where we observe at least five generations in Table B.7. This restriction induces a survivorship bias that is problematic if the lineage survival itself is an outcome of the reduction. In Table B.3 we directly assess whether affected lineages survive fewer generations and find no evidence that would support this, although the point estimates are pointing in that direction.

5.3 Benchmarking Against Measures of Intergenerational Mobility

We interpret the magnitude of our estimates by asking how they relate to standard measures of intergenerational mobility. A large literature summarizes persistence in socioeconomic status using rank-rank regressions of the form

$$R_{ig} = \alpha_g + \phi_g R_{i0} + \varepsilon_{ig}, \tag{3}$$

where R_{i0} denotes wealth or income rank for the index generation and R_{ig} is the corresponding rank for a descendant in generation g. See Stuhler (2024) for a summary of recent studies on *multi*-generational mobility.

The coefficient ϕ_g is a measure of persistence—capturing the extent to which families that are high-ranked in the index generation have high-ranked descendants g generations later—but it does not necessarily identify the causal effect of an exogenous shift in R_0, since it may also reflect shared traits, assortative matching, and other confounding family characteristics.

We benchmark the causal propagation of a the wealth shock against the propagation that would be implied by Equation (3).

This comparison serves two purposes. First, it provides a useful benchmark for whether our causal estimates are of a plausible order of magnitude relative to widely used mobility statistics. Second, and more importantly, it allows us to assess whether descriptive intergenerational correlations can be interpreted as reflecting causal wealth transmission.

Let ΔR_0 denote the change in wealth rank for the index generation implied by the wealth shock. We obtain ΔR_0 by taking the average number of manors lost among treated

index individuals from Section 4.2 and mapping this loss into rank points using the empirical distribution of manors in the index generation. For descendants, let ΔR_g denote our reduced-form estimate of the effect of treatment exposure in generation 0 on the descendant's wealth rank in generation g.

To benchmark these estimated effects, we estimate the rank-rank persistence coefficient ϕ_g from (3) for each g using the same rank definition. Given ϕ_g and ΔR_0, a simple mobility-implied prediction for the effect of the shock on generation g wealth rank is

$$\widehat{\Delta R_g}^{\,impl} \equiv \phi_g \cdot \Delta R_0. \tag{4}$$

Finally, we summarize the comparison between the estimated effects and the mobility-implied prediction using

$$\kappa_g \equiv \frac{\Delta R_g}{\phi_g \Delta R_0}. \tag{5}$$

If rank-rank persistence primarily reflected causal wealth transmission, one would expect κ_g to be close to one. Values of κ_g below one would indicate that the shock propagated less than implied by the mobility correlation, consistent with the concern that ϕ_g partly reflects persistent family traits rather than wealth itself. Conversely, values of κ_g above one indicate that the causal propagation of the shock is larger than what would be implied by the descriptive rank-rank slope.

Table 3 reports estimates of the causal effects ΔR_g, the estimated persistence parameters ϕ_g, the mobility-implied predictions $\phi_g \Delta R_0$, and the resulting ratios κ_g. Across descendant generations, the causal effects are negative and sizable in ranks across generations.[18] In contrast, the estimated rank rank coefficients ϕ_g are comparatively small and decay over generations, although more slowly than predicted by an AR(1) process, implying modest mobility predicted effects. As a result, κ_g is substantially greater than one for all g, indicating that the causal propagation of the wealth shock is much larger than what would be suggested by the descriptive rank-rank persistence.

A natural interpretation for the large effects relative to the mobility implied estimates is that the estimated ϕ_g values understate true persistence due to attenuation bias.

It is well known that intergenerational mobility estimates, including rank-rank estimates, can be substantially attenuated by measurement error in the proxy used for economic status, especially in historical settings with discrete and noisy wealth measures (Nybom and

[18]The rank rank coefficient for generation 1 (0.1861) is very similar in magnitude to modern day rank rank estimates of intergenerational mobility based on income in Nordic countries.

Table 3—Benchmarking estimated wealth effects against rank-rank persistence

Generation g	Causal effect ΔR_g (SE)	rank-rank ϕ_g (SE)	Mobility-implied $\phi_g \Delta R_0$	Ratio κ_g
1	-4.63 (2.24)	0.1861 (0.0048)	-2.01	2.30
2	-6.07 (2.30)	0.1074 (0.0050)	-1.16	5.23
3	-6.90 (3.07)	0.0660 (0.0051)	-0.71	9.68
4	-12.30 (4.56)	0.0418 (0.0055)	-0.45	27.27
5	-7.90 (4.87)	0.0224 (0.0060)	-0.24	32.70

Notes: Wealth ranks R are percentile ranks constructed within birth-decade cohorts. $\Delta R_0 = -10.8$ is the implied rank shift for the index generation, computed by mapping the average manor loss among treated index individuals into rank points using the pre-shock distribution of manors. ΔR_g reports estimates of treatment exposure in generation 0 on wealth rank in generation g; standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the lineage level (column 3 in Table 2). ϕ_g is estimated from rank-rank regressions of descendant rank R_g on ancestor rank R_0, controlling for birth-decade fixed effects for the descendant generation and clustering by ancestor. The mobility-implied prediction is $\phi_g \Delta R_0$, and $\kappa_g = \Delta R_g / (\phi_g \Delta R_0)$.

Stuhler, 2017). Such attenuation would reduce ϕ_g and therefore shrink the mobility-implied benchmark $\phi_g \Delta R_0$ in (4), pushing κ_g upward even if the underlying causal propagation were more modest.

Viewed through this lens, our results are consistent with substantial intergenerational persistence not captured by measures of intergenerational correlations: the causal effects ΔR_g remain large across descendant generations, while the descriptive rank-rank slopes may be biased toward zero.

5.4 Effects on Potential Mediating Outcomes

Beyond wealth measures, we study a broad set of outcomes capturing other dimensions of socioeconomic status and life chances in the noble population. We focus on four sets of outcomes: demographic characteristics, military career, marriage market outcomes, and occupation and human-capital outcomes. Across all these analyses, we generally find small effects insignificantly different from zero. Overall, the effects are fairly precisely estimated, although we return in the next section to the effect sizes one may expect to detect. Descendants of affected families marry at the same age, are equally likely to have a

partner and, conditional on having a partner, are equally likely to have a noble partner and, conditional on having a noble partner, have a wealthy noble partner. We likewise find no evidence of adjustment along demographic or military margins.

Although not statistically significant, the coefficients are negative across the human-capital and career outcomes. These patterns provide little support for the idea that the wealth shock pushed descendants toward a service-nobility trajectory centered on administrative careers or other prestige occupations. If anything, the estimates point in the opposite direction suggesting that landed wealth and elite careers were complementary components of the same underlying social rank.

The combination of large wealth effects and near zero effects on many other dimensions is surprising. To interpret this credibly, however, we need to show that the non-wealth outcomes measure something real in this historical context rather than being mostly noise.

5.5 Benchmarking Against Cross-Sectional Wealth Gradients

We next benchmark the estimated effects on non-wealth outcomes against the cross-sectional relationship between wealth and these outcomes.[19] To increase statistical power, we pool the analysis across the first five descendant generations. Pooling across generations is not innocuous, but it is useful here because the estimated effects of the Reduction on manor rank are fairly similar across these generations. Rather than relying on raw correlations, we estimate a pooled conditional wealth gradient controlling for parent birth decade and descendant generation. This provides a descriptive benchmark for how outcomes vary with wealth among broadly comparable individuals, without imposing the full set of controls from the main regression model. For each outcome Y, we estimate its pooled conditional relationship with manor rank, denoted $\widehat{\gamma}_Y$, and combine this with the pooled treatment effect on manor rank, $\widehat{\Delta M}$. This yields an *implied change*,

$$\widehat{\Delta Y}^{\,impl} = \widehat{\gamma}_Y \cdot \widehat{\Delta M}, \tag{6}$$

which we compare to the corresponding pooled treatment effect on the outcome.

[19] The benchmarking exercise in this subsection is reminiscent of similar exercises in Bleakley and Ferrie (2016) and Cesarini et al. (2017).

Table 4—Effect of the Great Reduction, Other Outcomes

	Generation				
Outcome	1	2	3	4	5
Wealth					
Manors rank	-4.08 (1.84)	-6.25 (1.95)	-6.44 (2.43)	-9.36 (3.67)	-5.61 (4.08)
Demographic					
Died in episcopal city	0.05 (0.03)	0.07 (0.04)	0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)
Died in Stockholm	0.05 (0.03)	0.05 (0.04)	0.02 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)	0.03 (0.04)
Life span	-0.32 (1.00)	-1.21 (1.04)	-0.98 (0.96)	-0.94 (1.07)	-0.25 (1.19)
N children	-0.16 (0.14)	-0.22 (0.14)	0.00 (0.13)	0.09 (0.13)	-0.35 (0.13)
Military					
Military officer	0.02 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.03)	0.03 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.04)
Went to war	0.00 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.05 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.01)
Marriage					
Any partner	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)	-0.05 (0.03)
Age at first marriage	0.69 (0.59)	-0.36 (0.55)	-0.77 (0.59)	0.45 (0.56)	0.45 (0.55)
Noble partner | partner	0.01 (0.03)	0.06 (0.03)	0.03 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.04)	0.01 (0.04)
Manors rank (father-in-law)	1.58 (1.91)	-0.15 (2.26)	-1.21 (2.52)	1.87 (2.58)	6.43 (3.43)
Human Capital					
HISCAM	-2.15 (1.81)	-1.46 (1.99)	-2.29 (2.04)	-0.53 (1.69)	0.34 (1.44)
Tax capacity	-2.23 (1.70)	-2.07 (1.55)	0.71 (1.10)	-0.51 (1.17)	-0.92 (1.42)
Administrative clerical	-0.03 (0.01)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.03)
Administrative elite	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)
Student	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.02)	0.05 (0.02)	0.06 (0.03)

Notes: This table reports estimates from the same specification as column 3 of Table 2, but using alternative outcome variables. These outcome variables are described in Appendix C.5.

