



# LUND UNIVERSITY

## Land Transmissions in the Manorial System. The Case of Southern Sweden 1766-1859

Drike, Martin; Olsson, Mats; Svensson, Patrick

2009

[Link to publication](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Drike, M., Olsson, M., & Svensson, P. (2009). *Land Transmissions in the Manorial System. The Case of Southern Sweden 1766-1859*. Paper presented at Economic History Society Annual Conference, 2009, Warwick, United Kingdom.

*Total number of authors:*

3

**General rights**

Unless other specific re-use rights are stated the following general rights apply:

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Read more about Creative commons licenses: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

**Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

LUND UNIVERSITY

PO Box 117  
221 00 Lund  
+46 46-222 00 00

Paper for the Economic History Society Annual Conference, University of Warwick,  
April 3–5, 2009

## Land transmissions in the manorial system The case of southern Sweden 1766–1859<sup>1</sup>

*Martin Dribe, Mats Olsson and Patrick Svensson*

Department of Economic History  
P.O. Box 7083  
S – 220 07 Lund  
Sweden

### **Abstract**

Land transmission affected the possibility for families to plan for generational shifts, marriages and retirements. For tenants on manorial land most of this decision-making potentially was left to the landowner. However, although differences existed within Europe, intergenerational transfers of tenancies seem to have existed in all parts of the continent.

In this paper we study land transfers, and their determinants, among tenants on noble land in southern Sweden, where the manorial system appears more akin to the east European system than to the manorial system of other parts of Western Europe. We study all land transmissions in two parishes, Halmstad and Kågeröd, in the period 1766–1859 using data from the poll-tax registers. Family composition at the time of the transfer is registered using family reconstitutions and catechetical examination registers. We hypothesize that it was a rational landowner strategy, at least until the 1820s, to promote intergenerational transfers of tenancies. After that, we expect that a new and more interventionist landlord strategy appeared.

Our results clearly indicate that similar strategies of land transmission applied in the manorial system as on free land owned by peasants. As was the case on freehold land, transfers to children were most important when tenancies were transferred in conjunction with retirement but there was also a considerable proportion – about 30 percent – of these transfers that went to non-kin. It is important to note, however, that these kinds of intergenerational transfers only constituted a part of all transfers. In more than 40 percent of all transfers the outgoing tenant was under 50, and in almost 30 percent of the transfers the outgoing tenant moved to become a tenant elsewhere or left the parish altogether. This clearly contradicts a simple picture of the manorial system where tenants were born and died on the same farm, without possibilities of migration or changing living conditions. As the agrarian economy developed in the nineteenth century, the management of estates changed, and the impression given is that the landlords took firmer control over the process of land transmission as land values increased.

---

<sup>1</sup> Financial support from the Centre for Economic Demography, Lund University is gratefully acknowledged.

## Introduction

Land transmission affected the possibility for families to plan for generational shifts, marriages and retirements. Since land was the main asset in pre-industrial rural societies, land transfers also affected the social status of the generations and thus social mobility. Owning land made it possible for parents to take strategic decisions on how the children would be supported during adulthood, even if legislation and practices could influence the degree of freedom in this decision (Dribe and Lundh 2005a). Transfer of property was thus a strategic decision of peasants in preindustrial society, which to a large extent determined marriage opportunities for their children as well as their own security in old age. For tenants on manorial land most of this decision-making potentially was left to the landowner. In that case the tenants had to adjust to the common practice of their landlord and to seek other ways of ensuring the social reproduction of the children in the family.

In some parts of Europe, predominantly in Western Europe, also tenants had land tenures that included hereditary rights. These tenants could often mortgage the land and even sell the user right to another tenant. In most cases, however, the landlord had to approve on the sale (Blum 1978). Even though the tenants had life-long contracts and hereditary rights it was possible for the landlord to evict them if the management of the estate as a unit so required. More common were leaseholds, either for life or restricted in time, without hereditary rights. According to many studies, land was transferred within the family at the death of the tenant also on leaseholds (see Blum 1978).

