

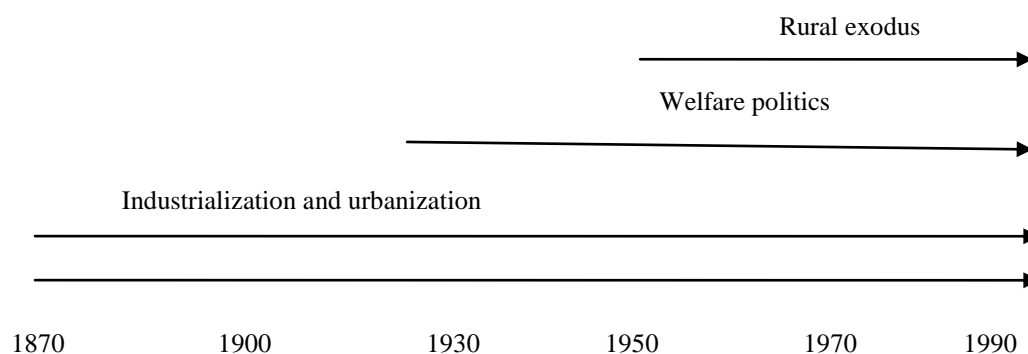
Ruling the rural:
A well planned rural exodus, patronized by the Swedish welfare state
 Carin Martiin

Dept. of Economic History
 Stockholm University
 SE-106 91 Stockholm, Sweden
carin.martiin@ekohist.su.se

Agricultural and Rural History, Dept. of Economics
 Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
 SE-750 07 Uppsala, Sweden
carin.martiin@ekon.slu.se

The alliterating title “Ruling the rural” refers to parts of the revolutionary changes of Swedish agriculture and rural societies that took place in Sweden from the late 1940s to the early 1990s. The farming population was reduced from one third to a few per cent of the total Swedish population, and about two thirds of all farming units were either abandoned or incorporated with other farms. Parallel with these processes, hundreds of thousands of previously farming men and women were directed from agriculture to factories or other jobs in town. The far-reaching changes were to great deals based on the 1947 agricultural politics that was until 1991, although modified in 1967, 1977 and 1985.¹

Rural Sweden certainly had experienced a number of changes since the final decades of the 19th century when industrialization and urbanization began, such as multiplied commercial production and improved farming methods. Until the mid 20th century, industrialization and urbanization went on without downgrading of farming, but from then on the urban sectors got ahead and, it is argued in this paper, came to rule much of Swedish farming.² The fact that Sweden experienced this turn after the mid 20th century does, among other things, mean that a far-reaching rural exit took place parallel with the emergence of the welfare state. The following conference paper highlights this parallelism and the fact that changes in farming and in the countryside came to be closely intertwined with ambitions for improved Swedish welfare. Figure 1 illustrates the simultaneous occurrence of continued industrialization and urbanization, welfare politics and rural exodus in Sweden during the second half of the 20th century.



¹ The years 1947, 1967, 1977, 1985 and 1991 are used as concepts for the time periods respectively, during which agricultural politics were subject to official investigation and the following parliamentary process. 1947 stands for processes 1942-47; 1967 for 1960-67; 1977 for 1972-77; 1985 for 1983-85. The shift around 1990 marks end of the studied period 1991, but is not included in the study. The official investigations were published in SOU 1946:42 and 46; 1966:30 and 31; 1977:17, and 1984:86.

² The reduction of agriculture and expansion of non-agricultural sectors is, among other sources, mirrored by numerous statistics, for example about rural and urban population, and the number of people working in different sectors, see Historical Statistics of Sweden, Part I. Population, Tables 4 and 83.

Figure 1. The parallel occurrence of continued industrialization and urbanization, welfare politics and rural exodus in Sweden during the second half of the 20th century.

