

JORDBRUKSMARK I FÖRÄNDRING

Drivkrafter bakom och förutsättningar för offentlig styrning i Sverige och Norge

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ABSTRACT

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With a focus on agricultural land use change, the overriding aim of this thesis is to contribute to the development of a more sustainable use and management of resources. A core requirement for doing so is to develop deeper knowledge of the ways we use resources and change land uses today. Since the 1950s the amount of agricultural land on the Scandinavian Peninsula (Sweden and Norway) has decreased. From the global perspective of long-term sustainability this development is problematic. The loss of agricultural land to asphalt and concrete is a particularly challenging problem as this is often irreversible.

The aim of this study is to investigate why agricultural land is being transferred to other land uses and to examine what potentials exist to influence these changes within today's policy structures. The study is based on a time-geographical approach meaning that context and the inevitable sharing of time and space is important for understanding changes. The theoretical frame is formulated as a contextual landscape perspective which acknowledges that landscape changes occur through actor's activities that are influenced by social and physical structural aspects – e.g. driving forces. The complexity and dynamics of land use changes are investigated with a case study methodology that focuses on three cases; the rural area of Hällnäs in Sweden and the peri-urban areas in Sarpsborg and Sandnes, Norway. The main methods used are interviews, document studies and seminars with researchers and officials. In the case studies the dominant driving forces for agricultural land use are categorized as enabling, limiting or direct triggering forces. In turn, the policy structures are investigated through a focus on decision making processes concerning spatial planning and agriculture.

The study concludes that the causes behind agricultural land use change vary according to where the land is located, what activities occur and the values ascribed to the land. The agricultural land is primarily changing because of the economic conditions in the agricultural sector, characterized by global competition and difficulties in developing other income opportunities in rural areas. In addition, agricultural land – especially in peri-urban areas - is changed to other uses as other land claims and social interests are given higher priority in the competition for physical space; such as business establishments, homes, infrastructure and outdoor-recreation. The agricultural land contributes to several different values and societal interests; for production, conservation and recreation. With the landscape perspective it is acknowledged that there are both synergies and conflicts between these interests in the agricultural landscapes today, depending on which activities occur. The study also highlights that context must be taken into consideration in order to be able to understand the relations between agricultural land and other land claims.

Analysis of the situations in Sweden and Norway illustrate that policy and public management can play an important role in preserving agricultural land. Increasing the opportunities to prevent agricultural land being transferred to other uses in Sweden and Norway can be achieved by primarily focusing on the following issues: 1) more clearly distinguishing between what is currently defined as agricultural land from traditional agricultural activities, 2) developing spatial planning to further integrate rural perspectives and values, and 3) transferring decision making power over land use to higher institutional levels. The most important precondition for protecting agricultural land is, however, the existence of the political will to do so.

This thesis contributes with new understandings of the logics of landscapes; landscapes are changing through different enabling and limiting relations between individuals' activities and the time and place specific physical and social contexts. Further, the thesis contributes with discussions around pros and cons of different ways to organize and delegate responsibility in the public management and of the importance of analyzing conflicts and synergies between the variations of values and claims that humans ascribe to different lands.

Keywords: sustainable, land use, agriculture, landscape, change, driving forces, time-geography, actor-structure, context, scale, governance, spatial planning

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