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# *Gender and Work*

*a research project at the Department of History, Uppsala University*

## *Defining work*

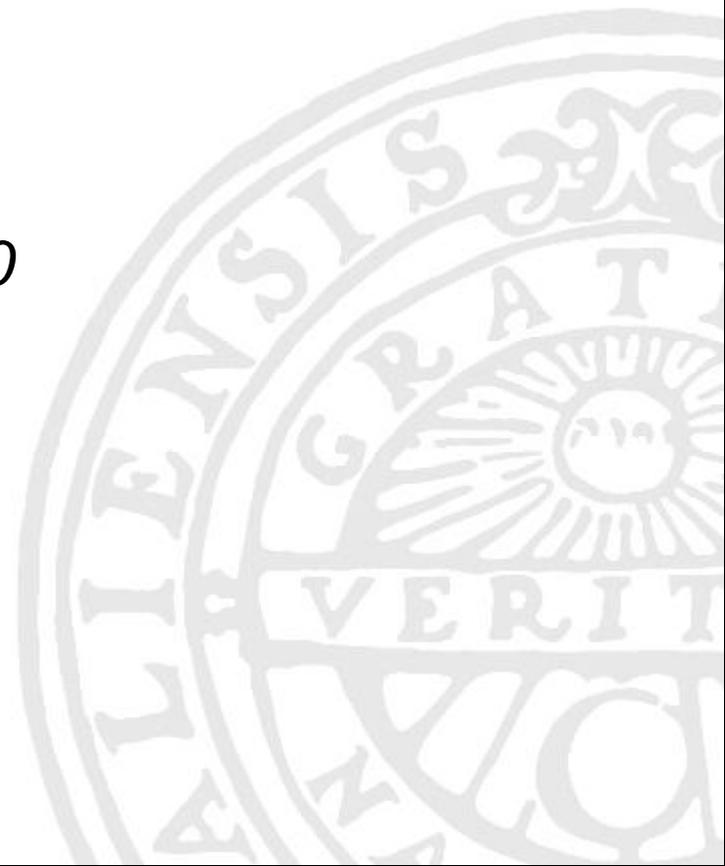
*Maria Ågren*

*Cambridge 23-24 Sept. 2010*



Vetenskapsrådet

*Knut och Alice  
Wallenbergs  
Stiftelse*





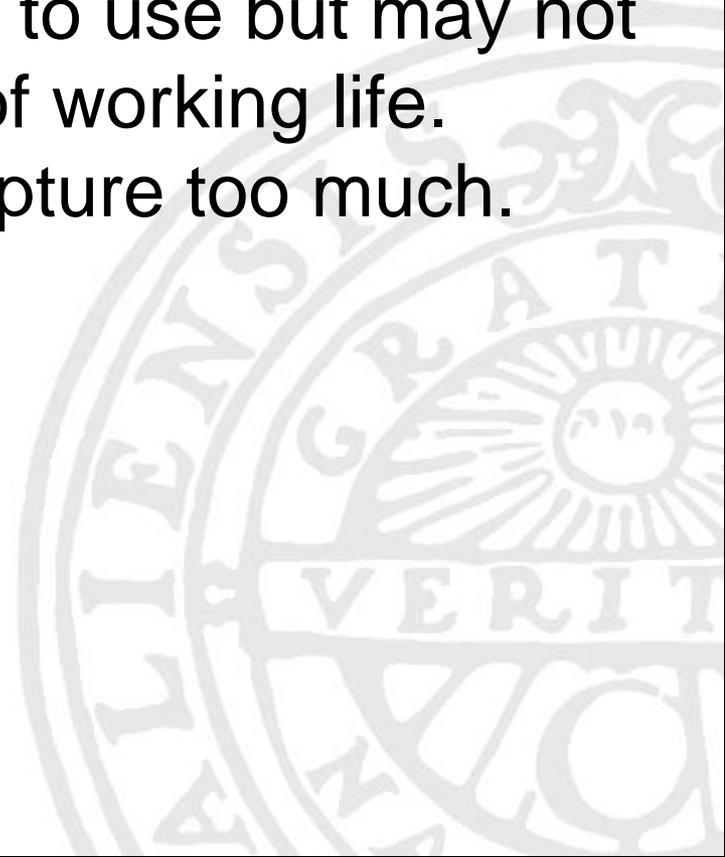
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*It is difficult to define work*