In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, tenancy at will dominated. In this case the tenant had no rights at all; the landlord could evict the tenants whenever he wished. He could transfer the land to a new tenant or add it to his demesne. Even though it may be tempting to assume that such a system would make it difficult for tenants to transfer their tenancies to their children, and thus that the logic of intergenerational transmission and social reproduction was very different on the manors than among freeholders or tenants elsewhere in Europe, several studies of central and eastern European manors have shown

that tenants frequently stayed for life and were replaced by their sons (e.g. Hagen 2002; Cerman 2008; Wetherell et al. 1994). One possible reason why landlords would promote transfers within tenant families is that it could be the easiest way to find new reliable tenants, and that the manorial system in this way became self-reproducing. In other words, choosing the new tenants among the children of outgoing tenants could lower transaction costs for the estate manager compared to finding a new tenant elsewhere.

In this paper we study land transfers among tenants on noble land in southern Sweden, where the manorial system appears more akin to the east European system than to the manorial system of other parts of Western Europe (see e.g. Olsson 2006). There are a number of studies on land transmission among manorial tenants in Europe, but most of these studies deal with the system rather than the actual rate of transfers to different types of tenants. Moreover, even the studies actually looking at transfers of tenancies usually do not analyze the determinants of the different types of transfers in greater detail. For Sweden we know even less about transfers of manorial tenancies, while there are quite a number of studies dealing with land transfers among freeholders and tenants on Crown land (e.g. Winberg 1981; Rosén 1994; Perlestam 1998; Dribe and Lundh 2005a, 2005b).

To chart the transmission of tenancies to different types of tenants we look at what factors determined the transfer. Was it age, presence of children, or status of the outgoing tenant? In addition, did the impact of the landlords on land transmissions differ between estates, and did it change over time in response to increasing commercialization and changed management of the estates? Finally, we look at what happened to outgoing tenants after the transfer and especially whether they remained as lodgers on the farm or migrated to other farms. The results give important insights into the workings of the manorial economy, and helps deepen our knowledge of this important historical institution.

We study all land transmissions in two parishes, Halmstad and Kågeröd, in the period 1766–1859 using data from the poll-tax registers. Family composition at the time of the transfer is registered using family reconstitutions and catechetical examination registers.

Together the data provides the possibility of estimating the frequency of intergenerational transfers when such options were at hand.

## Land tenure and land transmissions

While land transmissions among freeholders are analysed in the perspective of family strategies, the analyses of land transmissions among tenants additionally must consider the landlord perspective. In most parts of Europe manorial land ownership was the dominant form of ownership from the middle ages until the nineteenth century. However, the relative independence of the tenant cultivators differed over time and space. This affects the relative weight between the two perspectives.

Starting with the tenant perspective, transmission of land was one of the strategic decisions made by the family in order to ensure the survival of the next generation as well as the provision of the first generation when retiring (Dribe & Lundh 2005a, 2005b; Gaunt 1983; Goody, Thirsk & Thompson 1976; Lundh & Olsson 2002; Mitterauer & Sieder 1982; Moring 2003; Sabean 1990). On freehold land in Sweden a vast majority of transmissions in connection with retirement resulted in intergenerational transfers between kin, e.g. father to son, father to son-in-law (Dribe & Lundh 2005b). This was also true for other types of transfers (Perlestam 1998). However, over time, particularly from the beginning of the nineteenth century, the share of non-kin transfers increased for all types of turnovers due to transmissions being handled through the market (e.g. Österberg 1991; Dribe & Lundh 2005b; Holmlund 2007; Svensson 2009).

Since tenants on noble land also strived for social reproduction of the family and a safe old age, we can expect them to have had the same aspirations of family transfers. So, from the tenants' perspective any chance of making the landlord accept intergenerational transfers would be preferable. Though, if markets for tenancies were at hand and tenants were allowed to sell their lease, non-kin transfers could be a solution also for them. Moreover, in many cases landlords had left control over tenancy transmissions to the outgoing tenant. One example is Ireland where the so called "tenant-right" made tenants be the ones deciding whom to sell their tenancies to (Guinnane & Miller 1996). This

system of tenant controlled turnovers resulted in a large share of intergenerational shifts, a fact that strengthens the notion that tenants preferred transfers within the family. In effect, tenant-rights implied that the sum paid by the new tenant passed through the landlord's hands and deductions for possible arrears were made before the outgoing tenant received the rest of the money. In this way, the landlord was guaranteed to obtain previously unpaid rent from the outgoing tenant. He also made incentives for rent payment of the new tenant high since this tenant already had paid an entry fine and therefore would not get this back when passing on the farm if he had large arrears. The reason for the emergence of this system is attributed to a high number of small farms per estate and high fixed costs for rent collection and evictions (Guinnane & Miller 1996: 119).