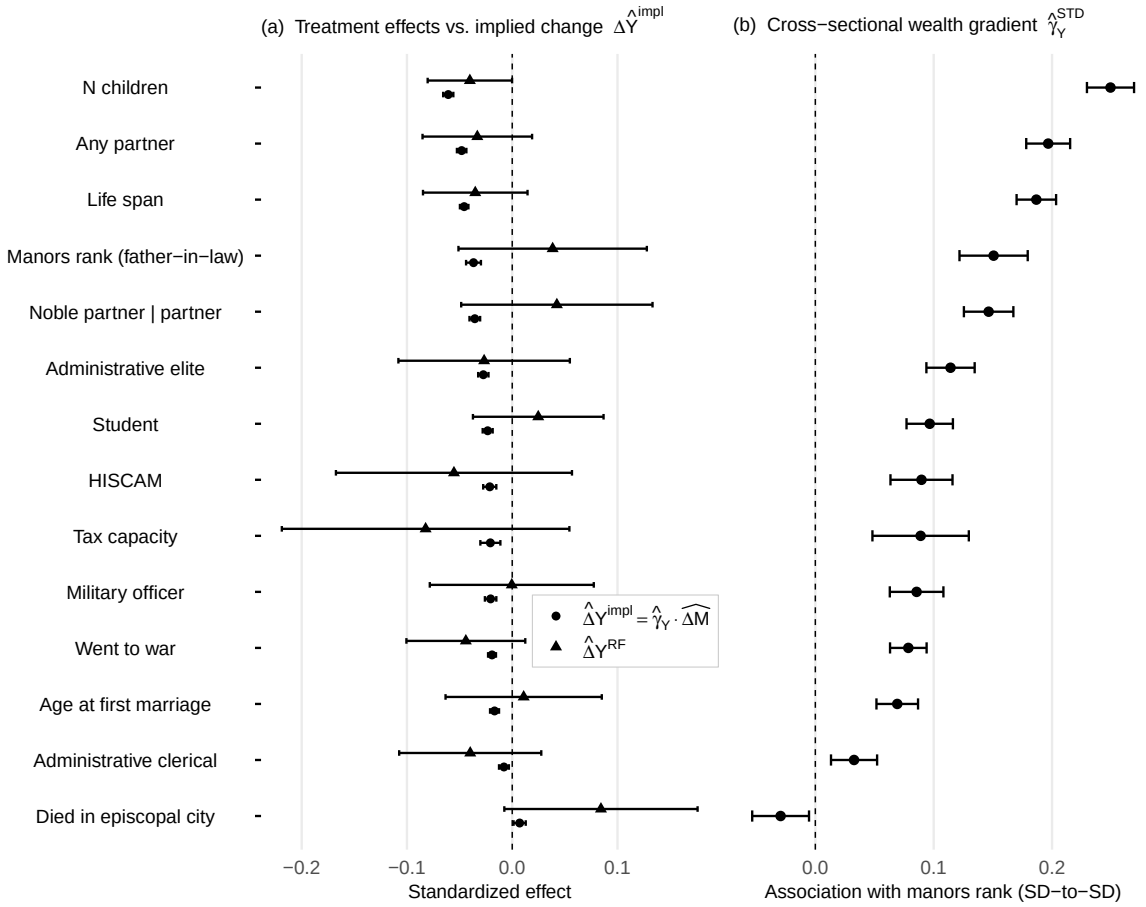

Figure 4: Cross-sectional wealth gradients and implied effects

Notes: Panel (a) plots coefficients from regressions of standardized outcomes on standardized manor rank, estimated on the pooled sample of descendant generations 1–5 with parent birth-decade and generation fixed effects. Panel (b) compares the estimated pooled treatment effect for each outcome to the implied change obtained by multiplying the pooled conditional wealth gradient by the estimated pooled treatment effect on manor rank. Horizontal lines show 95% confidence intervals based on standard errors clustered at the lineage level.

Figure 4 helps put the null results for the outcome variables, other than manors, in perspective. Panel (a) reports standardized estimates of $\widehat{\gamma}_Y$: the outcomes covary with manor rank in the expected directions, but the gradients are modest. Panel (b) combines these gradients with the estimated, pooled across descendant generations, effect of the Reduction on manor rank. Although the Reduction had a large and persistent effect on manorial wealth, the implied effects on other outcomes are small—typically well below 0.1 standard deviations. In this sense, the absence of statistically significant effects on most non-wealth outcomes is not surprising. In a model where the effects of the Reduction on these outcomes operated through descendants' wealth, the resulting changes would be

difficult to detect in our sample. The exercise suggests that the wealth shock was large enough to persist in the distribution of manorial wealth, but not large enough to generate major shifts in other dimensions of status.

5.6 Shifting Regimes: Validation Using Royal Council Lineages

We provide a second validation exercise by examining whether the outcomes respond to an alternative measure of elite status. To do so, we re-estimate the same specifications as in the main analysis, but replace the Great reduction indicator with an indicator for being a descendant of an individual who served on the Royal Council (i.e., the Privy Council during the period following the Great Reduction and up to 1719). These councilors constituted a post-Great Reduction political elite that replaced the older political elite around the time of the Great Reduction, although the older elite was not necessarily adversely affected by the wealth shock.

Lineages in which someone attains Royal Council membership are likely on systematically different trajectories than lineages in which no one does. Even so, the patterns are informative in three ways. First, associations that persist across descendant generations provide evidence of durable status transmission. Second, it provides a direct validation of our measures: if outcomes such as marriage-market assortative matching, occupational prestige, and elite administrative careers respond to this measure of elite status, that suggests that these outcomes capture meaningful dimensions of elite standing rather than noise. Third, it offers suggestive evidence consistent with a shift in elite composition. Following the Great Reduction, the Privy Council was gradually replaced by individuals who did not belong to the old nobility that had dominated it throughout the seventeenth century, as shown in Figure A.4. The status of this new elite persisted beyond the formal power associated with council membership.

Table B.8 reports the results. The results suggest that royal-council lineages were characterized by higher political and administrative status rather than by landed wealth. Relative to other high-nobility families, their descendants were more likely to die in Stockholm and much more likely to enter elite administrative careers. Within the very top of Swedish society, royal-council families may have been tied more closely to the central state bureaucracy than to landed wealth.

Some of the other patterns are harder to interpret. The negative coefficients on age at first marriage and the positive coefficients on noble partner and father-in-law wealth are consistent with stronger status-based assortative matching, but it is not obvious why these

families would marry into wealthier families while not appearing wealthier themselves on manor ownership. One interpretation is that they belonged to a relatively new elite whose status derived less from inherited landholding and more from political office, yet who still had sufficient prestige to marry into more landed noble families. The negative, though mostly imprecise, life-span coefficients are also somewhat puzzling; one possibility is that living in Stockholm and other cities was associated with less favorable disease environments.

5.7 Interpretation and Remaining Concerns

Taken together, We find substantial and persistent effects of the Great Reduction on wealth. At the same time, we find essentially no effects on a broad range of other outcomes. The validation analyses show that these non-wealth outcomes are meaningful measures of socioeconomic position in our context. It is therefore reasonable to interpret the null findings as real: beyond the wealth dimension, the nobility appears to display considerable resilience to the Great Reduction's consequences.

A remaining concern is that while manors correlate with many dimensions of status, owning manors was, frankly, not that important. However, extensive historical work desribes the Reduction as a genuine and substantial wealth loss for affected families that left a deep negative impact.

For example, Wienberg (2025) draws on contemporaneous letters from the household of Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie—famously among those who lost the most manors in the Reduction. De la Gardie's secretary, Jonas Lorin, described the period as a "very evil, hard, and dangerous" time, and asked rhetorically that if even "the highest in the realm" were being so crushed, what hope could remain for the wretched and dependent.

Relation to Existing Wealth Shock Papers The papers closest to ours are Ager et al. (2021), Bleakley and Ferrie (2016), and Shiu and Keller (2025), which also study intergenerational effects of wealth shocks. A comparison with these papers reveals common patterns but also important differences. Like Ager et al. (2021) and Shiu and Keller (2025), we find that descendant generations show little movement in broad proxies for social status, which is consistent with substantial persistence in family position. Unlike those papers, our data allow us to follow landed wealth directly. This matters because, as we show, wealth shocks may persist in wealth even when they leave other status outcomes largely unchanged.

In contrast to our findings, Shiu and Keller (2025) find that treated lineages eventually

recover and even surpass untreated ones in elite status, similar to how Becker et al. (2020) find that descendants of dislocated Jews invest more in human capital. We find no such mechanisms of readjustment.

Bleakley and Ferrie (2016) come closest to our design in that they also study a shock to land and observe descendants' wealth. A key difference is liquidity: lottery winners could, and often did, sell their land soon after receiving it. Our shock, by contrast, affected landed wealth in a setting where manors remained central to noble status and were often kept within the family.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper studies the long-run consequences of a large wealth shock among elite families. We use the Great Reduction of 1680, a major confiscation of noble estates in Sweden, together with newly digitized genealogical and data on manorial holdings that allow us to follow affected families over three centuries. We find substantial and persistent effects on landed wealth: descendants of affected families hold fewer manors for up to five generations. By contrast, we find limited effects on broader socioeconomic outcomes, including demographic characteristics, military careers, marriage outcomes, and human capital.

The contrast between wealth and other outcomes is relevant for how studies of intergenerational mobility measure persistence. Much of this work treats different measures of status as proxies for the same underlying process. Our results suggest that a shock to landed wealth can persist across generations without producing comparable changes in careers, marriage patterns, or human capital.

The paper contributes to the literature on long-run persistence of inequality and intergenerational mobility. Existing evidence from both causal wealth shocks and long-run status correlations is mixed. Our findings point to greater persistence of wealth shocks than some previous studies have found. At the same time, this persistence is unlikely to be a universal feature of wealth shocks. The pattern may partly reflect a setting with relatively stable political and economic institutions, together with a tradition of keeping landed wealth within the family.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. APPENDIX FIGURES

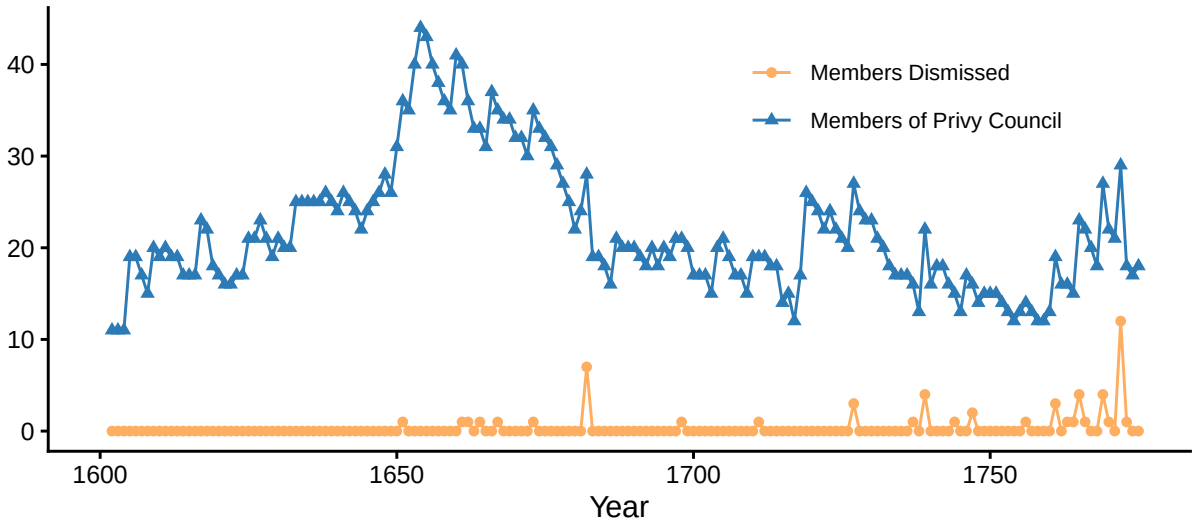


FIGURE A.1: PRIVY COUNCIL MEMBERS OVER TIME

Notes: Figure displays the number of members of the Privy Council over time, as well as the number of dismissals from office (as opposed to deaths while still serving). No distinction is made between the Privy Council and the Royal Council (1680–1719). Data from Lewenhaupt (1962).

