

ARTICLE

Wartime segmentation: Class, gender, and nation in the marketing of consumers, Sweden 1939–1945

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In line with recent research that regards the Second World War as a “defining moment” rather than a temporary disruption to the development of consumer societies, this paper explores how consumers were imagined in nonbelligerent Sweden. The main empirical source material consists of business-to-business advertisements from newspaper and magazine publishers aimed at potential advertisers. There, publishers portrayed their readers as suitable consumers, and, given that the division of the press constituted the main infrastructure for reaching different consumer groups, this is interpreted as a key to understanding market segmentation processes. The findings show how geographical, demographic, and psychological factors were considered in optimizing advertising influence and reaching classed and gendered target audiences. Although the segmentation process consolidated during the war, focusing on stable, large consumer groups, the imagined consumer also underwent fundamental changes, combating anxiety and despair through dreams of both future and present patriotic consumption.

Keywords: advertising; gender history; second world war; consumption

Introduction

Conditions for market segmentation, i.e., dividing consumers into sub-categories based on characteristics such as gender, social class, and geographical parameters, changed drastically during World War II in both belligerent and nonbelligerent countries. In Sweden, the advertising market initially experienced significant losses, while the demand for news media

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increased sharply.¹ Concurrently, there was a geographical and monetary reorganization of gendered purchasing power due to the conscription of men in working age and the recruitment of women into new workforce sectors.² Additionally, with rationing and increased state control of production, consumption and thus marketing possibilities were limited. While advertising in many countries had undergone a professionalization process during the interwar period, featuring sophisticated ideas about different target groups and ideas of “consumer engineering,” i.e., how to impact demand with new marketing techniques, the wartime market transformations presented challenges.³ The seriousness of the situation complicated the ideal of unabashedly promoting consumerism and tested assumptions about consumers.

World War II is increasingly acknowledged as a catalyst for broader consumer–cultural developments in the twentieth century, identified as a “defining moment” rather than a temporary disruption in the evolution of modern consumer society.⁴ As suggested by Hartmut Berghoff, before the onset of the war, most combatant nations had already witnessed the emergence of fundamental elements of mass production and distribution, with consumers evolving into a significant political factor. While wartime inherently involves a tension between military and civilian needs, the organization of consumption had become oriented toward nurturing consumer desires and aspirations, prevalent in both liberal democracies and dictatorial regimes.⁵ Similarly, in her study on Nazi Germany, Pamela Swett argues that commercial culture remained an active and meaningful sphere where “ideological claims about gender, race, the nation, urbanization, consumption, business, health, morality, and pleasure were tested.”⁶

Although, as demonstrated by Stefan Schwarzkopf, sophisticated segmentation ideas were already in practice during the interwar period in both the UK and the United States, and despite the significant reorganization of many countries due to mass mobilization and the war economy, surprisingly, little attention has been devoted to World War II consumer segmentation.⁷ Furthermore, the exploration of the wartime consumer has predominantly centered on belligerent countries, with less attention given to those whose economies were profoundly affected but were not directly involved in the conflicts. Adopting a nonbelligerent perspective not only enhances our understanding of the economic and cultural consequences of the global crisis beyond the military conflicting parties but also illuminates how preparing for and fearing conflict in an internationally integrated economy affected marketing practices.

This study distinguishes itself in a third aspect by focusing on a business-to-business market often overlooked in the realm of market segmentation—specifically, the sale of advertising space in newspapers and magazines. This market made use of the infrastructure of print media, which was divided into distinct publications directed to different audiences based on for example region, gender, and political affiliation. The product sold on the market was

1. Sandlund, “Beredskap och Repression,” 362.

2. Almgren, *Kvinnorörelsen*, 47–48; see also Overud, *I beredskap*.

3. Åström Rudberg & Husz, “The Technicians.”

4. Berghoff et al, *The Consumer*; Clampin, *Advertising*; Adkins Covert, *Manipulating*; Stole, *Advertising at War*.

5. Berghoff, “Consumption,” 6–7.

6. Swett, *Selling Under the Swastika*, 6.

7. See Schwarzkopf, “Discovering the Consumer.”

advertising space, but in that transaction, readers were also commodified. The advertisements that were directed at producers and advertisers in this market reveal a central phase of the performing of markets: the creation of consumers. Therefore, we specifically study how readers were discursively transformed into consumers of different segments and how they were marketed and “sold” in the context of the nonbelligerent war economy.

The analysis of this article is divided into two major parts. After the sections on methodical considerations, theoretical points of departure, and a contextual section, the first empirically based part offers an overview of how the portrayed market segments changed during the war by quantitatively categorizing the business-to-business advertisements. The second empirical part consists of an in-depth content analysis of both advertisements and editorial content in advertising trade journals and uses intersectionality as a tool to understand how gendered and classed consumer–citizens were discursively enacted. This two-step model offers a way to understand how different consumer groups were transformed and to place these changes in relation to the major quantitative shifts that occurred during the war.

Selection of sources and methodological considerations

The primary source material for the study is drawn from Swedish trade journals aimed at advertisers and business professionals: *Affärsekonomi*, *Annonseren*, *Reklamnyheterna*, and *Futurum*. These publications, though sharing a target audience of advertising professionals, also had distinctions. *Affärsekonomi* [Business economics], the largest among them, enjoyed a broad readership encompassing business leaders and various advertising professionals.⁸ *Annonseren* [The Advertiser] was tailored for the members of the Swedish advertisers’ association, while *Reklamnyheterna* [Advertising news] adopted a newspaper-like style and *Futurum* [Future] took a more esthetic approach.⁹ The editorial content of the trade journals has been used to trace discussions about different consumer groups within the advertising vernacular, and a comprehensive content analysis of the advertisements was conducted to trace changes in described segments over time.

Already at the turn of the century 1900, publishing houses tried to attract advertisers to their periodicals by collecting statistical data on their subscribers and readers in Sweden and elsewhere. As Schwarzkopf stresses, this type of research was biased to present their subscribers as “well-to-do folk susceptible to print advertising,” and as Roland Marchand argues, these portraits of the consumer “were often skewed by the desire to entice the advertiser.”¹⁰ However, this very circumstance suggests that publishers were aware of the importance of reaching audiences

8. *Affärsekonomi* was published with 16 issues per year, half under the headline “Advertising, Sales and Distribution” (the rest about business organization and offices). The influential economists Oskar Sillén and Gerhard Törnqvist held seats on the editorial board, something that certainly gave the journal academic credibility. In the mid-1950s the circulation was ca 5,500, earlier records have not been able to track. See Hermansson, *I persuadörens*, 5. *TS fackpressbok 1956*, 26.

9. In the mid-1950s, *Annonseren* (then under the name *Info*) had a circulation of ca. 4,200. See *TS Fackpressbok*, 1957, 101. *Reklamnyheterna* had a circulation of just under two thousand in the middle of the 1950s, see *TS Fackpressbok 1956*, 70.

10. Marchand, *Advertising*, 77.

with purchasing power and that they with this coconstructed the notion of the desirable consumer. In addition, retailers and manufacturers encouraged this development because they wanted to know what audiences they would reach depending on the medium.¹¹

In the Swedish context, reliable circulation figures were available from the 1940s onwards; however, exaggerations were possibly still occurring.¹² Therefore, advertisements cannot be used to detect either the dissemination of publications or the actual affluence of their readership. Instead, advertisements are analyzed as bearers of certain discourses about consumer groups. Since these were commercial market discourses, we assume that the description of a certain readership was put together to appeal to the advertiser's desire to reach certain preferred consumers. In both the quantitative and qualitative parts, we draw inspiration from Stuart Hall's interpretation of Foucauldian discursive formations, where he defines them as "a group of *statements* which provide a language for talking about [...] a particular topic at a particular moment in time."¹³ Following this, we quantitatively extracted and qualitatively analyzed the material, focusing on statements related to the readership.¹⁴

Since some of the trade journals stopped publishing advertisements or stopped being published during the war, only one of the journals, *Affärsekonomi*, has been used for the quantitative calculations. All advertisements for every other year during the longer period 1931–1951 and every year from 1939–1945 have been coded into different categories. Consumer groups that appeared often were coded into the broad categories of *all social classes*, *well-off audiences*, *workers*, *agricultural audiences*, and *women*, while groups that appeared seldom were coded into "other."¹⁵ The categorization is based on the primary audience claimed to be reached, allowing us to track predominant categorizations over time. The full quantitative dataset is compiled in the attached appendix.

The consumer and segmented markets

The premise that social classes, genders, and nations are the result of historical processes rather than inevitable divisions or essences has been discussed in material, social, and cultural

11. Schwarzkopf, "In Search of the Consumer," 80.

12. See Jonsson, "Störst"; Advertisement for T.U., *Affärsekonomi* 1942, no. 15, 844.

13. Hall, *Representation*, 44. Emphasis added.

14. See also Downing Peters, *Stoutwear*, 193; Arnberg, "Selling," 146. These discussions about readers or consumer groups were not intended for the groups themselves. Instead, the statements, while connecting to broader discourses on gender and social class, were internal to the business relationship between publishers and advertisers.