Another way of ensuring the social reproduction was to subdivide holdings between the children. In the literature on central European land transfers there is an underlying assumption that tenants desired to do this, whereas landlords did not. Consequently, presence of subdivisions, in a certain region or in a certain period, is interpreted as signs of strengthening of tenants' rights (Cerman 2008). This implies some kind of hereditary rights and that the tenant's intention was either to subdivide the holding for more than one heir, or in order to sell part of the tenure. None of these scenarios was at hand in Sweden. In contrast to parts of east central Europe, the tenant's possibility to exploit the tenure for selling was nonexistent, most often the tenant did not even own the house he was living in, and there were no rights of inheritance connected to tenure of noble land. Accordingly, subdivisions of farms were rare on noble land in Scania, including our area of investigation, as compared to on freehold land; In freehold parishes the subdivision of farms was pronounced as shown by a more than doubling of the number of farms in Kävlinge parish (about 20 kilometers south of the area under study) between 1720 and 1840 (Dribe & Lundh 2005a), while only five new farms were added, by means of partition, to the original 131 tenant farms in Halmstad and Kågeröd 1766 to 1859.

Most tenants in Scandinavia had accomplished basic security in tenancies by the end of the eighteenth century, though an important exception was the Swedish tenants under the

nobility. The nobility owned one third of the land in Sweden as full private property, and no legislations or customs impeded landlords from “making their landed properties as useful as possible”.<sup>2</sup> This meant theoretically full landlord control over the farm successions. Besides the Decree of inspections of houses and the legal period of notice of contract, which was March 15 the year after the notice of termination, the only regulations between landlords and tenants were the contracts, oral or written. This brings us over to the landlords’ perspectives.

In general, because the landlord owned the land he had a stronger position vis-à-vis the tenants when it came to negotiation and contractual matters, e.g. duration of tenancies, and rent level. In many places the landlord could evict tenants and replace them with new tenants when he desired to do so. Furthermore, the main aim for the landlord was to obtain income from his tenants. Either he tried to maximise rents, where rents was a residual and thus the landlord bore the risk, or he sought a stable and secure income, where fixed rents made the tenants bear the risk.<sup>3</sup> Together this made the situation for the tenants insecure, both in forms of whether they could stay on as tenants but also for the possibilities of transmitting the land within the family as well as coping with risks of harvest failures.

In a perfect non-regulated market for land tenures, the chance of an intergenerational transfer from parents to a son or daughter is expected to be low. If a tenancy for example is sold by auction there are no advantages for heirs to the outgoing tenant. In a world of neo-classical economics, in all cases where transmissions of tenancies is at hand, the landlord would simply choose the best suited man for the job (Offer 1991). With the landlord deciding on new tenants he allowed for a more flexible organisation of his land. He could choose to employ a new tenant, to rearrange the farm, or to withdraw from hiring a new tenant and include the farm into the demesne instead.

Length of tenancies could be shortened without the landlord having to worry about losing

---

<sup>2</sup> The wording from the Charter of the Swedish Nobility 1723.

<sup>3</sup> The former being a “Ricardian” rent and the latter a “Smithian” rent, see Offer (1991:8).

tenants (Offer 1991: 11–12). The reason for this is the presence of inherent factors in tenancies affecting tenants to stay on. Besides having the incentive of staying on the farm to be able to pass it on to the children and to be supported in adulthood, as well as the potential worse alternative of having no land at all, there were other factors making tenants choosing long durations of tenancies. Rents paid in advance each year, entry fines, and costs of moving (e.g. direct costs of moving, loss of social contacts, and search costs for a new tenancy) are examples of this. From the landlord's perspective, short-term tenancies thus made rent revisions and control of farming easier without the risk of losing "good" tenants.

We can, however, assume reasons for landlords to allow and encourage transfers within families, all connected to transaction costs. The costs for information and negotiation are expected to be higher when searching for a non-related successor than a related one. The costs for supervision are also likely to be higher, at least if comparing a perfect stranger to the son of the previous tenant. It is also possible that landlords used different strategies on land transmission depending on the institutional context. If evictions were costly and took a long time to accomplish other solutions would be preferred by the landlord (see Guinnane & Miller 1996 on the Irish case referred to above). If old age tenants by law were the responsibility of the landlord, retirement solutions involving the new tenants might be preferred, possibly increasing possibilities of intergenerational turnovers. Choosing the son of the former tenant as his successor would not only decrease search costs but also guarantee a transfer of "tacit knowledge" of the farm's specific land conditions.