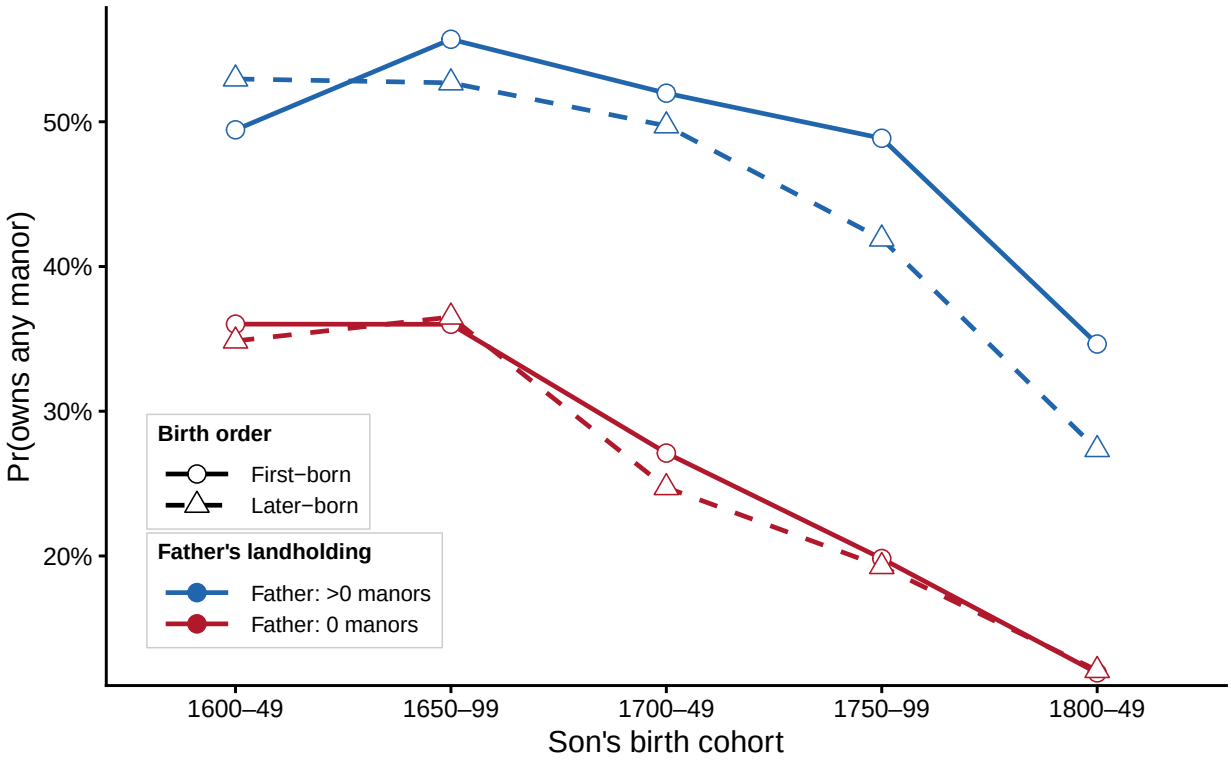


Figure A.2: Primogeniture and Manor Ownership Across Cohorts

Notes: Probability of owning at least one manor by sons' birth cohort, separately by whether the father owned no manors or at least one manor, and by whether the son was the first-born or a later-born son. The sample is restricted to families with at least two sons who survived to adulthood. First-born and later-born sons are defined within the set of adult sons, ordering brothers by birth year.

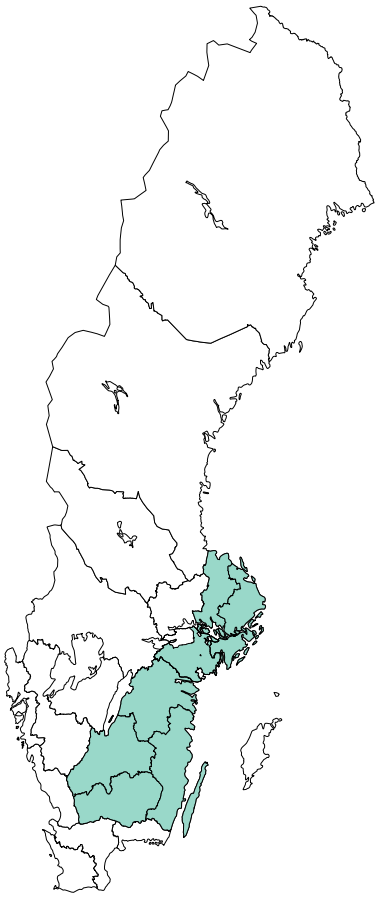


Figure A.3: Area covered by Almquist (1931–1976)

Notes: Map of Nyköping, Småland, Stockholm, Uppsala, and Östergötland counties, and the Livgedinge judicial district in Södermanland County, showing the area covered by the documentation of noble manors based on the extensive land registers (*landsböcker*) reviewed by Almquist (1931–1976), and included in the manor database of Ulväng (2024).

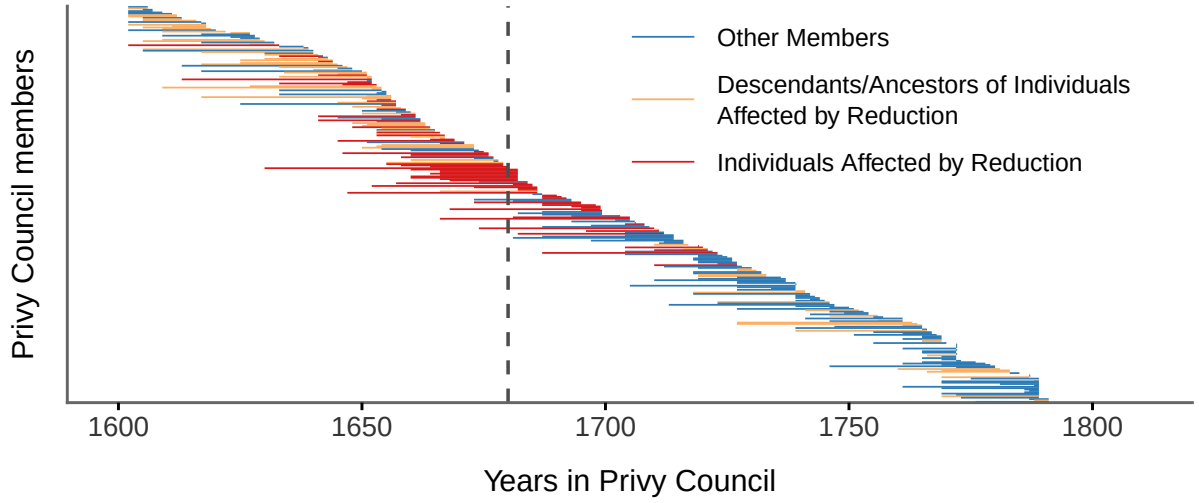


Figure A.4: Tenure of Privy Council Members

Notes: Each line represents the tenure of one member of the Privy Council. Red lines denote individuals affected by the Great Reduction. Orange lines denote ancestors and descendants of affected individuals. Teal lines denote all other council members. Data on privy council tenures are from Lewenhaupt (1962) and are manually matched to our data to infer reduction status among the members.

B. APPENDIX TABLES

Table B.1—Categories of Land Confiscated

Category	Daler Silvermynt	Comment
Conquered territories	1,053,187	Fiefs granted in newly conquered lands, including former Danish territories and Livonia.
Allodial properties	170,620	Properties granted as allodial donations, free from feudal obligations.
Countships and baronies	128,060	Large feudal estates established by the king of Sweden Erik XIV in 1561.
Former military fiefs	96,508	Properties originally assigned to support soldiers financially or logistically.
Former royal mansions	82,409	Residences previously used by the crown, often accommodating the king during travels.
Fiefs granted under the Norrköping decree of 1604	12,231	Fiefs granted after 1604 with restricted rights of inheritance.
Others	55,592	Miscellaneous or unclassified properties.

Notes: Categories of property subject to the Great Reduction. Data from Svedelius (1849–1851).

Table B.2: Linked Noble Individuals and Manorial Holdings by Century

	All	1600s	1700s	1800s
Panel A. Linkage outcomes				
Individual level				
Noble individuals born in century	116,884	14,835	36,119	38,410
Noble individuals linked to at least one manor	23,850	5,723	8,726	5,491
Avg. unique manors owned	0.48	1.08	0.46	0.24
Avg. unique manors owned | at least one	2.34	2.80	1.90	1.68
Manor level				
Manor entries in database	140,689	33,125	27,500	37,949
Manor entries linked to nobility	60,456	17,874	17,108	14,215
Panel B. Sample characteristics				
Share high nobility	0.18	0.08	0.14	0.25
Share surviving past age 15	0.48	0.74	0.63	0.54
Share father observed	0.97	0.96	0.99	0.99
Share died in Stockholm	0.19	0.21	0.18	0.21
Share ever married to a noble spouse	0.18	0.36	0.22	0.10

Note: This table describes the sample obtained by linking the dataset of the Swedish nobility to manor entries in the manor database. In Panel A, individual-level rows refer to noble individuals and manor-level rows refer to manor-database entries. Noble individuals linked to at least one manor denotes individuals matched to at least one manor entry, and manor entries linked to nobility denotes entries successfully linked to a noble individual. Avg. unique manors owned reports the mean number of distinct manors linked to an individual, while the conditional measure restricts attention to individuals linked to at least one manor. Panel B reports descriptive characteristics of the noble sample. The All column counts all observations, while the century columns classify noble individuals by birth century and property-event observations by entry start year. The century columns need not sum to the All column, since some entries fall outside 1600–1899 or have missing start or birth years.

Table B.3—Lineage survival

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Panel A: OLS (generations survived)			
Treated	-0.242	-0.200	-0.081
	(0.187)	(0.271)	(0.272)
Panel B: Lineage survival hazard ratios			
Treated	1.131	1.094	1.028
	[0.979, 1.306]	[0.885, 1.351]	[0.829, 1.276]
Lineages		2850	
Mean generations survived		4.707	
Controls			
Generation FE (hazard only)	✓	✓	✓
Birth decade FE	✓	✓	✓
Father characteristics	✓	✓	✓
Grandfather characteristics		✓	✓
Dynasty characteristics			✓

Notes: Panel A reports OLS estimates where the dependent variable is the number of generations the lineage survives. Panel B reports hazard ratios (with 95% confidence intervals in brackets) from a discrete-time hazard model estimated with a complementary log–log link. Generation fixed effects flexibly control for duration dependence in the hazard. Birth-decade fixed effects refer to the birth decade of the index generation. The unit of observation is a male lineage. Standard errors are clustered by index generation.