Welfare ideals did on the one hand provide material shelter for migrating farmers and thus safeguarded basic material standards and counteracted rural and urban proletarianization. But welfare ambitions also brought about state led ruling of farming and rural life. The process was based on the 1947 agricultural politics, which included substantial elements of top-down ruling of the countryside. This caused frustration and pain at individual and local levels, which contributed to widely spread discussions in rural as well as urban contexts. In spite of the intensive attention among contemporary generations, the subject seems to be relatively unknown among later generations. Moreover, limited academic interest has been put on postwar agricultural politics.³ This conference paper does not aim at compensating for these shortages, but should primarily be understood as a discussion about the 1947 agricultural politics and its links to general Swedish welfare ambitions.

The Swedish case is interesting from both past and present perspectives. From historical points of view early rural-urban transformation exemplify processes that took place before questions like that were considered as important political questions, for instance the early industrializing parts of Europe. From present perspectives, late industrializing parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America face spontaneous processes where rural masses leave the land and the countryside in hope for a better future in town, but instead become unemployed urban slum dwellers. Situations like that contrast with mid 20th century Sweden, where small-holders moved directly from farming to modern suburbs and steady jobs, while county agricultural boards arranged so that the remaining holdings were incorporated with neighbouring farms.

Swedish agricultural politics, a background

The history of postwar Swedish agricultural politics should be seen in the present political and economic context, but also to the background of previous experiences and lessons from the first half of the 20th century.⁴ To begin with the latter, the historical links back to traditional rural life should be remembered. Sweden was urbanized notably late, beginning around the 1870s and with half of the population still living in the countryside by the mid 20th century.⁵ Accordingly a majority of all Swedes were raised in the countryside and probably had friends there and still agreed with traditional rural values like industriousness, and respect for nature. This approach would however come into conflict with the 1947 programme for future agriculture, which aimed at less of small-scale economizing and pottering about, and more of efficient production. A second influencing factor was WWI. Sweden was saved from military actions but experienced some difficulties to safeguard the national food supply. The problems were partly owing to harvest failures but also to ordinary dependence on imported bread grain. Blocked trade routes and sky-high prices revealed that dependency on import was as a risky strategy that could expose common people to scarcity of bread, and politicians to societal unrest.⁶ Memories from this adventure were kept well in mind, and came to have

³ Hedlund & Lundahl, 1985 and 1986, provide a thorough study of the emergency considerations in the 1947 politics. Eriksson 2006, pp. 780-783 contributes with an analysis of the conservatives' (*högerpartiets* acting about the 1947 agricultural politics. A good general picture is provided by Flygare & Isacson 2003. The 1947 agricultural politics have also been presented by Nordlander, 1946, p22 f; Odhner 1966; Gulbrandsen & Lindbeck 1966 and Swedborg, 1968. Moreover the economists Bolin and Rabinowicz at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences should be mentioned as deeply engaged in Swedish postwar agricultural politics.

⁴ See Odhner 1966, p. 53; and Martiin 2008 and 2009 passim.

⁵ Historical Statistics of Sweden, Part I. Population, Table 4.

⁶ See Hildebrand, 1916-20.

considerable impact on preparations and acting during the following war, when self sufficiency in food and industrious farm work were highly appreciated and encouraged by the society.⁷ In between the two war-related crises (Sweden was saved from both wars), the economic downturn around 1930 reminded the Swedes about the vulnerability of industrial and urban economies. Like in war-time, rural life was again valued and appreciated as a true, safe way to earn one's living. Moreover, the government had encouraged people to stay in farming in order to counteract enlarged unemployment. Obviously, three dramatic time periods during the first half of the 20th century had reminded the Swedes about the importance of agriculture and the vulnerability of urban life. Yet, urbanization and industrialization had continued, and soon after the end of WWII the Swedish government was ready to implement radical changes in farming and rural life on basis of the investigation about future agriculture that was carried out 1942-46 and accepted by the parliament in 1947. In spite of the postwar economic crisis by that time, Sweden enjoyed a notably favourable situation in comparison with most nations in the world. No people had been killed and no buildings were destroyed, and the economic and administrative organization had been well functioning during the years of war-crisis.⁸ Sweden was thus able to carry on and even escalate the ongoing social and economic development that had been high on the political agenda during the interwar period. Extensive administration had been a part of the emergency activities, partly dealing with emergency issues, partly with post-war planning. The latter ambition resulted in publication of a large number of so called SOU-reports just after the war, reflecting ideas for improved welfare on basis of planning and social engineering.