Southern Sweden was a true paradox in terms of peasant emancipation. Half the land was held by owner-occupiers (freeholders) or crown tenants with strong hereditary rights. Half the land was owned by the nobility, who in the nineteenth century expanded their demesnes by way of evictions of whole villages and simultaneously raised boon works for the remaining tenants (Olsson 2006). The investigation is done in two typical Scanian manorial parishes, each with one dominating landed estate. While the eighteenth century was stagnant in terms of demesne enlargement the next century implied that the estate of

Knutstorp in Kågeröd permanently closed down 43 of its 79 tenant farmsteads, and the estate of Duveke did the same thing with 30 of its 40 tenancies. Most of the land consolidations took place in the period 1828–1855 and was the landlords' response to boosting grain prices and new market opportunities.

Based on the preceding discussion and the character of the Scanian manorial system we hypothesize that it was a rational landowner strategy, at least until the 1820s, to promote intergenerational transfers of tenancies. After that, we expect that a new and more interventionist landlord strategy appeared, meaning not a complete end of transmissions to kin, but a more fastidious selection of descending tenants. This would lead to fewer intergenerational transfers and more transfers to non-kin. We also expect the conditions surrounding the transfer mattered a great deal for the selection of the new tenant. In particular, family context, civil status, and age should be important determinants of transmissions and the characteristics of the new tenant.

## Area and Data

We study two parishes in western Scania, the southernmost province of Sweden, situated in about 10 kilometers from the west coast. In the first parish, Halmstad, land mainly belonged to the Duveke manor although some farms belonged to Videröra manor in a neighbouring parish. Geographically, most tenant farms were located in the plain land while the Duveke manor itself was located in the more wooded parts of the parish. The second parish, Kågeröd, is dominated by forests with arable land dispersed in between them. The Knutstorp estate was the dominant landholder but also here other estates owned farms: Möllarp's manor and manors outside the parish. The population in the two parishes increased from 1,397 persons in 1751 to 2,645 in 1865.

The character of the contractual agreements between landlords and tenants in the two parishes changed in some respects, but remained stable in others. In no contracts hereditary transfers are granted. Until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the length of the contracts were normally mentioned as “life-long”, but this was until the mid of the century, in

accordance with praxis, specified as either “until further notice”, with the mutual possibility of annual notice of termination, or altered into leases for six or ten years (Lundh & Olsson 2009). The *corvée* dues were always unspecified until the second fourth of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the typical wording “whenever I [the lord of the manor] choose to call him to work”. In the 1830s and 1840s labour services were contractually regulated at the estate of Duveke, normally to 300–400 boon days per year and farm. Labour services remained the principal rent at Duveke until the 1870s, thereafter money. In the 1840s and 1850s, 40 percent of the new contracts at the estate of Knutstorp converted rents partly into money. Labour services remained the principal rent for the rest, contractually designated as “whole” or “half” *corvée* (*hoveri*), depending on the size and economic strength of the farm.

The two parishes are part of the Scanian Demographic Database.<sup>4</sup> At present the database covers the period 1646 to 1895 and relies on a multitude of different sources. Initially, information from birth-, marriage-, and death registers was used for family reconstitutions. The inclusion of poll-tax registers has linked these families to farms and other houses in the parishes. Finally, for the period from the early nineteenth century, catechetical examination registers have been used in order to register all members in the households as well as internal and external migration. Together this means that we can follow families across different locations in the parishes and that the families are linked to one another in form of kinship.