15. The category of all social classes includes wordings such as "from all layers of society [alla samhällslager]," "read in all homes [i varje hem]," and the like. In the category of affluent classes, descriptions such as "affluent [burgna]," "rich [rika]," and "upper social classes [högsta samhällsklasserna]" were included. The categories of workers and farmers include statements such as "reaches all farmers [når alla jordbrukare]" and "newspaper for the working population [tidningen för det arbetande folket]." The category of women includes statements such as "women in industry [kvinnor i industrin]" and "affluent homemakers." The category of other includes various audiences such as "the family [familjen]," "popular movements [ideella rörelser]," and "teachers [lärare]." Advertisements without statements of the audience have been placed in the "no audience" category. When categories overlapped, the primary audience of the advertisement guided the categorization.

terms, but to a lesser degree also as being commercially informed. Therefore, this paper follows research that suggests that print–capitalism and mass media consumption have been central to imagining communities and citizenship historically and that the modern concept of the consumer—an integral part of (print) capitalism is a productive cultural construct that needs analysis.¹⁶ While Benedict Anderson’s seminal study mainly revolved around the rise and spread of texts in vernacular languages for the rise of a national sense, later periods with the massive spread of periodicals gave rise to different types of “imagined communities” on the basis not only of national identity but also of social class, gender, and regionality. To examine this, intersectionality is used to analyze the market relation between media actors and advertisers through the lens of social hierarchies (in this case, mainly citizenship, class, and gender) and how they are related and ascribed meaning in the sources. An intersectional perspective means that questions of, for example, how class has been gendered and how gender has been classed become central.¹⁷

Both commercial and political stakeholders have played important roles in creating the notion of the consumer and different undergroupings.¹⁸ As Lizbeth Cohen has highlighted, there was a transition from the 1930s and 1940s competing ideal types of the public-minded “citizen consumer” versus the more self-interested “purchaser citizen”, to the compromise of “the purchaser as citizen” who served the national interest of the postwar era of mass consumption and increasing segmentation in the US.¹⁹ Similar to Cohen, Richard Tedlow in different studies argues that the practice of market segmentation beyond mere measures of incomes and a very basic understanding of class cultures did not occur until the postwar period.²⁰ However, researchers like Schwarzkopf and Ronald A. Fullerton have in different studies questioned this periodization and show that market segmentation was practiced already in the interwar period and that other forms of market research using tax registers, census data, etc. were used even earlier on.²¹

However, our ambition here stretches beyond tracing the use of different marketing techniques, as we also study how notions of gender, class and citizenship play into these categorizations. In her exploration of the U.S. magazine market in 1900, for example, Ellen Gruber Garvey stresses how the weekly magazines served the interests of advertisers through editorial adaptation to commercial discourse. Consequently, the magazines early on actively constructed the reader—particularly the female reader—as a consumer.²² Marchand has also

16. See, e.g., Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 37–48; Couldry, Livingstone & Markham, *Media Consumption*, 104–120; Trentmann, *The Making*; Schwarzkopf, “Discovering the consumer.”

17. See McCall “The Complexity”; de los Reyes & Mulinari, *Intersektionalitet*; Tolvhed “Intersektionalitet.”

18. Ward, “Capitalism,” 201–203. The advent of market research in the interwar period made businesses move beyond mere guesswork or trial and error and meant a kind of scientification of business–consumer–relations. This type of effort to understand the marketplace was increasingly used and thus affected business and marketing decisions. In this way, Ward suggests, business and cultural ideals were melded. See also Smedberg, “En marknad.”

19. Cohen, *A Consumer’s*, 8, chapter 1–2 and 7.

20. See, e.g., Tedlow, *New and Improved*.

21. Schwarzkopf, “In Search of the Consumer,” 79; Schwarzkopf, “Discovering the Consumer,” Fullerton, “The Historical Development”; Fullerton, “Segmentation.”

22. Gruber Garvey, *The Adman*, 4.

stressed the importance of the construction of the consumer as feminine, and that conceptions of the general audiences revolved around the two broad categories during the interwar period —*mass* and *class*. The masses, however, were only those affluent enough to count as “citizen consumers,” sometimes not even most of the U.S. population. While advertisements for some products were for a smaller wealthy clientele (*class*), others needed to reach the broadest possible buying audience (*mass*) to become profitable. In the choice of media, Marchand suggests that “agencies and manufacturers paid close attention to the newspapers’ and magazines’ various claims for the class standing of their readers.”²³ Although certain advertising agencies differentiated homes into four different class categories, the distinction between class and mass was the choice of media for advertising a certain product rather than producing segment-differentiated copy.²⁴

Moving to World War II, the notion of the consumer was put under pressure and changed in most countries directly or indirectly involved in the conflict, although sometimes quite differently. Pamela Swett argues that unlike in the United States, where class differentiation was downplayed to create mass markets, advertisers in Nazi Germany did not replace depictions of peasants and workers with ideal middle-class families. Instead, she stresses, “National Socialist glorification of physical labor and the masculine Aryan body meant that heroic male workers and farmers remained staples in German ad culture.”²⁵ However, in the UK, the worker was by 1939 “eclipsed by the consumer” Clampin suggests. However, both Swett and Clampin stress in their respective studies, that advertising was an important part of everyday culture, reflecting continuity in contrast to the disruption of the war.²⁶

Mobilization and the advertising industry

Compared to World War I, the commercial infrastructure had changed in several ways, including new trade journals introducing new marketing methods, new education for advertising professionals, and new scientific knowledge about consumer habits and behavior with new initiatives to map and understand consumer behavior.²⁷ Given that Sweden was a small country on the European outskirts, marketers looked abroad to gain skills, and experience, and explore new technologies. There was intense Nordic cooperation, but Swedish advertising professionals also closely followed what happened in the international arena, especially in the United States.²⁸

Since radio broadcasts were monopolized by a public service corporation, the printed press was the main link between producers and the consuming audiences. The outbreak of the war meant a strained economy for advertisers and newspapers when consumer demand fell and advertising revenues were severely reduced, counting to 30 percent in the first three months of the war. The advertising market also reacted negatively to the occupation of Denmark and

23. Marchand, *Advertising*, 65.

24. Marchand, *Advertising*, 63-4.

25. Swett, *Selling under the Swastika*, 12.

26. Clampin, “Not the Least”; Swett, “Advertising.”

27. Smedberg, “En marknad”; Åström Rudberg & Husz, “The Technicians.”

28. Åström Rudberg & Kuorelahti, “We Have a”; see also Wahlström, *Amerikansk reklam*.

Norway in April 1940 but was stabilized in 1941.²⁹ This meant that even if the demand for news increased and circulation figures rose dramatically for both newspapers and magazines, several advertising-dependent publications experienced hardships, particularly at the beginning of the crisis.³⁰ Both publishers and the advertising industry also suffered from the loss of manpower, rising prices and salaries, and shortage of central resources such as ink.³¹ “Mercury puts on his War helmet” one of the largest advertising agencies Gumaelius however announced, promising that they could help in the recovery from the initial “devastating attack” of shortages and “buying panics.”³²

Elin Åström Rudberg has described the Swedish advertising industry representatives’ eagerness to embody their 1937 motto, “advertising serves society,” as they contacted the crisis authorities to offer their expertise at the beginning of the war.³³ This contact, as in other countries, resulted in extensive information and propaganda campaigns.³⁴ Analogous to belligerent countries, the advertising industry called for “business as usual” despite shortages to sustain interest in the products and keep alive trademarks.³⁵ Instead of seeing advertising as an invitation to consumption, commercial actors argued that consuming dreams also boosted morale and kept spirits up.³⁶ Newspapers and weeklies also saw themselves as important parts of the total defense in the same sense. In a 1939 advertisement (Figure 1) for *Skånska dagbladet*, advertising was illustrated as patriotic and as a physical counterweight to anxiety and despair:

Sound and well-planned advertising is in the current situation probably the most efficient counterweight to the anxiety and despair that more than anything can paralyze our trade and industry. Continued advertising, as if nothing happened—that is advertising that truly serves society. Austerity, on the contrary, is worrying for the buying public and aggravates the normal functions of our trade and industry.³⁷

This meant that the interest of commercial actors, i.e., business as usual, also was formulated as the public interest of keeping moods up and the wheels spinning. *Svenska dagbladet*

29. Figures from the Swedish Media Publishers’ Association discussed by Sandlund, “Beredskap och repression,” 287. Measured in another way, advertising expenditures of the whole economy dropped by one-third between 1935 and 1940, but the level in 1945 was 15 percent over the level in 1935 in fixed prices. Jonsson, *Pressen, reklamen*, 67.

30. The newspaper circulation counted to an increase of 40 percent between 1942–1949, magazines had comparable figures. 20–30 percent of weeklies’ incomes depended on advertising, and newspapers’ ca 50 percent. Jonsson, *Pressen, reklamen*, 25, 30, 49; Sandlund “Beredskap och repression,” 362.