Accordingly, Sweden was well prepared for a further industrial expansion in order to serve domestic as well as international postwar demand for machinery, paper and minerals.⁹ Most resources were at hand, but there was shortage of labour.¹⁰ Labour was however available in the countryside that was dominated by small holdings with a few hectares and livestock, operated through large inputs of manual work. The rural sector could thus be seen as a potential source of labour for factories and other parts of the non-agricultural economy. By the mid 20th century, it was generally considered as natural that the state took active part in matters of public interest.¹¹ Accordingly, state led employment offices, housing authorities, and relocation grants were seen as parts of the society. Moreover the state supported domestic migration through support to modern suburbs where former farm households could settle. Another important aspect of importance for migration of labour from rural to urban areas was that agricultural production was high enough for to supply the total population with food of vegetable as well as animal origin. This made it possible to put increased attention to industrial and urban issues, and to move resources from farming without risks for food shortage.

Furthermore, the political situation opened for general changes in the balance between rural and urban interests. Postwar Sweden came to be a long period of stable political dominance for the Social Democrats (*Socialdemokraterna*), now and then collaborated with *Bondeförbundet* (The farmers' party, my translation). *Bondeförbundet*, which was supported by most smallholders and farmers, was partly supportive to the Social Democrats but could

⁷ See Martiin 2008 and 2009.

⁸ The period 1939-45, which was called a time of war-related crisis, did however include periodical blocking and abundant use of resources for emergency service and emergency administration. See Åmark 1952, Part I and II, passim. Also see Erlander 1973, p. 299 for an optimistic view on Sweden just after the war.

⁹ Historical Statistics of Sweden, Part 3. Foreign trade, Table 4.8, p. 270 f.

¹⁰ According to Erlander 1973, the government did however worry for unemployment just after the war.

¹¹ This perspective is frequently mirrored in Erlander 1973 and 1974, for example at p. 176 in Erlander 1973.

also be an obstructive political colleague.¹² Reading of the memories of Tage Erlander, prime minister 1946-1969, indicate that *Bondeförbundet* managed to slow down and modify Social Democratic suggestions about the agricultural sector.¹³ It may thus be suggested that the Social Democrats' interest in the agriculture was reduced because of their bickering with *Bondeförbundet*. When the Social Democratic leadership thought of rural aspects they seem to have been thinking more about their political colleagues in *Bondeförbundet*, than of rural issues as such.¹⁴ Political considerations thus seem to have generated some caution and strategic acting that may have delayed or nuanced the processes of change. Yet, the general plan was clear: the number of smallholders had to be reduced while farming efficiency had to be improved. This is further demonstrated in the following presentation of the 1947 agricultural politics and the then following discussion about welfare perspectives and their influence on Swedish postwar agriculture and rural life.

1947 agricultural politics

The year 1947 serves as point of departure for the previously mentioned revolutionary changes of Swedish farming during the second half of the 20th century. This year saw the parliament accept the first explicit general Swedish agricultural politics ever. The parliamentary decision had been preceded by a long process, formally beginning in 1942.

The start already during raging war reminds of the Swedish interest for societal planning and that this was accomplished in spite of the surrounding war. In addition, the beginning during the war indicates that the investigation must have been influenced by this, especially regarding the importance to be self-sufficient with food. In a nutshell, the 1947 agricultural politics emphasized that Swedish farming was exposed to structural problems that had to be solved through structural rationalization and not, as before, subject to occasional crises that called for emergency actions in order to get back to the previous situation. The 1947 politics came to be greatly influential for long, at least until the next formal shift in agricultural politics, which was decided in 1991.¹⁵ The political decision in 1947 certainly marked the beginning of a new era, a dramatic decline in number of farms, farmers, farm labour, and number of livestock herds, as well as a dramatic increase in use of purchased inputs, in yields per hectare and animal, while total production was kept relatively constant. Even though the politics brought about new situations for farmers and rural societies, the principles were to great deals based on agreements and constructions from the 1930s and early 1940s, and on the formerly mentioned experiences and lessons learned during the first half of the century.¹⁶

