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Knowledge Brokering and the Historical Legitimization of Mechanized Forestry

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Knowledge brokering helped legitimize the Swedish transition to mechanized forestry in the 1950s and 1960s

Policymakers can learn from the mechanization of forestry by combining top-down policy instruments with bottom-up means of knowledge brokering

Image on the right and left below: SLU Forestry Photo Archive



Transition to mechanized forestry

- How do we engage small-scale forest owners in the climate transition?
- Aiming to learn from the past, we studied the Swedish transition to mechanized forestry in the 1950s and 1960s
- In the 1950s, the Swedish state initiated a transition in the forestry sector to exclusively high sustainable yields
- The shift was secured by a forestry law and supported by technical innovations such as the chainsaw
- Half of Sweden's forest land was owned by small-scale owners; many were primarily farmers and sceptical towards mechanization and sustainable-yields forestry

Image to the right: Jerdén S, 1960. Fritte 134, *Skogsägaren* 36

Knowledge brokering

- In the 1950s and 1960s, the forest owner association SSR launched knowledge campaigns to support forest owners adjusting to mechanization
- The campaigns included contests, technology trials, and participant-led study circle courses where forest owners learned in small groups
- We analysed the campaigns, viewing SSR as a "knowledge broker" mediating between policymakers and forest owners

Conclusions

- Knowledge brokering provided forest owners with a multimedia knowledge society, technical know-how, educational structures, new identities, and critical perspectives
- Ultimately, knowledge brokering provided a bottom-up legitimization of mechanization
- Climate transition policymakers can learn from this by combining top-down policy instruments with the bottom-up means of knowledge brokering