31. Sandlund, “Beredskap och repression,” 280–283.

32. Advertisement in *Reklamnyheterna* 1939, no. 19, 3.

33. Åström Rudberg, *Sound and Loyal*, 168–169.

34. Lakomaa, “Consumer of Last”; see also Stole, *Advertising*; Clampin, *Advertising*; Fox, *Madison avenue*. Similar to other Nordic countries, Swedish advertising agencies had an agreement with the organized press, i.e., a cartel, to secure “sound and loyal competition.” Since state authorities were not considered ordinary advertisers, the campaigns were not covered by the agreement. However, as Åström Rudberg suggests, the cartel was nevertheless strengthened because state actors preferred to cooperate with already organized actors. See Åström Rudberg & Kourelahti, “We Have a,” 6; Åström Rudberg, *Sound and Loyal*, 166.

35. Åström Rudberg, *Sound and Loyal*, chapter 5; Gardeström, *Reklam*, chapter 7; Swett, *Selling under the Swastika*, 191; Fox, *Madison Avenue*, 32ff.

36. Arnberg, Glover & Sundevall, “På hemmafronten,” 487–489; Gardeström, *Reklam*, 181–201.

37. *Affärsekonomi* 1939, no. 16, 995.



Figure 1. Advertisement for *Skånska dagbladet* in *Affärsekonomi* 1939:16, 995.

expressed it similarly: “Life goes on ... after all we are still consumers, our ways of living have not changed a lot—we brush our teeth like before, wash, dress, read ... consume.”³⁸ The weekly *Hemmets journal* also asserted that they had an important mission to fulfill:

Considering the recent events out in the world, the different family members have the need for recreation and relaxation in a magazine that is not engaged only with war and misery. In this peaceful environment, Your sales argument and offers will come to their full right.³⁹

38. *Annonsören* 1940, no. 3–4, 7.

39. *Annonsören* 1939, no. 9–10, 9.

The recreation and relaxation that the weeklies offered were thus not only in relation to a stressful life but also during this period in relation to “these days of nerve war” as *Hemmets journal* described it elsewhere.⁴⁰ In this way, reading weeklies and their commercial messages was portrayed as a form of psychological recovery that would strengthen the “home front” at the same time as advertisers could gain new (or keep old) customers.

Segmenting the war

There was a continued discussion about segmentation (though not using the term) during the war. In a 1943 information pamphlet about advertising and inflation during the crisis, the leading researchers Gerhard Törnqvist and Sune Carlsson suggested that to facilitate large-scale industrial production, businesses could either *deepen* the market through increased sales to existing consumers or *broaden* the market by exploring new geographical areas or identifying new categories of buyers. They emphasized the essential role of advertising, stating: “In these days, it is considered almost impossible to introduce a product to a new market without first preparing the soil with the help of advertising.”⁴¹ In an even more explicit mode, Erik Roth from the publisher Åhlén & Åkerlund noted in 1943 that Sweden had numerous magazines and newspapers, each representing markets with diverse characteristics based on sex, age, social classes, marital status, occupations, habits, interests, living conditions, and living standards. Roth highlighted that weeklies were primarily read by women, youngsters, and children, whereas newspapers had their main readership among men.⁴²

Figure 2 depicts the patterns of represented segments that newspapers and magazines claimed to have as their readers, and thus were reachable via advertising in their respective medium. While claims of adverts reaching “all social classes” could be termed as clearly alluding to the masses, well-off audiences were only sometimes an upper or middle-class marker as the term was used in a broader sense by, for example, describing whole regions as well-off. Claiming that the readership was well-off was sometimes apparent efforts to counteract prejudice against certain groups and their perceived lack of purchasing power. Having said that, even if some adverts did not reflect the material wealth of the potential consumer, finding consumers who wanted and could afford to consume was of key importance for advertisers. The economist Harry Grönfors, for example, argued in 1944, that accounting for the circulation of a publication (the milli–millimeter price) was too primitive and obsolete. Instead, the advertiser should account for “what type of audience that reads his advertisements, and if it is plausible that the audience has interest in his goods, can afford and buy it, and how much of this audience that consume similar products.”⁴³ Tax payer’s incomes became indicators, and maps based on official statistics were published in the trade journals, one of the advertising agencies, e.g., published a “map of value [värdekarta]” geographically

40. *Annonsören* 1940, no. 5–6, 9.

41. Törnqvist & Carlsson, *Reklamens ekonomiska*, 9.

42. Erik Roth, “...och/eller veckopress,” *Annonsören* 1943, no 12, 6.

43. Harry Grönfors, “Enbart upplagan är inget mått,” *Annonsören* 1944, no. 1, 10.

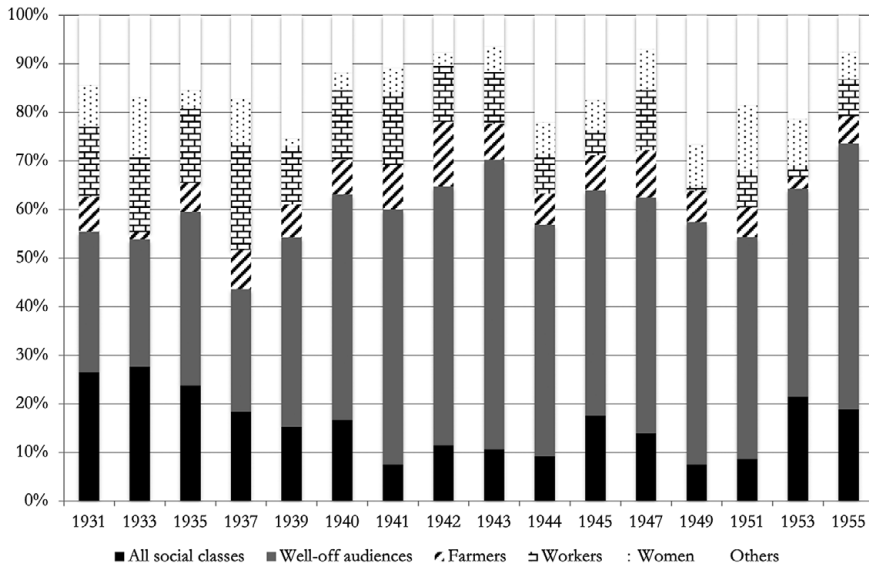


Figure 2. Represented segment/readership in advertisements marketing advertising space in newspapers and magazines 1931–1955.

Note: Compiled by the authors, source *Affärsekonomi* 1931–1955.

plotting the purchasing power.⁴⁴ As shown in Figure 2, well-off audiences increasingly became a group said to be reached through various publications and the largest segment during the war.

Figure 2 shows how the decline in advertisement for all social classes, which started after 1933, continued during the war, reached a low in 1941, and experienced some increase toward the end of the war in 1945. Simultaneously, the number of advertisements directed at well-off audiences increased after 1940, reached a high in 1943, and thereafter experienced a decline. The fact that the two categories were not mutually exclusive becomes evident when reading advertisements where readers could be characterized as being from all social classes and the well-off at the same time. It shows how the advertisements stressed the fact that even if the readership stemmed from all social classes, it still possessed purchasing power. In addition, both workers and farmers were described as well-off in phrasings like “workers and farmers with high purchasing power [köpstarka arbetare och bönder].” Nevertheless, the figure shows how the category of farmers, apart from a peak in 1942, and the category of workers, apart from a slight decrease in 1944 and 1945, remained relatively stable during the period, whereas there was some more movement within the categories of women and “others.”

Given the sample size, the small changes, and the categories overlapping, the figure should be analyzed with caution. However, the decline of the category of all social classes might indicate a hesitation toward describing the people as a compilation of classes rather than one unity during wartime. This, in turn, does not necessarily mean that reaching a mass audience

44. See *Affärsekonomi* 1939, no. 12, 748.

was abandoned. What stands out from the quantitative assessment of the various segments claimed to be reached is the nonchange in relation to the serious wartime disruptions of the consumer culture.⁴⁵ Although the “home front” gained increased importance and women got increased incomes, for example, women as a category did not alter much. Understanding the limited quantitative change and how consumers were qualitatively created in the advertisements is therefore the focus for the following analysis.

Well-off consumers

Marchand argues that most US advertisers defined the market for their products as a relatively select audience of the upper and middle classes. However, they still struggled to understand the “class audience” since they considered consumers essentially female and led by emotionality.⁴⁶ Douglas B. Ward has put forward for the same national context that marketers early on discussed the value of reaching families that could count as “leaders of consumption.” If these families were consuming in a certain way, the argument was that other members of the same community would soon copy their consuming pattern such as a taste for branded products. This meant that it was not only necessary to find the affluence as such, but also to reach an influential audience in a two-step process to reach the masses.⁴⁷ This also meant that the white, upper- and middle-class population in the US was favored by advertisers and marketing professionals as ideal consumers.⁴⁸

Although the “leaders of consumption” idea of trickling down was seldom expressed explicitly in the studied material, several newspapers and magazines stressed the importance of reaching the upper and middle classes also as a way of reaching broader populations. The association of Swedish conservative newspapers [*Svenska högerpressens förening*], for example, not only claimed to reach affluent audiences but also that these were extra valuable:

In turbulent times with difficulties to assess the market, it is the stable purchasing power that an advertiser should try to reach with his advertising. During uncertain circumstances that currently characterize Swedish business, it is of uttermost importance to a national advertiser that he makes sure to reach the consumer categories whose purchasing power is affected the least by the crisis, i.e., the most well-off social groups. [...] A right-wing newspaper’s value is in addition almost always larger than what appears from a simple comparison of circulation figures.⁴⁹

The quoted passage can be interpreted as a call to advertisers to prioritize caution, particularly by emphasizing the primacy of class over mass, in accordance with Marchand’s terminology.