It is interesting to learn that the initiative to a thorough official investigation of the future for Swedish agriculture came from the farmers' themselves or, more correct, from the biggest and most established national farmers' organization SL (*Sveriges Lantbruksförbund*, the organization of Swedish farmers, my translation). The initiative certainly aimed at safeguarding favourable conditions for the farmers, but did instead result in widely disliked politics that brought about revolutionary changes that reduced the number of

¹² The political representation and the influence of the conservatives (*Högerpartiet*) is discussed in Eriksson, 2004.

¹³ Erlander's relations with *Bondeförbundet* are frequently mentioned in his memoars, were representatives for *Bondeförbundet* regularly are called "the farmers", for example in Erlander 1973, p. 312 f.

¹⁴ This reflection is based on reading of Erlander, 1973.

¹⁵ In 1991, the parliament decided about deregulation of the agricultural sector. This new approach was however short-lived, due to the Swedish membership in the European Union in 1995. See Flygare & Isacson, 2003, pp. 254-257 for an overview.

¹⁶ Swedberg 1968, p. 12 and Martiin 2008 and 2009.

farmers and reshaped the entire business.¹⁷ The SL had an enormously strong position during WWII, when the government had delegated almost all agricultural matters to the organization. Already in the early 1940s, representatives for SL were anxious about the future and suggested an official investigation and outlines for Swedish agriculture in times of peace. The government listened and set an official investigation in train in 1942, operated by the so called 1942 committee. The publication of the results in 1946 was followed by intensive debates among farmers and other common people as well as in political corridors and the *Riksdag* that where the final parliamentary decision was taken in 1947. Parts of the agricultural program stated that regulation of farm-gate prices and of trade and tariffs should be maintained, following agreements from the early 1930s. Moreover, and most important, agricultural efficiency was highlighted. This can be seen as a somewhat new perspective that contrasted previous emphasis on total production. The aims for improved efficiency brought about detailed state-led planning that came to rule individual households in remarkable ways. As shown later, this ruling meant that civil servants selected farms that were supposed to be or become efficient enough for the future, while their neighbours were supposed to give up farming sooner or later and then leave their land for to be included with the expanding unit.

The 1947 political decision marked certain important shifts. First, that farming was involved in a structural crisis, caused by structural rather than occasional problems. In mid 20th Sweden a structural crisis called for active involvement by the state in line with the 1947 agricultural programme. Second, the new programme marked a general shift as regards rural versus urban balance. The industrial sector became more and more dominating while farming successively came to be reduced, from dominating to marginal. Third, the altered balance between rural and urban interests resulted in intensified emphasis on urban life and establishment of the industrial sector as norm for efficiency in farming. Economic results in urban sectors were thus thought to serve as a way to measure farmers' economic results, rather than traditional references to the rhythm of the sun and the season.¹⁸ This kind of urban influence is further explained later on.

Ruling of agriculture, on basis of three main principles

Descriptions of the 1947 agricultural politics are generally structured as three main principles, referring to farmers' income, total Swedish farm production and farming efficiency. The original formulations were however longer and included more of nuance and discussion.¹⁹ An "economic criterion" was suggested as a main principle for the political approach on agriculture, but social aspects should be taken into consideration. The economic criterion was accompanied by "the emergency criterion", and "the income equalizing criterion".²⁰ Attention was repeatedly put to social and demographic aspects, to farming as an honourable work, and to respect for the importance of domestic food production. This shows that the authors were well aware of the dynamite character in some of the presented ideas. The introducing text was cautious and underlined a number on uncertain factors for the future, factors that was unclear just after the war.²¹ Moreover the committee admitted that they expected conflicts between the criteria, and disagreements about the balance between the three criteria.²²

The economic criterion, (*Det rent ekonomiska kriteriet*) later came to be called the efficiency goal, *effektivitetsmålet*). The criterion, or goal, called for economic allocation of

¹⁷ See Martiin 2008 and 2009.