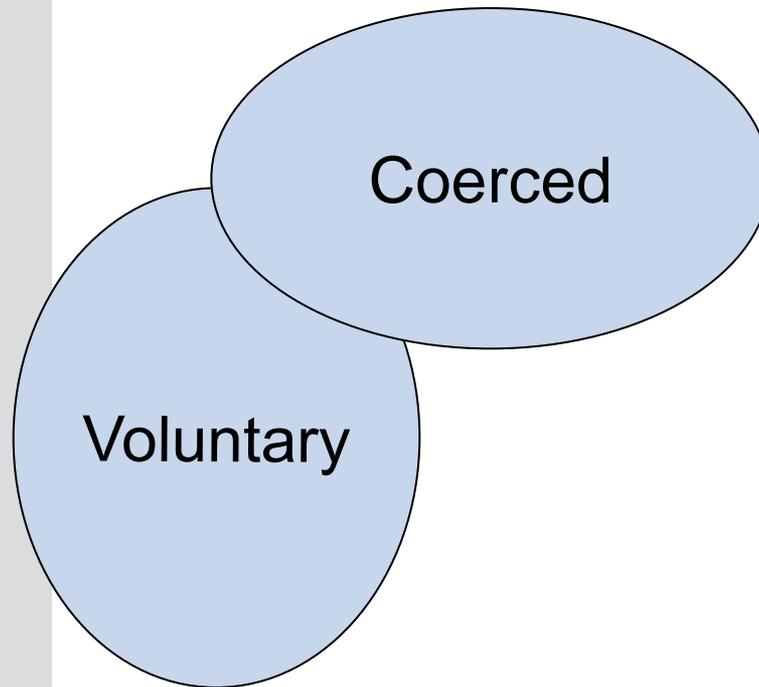
Narrow definitions easier to use but may not do justice to complexity of working life.  
Broad definitions may capture too much.





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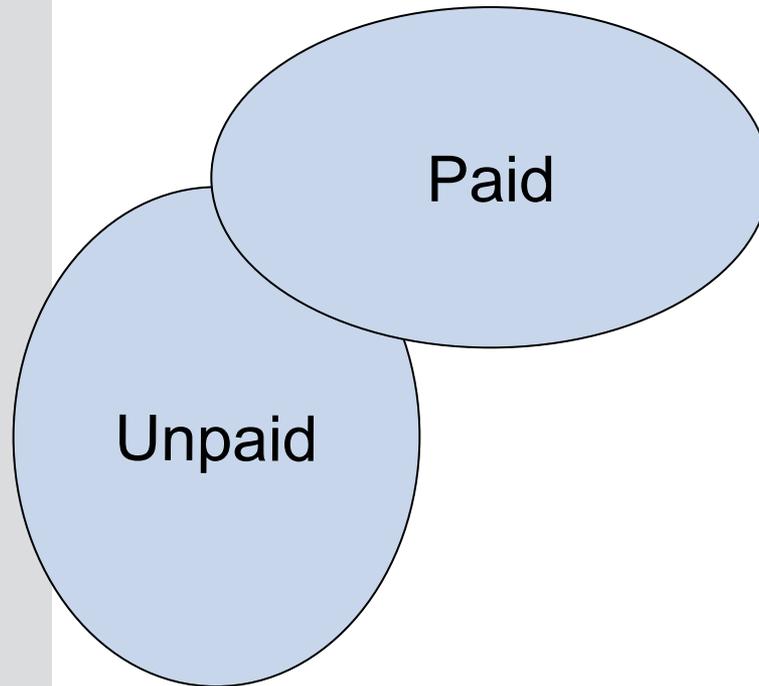


- A peasant who has to deliver his tax in the form of charcoal he has produced himself – coerced work?
- A peasant who has to deliver any extra charcoal he has to a designated recipient, but against payment – voluntary work?



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- A married woman who prepares food in her own home without being paid and without having occupational title – work?
- A man who does something for the community, regarded as honorary – work?





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## *Rural areas = fewer occupational descriptors*

- **Hammerdal judicial district, 1649-58 (ca 600 inhabitants)**
- Unique male occupational descr. 14
- Unique female occupational descr. 1
- Unique female marital descr. 4
- Character of title unclear 1  
(e.g. "lapp")



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## *Urban areas = more occupational descriptors*

- **Örebro judicial district, 1756 (ca 2200 inhabitants)**
- Unique male occupational descr. 85
- Unique female occupational descr. 3
- Unique female marital descr. 4
- Sex unclear, or character of activity unclear 6



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## *What were the female occupational descriptors?*

- **Örebro 1756:**
- Piga, kaffekokerska, krögare [= maid servant, coffee brewer, tavern keeper]
- **Hammerdal 1649-58:**
- "laggstadd jänta" = piga [= maid servant]



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*Sources give us descriptions of what people did/how they used their time*

- **Examples Hammerdal:**
  - Repair public road
  - Transport hay from meadows
  - Organise military transports, including feeding men & horses
- **Examples Örebro:**
  - [widow wishes to] have a grocer's shop
  - [widow receives permission to] bake bread [although not member of bakers' gild]



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## *Our definition of work:*

”Time-use with the  
purpose of making a  
living”

## *Which means ...*

- That paid and unpaid, coerced and voluntary, male and female forms of work are included
- What is excluded? E.g. to enjoy music; ”to take part in the celebrations to welcome the new governor”; etc