45. It is worth mentioning that advertisements selling the consuming family increased during the period 1939 to 1945 from one to two mentions per year to five to eight mentions per year at the end of the war. As with the other categories, overlaps exist with descriptions such as claiming to reach well-off-, worker-, or agricultural families. The creation of the family as a consumer unit increased in popularity after the war, simultaneously as the worker category diminished. However, family is not a class or gender category, and although the family unit is increasingly mentioned, it does not become included in our categories.

46. Marchand, *Advertising*, 72.

47. Ward “Capitalism,” 214–215.

48. Ward, “Capitalism,” 218.

49. *Affärsökonomi* 1939, no. 12, 855.

Although these arguments were also prevalent in the interwar period, they were invoked in the direct context of the war, suggesting a call for a particular kind of vigilance. Moreover, sometimes the “leaders of consumption” idea was expressed in the sense that newspapers were said to be read by leading figures of certain local communities and that they in turn put pressure on local retailers.⁵⁰ To please this type of consumer was therefore important. Sometimes this was connected to the political stance of the newspapers. *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* (SDS) could, for example, they stated (Figure 3), be found at every businessman’s table in the region: “[A]lmost all managers in Skåne are regular SDS readers, and the newspaper serves his interests.”⁵¹ According to the evening paper *Allehanda*, it was read by people with a relatively high income: “The majority of the *Allehanda* readers is at the top, where not only the purchasing power is the greatest, but also where the initiative when it comes to lead paths of consumption is the greatest.”⁵²

Class and mass were often expressed as a question of the *quality* versus *quantity* of the readers. For example, *Svenska dagbladet* argued that the most important question for the advertiser was not how many readers an advertisement got, but how many of them had the time and money to act on the impulses given by its advertisements.⁵³ The association of Swedish conservative newspapers had an advertisement under the headline: “It is not only the circulation figures that have something to say.” Knowing how many readers a certain newspaper had was of course important information, as the copy stated, but even more important for advertisers was to know who the readers were. Conservative newspapers were read daily by the most affluent categories of people they claimed, subscribers were therefore also qualified customers.⁵⁴

In relation to turbulent times, the upper and middle classes were by conservative and liberal newspapers continually described as the safest consumer groups. *Göteborgs morgonpost*, for example, illustrated the purchasing power of their audience with a person made out of money: “In the current situation, it is of uttermost importance to reach the categories of consumers, who despite the condition still have a stable purchasing power.”⁵⁵ Along the same line, the conservative newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* argued that now more than ever, there was a need to choose the right advertising forum: “It pays to advertise now, but only in the forums that really give value for money.”⁵⁶

The concepts of class, quality, and “leaders of consumption” were also illustrated and personified. In a full-page advertisement, *Skånska Dagbladet* (Figure 4) claimed to reach “the Purchasing Power family”:

Mr Purchasing Power can, like in this case, be a well-to-do farmer, but he can just as well be a diligent craftsman, a reputable trader, an influential municipal official, an enterprising industry leader or another successful businessman.⁵⁷

50. See, e.g., *Annonssören* 1939, no. 1–2, 7.

51. *Annonssören* 1941, no. 4.

52. *Annonssören* 1944, no. 1, 9.

53. *Annonssören* 1942, no. 1.

54. *Annonssören* 1942, no. 12.

55. *Annonssören* 1941, no. 3.

56. *Annonssören* 1941, no. 4.

57. *Annonssören* 1942, no. 10.

SDS återfinnes på varje
FÖRETAGARES BORD

Praktiskt taget varje chef och större företagare i Skåne prenumererar på SDS, vilken mer än någon annan tidning tillgodoser hans intressen. På varje chefsbord ligger "Sydsvenskan", vars första sida är industriens speciella annonssida — den sida som först fångar läsarens uppmärksamhet och därför har både annons- och affischvärde! Betänk ovanstående vid planerandet av Er annonsering, eller då Ni prenumererar på en tidning för Ert företags räkning.

SDS:s medelbruttopprika 1940	
pr vardag	44,900
pr söndag	97,375
pr utgivningsdag	52,837

SYDSVENSKA DAGBLADET
SNÄLLPOSTEN
Rikstidningen för Sydsvetige

OBS! SDS ÄR DEN ENDA SYDSVENSKA TIDNINGEN MED FULLSTÄNDIG HANDELSIDA

Figure 3. Advertisement for *Sydsvenska dagbladet* in *Annonssören* 1941: 4.

In the above quotation, it is clear how the social class was gendered as male-driven, but this also stands out as an example of how the family was attributed to increasing importance as a consuming unit during the war. The illustration shows the whole family waiting for the postman to deliver the newspaper, suggesting that all family members could be relevant as consumers. The well-off family was thus idealized rather than portrayed as affected by the war in the sense of curbed consumption and a drafted husband.⁵⁸

Just as in the interwar period and the example above, the countryside was often described as prosperous. Newspapers sometimes underscored the fertility of the soil of their region and implied that this would also spill over to the purchasing power of the potential consumers there. Sometimes newspapers also certainly used it as a way to counteract preconceptions about consumer society being an urban phenomenon. In one of the western regions, consumption needs were rising according to one newspaper situated there: "The time of subsistence economy is over. A modern, awake generation with their eyes open to the demands of the time is dominating the countryside. Their needs are fully comparable with those of urban citizens and their monetary ability to realize them are good."⁵⁹

58. On some occasions the three social groups (I, II, and III) as categorized by Statistics Sweden were used. The newspaper *Halland*, for example, claimed to have readers among social group no I, consisting of property owners, industrialists, land owners, and government officials. All the named groups were illustrated as men in suits. *Affäreskonomi* 1943, no. 12, 677.

59. *Affäreskonomi* 1939, no. 12, 694.



Med Sk.D. träffar Ni
familjen KÖPKRAFT

Herr Köpkraft kan som i detta fallet vara en välbärgad lantbrukare, men han kan lika gärna vara en idog hantverkare, en ansedd handlande, en inflytelserik kommunalman, en driftig industriledare eller en annan framgångsrik affärsman.

Gemensamt för dem alla är emellertid, att de ha sin utkomst i Sveriges rikaste landsända och tillhöra Skånska Dagbladets stora läsekrets.

Enligt AB. Tidningsstatistikens undersökningar täcker nämligen Skånska Dagbladet 42 % av hushållen inom Malmö tidningsområde, den största täckningsprocent någon rikstidning i södra Sverige kan uppvisa.

Malmö tidningsområde omfattar 88.100 hushåll med en sammanlagd inkomst enligt årets taxering överstigande 473 miljoner kronor, d. v. s. en medelinkomst av 5,300 kronor per hushåll och år.

Familjen Köpkraft representerar ett av dessa tusentals hushåll i Skåne, som Ni träffar genom regelbunden annonsering i Skånska Dagbladet.

Medelnettopplaga under första halvåret 1942
46 397 ex, varav 39.717 prenumerantex.

Figure 4. Advertisement for *Skånska dagbladet* in *Annonssören* 1942:10.

Agriculture needed to scale up to compensate for closed trade and the following increase in domestic demand. Publications in more rural areas therefore quite naturally claimed that their audiences were stable consumers during the war, and the countryside and especially farmers'

essential societal importance for the nation was stressed.⁶⁰ *Skånska dagbladet* hence asked rhetorically, “Has there been a shift in the purchasing power?” The state of time had brought transpositions and regroupings of the functions of society, they stated. “Just like a huge army but with the peaceful task of securing our people’s livelihood in times of trouble,” they described the farmers of their region: “Every grain means new capital, new purchasing power.”⁶¹

The role of workers in mass consumption

David Clampin has held forward for the British case, that advertisers found an unexpected ally in the Social democratic vision of egalitarianism through consumption and the realities of the wartime system that combined planning and collectivism with civil liberties.⁶² Given that the social democrats had held power in Sweden (in a minority government or coalition) since 1932, except for a few months, it certainly became a natural political movement to relate to for advertising professionals. As Petter Tistedt has shown, Swedish advertising professionals intervened in the ongoing discussion about democracy and promised to nurture free, educated, and self-reflective citizens in the 1930s. Advertising aimed to enhance civic communication efficiency and to transform political conflicts into contests of words and images, rather than clashes between opposing citizens.⁶³ This discussion, both in general and in direct connection to social democracy, continued during the war when the concept of the mass was discussed in relation to the societal role of advertising.

