

Konkurrens, samarbete och koncentration

Kalkstens- och cementindustrin i Sverige
1871-1982

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation examines cartels and cooperation. The literature about cartels and cooperation is in many ways contradictory; many of the studies that have been made come to different results. Several of the implications from former research are valid only within their context. This dissertation takes on different topics in the field of cartel research by investigating cartels and cooperation in two Swedish industries, Limestone and Cement. The time period of the study ranges from 1871, when the Cement industry was established in Sweden, to 1982, when the big cement company Cementsa (former Skånska Cement) had monopolized the two industries.

The industries were different in many aspects, which also affect the forms of cooperation in the industries. The Cement industry was technologically advanced, capital intensive and had high entry barriers, the product was homogeneous. The Limestone Industry on the other hand was neither capital nor technological intensive, the barriers to entry were really low and the product was not homogeneous. Some of the main findings in the dissertation are that both external and internal factors matter for the establishment of cartels. The cartels are often started with a test period, where the companies get to know each other and test the cooperation.

One of the main topics in the dissertation and in the field of cartel research is the link between cartels and concentration. When comparing the two industries it is clear that the concentration process and the way cartels worked differed between the industries, due to their structural diversity. In the Cement industry the concentration process was rather straightforward, and there was one main cartel controlling the industry. In the Limestone industry the development was not clear at all, different cartels succeeded each other, and the competition constantly changed. Both the Cement and the Limestone industry had a variety of forms of cooperation. The dissertation shows that cartels should not automatically be seen as a counterbalance to big companies, cartels could as well be a basis for concentration.

The Cement and Limestone industry are investigated through case studies. The case studies are based on extensive archival studies. The development and the cooperation in the two industries are compared historically. The effects that the cartels have on price development and technological development are discussed in the dissertation. The price of Limestone increased in periods of cartelisation, but overtime the prices was decreasing, especially in the late period when the advantage from economies of scale was larger. In the Cement industry the price decreased over time, especially due to declining production costs. One reason for the declining production costs was the technological development in the industry. A particular study of the mechanisation process of the quarries in the industries shows that the stabile cartels in the Cement industry supported the change. But the unstable and unsecure cartels in the Limestone industry delayed the mechanisation. Cartels could not be seen as one single phenomenon with the same features and impact everywhere, but instead the question of cartel is complex.

KEYWORDS: Cartels, cooperation, concentration, competition, cement, limestone, industry, cartel legislation, monopoly