Table B.4—Sample composition by generation

Gen	N. Treated	N. Treated lineages	Median Birth Year
0	140	140	1643
1	606	140	1684
2	494	80	1725
3	474	61	1763
4	513	51	1802
5	555	41	1835

Notes: The table reports the composition of the main sample (used in Table 2) by generation. A lineage is defined by the index father. Generation 0 refers to the index generation. *N. Treated* reports the number of descendants of treated individuals in the index generation in each generation. *N. Treated Lineages* reports the number of index fathers in each generation. This numbers varies by generation since lineages die out and thereby dissapear from the data.

Table B.5—Effect of Reduction across generations: Wealth Rank, Alternative Treatment

Gen.	Obs.	Mean dep. var.	(1)	(2)	(3)
1	4,516	55.82	-3.72 (1.95)	-3.56 (1.98)	-3.39 (1.97)
2	4,621	57.71	-5.31 (2.00)	-5.06 (1.97)	-4.45 (2.03)
3	4,741	57.49	-9.31 (2.73)	-8.60 (2.78)	-8.21 (2.79)
4	4,803	57.40	-15.70 (4.09)	-14.40 (4.11)	-14.14 (4.08)
5	4,195	56.92	-12.31 (4.58)	-11.43 (4.77)	-10.97 (4.48)
Controls					
Birth decade FE			✓	✓	✓
Father characteristics			✓	✓	✓
Grandfather characteristics				✓	✓
Dynasty characteristics					✓

Notes: Birth decade FE refers to fixed effects for the birth decade of the index fathers. *Father characteristics* include number of manors owned before the Great Reduction and number of children of the index father. *Grandfather characteristics* include number of manors owned and the number of children for the father of the index father and an interaction term between the father's and the grandfather's number of manors. *Dynasty characteristics* include indicators for high nobility and privy council membership, their interaction, and controls for the father's birth order and partner status. The unit of observation is an individual descendant. Standard errors clustered by index father are in parentheses.

Table B.6—Effect of Reduction across generations: Wealth Rank, Including Children

Gen.	Obs.	Mean dep. var.	(1)	(2)	(3)
1	13,006	51.01	-7.14 (1.40)	-6.58 (1.37)	-6.29 (1.38)
2	14,961	50.86	-7.56 (1.56)	-6.94 (1.49)	-6.72 (1.44)
3	16,050	51.16	-8.54 (1.97)	-7.73 (1.87)	-7.37 (1.85)
4	15,465	52.21	-10.65 (2.72)	-9.61 (2.60)	-9.45 (2.52)
5	15,301	52.73	-10.10 (3.35)	-9.13 (3.14)	-8.84 (3.00)
Controls					
Birth decade FE			✓	✓	✓
Father characteristics			✓	✓	✓
Grandfather characteristics				✓	✓
Dynasty characteristics					✓

Notes: Birth decade FE refers to fixed effects for the birth decade of the index fathers. *Father characteristics* include number of manors owned before the Great Reduction and number of children of the index father. *Grandfather characteristics* include number of manors owned and the number of children for the father of the index father and an interaction term between the father's and the grandfather's number of manors. *Dynasty characteristics* include indicators for high nobility and privy council membership, their interaction, and controls for the father's birth order and partner status. The unit of observation is an individual descendant. Standard errors clustered by index father are in parentheses.

Table B.7—Effect of Reduction across generations: Wealth Rank, Restricted to surviving lineages

Gen.	Obs.	Mean dep. var.	(1)	(2)	(3)
1	367	70.13	-8.77 (4.24)	-9.09 (4.28)	-8.64 (4.51)
2	1,701	60.74	-7.95 (3.25)	-8.04 (3.17)	-7.24 (3.22)
3	2,783	60.02	-8.27 (3.70)	-7.30 (3.77)	-6.17 (3.85)
4	3,611	59.16	-15.23 (4.92)	-13.46 (4.96)	-13.05 (4.88)
5	3,727	57.53	-10.11 (4.98)	-9.05 (5.18)	-7.90 (4.87)
Controls					
Birth decade FE			✓	✓	✓
Father characteristics			✓	✓	✓
Grandfather characteristics				✓	✓
Dynasty characteristics					✓

Notes: Birth decade FE refers to fixed effects for the birth decade of the index fathers. *Father characteristics* include number of manors owned before the Great Reduction and number of children of the index father. *Grandfather characteristics* include number of manors owned and the number of children for the father of the index father and an interaction term between the father's and the grandfather's number of manors. *Dynasty characteristics* include indicators for high nobility and privy council membership, their interaction, and controls for the father's birth order and partner status. The unit of observation is an individual descendant. Standard errors clustered by index father are in parentheses.

Table B.8—Effect of Royal Council, Other Outcomes

	Generation				
Outcome	1	2	3	4	5
Wealth					
Manors rank	1.74 (2.51)	-1.25 (2.63)	0.37 (3.40)	3.52 (3.79)	7.43 (4.04)
Demographic					
Died in episcopal city	0.19 (0.05)	0.18 (0.07)	0.12 (0.06)	0.03 (0.07)	-0.00 (0.05)
Died in Stockholm	0.23 (0.05)	0.20 (0.07)	0.09 (0.05)	0.07 (0.06)	0.05 (0.05)
Life span	-2.75 (1.50)	-2.27 (1.73)	-1.16 (1.71)	0.22 (1.34)	-0.06 (1.32)
N children	-0.49 (0.22)	-0.14 (0.21)	0.02 (0.31)	0.12 (0.21)	-0.16 (0.16)
Military					
Military officer	0.04 (0.04)	-0.15 (0.06)	-0.09 (0.04)	0.08 (0.04)	0.16 (0.05)
Went to war	0.01 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.05 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.01)
Marriage					
Any partner	-0.00 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.10 (0.04)	0.06 (0.05)	0.00 (0.04)
Age at first marriage	-1.99 (0.80)	-2.10 (0.60)	-1.28 (0.93)	-0.95 (0.60)	-0.29 (0.73)
Noble partner | partner	0.13 (0.04)	0.09 (0.06)	0.13 (0.07)	0.10 (0.07)	0.07 (0.07)
Manors rank (father-in-law)	9.80 (3.14)	13.52 (3.47)	0.67 (4.61)	11.58 (4.26)	3.26 (6.27)
Human Capital					
HISCAM	10.27 (2.15)	7.73 (3.12)	4.47 (2.39)	4.92 (1.63)	4.91 (2.65)
Tax capacity	7.35 (2.39)	5.92 (1.96)	3.07 (1.83)	3.35 (2.11)	93.00 (2.64)
Administrative clerical	-0.05 (0.02)	0.03 (0.04)	0.01 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.04)
Administrative elite	0.22 (0.04)	0.19 (0.07)	0.18 (0.06)	0.14 (0.04)	0.04 (0.04)
Student	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.03 (0.04)	0.07 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.04)

Notes: This table shows estimates similar to the ones displayed in Table 4 but with progenitor being in the royal council as the main independent variable. The outcome variables are described in Appendix C.5.

C. DATA APPENDIX

C.1 Manual Linking of Reduced Manors

We start from 976 entries classified by Ulväng (2024) as reduced. For each entry, we use the recorded owner information together with biographical material and (when needed) additional sources to link the reduction entry to a specific person. In cases where the owner is listed as *dödsbo* (estate) or *arvingar* (heirs), we attribute the event to the individual who died (i.e., the underlying person rather than the estate/heirs).

We use the manual linking to assign each reduced entry to a noble individual whenever a unique and defensible identification can be established from the recorded owner information and supporting sources. We exclude 218 entries that either correspond to non-individual entities, to non-noble individuals (and individuals without a noble partner), or to noble individuals for whom we cannot uniquely identify the correct person.

We define treatment in two ways. Under a narrow definition, we classify as treated the 556 noble individuals who are directly linked to a reduction entry. Under an extended definition, we additionally classify as treated the noble male partner in the 211 cases where the reduction entry is linked to a female individual with a noble husband (for a total of 556+211 treated individuals under this definition).

Two implementation details are worth noting. First, in a small number of cases the relevant affected person is not the name that appears in the reduction entry (defined as the entry preceding the reduction event) but instead a nearby individual in the ownership chain; our linking therefore uses the full owner history rather than the single recorded label. Second, when the affected individual is female and there are multiple potential partners, assigning the relevant partner is sometimes ambiguous; we primarily follow the partner recorded in the entry and otherwise rely on auxiliary identifying information when available.

C.2 Automatically Linking Manors

We start by harmonizing last names in both Ulväng (2024) and Adelsvapen (2015) by removing suffixes such as "–Ätten" and "–Släkten," as well as trailing identifiers like "nr 123". In a second step, we concatenate first and last names so that each individual is represented by a single string in each source. We then perform fuzzy string matching, using Jaccard similarity to quantify name similarity, in order to link each manor event to a

potential owner. Because computing similarity scores for all individuals × manor events is infeasible, we use probabilistic record linkage with blocking.

We consider three candidate blocking conditions: (i) first letter of the first name, (ii) harmonized family name, and (iii) the event start year must fall between the individual's birth and death year. We then evaluate all eight combinations of these candidate blocking rules, together with different similarity thresholds, on our manually matched sample. To summarize performance, we report F1, precision, and recall. As expected, a lower similarity cutoff yields more matches but a lower share of correct matches, while a higher cutoff yields fewer matches with higher precision.

We choose the similarity threshold and blocking rules that maximize F1 on the manually matched sample. As is seen in Figure C.1, this selects blocking on first initial and the year restriction, although the difference compared to blocking also on harmonized family name is negligible.