As a clear example of the above, Törnqvist & Carlsson’s pamphlet was also sent to the social democratic Minister of Finance Ernst Wigforss, who was known for his skeptical stance toward advertising. In the pamphlet, the authors did not only defended their profession, but also suggested that tastes became more similar along with mass production, of standardized products, and increased material prosperity.⁶⁴ In *Annonsören*, the headline of an article with a similar defense position suggested that “The Masses Need a Leader” where it was argued that advertising would be a natural candidate for this role in a democratic society. To assume such a leadership position, however, advertising needed to address prevalent biases against it such as that it had to rely on suggestion, or that it mainly served to diffuse competition. However, within a “democratic republic of commerce,” consumer interests would be of paramount importance, the author forecasted.⁶⁵

If advertising strived for democratic and political legitimacy in the burgeoning welfare state, social democratic newspapers in parallel continued their long struggle to gain legitimacy as advertising fora. Advertisers had often rejected social democratic newspapers either for political reasons or because they did not regard workers’ purchasing power high enough. In addition, although most Swedes by 1940 could be considered workers, social democratic

60. *Annonsören* 1940, no. 5–6, 13.

61. *Affärsekonomi* 1941, no. 16, 1013.

62. Clampin, “Not the least.”

63. Tistedt, “Reklam.”

64. Törnqvist & Carlsson, *Reklamens ekonomiska*, 8.

65. “Massan vill ha en ledare: reklamen har en naturlig uppgift som sådan på en demokratisk marknad,” *Annonsören* 1943, no. 10, 8–10.

newspapers could not compete with many of the liberal newspapers when it came to circulation figures.⁶⁶ Although, as Elin Gardeström has highlighted, social democratic newspapers had been highly critical of advertising, with time they realized that acceptance of advertising was a matter of survival.⁶⁷ By the outbreak of the war, conflicts in the labor market had been reduced as a consequence of the *Saltsjöbaden agreement* between employers and trade unions in 1938. In addition, even if Minister of Finance Wigforss was critical of advertising, Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson spoke at the Nordic Advertising Congress held in Stockholm in 1937, indicating a more positive stance toward the commercial sector.

Although the discussion on equalization of tastes might be seen as a sign of mass marketing rather than segmentation, the latter was not deficient. In 1940, for example, *Affärsökonomi* had a special issue on the various “people’s movements” [folk rörelser]—trade unions, consumer organizations, women’s associations, charities, religious congregations, and the like—and how memberships also could reflect mentalities and habits of interest for advertising.⁶⁸ Several renowned leaders wrote pieces on the “characteristics” of their various movements, and statistics were presented for memberships of various organizations in different districts. In his analysis of how this knowledge could be used for market analysis, the adman Ralph Rilton described how membership in people’s movements had become a foundation of Swedish society: “[T]he modern man only reacts to a small extent individually—our time is the era of mass movements.”⁶⁹ Behavior was predictable along the lines of sex, age, and income, and people organized according to their psychological conditions and their values when it came to sobriety, politics, religion, or labor interests, he stated: “It could probably be said that if you have knowledge of how people are organized, you have a certain possibility of predicting their consumption attitude.”⁷⁰ Therefore, Rilton continued, the same product could be marketed differently to various audiences. The statistics on membership were followed up in 1945 for the different regions, concluding that certain organizations had gained significant increases in membership during the war (women’s organizations, the cooperative movement, and the Red Cross), while others like temperance organizations had lost some of their importance. However, Britta Eriksson wrote in her conclusion that information on memberships still revealed the spread of certain mentalities that constituted an important tool for market analysis.⁷¹

Even if well-off audiences constituted the largest group in the studied material, broader audiences, and the working class were recurrently described as valuable and relevant consumers in the advertisements from some of the newspapers. The social democratic newspapers even advertised results from the local elections, showing the growth of the party, thus connecting citizenship and consumption.⁷² Possibly as a way to counteract prejudices, the readers were

66. The social democratic newspapers generally increased their circulation during the war; however, the Stockholm-based *Social-Demokraten* diminished somewhat. Sandlund, “Beredskap och repression,” 304–5, 317.

67. Gardeström “Reklamen”; Gardeström, *Reklam*, 93–122.

68. *Affärsökonomi* 1940, no. 12.

69. Ralph Rilton, “Svenska folk rörelser som underlag för marknadsbedömning: en ekonomisk-psykologisk orientering,” *Affärsökonomi* 1940, no. 12, 632.

70. *Ibid.*, 632.

71. Britta Eriksson, “Hur har de svenska folk rörelserna utvecklats under kriget?,” *Affärsökonomi* 1945, no. 12, 754.

72. See, e.g., *Reklamnyheterna* 1940, no. 18, 7.

described as “well-off workers” or “workers with high incomes.” Due to their *desire* and *need* to consume, salaries were immediately transformed into purchasing power it was argued. The liberal newspaper *Stockholms-tidningen* even suggested this as a third factor (besides the quantity or quality of an audience) and named it “public acceptance,” i.e., the readership’s interest for new things and their “willingness to be influenced by good, reputable advertising.”⁷³ By describing workers (of a certain region or in general) as powerful consumers with increasing purchasing power and public acceptance despite the war, social democratic newspapers, like many other publications marketed their audience as desired and safe consumers. Social democratic *Ny Tid* also claimed that in addition to the improved conditions for workers in general, the rationing system had “evened out the purchasing power!”⁷⁴ Workers were also sometimes literally pictured as masses, quite often as a seemingly never-ending stream of people walking from the factories.⁷⁵ Illustrated with a factory and a crowd of people and a newspaper in between them, *Social-Demokraten* tellingly claimed to be “the natural link between You and the buying needs of the large audience” (see Figure 5).⁷⁶ However, this was also connected to purchasing power. Four million SEK per week was the estimated income of the readership of *Socialdemokraten* according to their own 1939 advertisement: “4 million kronor is a considerable capital that via these 30 000 persons every week is passing through the Stockholm retailers.” Failing to advertise in newspapers read by workers was therefore likened to “letting the stream of gold flow by.”⁷⁷

The intersection between class and gender was visible in how in particular labor-related newspapers claimed to reach the family.⁷⁸ Even if the female “Mrs Consumer” was in advertising vernacular often depicted as middle class, her portrayal did not differ much when described by labor newspapers, i.e., a well-dressed homemaker with responsibility for the family purchases. Although most working-class married women at least partly provided for their families through paid labor at the time, *Morgonbris*, published by the Social Democratic Women’s Federation, tellingly claimed that their readership consisted of “33 000 housewives.”⁷⁹ Also, Social Democratic *Aftontidningen* promised that “a female elite” was to be reached through their women’s supplement.⁸⁰

In one of the advertisements (see Figure 6), two women (probably intended as a mother and a teenage daughter) were reading the newspaper together under the headline: “She is so fond of Social-Demokraten.” The copy employed the frequently used metaphor of the woman as a purchasing manager of the home, and the name of the newspaper was added with the slogan: “more for the family” (and in a later version “more for the family—more for the advertiser”) thus adding to the building of the family as a consuming unit.⁸¹ They also had female-connoted sections such as “The homemaker round” and “Us and our children” where

73. *Affärsekonomi* 1944, no. 8, 508.

74. *Annonsören* 1942, no. 1.

75. See, e.g., advertisement for *Värmlands folkblad*, *Affärsekonomi* 1942, no. 15, 922.

76. *Annonsören* 1941, no. 3.

77. *Affärsekonomi* 1939, no. 12, 712.

78. See, e.g., ad for *Ny Tid* in *Annonsören* 1941, no. 9.

79. *Annonsören* 1943, no. 7, 33

80. *Affärsekonomi* 1944, no. 12, 894.

81. *Affärsekonomi* 1940, no. 18, 1039. See also *Affärsekonomi* 1941, no. 4, 175; *Reklamnyheterna* 1941, no. 6, 5.

Social Demokraten

- den naturliga förbindelselänken mellan Er och den stora publikens köpbehov

Tack vare den redaktionella omläggningen och utvidgningen fyller Social-Demokraten nu hela familjens läsbehov och täcker därigenom också såsom annonsorgan familjens totala köpbehov.

Det rikhaltiga nyhetsmaterialet ökar annonsvärdet hos nyhetssidorna och det kvinnligt betonade textmaterialet såsom »Husmorsronden», »I pratvrån», »Vi och våra barn», »En pratstund med doktorn», »Namn och data», »På solsidan» o. s. v. ger ett naturligt stöd åt propaganda för speciellt livsmedel, kläder, heminredning, kemisk-tekniska artiklar och liknande konsumtionsvaror.

De fylliga sportssidorna bilda en säljande bakgrund för annonser om säsongens sportartiklar av alla de slag.

Kultursidorna ha en vaken och tacksam läsekrets som har ett levande behov av böcker, tidskrifter, studier etc.