¹⁸ The expression "the rhythm of sun and the season" refers to Wrigley, 1988, p. 6

¹⁹ SOU 1946 :42, Vol. 1, pp.

²⁰ SOU 1946:42, pp. 16-21.

²¹ SOU 1946:42, p. 15 f.

²² SOU 1946:42, p. 16.

resources in general and labour in particular. According to this goal, substantial transition of farm labour to other businesses would improve the allocation of the national resources and thereby increase Swedish welfare.²³ Hence, the economic criterion for agricultural politics was thought to support the entire nation, working for everybody's best.

The emergency criterion (*Beredskapssynpunkten*) (later called the production goal, *produktionsmålet*) came to be widely discussed as regarded the level of production for future emergency needs, which also was decisive for the ordinary level. This criterion has been analyzed by Hedlund & Lundahl but is less focused in this paper. Yet it is interesting to mention that the 1942 commission accentuated links between full supply and inefficient resource allocation, and vice versa.²⁴ Hundred per cent self sufficiency meant maintaining of present level of production, and delayed structural rationalization, while lower levels signalled that a lot of farmers would have to leave the business. No agreement was reached in 1947, and the subject came to be repeatedly discussed over the following decades.²⁵

Finally, the commission presented a third criterion, the income equalizing criterion (*Inkomsstutjämningssynpunkten*, ("*Inkomsstutjämningssynpunkten*") (later called the income goal, *inkomstmålet*). This goal aimed at equalizing of rural and urban livelihoods. Fair payment to farmers was probably well in line with public opinion, considering most Swedes' rural background and the fact that the urban population had been encouraged to support the farmers during the recent war. According to the report, a gap had emerged between rural and urban living standards since long. This had, the authors wrote, been functioning and stimulated economic rational transfer of labour from agriculture to other sources of income.²⁶ Well in line with present welfare ideals it was now considered to be time to support more equal income levels, motivated by the importance of societal justice and equal material living standard.²⁷ As it was hard to reach absolute material justice, the term equalizing was used instead of equal. Farm households could for example benefit from free firewood, no rents, and some food in kind, but also had to put in manual work for to handle this. Aspects like that seem to have been frequently discussed in detail. What is more interesting is however that the principle about income equalizing had a potential to serve a tool for ruling of farming under cover of references to general welfare.

Equalized income levels called for improved efficiency

The attempts to work for more equal incomes was a matter of improved economy for farmers, up to the level of factory workers who were considered as the most relevant category to compare with. As better profit may counteract or at least delay the politically desired transfer of labour from farming to other businesses, the 1942 commission argued that strivings for more equal incomes had to be combined with state led structural rationalization and directing of farm production.²⁸ Nice talk about improved living standard thus meant that some farmers would have the possibility to increase their income, presumed that they became more efficient. Others would have to leave the business for other jobs that, one the one hand probably offered better pay, but on the other hand required breaking up from the farm holding and the local rural society in order to move closer to the urban labour market. It should however be added that many ex-farmers managed to stay in their house, but sold or let out the

²³ SOU 1946:42, p. 16 f.

²⁴ SOU 1946:42, p. 20.

²⁵ See SOU 1966:30; 1977:17, and 1984:86.

²⁶ SOU 1946:42, p. 20.

²⁷ SOU 1946:42, p. 21.

²⁸ SOU 1946:42, p. 21.

land. The possibility to do this depended on the distance between the holding and the new place of work.

Another interesting aspect on the income goal is that justice between rural and urban households is that the use of factory workers wages as norm, meant that economic outcome from farming was compared with economic outcome from the industry. As the Swedish industrial sector prospered from increased demand and further expansion, at the same time as labour unions grew strong, wage levels increased as well. As salaries were raised from year to year, the economic results in farming were expected to increase as well, albeit varying structures and the fact that farming was strongly exposed to nature.