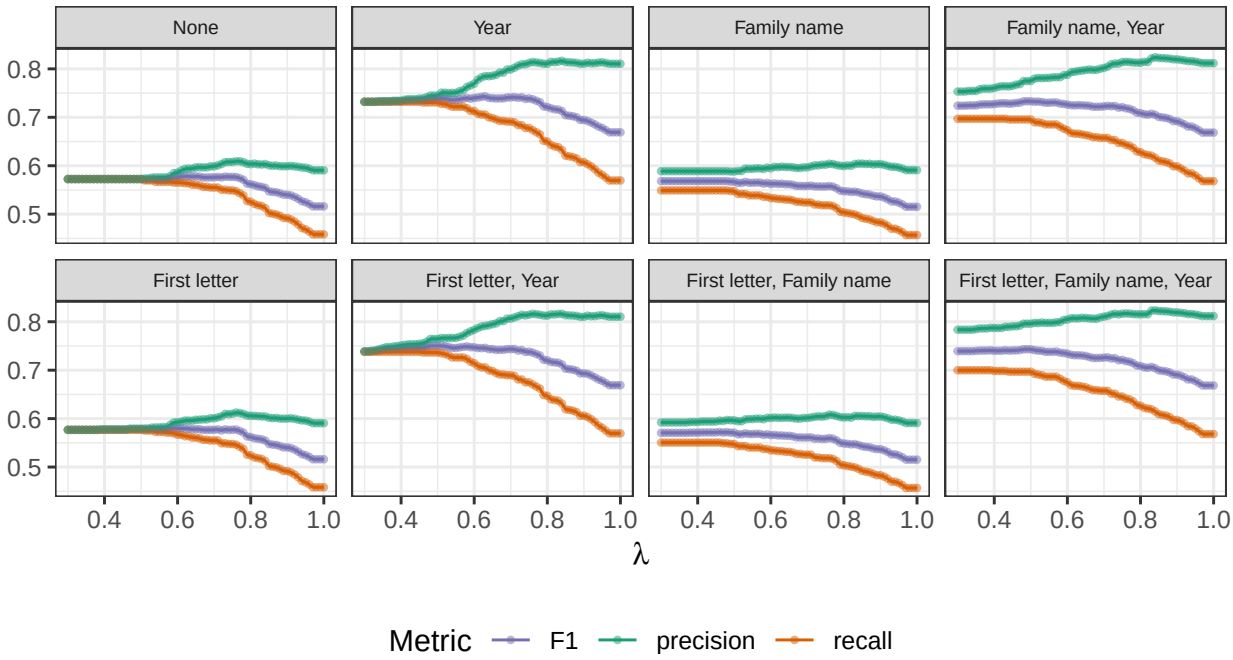


Figure C.1: Record Linkage Quality Under Alternative Blocking Strategies

Notes: The figure reports match quality measured by precision, recall, and the F1-score for alternative values of the string-distance parameter λ, which is normalized such that higher values correspond to greater name similarity, while lower values indicate more distant name matches. Blocking on first letter restricts comparisons to individuals sharing the same initial in the given name; blocking on family name uses harmonized surnames; and the year restriction requires that the recorded start year of manorial holding falls within the individual's observed lifespan.

LLM-Augmented Manor Linking Among the set of manor-events that matches to multiple noble individuals, we consider a set of candidate noble individuals whose Jaccard similarity is no less than 0.1 of the highest Jaccard similarity of manor-event p. Among these candidate individuals we use language models to find a single match. We use two pieces of information that we do not account for in the "normal" automatic matching. 1. The biography of the candidate noble individuals, 2. the full description of the manor-event as well as the preceding manor-event (i.e. information about the previous owner of the manor). Typically, ChatGPT is able to exploit information on e.g. spouses in the respective texts to pin down the correct owner. Figure C.2 illustrates the trade-off between recall and precision in action and shows that the LLM augmentation strictly improves both recall and precision in the manual sample, increasing the F1 score from 0.75 to 0.81.

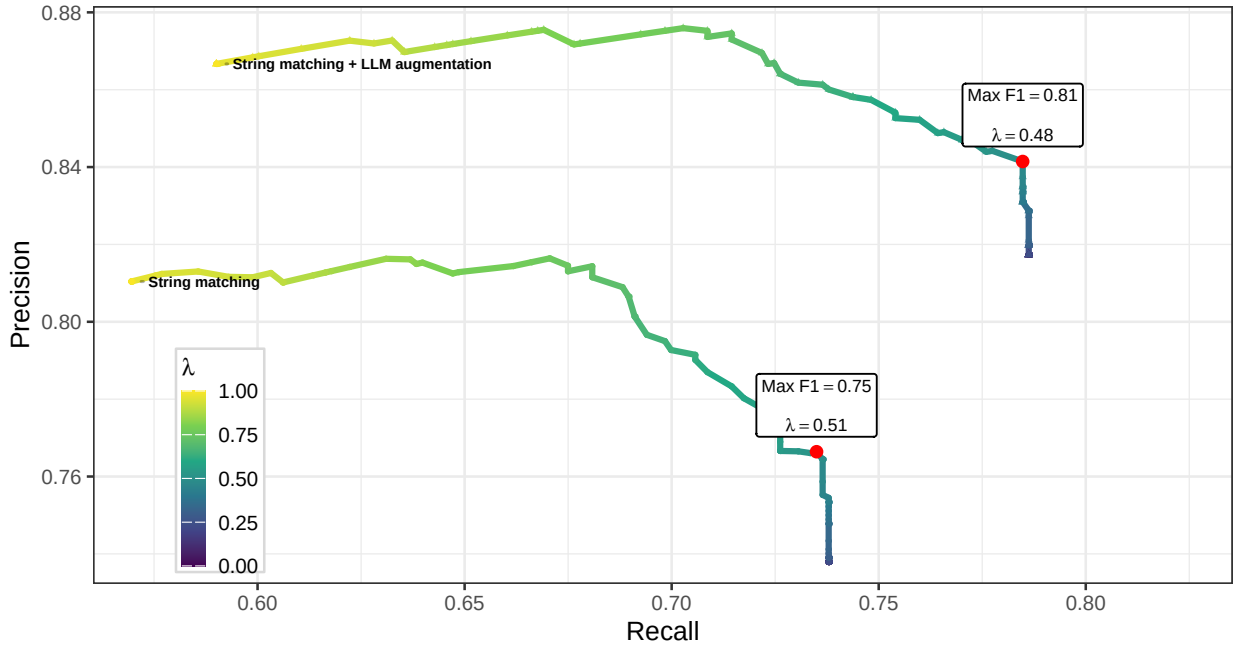


FIGURE C.2: MATCH QUALITY: PRECISION-RECALL CURVE

Notes: This figure shows match quality in a manually matched sample of 772 manor entries, measured by recall (the share of true matches successfully recovered) and precision (the share of proposed matches that are correct), and the F1 score (their harmonic mean). Matching uses our preferred method, which blocks on the first letter of the first name and restricts candidates to nobles alive at the manor-entry start year. λ denotes the Jaccard similarity.

C.3 LLM-Augmented Partner Linking

We begin by extracting partner names from the biographical text. For each individual, we concatenate the extracted first and family names into a single string and treat these as linkage targets. We then link these targets to the universe of nobility individuals using a two-stage procedure. In the first stage, we apply a fuzzy matching based on the Jaro–Winkler string distance after standardizing names (lowercasing and removing punctuation/whitespace) and blocking on the first letter of the first name, just as how we match manors to owners. For each target partner name we keep the closest candidate(s) within the block and keep only candidate links with distance below a chosen threshold (0.15).

In the second stage, we discriminate between these candidate links using an LLM that exploits the richer biographical information. For each focal individual and the associated set of candidate partners, we provide the model with (i) the focal record's name and biography text and (ii) each candidate's name, biography text, and the string distance from stage one. The model returns a probability-like score in [0,1] for each candidate together with a brief justification. We then assign the focal individual to the candidate with the highest score, provided that this score exceeds 0.9.

From the manually matched entries discussed in Appendix C.1, we also observe 164 couples. The automated partner identifies 151 (92%) of these couples.

C.4 LLM-Extraction of Key Variables

Each entry in our dataset on the Swedish nobility contains a short biography with relevant information but lacks a consistent structure, making regular expressions unsuitable for reliable extraction. To address this limitation, we employ the GPT-4o mini large language model via the OpenAI Completions API to identify and extract the desired variables. For each individual, the procedure involves supplying a system prompt followed by the corresponding biography. The prompts are listed below.

Occupation Extraction

This text potentially contains information about occupations or titles held by one individual.
Extract the occupations or titles that the individual held and any associated years if these are stated.

Important rules:
– Do not include education.
– Do not include workplace employer or place information.
– Do not translate occupations or titles and keep the original language as written Swedish or English.
– The text may sometimes refer to a partner a child or a parent. Exclude occupations or titles that belong to someone else.

Year rules using the string field year:
– If a single year is stated return that year for example 1712.
– If an interval is stated for example 1712–1716 1712–1716 or 1712 till 1716 return only the start year for example 1712.
– If a decade or approximation is stated for example 1680-talet ca 1712 or omkr 1712 return it exactly as written without conversion.
– If no year is stated set year to Unknown.

If no occupations are found return an empty array occupations empty.
If an occupation or title is mentioned but cannot be resolved use Unknown.

Return only JSON that conforms to the required schema.

Education Extraction

This text potentially contains information about education undertaken by one individual.
Extract the education or educations completed by the individual and any associated years if these are stated.
Provide both the field of education and the place of education when available.

Note that education may sometimes refer to a partner a child or a parent of the individual. In such cases do not include it.
Do not include occupations and do not include any military titles or military duties.

Return only JSON that conforms to the required schema.

Partner Extraction

This text potentially contains information about partners or spouses of the focal individual.
Extract the partner or partners of the focal individual and if stated the year of marriage.

Rules:
– Only include partners of the focal individual and not partners of children parents siblings or other individuals.
– If multiple marriages or partners are listed output one object per partner.
– Output names exactly as written and do not translate.
– If a marriage date is given as a full date extract only the year YYYY.
– If the marriage year is not stated set year to Unknown.
– If a first name or family name is missing set that field to Unknown.
– If no partner is mentioned return an empty array partners empty.

Return only JSON that conforms to the required schema.

Death Place Extraction

From the following historical passages, extract the place of death. Follow these rules: If the name of the place does not uniquely identify a location, use other geographical or contextual information provided in the passage to infer which place the name is most likely referring to. Assume the place of burial (if mentioned) is the same as the place of death unless explicitly contradicted. Provide as detailed information as possible about the location. In particular, try to infer the correct parish and region. Output the place as a single string with the place name and where it is located (parish, region, etc.), or "Unknown" if not resolvable. Do NOT output anything else than this. Here is the text:

Death Place Coordinates Extraction

Try to provide the coordinates for this place.
Output the result as a JSON object with:
"latitude": The geographic latitude or "Unknown" if not resolvable.
"longitude": The geographic longitude or "Unknown" if not resolvable.
Here is the place:

Birth Place Extraction

From the following historical passage, extract the place of birth.

Your task is to extract:
– place of birth

Rules:
– If the place name is ambiguous, infer the most likely location using context.
– Assume the place of baptism equals place of birth unless explicitly contradicted.
– Try to infer parish and region if possible.
– Output a single string describing the place.
– If not resolvable, return Unknown.

Return only JSON that conforms to the required schema.

Birth Place Coordinates Extraction

Try to provide the coordinates for this place.
Output the result as a JSON object with:
"latitude": The geographic latitude or "Unknown" if not resolvable.
"longitude": The geographic longitude or "Unknown" if not resolvable.
Here is the place:

Birth Year & Death year Extraction

This text potentially contains information about the birth year and death year of one focal individual.
Your task is to extract:
– birth year (YYYY)
– death year (YYYY)

Rules:
– Only extract years that refer to the focal individual in the passage.
– If the passage mentions years for a partner child parent or other person ignore those.
– Prefer explicit birth and death years.

– If not explicitly stated you may infer a year using nearby evidence such as baptism year funeral or burial year or other clearly linked events but only if this evidence strongly indicates the birth or death year.
– Output must be exactly four digits (YYYY) or the string Unknown.
– Do not output ranges months or full dates.