Till detta kan så läggas, att stammen av Social-Demokraterns läsekrets — sammansatt av organiserade arbetare, lägre tjänstemän i offentliga och privata företag, affärsanställda, hantverkare och andra småföretagare — icke blott representerar stora köpbehov utan även en stor samlad köpkraft.

Det är därför ingen överdrift att påstå att Social-Demokraten är den naturliga förbindelselänken mellan Er som annonsör och denna köpkraftiga publik.

Figure 5. Advertisement for *Socialdemokraten* in *Annonsören* 1941:3.

advertisements for food, clothing, interior decoration, etc. were recommended. This suggests that not only the division of the press but also the departmentalization of the content of the newspapers was used as an infrastructure for segmentation. In the same advertisement, *Socialdemokraten* advocated that sports pages could be used for related products, culture

pages for marketing books, etc. However, they also made sure to describe their readership as a broad mass compound by organized workers, junior civil servants, sales staff, craftsmen, and owners of small businesses and that these not only represented considerable buying needs but also a large aggregate purchasing power.⁸²

Similar to *Social-Demokraten*, *Ny Tid* stressed that they reached the *affluent* workers.⁸³ Another way to market workers as consumers was to instead call them “the industrious population” living in towns or regions with successful industries: “The Småland industry works” claimed an advertisement for *Smålands folkblad* illustrated with a stylized industrial building from which smoke billowed.⁸⁴ Another town was claimed to be “An Eldorado for workers and businessmen,” illustrated with a man approaching a factory from afar.⁸⁵ Advertisers were yet in another advertisement encouraged to follow the example of workers there: “[K]eep the wheels spinning.”⁸⁶ In the interwar period, social democratic newspapers had marketed the working-class readers as more suggestible and easy to influence with advertising than other segments.⁸⁷ This was continuously alluded to during the war, often in relation to their need and desire to consume. In the western region rich in textile production, for example, the industry had flexibly adapted to the prevailing situation, asserted one of its newspapers: “The industrial population still holds high employment and valuable purchasing power. You can with good results gain influence over this industrial population through advertising in their own newspaper.”⁸⁸ Similarly, the labor movement weekly *Folket i bild* stated that their readers were “especially receptive to new impulses and fresh ideas,” they “want to buy, can buy, and also buy the same items and the same quality as the so-called middle class.”⁸⁹

The juxtaposition of workers to middle-class consumers rather than describing workers as a segment with specific tastes and mentalities can be seen in several advertisements. In 1939, for example, *Socialdemokraten* claimed that the piano market had reached a new audience through the increased purchasing power of workers: “This is also the case with many other products. A lot of what could formerly be found solely in a rich man’s house is today in every man’s possession.” Its readers’ consumer habits and their demands for quality were said to be increasingly pretentious.⁹⁰ “Hundreds of consumer items are consumed to the same extent in working-class homes as elsewhere” *Folket i bild* similarly stated.⁹¹ These examples imply that the labor press tried convincing advertisers that workers had adapted the cultural capital of the middle class in a continuous democratization of consumer products.

Even if women and families were portrayed as a way to allude to the notion of Mrs. Consumer, the worker outside the home was continuously portrayed as male. Not only the national socialists described by Swett idealized the strong male industry worker. However, in

82. *Annonsören* 1941, no. 3.

83. See, e.g., *Annonsören* 1941, no. 3.

84. *Annonsören* 1941, no. 10.

85. *Annonsören* 1943, no. 4, 25.

86. *Affärsekonomi* 1941, no. 12, 820.

87. Arnberg, “Selling the consumer,” 150–154.

88. *Annonsören* 1941, no. 11.

89. *Affärsekonomi* 1940, no. 12, 666; *Annonsören* 1942, no. 3.

90. *Futurum* 1939, no. 1, 5.

91. *Annonsören* 1941, no. 12.

Hon är så glad i Social-Demokraten



— det är de nya, intressanta specialsidorna för kvinnan, hemmet och familjen, som gör att hon läser Social-Demokraten.

Kvinnan — hennens inköpschef — väljer numera Social-Demokraten, det är ett av våra ombud och prenumerationskontor allmänt konstaterat faktum.

När Ni gör upp Er annonsplan för 1941 — gör som vi gjort, när vi lade om tidningens redigering, tänk på, att det är kvinnan, som i de flesta fall bestämmer och stimulerar familjens inköp.

Social Demokraten

mera för familjen

Figure 6. Advertisement for *Socialdemokraten* in *Affärsökonomi* 1940:18, 1039.

the Swedish labor newspaper version, there was more of a blurring of the working class and the mass market. Illustrated with a male worker in front of a machine, *Västgöra-Demokraten* for example asked: “Is He one of your customers?”⁹² Similar advertisements portrayed more or

92. *Annonsören* 1942, no. 4.

less stereotypical images of forceful male workers. One of them exclaimed: “I have good incomes, therefore I am a good customer.”⁹³ In some rare instances, the number of industry workers in a certain district was counted and divided along gender lines. For example, *Östergötlands Folkblad* informed potential advertisers that nineteen thousand men and six thousand women worked in industries in its area of dissemination.⁹⁴

In the portrayals of workers as consumers in the studied material, class relationships were never portrayed as conflicting. Sometimes, as shown in [Figure 7](#) from the liberal *Karlskoga tidning*, the different social classes were even portrayed as smilingly walking side-by-side. The three stereotyped consumers—the worker, the businessman, and the seemingly classless Mrs. Consumer—marching “on their way to buy Your goods” as the caption stated.⁹⁵

The Social Democratic newspapers stressed not only the increased incomes and the buying desires of workers, but they also asserted that the workers adapted tastes and consuming patterns from the middle classes. This strengthens the indication that the division of society into classes was downplayed to present readers as consumers. Although idealized strong male workers were visible in the material, so were women in home settings and suggestions that all products could be advertised to the social democratic readership, i.e., a mass market rather than a class-based segment.

Mrs. Consumer and the “home front”

How to adapt to the crisis became a central issue in many countries, realizing that the war was not only dependent on success on the battlefield but also at the kitchen table. Shortage of food could not only lead to starvation and riots but also severely slow down the production of munition and potentially force countries to surrender. The realities of the total war put homemakers at the center of the home front, and many countries engaged women as experts when trying to educate housewives on how to creatively deal with scarce rations or how to make use of old clothing.⁹⁶ In Sweden, a state agency called *Aktiv hushållning* [Active housekeeping] was founded in 1940 to facilitate the adaptation of housekeeping to the crisis. The agency, which was led by the economist Karin Kock, carried out extensive counseling and information activities, regarding, among other things, food storage, clothing care, and clothing purchases, both with campaigns in the media, and through its own publications.⁹⁷

In his study of the Canadian home front, Graham Broad argues that the more traditional roles of women in the war efforts have been understudied. Patriotic consumerism conducted by women was seen as “part of an attempt to defend the country, the family, and the place of women in it.”⁹⁸ This strengthened the notion of women’s role as the main purchaser for the family and thus the need to direct advertisements to them. Daily purchases were normally made

93. Advertisement for *Karlskoga tidning*, *Affärsekonomi* 1942, no. 16, 965.

94. *Affärsekonomi* 1943, no. 12, 750.

95. *Annonssören* 1943, no. 6, 17.

96. See Garon, “The home front”; Arnberg, Glover & Sundevall, “På hemmafronten,” 485.

97. Anrep, *Från Aktiv hushållning*. See also Parr & Ekberg, “Mrs Consumer,” 224.

98. Broad, *A Small Price*, 194.

På väg att köpa Edra varor...



INOM det rika Karlskoga tidningspridningsområde finner Ni en givande försäljningsmarknad. Industrins män och kvinnor ha goda inkomster och näringslivet blomstrar.

Låt oss hjälpa Er med en försäljningskampanj i det av Sveriges industriområden, som uppvisar den största ökningen av folkmängden! Gör en fördelaktig och vinstgivande annonskampanj i "Tidningen som säljer".

