

Släktgårdens uppkomst

Jord och marknad i Skaraborg, 1845-1945

with an English summary

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Abstract

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This thesis examines the relationship between land and family in Sweden from 1845 to 1945. According to previous research, both in Sweden and the rest of the Western world, this relationship changed fundamentally in the 18th and 19th century. Previously, people had stayed on their farms for generations and the emotional attachment to specific parcels of land was significant. As a result of commercialization, more land was sold on the market between unrelated individuals and the emotional bond to specific parcels of land was weakened. However, some recent results concerning the 20th century indicate that many farms were still transferred within the family. The purpose of this study is, therefore, to analyze how the proportion of inherited land changed over time and to explain why these changes occurred. General developments are linked to Karl Polanyi's concepts of disembedding and re-embedding. The main question concerns whether land was re-embedded and, if so, how.

The study is conducted on different levels. The first of these is the legislation concerning land, family and inheritance, and the preceding debates in the Swedish Riksdag (Diet). The source materials consist primarily of minutes from the Riksdag, together with some Swedish Government Official Reports (SOU) from the first half of the 20th century. The second consists of a survey of land transactions and farm structure in three parishes in the Swedish county of Skaraborg. Based on data from the land registry all properties have been reconstructed and followed over one hundred years.

This study highlights the sometimes quite contradictory relationships between family interactions and the market. There were in fact several signs of a tighter bond between land and family in this period, and most of the farms were transferred within the family. However, even transfers between relatives were commercialized and family continuity in the 20th century was often achieved at a high cost. In 1945, more than one third of the inherited farms were co-owned by a set of unmarried heirs of the previous owner, usually siblings. This thesis underlines the importance of studying problems using a long-term perspective, and also brings to the fore valuable knowledge of how the bond in Sweden evolved over time.

Keywords: family farm, inheritance, land, market, property, marital property, kinship, legal change, embedding, agrarian, Sweden