– Ensure the year lies between 1000 and 2025. In very rare instances the year may fall outside this interval. In such cases you may infer a plausible year but only if the extracted year clearly lies outside this range.

Return only JSON that conforms to the required schema.

War Participation Extraction

You are an information extraction system.

Task:
Given a biographical passage (often Swedish), determine whether there is fairly clear textual evidence that the individual personally went on a military campaign, expedition, or war-related journey, including foreign military service.

Output (strict):
Return ONLY JSON matching this schema:

{
"went_to_war": 0 or 1,
"evidence": "short quote or paraphrase from the text that justifies the decision (max ~25 words), or empty string if went_to_war=0"
}

Decision rule:
Set went_to_war = 1 ONLY if the passage explicitly indicates personal participation in a war-related movement, campaign, battle, siege, expedition, or service in an army or navy in a way that implies the person was present or active. Otherwise set went_to_war = 0.

Critical constraint:
Do NOT infer war participation from military rank or title alone (e.g., “överste”, “kapten”, “amiral”, “hövitsman”) unless the text also describes campaign participation, movement, or command in a specific operation.

Positive triggers (examples, not exhaustive):
– Campaign or field service: “följde . . . i fält”, “i fält”, “fälttåg”, “på tåget mot . . . ”, “tågade” or “marscherade till . . . ” (clearly military)
– Participation in operations: “deltog i . . . ”, “landstigningen på . . . ”, “slaget vid . . . ”, “träffning”, “belägring(en)”
– Command in a named operation: “förde befäl vid . . . ”, “anföll . . . ”, “slog . . . ”, “erövrade . . . ” in clear war context
– Naval expedition or service: “på skeppet . . . ”, “i . . . flotta” when tied to an expedition or operation
– Capture or surrender: “kapitulation(en) i . . . ”, “gav sig fången”, “krigsfånge”
– Foreign military service: explicit statements such as “begav sig utrikes för att söka utländsk krigstjänst”, “tjänst i . . . armé eller flotta”, “i främmande härar” (counts even if no battle is named)

Negative examples (went_to_war = 0):
– Only lists titles or offices without any campaign or operation wording.
– Only indicates the person was a soldier or officer in general, without describing participation.
– Mentions wartime period generally without linking the person to participation.

Evidence field:
– If went_to_war = 1: include one short supporting excerpt or a tight paraphrase naming the operation, campaign, or service.
– If went_to_war = 0: evidence must be "".

If ambiguous, default to went_to_war = 0.

Return only JSON that conforms to the required schema.

We provide an example illustration of how the LLM extracts information in the case of

occupation, education and death place for Johan De la Gardie (1582) in Figure C.3.

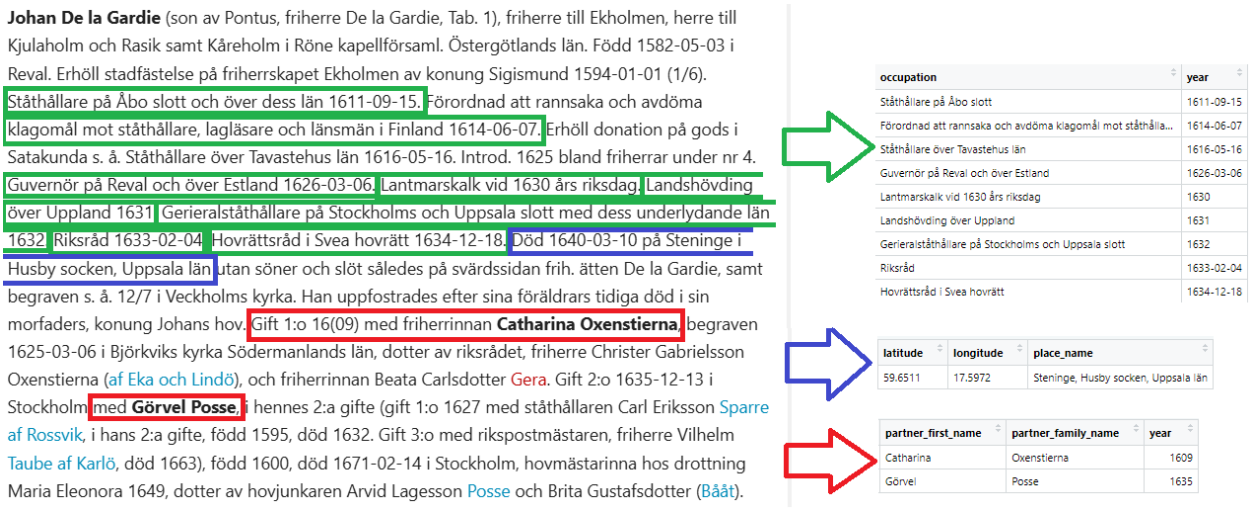


FIGURE C.3: ILLUSTRATION OF EXTRACTING KEY INFORMATION USING LLM

Notes: This figure displays how the LLM extracts occupation, partners and place of death from biographical text data in the case of Johan De la Gardie (1582).

C.5 Variable Definitions

Below we describe the variables that we use as outcome variables in the analysis. These variables are all derived from the biographical text using large language models.

Wealth

Number of Manors Owned We define manors owned as the number of manors ever owned during an individual's lifetime. This limits issues due to uncertainties regarding exact years of ownership. The drawback is that an individual that changes properties across her lifetime is treated as equally wealthy as an individual that owns many manors in a given year. Individuals who are not matched to the database *Historical Manors in Sweden and Finland* are assigned zero Manors owned.

Demographic

Died in Episcopal City Equal to 1 if coordinates of death place are within boxes that we define for the following cities: Stockholm, Uppsala, Linköping, Skara, Strängnäs, Västerås, Växjö, Lund, Göteborg, Karlstad, Härnösand, Visby, Kalmar, Åbo.

Died in Stockholm. Equal to 1 if coordinates of death place are within boxes that we define for Stockholm (a roughly 25×25 box around Stockholm city centre).

Military

Military officer. Equal to 1 if an individual held an "occupation" with the 3-digit HISCO code 583. In our data, the most common occupations in this category are Lieutenant (sv. Löjtnant), Captain (sv. Kapten), Ensign (sv. Fänrik), Sergeant (sv. Sergeant), Major (sv. Major), Second Lieutenant (sv. Underlöjtnant), Lieutenant Colonel (sv. Överstelöjtnant), Rittmeister / Cavalry Captain (sv. Ryttmästare), and Cadet (sv. Kadett). Note that these occupations correspond primarily to commissioned officer ranks, which were disproportionately held by members of the nobility during this period.

Went to War Equal to 1 if the biographical text contains explicit evidence that the individual personally participated in a military campaign, expedition, battle, siege, or foreign military service as defined by the LLM.

Marriage

Any Partner Equal to 1 if an individual had a partner (noble or not) as defined by the LLM.

Noble Partner | Partner. Equal to 1 if an individual had a partner that we successfully match to another noble individual in our dataset as described in Appendix C.3. In other words, it is only defined conditional on having a partner.

Age at First Marriage Age at first marriage, independent of partner's nobility status.

Wealth (father-in-law) Number of manors owned by the father-in-law. Defined conditional on partner being noble.

Human capital and career outcomes

HISCAM We construct a measure of occupation based status in the following way. Each word of each string that the language model identifies as an occupation is matched to

HISCO, a historical occupation classification, using a key from raw occupation-strings to HISCO codes constructed in the SwedPop research infrastructure (SwedPop, 2026). Each HISCO occupation is then linked to a unidimensional social stratification index, HISCAM, based on a key constructed by Lambert et al. (2013). For each individual, we assign the highest HISCAM score that the individual had that was not associated with a military rank. Johan de la Gardie in Figure C.3 serves as an illustrative example. GPT finds nine occupations of which the following words are occupations in SwedPop: Guvernör, hovrättsråd, landshövding, riksråd, ståthållare and åbo. Both riksråd and hovrättsråd have a HISCAM value of 99 (the highest value), and he is hence assigned 99.

Tax Capacity Based on the occupational information, we derive an occupation-based proxy for tax capacity. The measure is based on a one-time tax levied in 1604 to finance a ransom payment to Denmark, under which the Crown assigned occupations to 26 taxable classes. We use a large language model to classify occupations into these categories. Using the tax-capacity values reported in Andersson and Molinder (2024) and the occupational descriptions in their Appendix I, we map our LLM-extracted occupations, and hence individuals, into tax-capacity bins.

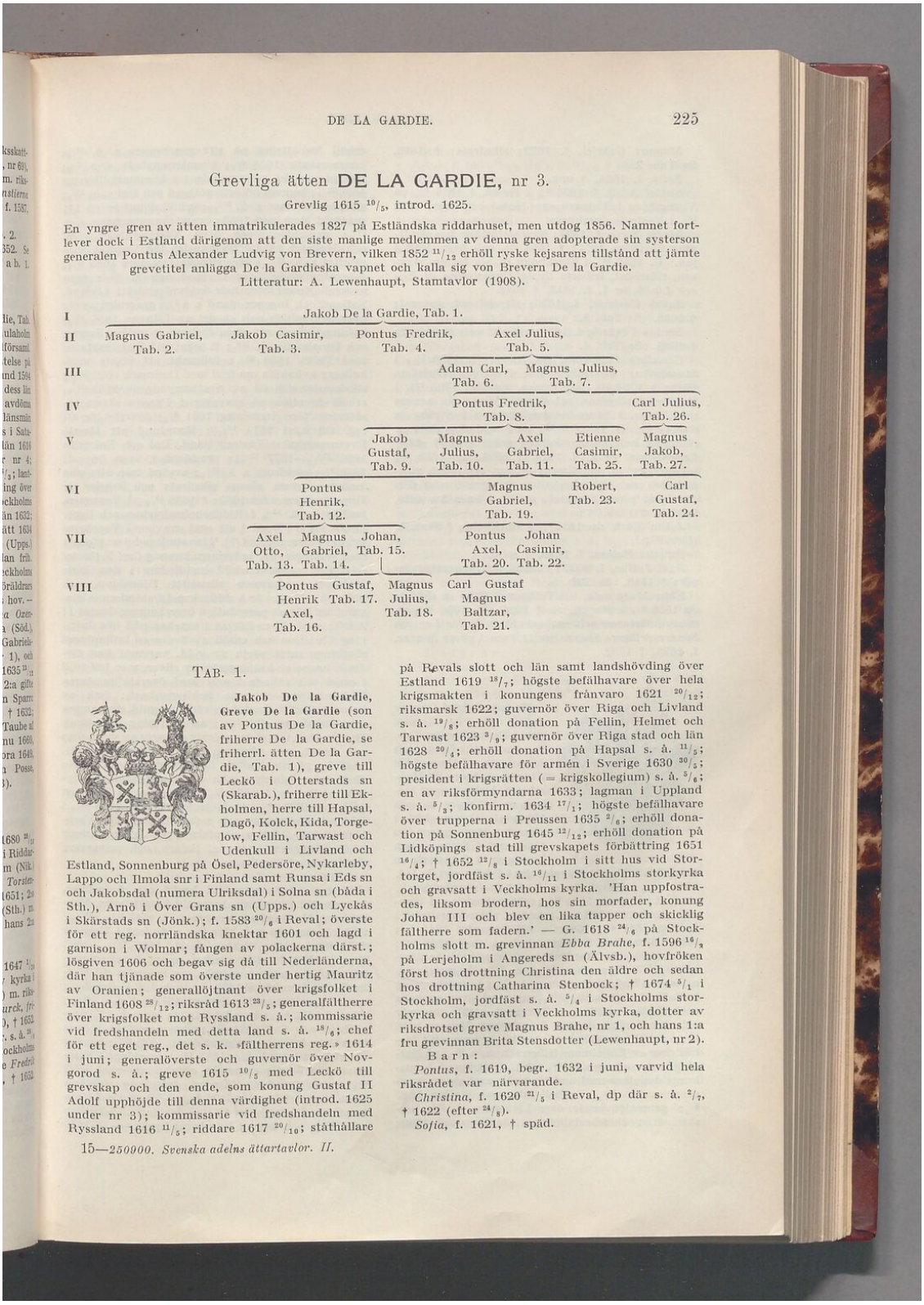
Student Equal to 1 if an individual was enrolled as a student. This information primarily comes from student records and mostly lacks information on field of study. Furthermore, among the nobility it was common to register children as students at a young age without necessarily implying that they actually pursued higher studies.