KARLSKOGA TIDNING

Figure 7. Advertisement for *Karlskoga tidning* in *Annonssören* 1943:6, 17.

by the homemaker, according to Törnqvist & Carlsson, without the help of servants. Advertising facilitated and made consumption more efficient they stressed; since women had studied the advertisements beforehand, they could save a lot of time not having to go from shop to shop to

search for products or compare prices.⁹⁹ In line with the serious construction of the wartime female consumer, the “home-maker department” at the Ervaco advertising agency was said to have new and large tasks during the first weeks of the crisis, representing the “largest consuming group in Sweden.”¹⁰⁰ In addition, merchants’ associations across the country organized “housewife evenings” bringing together female consumers and retailers. These were sometimes organized together with the housewife organizations and aimed at explaining the difficult situation for merchants and their reduced service due to wartime, advising housewives how to handle limited resources (cooking, food preservation, etc.), and to create goodwill for private commerce. This was framed as part of the defense efforts of the “home front,” and the hardships were to be met by “spirited courage [frejdigt mod].”¹⁰¹

In Sweden, weeklies grew steadily in the first decades of the twentieth century. Since many of them were directed at women or families, they also claimed to especially target the homes during the years of preparedness.¹⁰² Studies from the belligerent countries show that there was a double message passed on to women via the commercial messages in magazines: both to contribute to national mobilization and to keep their feminine charm or beauty intact. New ideals of women’s roles in society were formulated, but few advertisements challenged established gender norms.¹⁰³ Beauty was, for example, combined with courage and mental strength in slogans like “strong yet feminine” or “beautiful and brave” in the UK.¹⁰⁴ In line with this perspective, Broad argues that in the Canadian context, consumers, advertisers, and retailers gravitated toward discourses of *patriotic consumption* rather than adhering to a patriotism exclusively centered on thriftiness. This approach emphasized women’s roles as wives and mothers while they could actively participate in the public sphere, show their support for the war effort, and thereby advocate a more extensive and active form of public citizenship. Women’s patriotic duties thus became intimately related to their responsibilities as consumers.¹⁰⁵

The consuming woman was most often constructed in relation to her family, but she was also portrayed alone in the studied material. Some of the weeklies claimed to reach women irrespective of age, social status, or domicile, whereas others instead suggested especially well-off women or “the whole family” read the magazines.¹⁰⁶ While the female consumer has a long history as a trope, the fact that both *Svensk Damtidning* (published by Saxon & Lindström) and Åhlén & Åkerlund (see Figure 8) claimed to be reaching “her majesty—the woman” during the war might indicate that she became even more central also in her own right.¹⁰⁷ This can, on the one hand, be seen as an acknowledgment of women as an important consumer group, but

99. Törnqvist & Carlsson, *Reklamens ekonomiska*, 10.

100. Advertisement in *Reklamnyheterna* 1939, no. 20, 5.

101. “Köpmännen söka ny kontakt med kunderna genom husmodersaftnar,” *Affärsekonomi* 1940, no. 14, 786.

102. Arnberg, Glover & Sundevall, “På hemmafronten”; Bernow & Östenman, *Svensk veckopress*, 44–55; Larsson, *Å&Å*, 19–26.

103. See Adkins Covert, *Manipulating*; Peiss, *Hope in a Jar*; Clampin, *Advertising*; Swett, “Advertising.”

104. Adkins Covert, *Manipulating*, 116.

105. Broad, *A Small Price*, 19–20.

106. *Annonssören*, 1944, no. 10, front and back page advertisements.

107. *Affärsekonomi* 1942, no. 15, 843; *Annonssören* 1942, no. 9; *Annonssören* 1944, no. 11. For female consumers as a trope in Sweden, see, e.g., Husz, “The birth of,” 8–9; Aléx, *Den rationella*, 212–232; Husz, “Spara, Slösa,” 279–329; Hirdman, *Den socialistiska*, 94–97.

on the other hand also as a strive toward mass consumerism since women constituted the key to the rest of the family.¹⁰⁸

Several of the weeklies directed at women held forward their ability to publish ads in color and their national reach to portray themselves as optimal advertising publications.¹⁰⁹ The weeklies were read in the quiet and comfort of the home, which created an advantageous environment for shopping planning and dreams, many publishers argued: “After a hectic day, when the kids have fallen asleep, then it’s the right timing for You to intervene” *Hemmets Journal* urged potential advertisers.¹¹⁰ Evening papers argued similarly. One of the advertisements for *Aftonbladet* was illustrated, for example, with a woman reading the evening paper: “She reads *Aftonbladet* to shop—and you advertise to sell....” The housewife who went shopping during the afternoon bought her evening paper regularly, the ad stated: “And your advertisement meets her just in that moment when she has the purse in her hand.”¹¹¹ Yet, quite paradoxically, the same publication elsewhere claimed to be “the gentlemen’s newspaper” the very same year, illustrated with a photo of a man sucking his pipe:

That *Aftonbladet*, thanks to its fresh news, large sports compartment, and its snappy editing, is the *gentlemen’s newspaper*, is an obvious and known fact.

In *Aftonbladet*, the advertiser meets the gentleman of the house when he is in his best mood—after the workday has ended and there is a discussion within the home about the events of the day and the purchases of tomorrow.¹¹²

Yet in another advertisement for the military journal *Folk & Försvar* [People & Defense], their readers were described as follows:

Almost 95% of our civilian readers are *male* subscribers, largely in senior positions and in good social standing. The adverts in *Folk & Försvar* are noticed by men with authority to act independently.¹¹³

However, the examples above stand out as exceptions. When gender was explicitly mentioned, married women took center stage. Their portrayal stands in stark contrast to the independent decision-making that the male readers of *Folk & Försvar* were claimed to have. For example, the daily *Dagens nyheter* held forward that the housewives who read their paper were more susceptible than ever to information about good products and methods that could support the household economy during the current crisis.¹¹⁴ In 1942, the Provincial News-

108. Arnberg, “Beyond Mrs Consumer”; Arnberg, “Selling the Consumer”; Gardeström, *Reklam*, chapter 6; Parr & Ekberg, “Mrs Consumer.” See also Reekie, “Impulsive women”; Rutherford, *Selling Mrs Consumer*.

109. Advertisement for *Hemmets journal*, *Annonssören* 1941, no. 1, 25.

110. *Affärsekonomi* 1939, no. 6, 305.

111. *Annonssören* 1944, no. 2, 34.

112. *Affärsekonomi* 1944, no. 4, 211.

113. *Affärsekonomi* 1944, no. 6, 379.

114. Advertisement for *Dagens nyheter*, *Reklamnyheterna* 1940, no. 14, 2.

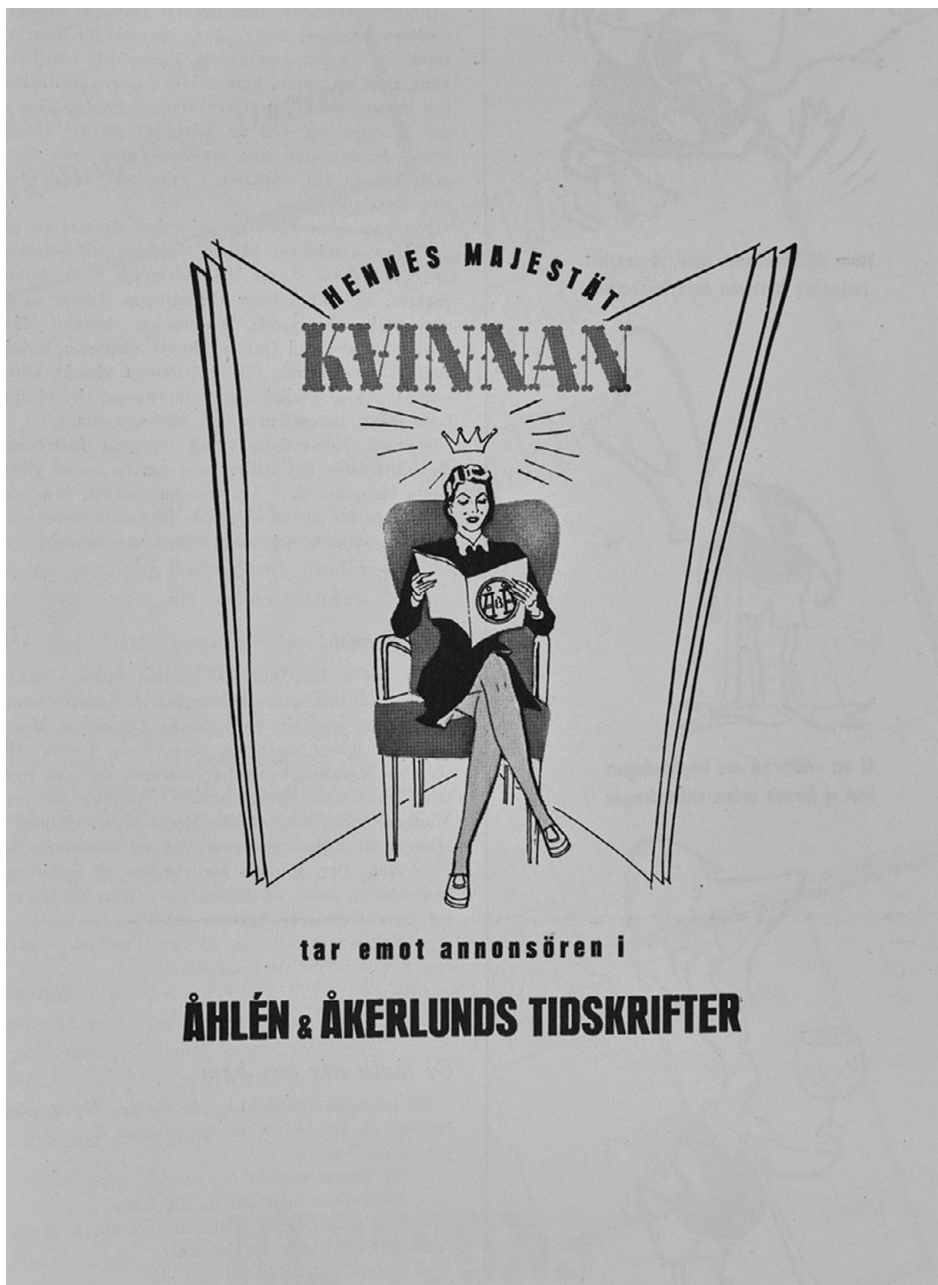


Figure 8. Advertisement for Åhlén & Åkerlund in *Annonsören* 1944: 11.