As the income goal included called for improved efficiency it should in fact be understood as an efficiency goal. This connection was observed by Swedborg, Norborg et al, and in SOU 1966:31 but seems to have been foreseen by later authors who presents the income goal as an income guarantee and unquestionable positive from farmers' perspectives.²⁹ Underestimating of the call for efficiency may be misleading for analyses of influencing powers and of the roles of included actors: farmers and smallholders, the state-led county agricultural boards (see below), the government and the *Riksdag*, and the public opinion. To underestimate the connections between the income and efficiency goals is however to underestimate the pressure that was put on the farming population as the 1947 agricultural politics was set in train. Yet, the size of the revolutionary changes put this clear: the second half of the 20th century saw the farming population be reduced from one third to a few per cent of the total Swedish population, and about two thirds of all farming units be abandoned or incorporated with other farms.

Continued call for structural rationalization

The call for structural rationalization thus continued. This was included in the connection between farmers' and factory workers' material living standard. As wages rose in the successful industrial sector, farming efficiency had be increased as well. Or, the holding should be given up. Yet, it would have been politically impossible to keep strictly to these requirements. Farms with 10-20 hectares of arable land came to be regarded as a model for family farms and also as the minimum size for farms with a potential to become efficient, long-lasting units.³⁰ This size was however out of reach for the many smallholders; almost eighty per cent of all units had less than ten hectares.³¹ In order to manage the discrepancy between aims and reality, small-holders were able to get some economic support during their remaining years before retirement after which the land was supposed to be transferred to an expanding farm. This kind of support was expected to delay the process, but was still accepted in order to avoid rural proletarianization or an almost total rural exit. Obviously, the argument that the welfare ambitions linked the income and efficiency goal together instead of being seen as separate parts of postwar agricultural politics, does not exclude that social aspects were considered.³² The following part of the paper gives a glimpse from the operating of

²⁹ Swedborg 1968, p. 13; Norborg et al 1973, p. 87; SOU 1966:31, p. 10. Gulbrandsen & Lindbeck 1971, p. 55; Hedlund & Lundahl 1985, p 105, and Flygare & Isacson 2003, p. 229 present the income goal as a matter of income guarantee.

³⁰ Later, the area was changed, from 10-20 to 20-30 hectares. 10-20 hectare farms were called *basjordbruk* (farms of basic size, my translation) while 20-30 hectare farms were called the slightly modified *normjordbruk*.

³¹ Historical Statistics, Table D4, p. 27.

³² It can be said that the 1947 and 1977 decisions generally saw more to social aspects, compared with the decisions in 1967 and 1985.

postwar agricultural politics. The text refers to a major part of the second half of the 20th century but primarily to the politics of 1947 and 1967.³³

Carefully selected farmers

The 1942 committee was well aware of potential collisions between the outlined future prospects and peoples', especially farmers' points of view. The changes should be managed on basis of farmers' free will, but the process would clearly have to be encouraged and directed. A detailed organization with a number of tools, some carrots and some sticks, was thus suggested. A state-led organization with regional county advisory boards, LN, (*Lantbruksnämnder*) was soon built up and equipped with experts in structural rationalization, soils, buildings and arable and animal farming. Numerous agronomists and engineers were employed for to fulfil the 1947 politics, as well as the sharpened version from 1967, the softened from 1977 and the slightly different decision from 1985 in which the coming end of the postwar politics was indicated. The LN often worked at detailed level, giving individual pieces of advice in practical matters, such as fertilizing and pest control. It was, it is suggested, not always obvious for those involved that the increased yields of wheat, milk and pork that made the farm household proud and happy, also brought about an almost constant rural exodus.