Administrative Clerical Equal to 1 if an individual ever had an occupation with one of the following 2-digit HISCO codes: 11, 30, 32, 33, 39. The most common LLM extracted occupation strings (rough translation to english) are Chancellor (sv. Kanslist), Secretary (sv. Sekreterare), Amanuensis (sv. Amanuens), Clerk (sv. Kammarskrivare), Civil Servant (sv. Tjänsteman), Bookkeeper (sv. Bokhållare), Copyist (sv. Kopist), Cameralist / Treasury Official (sv. Kamrerare), Registrar (sv. Registrator), Cashier (sv. Kassör), and Office Clerk (sv. Kontorsskrivare).

Administrative Elite Equal to 1 if an individual ever had an occupation with one of the following 2-digit HISCO codes: 12, 20, 31. The most common LLM extracted occupation strings (rough translation to english) are Chamberlain (sv. Kammarherre), Valet de chambre (sv. Kammarjunkare), Deputy District Judge (sv. Vice häradshövding), District Judge

(sv. Häradshövding), Extraordinary Notary (sv. Extra ordinarie notarie), Assessor (sv. Assessor), and Privy Council Member (sv. Riksråd).

C.6 Data Excerpts



DE LA GARDIE. 225

Grevliga ätten **DE LA GARDIE**, nr 3.

Grevlig 1615 $^{10}/_{5}$, introd. 1625.

En yngre gren av ätten immatrikulerades 1827 på Estländska riddarhuset, men utdog 1856. Namnet fortlever dock i Estland därigenom att den siste manlige medlemmen av denna gren adopterade sin systerson generalen Pontus Alexander Ludvig von Brevern, vilken 1852 $^{11}/_{12}$ erhöll ryske kejsarens tillstånd att jämte grevetitel anlägga De la Gardieska vapnet och kalla sig von Brevern De la Gardie.

Litteratur: A. Lewenhaupt, Stamtavlor (1908).

I Jakob De la Gardie, Tab. 1.

II Magnus Gabriel, Tab. 2. — Jakob Casimir, Tab. 3. — Pontus Fredrik, Tab. 4. — Axel Julius, Tab. 5.

III Adam Carl, Tab. 6. — Magnus Julius, Tab. 7.

IV Pontus Fredrik, Tab. 8. — Carl Julius, Tab. 26.

V Jakob Gustaf, Tab. 9. — Magnus Julius, Tab. 10. — Axel Gabriel, Tab. 11. — Etienne Casimir, Tab. 25. — Magnus Jakob, Tab. 27.

VI Pontus Henrik, Tab. 12. — Magnus Gabriel, Tab. 19. — Robert, Tab. 23. — Carl Gustaf, Tab. 24.

VII Axel Otto, Tab. 13. — Magnus Gabriel, Tab. 14. — Johan, Tab. 15. — Pontus Axel, Tab. 20. — Johan Casimir, Tab. 22.

VIII Pontus Henrik Axel, Tab. 16. — Gustaf, Tab. 17. — Magnus Julius, Tab. 18. — Carl Gustaf Magnus Baltzar, Tab. 21.

TAB. 1.

Jakob De la Gardie, Greve De la Gardie (son av Pontus De la Gardie, friherre De la Gardie, se friherrl. ätten De la Gardie, Tab. 1), greve till Leckö i Otterstads sn (Skarab.), friherre till Ekholmen, herre till Hapsal, Dagö, Kolck, Kida, Torgelow, Fellin, Tarwast och Udenkull i Livland och Estland, Sonnenburg på Ösel, Pedersöre, Nykarleby, Lappo och Ilmola snr i Finland samt Runsa i Eds sn och Jakobsdal (numera Ulriksdal) i Solna sn (båda i Sth.), Arnö i Över Grans sn (Upps.) och Lyckås i Skärstads sn (Jönk.); f. 1583 $^{20}/_{6}$ i Reval; överste för ett reg. norrländska knektar 1601 och lagd i garnison i Wolmar; fången av polackerna därst.; lösgiven 1606 och begav sig då till Nederländerna, där han tjänade som överste under hertig Mauritz av Oranien; generallöjtnant över krigsfolket i Finland 1608 $^{28}/_{12}$; riksråd 1613 $^{23}/_{5}$; generalfälttherre över krigsfolket mot Ryssland s. å.; kommissarie vid fredshandeln med detta land s. å. $^{18}/_{6}$; chef för ett eget reg., det s. k. »fältherrens reg.» 1614 i juni; generalöverste och guvernör över Novgorod s. å.; greve 1615 $^{10}/_{5}$ med Leckö till grevskap och den ende, som konung Gustaf II Adolf upphöjde till denna värdighet (introd. 1625 under nr 3); kommissarie vid fredshandeln med Ryssland 1616 $^{11}/_{5}$; riddare 1617 $^{20}/_{10}$; ståthållare på Revals slott och län samt landshövding över Estland 1619 $^{18}/_{7}$; högste befälhavare över hela krigsmakten i konungens frånvaro 1621 $^{20}/_{12}$; riksmarsk 1622; guvernör över Riga och Livland s. å. $^{19}/_{8}$; erhöll donation på Fellin, Helmet och Tarwast 1623 $^{3}/_{9}$; guvernör över Riga stad och län 1628 $^{20}/_{4}$; erhöll donation på Hapsal s. å. $^{11}/_{5}$; högste befälhavare för armén i Sverige 1630 $^{30}/_{5}$; president i krigsrätten (= krigskollegium) s. å. $^{5}/_{6}$; en av riksförmyndarna 1633; lagman i Uppland s. å. $^{5}/_{3}$; konfirm. 1634 $^{17}/_{1}$; högste befälhavare över trupperna i Preussen 1635 $^{2}/_{6}$; erhöll donation på Sonnenburg 1645 $^{12}/_{12}$; erhöll donation på Lidköpings stad till grevskapets förbättring 1651 $^{16}/_{4}$; † 1652 $^{12}/_{8}$ i Stockholm i sitt hus vid Stortorget, jordfäst s. å. $^{16}/_{11}$ i Stockholms storkyrka och gravsatt i Veckholms kyrka. 'Han uppfostrades, liksom brodern, hos sin morfader, konung Johan III och blev en lika tapper och skicklig fältherre som fadern.' — G. 1618 $^{24}/_{6}$ på Stockholms slott m. grevinnan *Ebba Brahe*, f. 1596 $^{16}/_{9}$ på Lerjeholm i Angereds sn (Älvsb.), hovfröken först hos drottning Christina den äldre och sedan hos drottning Catharina Stenbock; † 1674 $^{5}/_{1}$ i Stockholm, jordfäst s. å. $^{5}/_{4}$ i Stockholms storkyrka och gravsatt i Veckholms kyrka, dotter av riksdrotset greve Magnus Brahe, nr 1, och hans 1:a fru grevinnan Brita Stensdotter (Lewenhaupt, nr 2).

Barn:

Pontus, f. 1619, begr. 1632 i juni, varvid hela riksrådet var närvarande.

Christina, f. 1620 $^{21}/_{5}$ i Reval, dp där s. å. $^{2}/_{7}$, † 1622 (efter $^{24}/_{8}$).

Sofia, f. 1621, † späd.

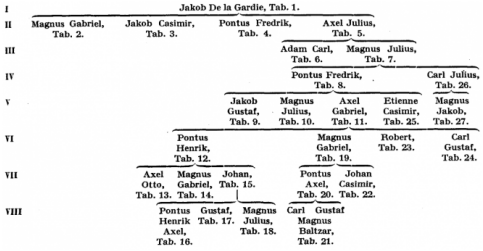
FIGURE C.4: EXTRACT FROM ELGENSTIERNA (1925–1936): FAMILY TREE FOR *DE LA GARDIE, NR. 3*

De la Gardie nr 3

Grevliga ätten De la Gardie nr 3

Grevlig 1615-05-10, introducerad 1625.

En yngre gren av ätten immatrikulerades 1827 på Estländska riddarhuset, men utdog 1856. Namnet fortlever dock i Estland därigenom att den siste manlige medlemmen av denna gren adopterade sin systerson generalen Pontus Alexander Ludvig von Brevern, vilken 1852-12-11 erhöll ryske kejsarens tillstånd att jämte grevetitel anlägga De la Gardieska vapnet och kalla sig von Brevern De la Gardie.