paper's Association surveyed housewives about how the war affected their relation to advertising. The results, published by *Annonsören*, showed that they appreciated advertisements more than before as sources of information in times of rationing and crisis. This only, however, on the condition that advertisements were reliable and truthful. A housewife in southern

Sweden, cited by *Annonsören*, warned that retailers who had “created its customer base” before the war now lost it when the price and need for coupons were the same at competing outlets. But since “we housewives are sensitive to a firm that is seen in the columns,” advertising could counteract that development.¹¹⁵

The future role of Mrs. Consumer was also debated in more public forums. In an interview with the largest newspaper *Dagens nyheter* in 1943, the chairman of the Swedish Advertising Association Folke Stenbeck predicted new roles for advertising and distribution when peace came. Consumers were left behind during the war: “[I]t is only by grace they have been allowed to make purchases, and the household work has to a great extent become more difficult.” In a futuristic vision, he suggested that standard packaged foods could be delivered to the door by a special vehicle with a cooling system, at the housewives’ convenience. Some shop windows could also be rebuilt into vending machines, he suggested, so that the opening hours would not restrict purchasing possibilities too much. To change distribution in this way, advertising was a necessary part, he argued. By using market research, production could easily be adjusted to consumer needs: “Put the consumer, and especially the homemaker, first! This is a mission for advertising when peace comes.”¹¹⁶

Although many women entered traditional male-connoted employment in the absence of enrolled men during the war, women working outside the home were seldom mentioned. However, the local newspaper of Ulricehamn, suggested the town consisted of both industry and surrounding fertile countryside: “where the male population run profitable agriculture and women to a great extent are employed in the textile industry.”¹¹⁷ Only on rare occasions, women’s replacement of male workers in the industries were alluded to. In a recurrent full-page advertisement for the weekly *Allers* for example, three women were pictured in front of their industrial machines together with the headline: “Count on the women—in all areas!”¹¹⁸

Concluding discussion

The period of preparedness meant substantial changes in the everyday lives of most Swedes. Although the country was never occupied and no battles were fought on its soil, both mental and military mobilization and blocked trade certainly restructured people’s various occupations and their ability to consume. Advertising professionals in Sweden, just as in other countries, struggled to survive and prove their relevance also in times of crisis. Part of this was the portrayal of citizens as consumers who needed guidance, and advertising was suggested to become a leader of the masses in a “commercial democracy.” After the war, advertising professionals concluded that a structural shift had occurred, where incomes had increased for most citizens and become more equalized in favor of the middle segment.¹¹⁹ This type of broadening of consumer citizenship was also something that social democratic

115. *Annonsören* 1942, no. 7–8, 28; see also Glover & Arnberg “Blickfång.”

116. “Reklam för flyg efter kriget, sätt husmor i högsätet igen!,” *Dagens nyheter*, October 21, 1943.

117. *Affärsekonomi* 1939, no. 4, 189. See also *Affärsekonomi* 1939, no. 12, 692.

118. *Annonsören* 1943, no. 4, 30.

119. Tamm, Göran. “Ändringar i inkomstfördelningen under kriget – och dess inverkan på efterfrågans inriktning – några reflektioner,” *Affärsekonomi* 1949, no. 29, 1214.

newspapers strived for in their description of workers as adapting middle-class consuming patterns and assuring that rationing had evened out purchasing power.

Although conservative and liberal newspapers claimed to have the most valuable and safest readers from a commercial perspective, their marketing of advertising space in a sense alluded to mass marketing in a similar way that women's magazines did. Here, both homemakers and well-off consumers became keys to broader markets by either influencing the rest of the family or the rest of their local community as "leaders of consumption." Simultaneously, there were also discussions and marketing of certain segments. Not only were geographical parameters considered via market research and published statistics in trade journals, but more demographic and psychological considerations were also sometimes alluded to in depictions of popular movement membership and political sympathies along with more basic understandings of gender preferences. Although we have not examined to what extent advertisers used this information in the planning of various advertising campaigns, the division of the press and the choice of advertising media were framed as the natural way of optimizing advertising influence and reaching target audiences.

On the one hand, preparedness and the war economy affected advertising and press markets in several ways. Not only was the market seriously hit by the outbreak of the war and the sharp downturn in advertising, but consumption and thus advertising became a questionable practice. However, as Broad shows for the Canadian case, consumption was also, in some instances, framed as patriotic and thus morally preferred. In addition, the goodwill advertising made to make people remember trademarks could be understood as encouraging postponed consumption.

On the other hand, especially in the quantitative measures of the commercial world studied here, surprisingly little happened. Consumer segments were quite stable and were not in any obvious sense affected by the war. Women as a consumer segment even diminished somewhat in quantitative terms, despite their increased responsibility for defending the "home front" and their increased incomes. The change in women's occupations in the labor market had very little impact on how the consumer was imagined. This might either be seen as an inability or unwillingness by commercial actors to adapt to changed material conditions, or more likely that they perceived these conditions as highly temporal.¹²⁰ Just as in the British case studied by David Clampin, the Swedish commercial actors seem to have relied on feelings of normality and safety associated with stable gender relations. However, as studied here, this dream was also sold to potential advertisers: the looming threat of war prompted publishers to market their readers as well-off, safe, and patriotic consumers. Fathers were never absent, and women were placed in homes planning the next purchase with the relevant publication in their hand. These sentiments might explain why publishers were so reluctant to use wartime as an opportunity to construct those enriched by the situation as targetable consumers.

The gendering of class and the classing of gender, to a certain degree, reinforced the image of a patriotic family. While the notion of the worker was to a large extent constructed as a male industry worker, the rest of the family (if not employed in industry work) was constructed as more or less classless. This meant that constructing the purchasing unit, or the masses, as

120. Arnberg, Glover, Sundevall, "På hemmafronten."

families rather than male industry workers only, softened the notion of certain class characteristics. In addition, social democratic newspapers put extra effort into describing the needs and desires of workers as similar to the middle classes. When gender was classed, on the other hand, female readers were described as well-off rather than plentiful. This constructed women as married, nonworking, and middle-class, i.e., mainly as the mother of the patriotic family.

At a quantitative level, the segmentation process appears to have undergone a phase of consolidation during the war. The imminent threat of war, scarcity, rationings, and authorities' call for thriftiness, together with increasing competition in the advertising market, might have made publishers ensure that they could offer stable and large consuming groups rather than dividing the market into smaller segments. Qualitatively, however, the changes in how consumers were imagined both by authorities and advertisers as key for preparedness and endurance certainly had a more fundamental impact. Advertising was promised to counteract the threats of anxiety and despair by invoking dreams of consumption. However, these were not only dreams of future peacetime consumption, but also present wartime consumption where advertisements in magazines should meet the consumer in the right moment when buying decisions were made. The patriotic consumption encouraged then meant keeping the spirits up by a combination of postponing purchases and immediate spending.

The study of the business-to-business market for advertising space provides a glimpse into how the consumer was envisioned behind the scenes. Apparently, these messages were not intended for the consumers themselves but served as selling portrayals of various segments that accompanied and dialoged the editorial content of the advertising trade journals. Even if newspapers and magazines might only have attempted to describe their actual readers as desired consumers, or even if they were biased to court the advertisers, the way they did so reveals some of the discursive mechanisms through which readers were marketed and segments were formed. The findings thus also show that the process of making and remaking citizens or readers into consumers was not orchestrated by a narrow field of marketing and advertising actors in a vacuum. Instead, (wartime) consumer citizen segments were carefully coconstructed by stakeholders such as publishers, aligning with the infrastructure of the historically established division of the press.

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Newspapers and Magazines

Affärsekonomi [1931–1955]

Annnsoören [1939–1945]

Dagens nyheter [1943]

Futurum [1939–1945]

Reklam-Nyheter [1939–1945]

Appendix: Full Data for Figure 1

Year	All social classes	Well-off	Farmers	Workers	Women	Other	Total number of ads with audiences	Total number of ads
1931	22	24	6	12	7	12	72	163
1933	18	17	1	10	8	11	59	133
1935	20	30	5	13	3	13	72	175
1937	16	22	7	19	8	15	77	179
1939	9	23	4	7	1	15	55	162
1940	14	39	6	12	3	10	68	110
1941	9	63	11	18	6	13	85	145
1942	12	56	14	12	3	8	75	124
1943	10	56	7	10	5	6	76	124
1944	10	52	7	9	7	24	85	136
1945	17	45	7	5	6	17	80	129
1947	10	35	7	9	6	5	52	110
1949	7	47	6	1	8	25	72	120
1951	7	37	5	6	11	15	64	125
1953	9	18	1	1	4	9	52	94
1955	10	29	3	4	3	4	47	89

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