

Gåvan i Gnosjö –
Företagares relationer i ett industriellt distrikt

Av

Glenn Sjöstrand

Akademisk avhandling för filosofie doktorsexamen i sociologi vid sociologiska institutionen, Göteborgs universitet, som med tillstånd av samhällsvetenskapliga fakultetsnämnden läggs fram måndagen den 9 juni 2008 klockan 13.00 i sal Sappören, Sprängkullsgatan 25.

Abstract

Title: the Gift in Gnosjö –The Relations of Entrepreneurs in an Industrial District.

Written in Swedish, summary in English, 255 pages.

Author: Glenn Sjöstrand

Doctoral Dissertation at the Department of Sociology, Göteborg University

Box 720, SE-405 30 GÖTEBORG, Sweden

ISBN: 978-91-975405-0-6

ISSN: 1650-4313

Göteborg 2008

In the growing body of research on industrial districts, focus is usually on trying to explain the economic outcomes of the configuration of formal and informal economic and social organisations specific to these districts. A general way to explain the outcomes is by referring to the “culture” in which economic and social exchanges take place without specifying what culture means and what it is in culture that affects the economic outcomes. This dissertation analyzes a gift-economy where goods and services are offered, accepted and returned among business entrepreneurs in the industrial district of Gnosjö, Sweden. Especially the institutional and social embeddedness of exchanges between small business owners and the norms in the culture that regulates the relationships are focused. The three aims of the study are to explain the local preconditions for a gift-economy to be established, explain how the gift-economy is affecting the outcomes of the formal economy and to explain how the social changes with globalization and integration of markets change the conditions for the gift-economy to reproduce.

The empirical data is drawn mainly from 94 interviews with business owners or CEO:s in the district. The dissertation shows that the gift-economy is affecting the economic outcomes, such as high flexibility, low transactional costs, high profits, coordination of production, prices and knowledge dispersion of the industrial district, but also that it creates (social) costs of social control and other social drawbacks such as exclusion from networks and conformity.

Keywords: Industrial district, economic sociology, new sociological institutionalism, gift-economy, flexibility, coordination, social capital, social control, norms of exchange.