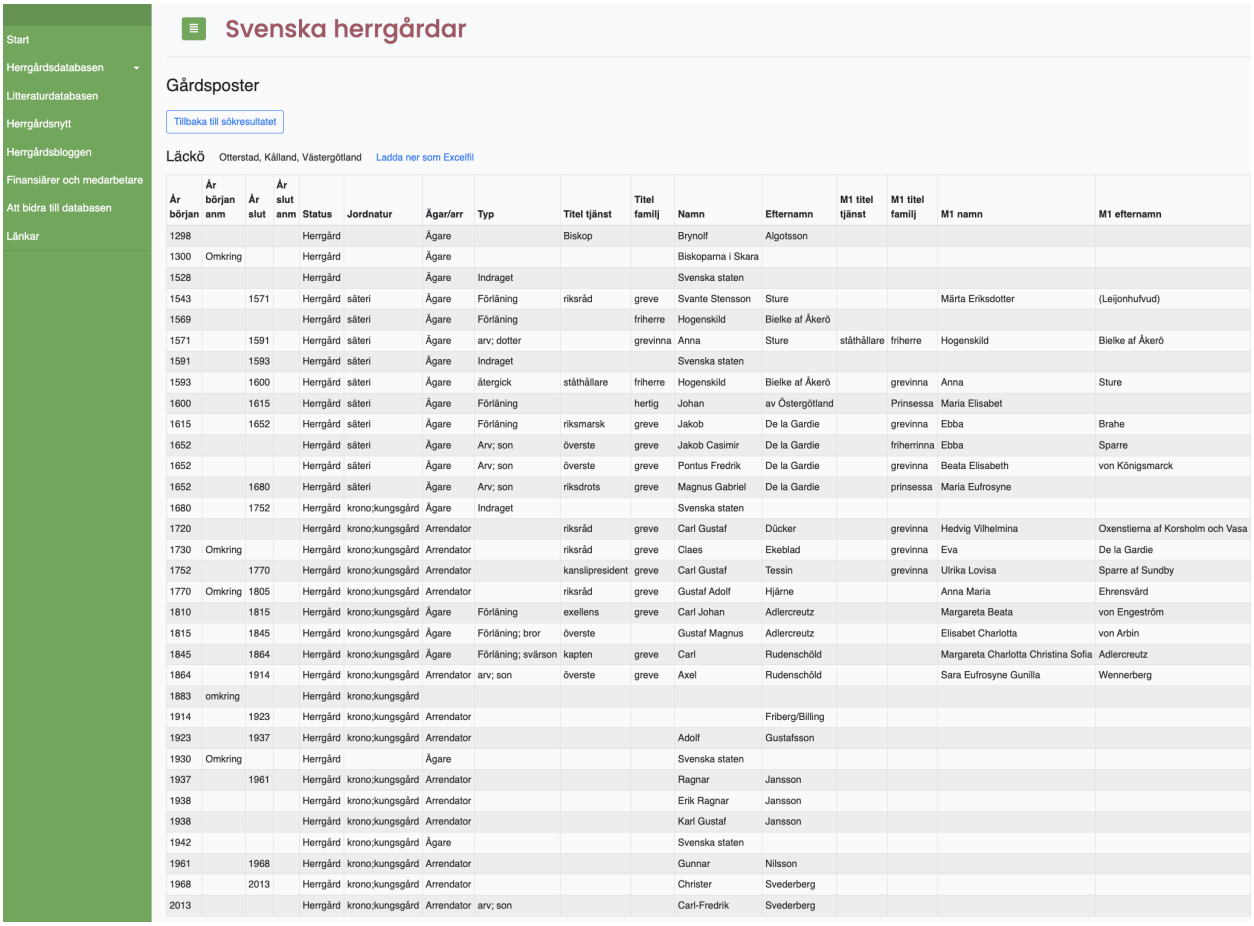
TAB 1

Jakob De la Gardie, Greve De la Gardie (son av Pontus De la Gardie, friherre De la Gardie, se friherrl, ätten De la Gardie, Tab. 1), greve till Leckö i Otterstads socken, Skaraborgs län, friherre till Ekholmen, herre till Hapsal, Dagö, Kolck, Kida, Torgelow, Fellin, Tarwast och Udenkull i Livland och Estland, Sonnenburg på Ösel, Pedersöre, Nykarleby, Lappo och Ilmola socknar i Finland samt Runsa i Eds socken och Jakobsdal (numera Ulriksdal) i Solna socken båda i Stockholm, Arnö i Över Grans socken, Uppsala län och Lyckås i Skärstads socken, Jönköpings län. Innehade 1622 säteriet Redberga i Marka sn Född 1583-06-20 i Reval. Överste för ett regemente norrländska knektar 1601 och lagd i garnison i Wolmar. Fången av polackerna i Wolmar. Lösgiven 1606 och begav sig då till Nederländerna, där han tjänade som överste under hertig Mauritz av Oranien. Generallöjtnant över krigsfolket i Finland 1608-12-28. Riksråd 1613-05-23. Generalfältherre över krigsfolket mot Ryssland 1613. Kommissarie vid fredshandeln med detta land 1613-06-18. Chef för ett eget regemente, det sk »fältherrens reg.» 1614-06-00. Generalöverste och guvernör över Novgorod 1614. Greve 1615-05-10 med Leckö till grevskap och den ende, som konung Gustaf II Adolf upphöjde till denna värdighet (introducerad 1625 under nr 3). Kommissarie vid fredshandeln med Ryssland 1616-05-11. Riddare 1617-10-20. Ståthållare på Revals slott och län samt landshövding över Estland 1619-07-18. Högste befälhavare över hela krigsmakten i konungens frånvaro 1621-12-20..Riksmarsk 1622. Guvernör över Riga och Livland 1622-08-19. Erhöll donation på Fellin, Helmet och Tarwast 1623-09-03. Guvernör över Riga stad och län 1628-04-20. Erhöll donation på Hapsal 1628-05-11. Högste befälhavare för armén i Sverige 1630-05-30. President i krigsrätten (= krigskollegium) 1630-06-05. En av riksförmyndarna 1633. Lagman i Uppland 1633-03-05. Konfirmerat 1634-01-17. Högste befälhavare över trupperna i Preussen 1635-06-02. Erhöll donation på Sonnenburg 1645-12-12. Erhöll donation på Lidköpings stad till grevskapets förbättring 1651-04-16. Död 1652-08-12 i Stockholm i sitt hus vid Stortorget, jordfäst 1652-11-16 i Stockholms storkyrka och gravsatt i Veckholms kyrka. 'Han uppfostrades, liksom brodern, hos sin morfader, konung Johan III och blev en lika tapper och skicklig fältherre som fadern.' Gift 1618-06-24 på Stockholms slott med grevinnan **Ebba Brahe**, född 1596-03-16 på Lerjeholm i Angereds socken Älvsborgs län, hovfröken först hos drottning Christina den äldre och sedan hos drottning Catharina Stenbock, död 1674-01-05 i Stockholm, jordfäst 1674-04-05 i Stockholms storkyrka och gravsatt i Veckholms kyrka, dotter av riksdrotset greve Magnus Brahe, och hans 1:a fru grevinnan Brita Stensdotter (Lewenhaupt).

Barn:

- **Pontus**, född 1619, begraven 1632-06-00, varvid hela riksrådet var närvarande.
- **Christina**, född 1620-05-21 i Reval, döpt där 1620-07-02, död 1622 (efter 24/8).
- **Sofia**, född 1621, död späd.
- **Magnus Gabriel,** född 1622. Riksdrots. Död 1686. Se Tab. 2

Figure C.5: Extract from Adelsvapen (2015): Entry corresponding to Figure C.4



År början	År början anm	År slut	År slut anm	Status	Jordnatur	Ägar/arr	Typ	Titel tjänst	Titel familj	Namn	Efternamn	M1 titel tjänst	M1 titel familj	M1 namn	M1 efternamn
1298				Herrgård		Ägare		Biskop		Brynolf	Algotsson				
1300	Omkring			Herrgård		Ägare				Biskoparna i Skara					
1528				Herrgård		Ägare	Indraget			Svenska staten					
1543		1571		Herrgård	säteri	Ägare	Förläning	riksråd	greve	Svante Stensson	Sture			Märta Eriksdotter	(Leijonhufvud)
1569				Herrgård	säteri	Ägare	Förläning		friherre	Hogenskild	Bielke af Åkerö				
1571		1591		Herrgård	säteri	Ägare	arv; dotter		grevinna	Anna	Sture	ståthållare	friherre	Hogenskild	Bielke af Åkerö
1591		1593		Herrgård	säteri	Ägare	Indraget			Svenska staten					
1593		1600		Herrgård	säteri	Ägare	återgick	ståthållare	friherre	Hogenskild	Bielke af Åkerö		grevinna	Anna	Sture
1600		1615		Herrgård	säteri	Ägare	Förläning		hertig	Johan	av Östergötland		Prinsessa	Maria Elisabet	
1615		1652		Herrgård	säteri	Ägare	Förläning	riksmarsk	greve	Jakob	De la Gardie		grevinna	Ebba	Brahe
1652				Herrgård	säteri	Ägare	Arv; son	överste	greve	Jakob Casimir	De la Gardie		friherrinna	Ebba	Sparre
1652				Herrgård	säteri	Ägare	Arv; son	överste	greve	Pontus Fredrik	De la Gardie		grevinna	Beata Elisabeth	von Königsmarck
1652		1680		Herrgård	säteri	Ägare	Arv; son	riksdrots	greve	Magnus Gabriel	De la Gardie		prinsessa	Maria Eufrosyne	
1680		1752		Herrgård	krono;kungsgård	Ägare	Indraget			Svenska staten					
1720				Herrgård	krono;kungsgård	Arrendator		riksråd	greve	Carl Gustaf	Dücker		grevinna	Hedvig Vilhelmina	Oxenstierna af Korsholm och Vasa
1730	Omkring			Herrgård	krono;kungsgård	Arrendator		riksråd	greve	Claes	Ekeblad		grevinna	Eva	De la Gardie
1752		1770		Herrgård	krono;kungsgård	Arrendator		kanslipresident	greve	Carl Gustaf	Tessin		grevinna	Ulrika Lovisa	Sparre af Sundby
1770	Omkring	1805		Herrgård	krono;kungsgård	Arrendator		riksråd	greve	Gustaf Adolf	Hjärne			Anna Maria	Ehrensvärd
1810		1815		Herrgård	krono;kungsgård	Ägare	Förläning	exellens	greve	Carl Johan	Adlercreutz			Margareta Beata	von Engeström
1815		1845		Herrgård	krono;kungsgård	Ägare	Förläning; bror	överste		Gustaf Magnus	Adlercreutz			Elisabet Charlotta	von Arbin
1845		1864		Herrgård	krono;kungsgård	Ägare	Förläning; svärson	kapten	greve	Carl	Rudenschöld			Margareta Charlotta Christina Sofia	Adlercreutz
1864		1914		Herrgård	krono;kungsgård	Arrendator	arv; son	överste	greve	Axel	Rudenschöld			Sara Eufrosyne Gunilla	Wennerberg
1883	omkring			Herrgård	krono;kungsgård										
1914		1923		Herrgård	krono;kungsgård	Arrendator					Friberg/Billing				
1923		1937		Herrgård	krono;kungsgård	Arrendator				Adolf	Gustafsson				
1930	Omkring			Herrgård		Ägare				Svenska staten					
1937		1961		Herrgård	krono;kungsgård	Arrendator				Ragnar	Jansson				
1938				Herrgård	krono;kungsgård	Arrendator				Erik Ragnar	Jansson				
1938				Herrgård	krono;kungsgård	Arrendator				Karl Gustaf	Jansson				
1942				Herrgård	krono;kungsgård	Ägare				Svenska staten					
1961		1968		Herrgård	krono;kungsgård	Arrendator				Gunnar	Nilsson				
1968		2013		Herrgård	krono;kungsgård	Arrendator				Christer	Svederberg				
2013				Herrgård	krono;kungsgård	Arrendator	arv; son			Carl-Fredrik	Svederberg				

Figure C.6: Extract from Ulväng (2024): Manor *Läckö* in Västergötland, Sweden