

## Abstract

Land and people. Productive resources in a mixed area in western Sweden in the 18th century. (Publication of the Department of Economic History, Göteborg University, no 84).

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This dissertation deals with an area in southwestern Sweden, which is described as mixed regarding the natural environment. The time period is 1695-1805. The two productive resources that are examined are land and people: did the natural environment have any influence on the demography and the development of arable land? The mountain Kinnekulle and the woodlands gave opportunities for non-agrarian industries like lime burning and quarries.

The demographic development was more uniform in this area than on the clay plains of Västergötland, where the population growth was stagnant 1770-1800 due to a crisis in food supply. This crisis did not occur in the area investigated here.

Population growth in this mixed area was 0,5 percent a year between 1695 and 1805. Cultivated land increased by at least 0,4 percent a year. It is quite difficult to determine whether land reclamation and population growth kept pace. But a tentative estimate of the agrarian production shows that the region at the very most produced its own needs. On the plains, where agrarian production totally dominated, peasants in the end of the 18th century daily produced 2 000-3 000 kcal more than peasants in the mixed area. Agrarian production therefore seems to have been insufficient in the latter area.

The continuation of population growth in the mixed area thus seems to confirm that this region could develop thanks to the non-agrarian industries.

Previous research has shown that the value of freehold land (*skattejord*) increased more rapidly than the value of tax-exempt land (*frälsejord*). This has tentatively been explained by the assumption that population and arable land increased at a higher rate on freehold land than on tax-exempt land. This investigation gives no unambiguous evidence of relative stagnation on tax-exempt land.

Key words: natural environment, non-agrarian industries, demography, cultivated land, production, peasants, land category, age group, work force, poll tax registered population, field-system.