Research Question

Over the 18th and 19th century, Sweden experienced a manorial system with peasants being subject to different property rights regimes and unpaid labour services to be provided to the landlords: the main division was between freeholders and tenants.

Is there a differential in farm productivity between freeholders and tenants in Sweden in the period 1700-1860?

Methodology

\[ y_{it} = \text{farm size}_{it} + \text{land ownership}_{it} + \text{early enclosures}_{it} + \text{radical enclosures}_{it} + \text{natural conditions}_{it} + \text{expected prices}_{it} + \text{year dummy}_{t} \]

\[ y_{it} \] is grain production in farm \( i \) at time \( t \), \( \text{farm size}_{it} \) is farm size in manatal, \( \text{land ownership}_{it} \) is 4 types of land ownership (freeholder, crown tenant, lordship tenant 1 and lordship tenant 2). Freeholder is the baseline. Lordship tenants 1 and 2 are both subject tenants, however the former were living close to the landlord’s estate and deeply involved in unpaid labour services. 

\( \text{early enclosures}_{it} \) : enclosed, not enclosed and re-enclosed farm. 

\( \text{radical enclosures}_{it} \) : open field, enclosed and solitary. 

\( \text{natural conditions}_{it} \) : plains, intermediate and woods. 

\( \text{expected prices}_{it} \) : weighted average of 5-year real prices (grain prices divided by an index of rural day labourers wages). 

\( \text{year dummy}_{t} \) : dummy for 10-year period.

The model is estimated as a panel using OLS. The model is ran for the two sub-periods, 1702-1802 and 1803-1864 to compare the effect of the first (milder) wave of demesne expansion with the more severe wave that followed. We expect to find a stronger effect of the expansions, in terms of production differential, in the second period.

Main results:

- In first period, with mild demesne expansions, the dummys capturing different land ownership arrangements do not appear significant when we cluster by parish (column 4).
- In the second period, when demesne expansions were more severe, we see that lordship tenant 1 has a negative coefficients double of that of crown tenants and significant at the 5% level while lordship tenant 2 has a slightly smaller effect, significant at the 10% level.

Conclusions and Future Research

- Study on farm productivity in Scania, the most southern region of Sweden, in the period 1702-1864.
- There is evidence of a negative effect on production given by restrictions to land ownership and provision of unpaid labour by the tenants. In particular, we find that the strongest effect is on subject tenants who lived close to the landlord’s estate.
- The effect is stronger in the second period, which corresponds to the most severe wave of demesne expansion in Scania.
- Next steps: attempt to measure investment and test effect of land ownership.