In other corridors at the LN office, experts in structural rationalization worked for improved farm sizes in order to replace as many smallholdings as possible to 10-20 hectare family farms. If no farm was big enough, future farms were selected on other criteria that were supposed to indicate units with the best prospects for future efficient farming. This process was rather unpopular and contributed to hatred and disappointment in the rural society, locally and nationally. With slightly incisive wording, the process of selection was based of favouring of some farms while others were expected to understand their own best and move to town. According to study visits as a student, principles for selection could refer to quality of farm buildings and the farmers' age and skills, but also to doubtful aspects like priority for farms with sons but not to those with daughters. The carefully selected farms were supposed to keep in intensive contact with the county agricultural board, whose advisors offered state guarantees for loans, suggested investments in machinery and enlarged and modernized farm buildings, and pushed for tile drainage, and soil mapping.

Some of this knowledge was new, and recently made available. Tractors, pesticides, feeding principles and rational buildings could be mentioned as indicators of the important role of farm technology. Moreover the establishment of an agricultural college Ultuna in Uppsala in 1932 played substantial roles in for to operate postwar agricultural politics.³⁴ The college educated agronomists, communicated with the Ministry of Agriculture that seems to have based much of their strategies on information from experts at Ultuna, and produced an almost constant flood of reports from field experiments that served as tools for advisory service at farm level. The access to available technology and knowledge, well in line with the political aims for Swedish farming, was of substantial importance for the processes of change during the second half of the 20th century. In fact, the importance may have been on a magnitude that renders the technology and knowledge factors positions in level with the

³³ This part of the paper is partly based on my education in structural economics in the late 1970s (including Martiin 1978 and Martiin & Uhlin, 1978), on employment in the late 1970s at the National Board of Agriculture that was head of the regional LN-organization (see the following text), and on personal contacts with farmers, politicians and agricultural advisors from the 1970s onwards.

³⁴ Ultuna was established as Agricultural Institute in 1849, became a college in 1932 and a university (SLU) in 1977.

larges-scale societal forces that generated the postwar agricultural politics: the industrial expansion, the continued urbanization, and the ambitions for general welfare.

Ruling the rural, a summary

The second half of the 20th century saw revolutionary changes of Swedish farming, which came to take place parallel with the emergence of the welfare state. This coincidence brought about a combination of call for improved farming efficiency, attempts to equalize farmers' material living standard with that of factory workers' and, to some degree, social and demographic considerations. From the late 1940s to the early 1990s, the farming population was reduced from one third of the total Swedish population to a few per cent of the total population, and about two thirds of all farming units were either abandoned or incorporated with other farms. Parallel with these processes, hundreds of thousands of farm households migrated left their holdings and native parish for a life as workers and town dwellers. The rural exodus was managed in a context of welfare ambitions and shortage of urban labour, which counteracted both rural and urban proletarianization. The process was formally set in train when the Swedish *Riksdag* accepted the first explicit programme for agricultural politics in 1947. The 1947 agricultural programme was to great deals built up on three main aims: the economic, emergency and the income equalizing criteria, which later came to be called the efficiency, production and income goals. In contrast with common view, the paper highlights strong links between the political aims for efficiency and income, and emphasizes that Swedish welfare ambitions was an important driving force for political calls for improved farming efficiency.

The 1947 political decision marked certain important shifts. First, that farming was involved in a structural crisis, caused by structural rather than occasional problems. In mid 20th Sweden a structural crisis called for active involvement by the state in line with the 1947 agricultural programme. Second, the new programme marked a general shift as regards rural versus urban balance. The industrial sector became more and more dominating while farming successively came to be reduced, from dominating to marginal. Third, the altered balance between rural and urban interests resulted in intensified emphasis on urban life and establishment of the industrial sector as norm for efficiency in farming. Economic results in urban sectors were thus thought to serve as a way to measure farmers' economic results, rather than traditional references to the rhythm of the sun and the season.

From perspective of general economics and welfare ambitions, these changes were understood as positive. It gained the expanding industry and the material welfare, and could be managed without risks for insufficient domestic food production. Albeit the material benefits, the 1947 agricultural politics and later modifications of this, were widely discussed and disliked partly because of the painful process of migration, partly because of its top-down ruling through state-led county agricultural boards.

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