Data on land transfers come from the yearly poll-tax registers. In these registers tenants are listed on each farm each year so information on timing of turnovers is readily available. The registers also contain data on the size of the farms (*mantal*) as well as which landed estate the farms were part of. It has been argued that the poll-tax registers are not fully accurate regarding the exact timing of land transfers (Lex 1987: 45–46). This does not apply to transfers between non-kin but only to turnovers within the family,

---

<sup>4</sup> The Scanian Demographic Database is maintained by the Centre for Economic Demography, Lund University ([www.ed.lu.se](http://www.ed.lu.se)).

e.g. from father to son. The reason for this is that if the head reached 63 years of age and was no longer listed as head of the farm he did not have to pay tax. This may have resulted in transfers in the registers but not *de facto* transfers from fathers to sons. However, since we deal with tenants on manorial land the landowner was present in the transfers where written contracts were issued. This makes this potential flaw less probable. In order to check this we have compared contracts from Knutstorp's manor and the information given in the poll-tax registers and they fit exceptionally well.<sup>5</sup>

The poll-tax registers also contain information on the size and composition of the family and the household. However, earlier studies have shown that these figures are not entirely reliable. This is due to these registers being listed for tax purposes where all persons aged 15 to 63 should pay tax. This has caused an underestimation of the number of people as well as some persons being “made younger” by the tax-payers (Herlitz 1991: 90). Instead we rely on family reconstitutions and catechetical examination registers for information on the family context of the tenants (see Drike 2000 for a description of the area, data and the sources). For the period 1766 to 1813 in Kågeröd and 1766 to 1821 in Halmstad we use data from family reconstitutions and thereafter on catechetical examination registers. One weakness is that the data will not provide sufficient information on whether children who moved out of the family and out of the parish were still alive, and whether or not they had already married and taken over a farm somewhere else. This implies that we sometimes do not know if the children were still alive in cases where the transfer of land took place after they moved out of the parental household or the parish. However, since very few children left the family before the age of 15 (see Drike 2000) and since mortality after this age was quite low it does not create any large bias.<sup>6</sup> Our assumption is therefore that children who survived until leaving the parental home were alive and thus

---

<sup>5</sup> Only in one case the timing of the transfer differed between the two sources. In the poll-tax registers a widow was registered as out-going in 1792, leaving the farm to her son, but according to the contract this transfer took place six years later (contracts' sources: Knutstorp Estate Archives, The Regional Archives in Lund).

<sup>6</sup> For men, the probability of dying before 30 conditioned upon being alive at 15 ( $_{15}q_{15}$ ) was about 10 percent in Sweden in the period 1811-1815 (Human Mortality Database, [www.humanmortality.org](http://www.humanmortality.org))

potential successors.

In total, we study 655 land transfers in the period 1766-1859, of which 180 took place on 43 farms in Halmstad parish. The remaining 475 transfers took place on 93 farms in Kågeröd parish. For each transfer, the family composition of the outgoing tenant at the time of the transfer has been registered. This includes information on the family head, i.e. if husband and wife were alive and their respective age, and the number of children by sex and age. We also have data on how long time the tenancy had lasted and where the outgoing head moved after the transfer. For the incoming tenant, we have registered the year of birth for the new tenant and his/her relation to the previous tenant. Here we have divided this information into son, son-in-law, widow, widow's new husband, other kin, and non-kin. Finally, for all transfers we have registered year of transfer, which farm it concerned and which manor that owned the farm, and the size of the farm (in *mantal*).

## Results

Before turning to a more detailed analysis of land transfers in Scania, the general picture of intergenerational transmissions will be compared with some other studies of manorial systems in eastern and central Europe as well as in neighbouring Denmark (see Tables 1 and 2). It is striking that so many of the studies show that about half of the land transfers went to relatives, and half went to non-relatives. Furthermore, although only the present Scanian study simultaneously reports transmissions to widows and widows' new husbands, it is striking that when either of these events are reported in the other studies, their shares of total transfers were all between 10 and 13 percent. In 12 of the 84 Scanian cases these were overlapping events, meaning that a woman took over the farm for some years after her husband's death, and then married a new husband to whom the farm was transferred. This leaves us with a comparable share of 11 percent transfers to widows or widows' new men.

Table 1 and table 2 here

The other studies are not completely comparable, due to national and regional differences in relations between landlords and tenants, but also due to some differences in the disposition of the studies. In all other areas, except for Sweden, serfdom or some kind of restrictions in the mobility of the peasants was maintained until the late eighteenth or the early nineteenth century. However, in the Bohemian case the tenants held a strong position in the respect that they possessed saleable tenancies. The outgoing tenant could negotiate price and retirement conditions with the successor. On the other hand the landlord had to approve every new tenant, and accordingly every purchaser. In Latvia serfdom was abolished in 1819. Before that, 58 percent of the transfers went to relatives but in 1833–1850 only 40 percent. The figures presented here are mean values for the whole period. The authors of the study foremost discuss transfers in respect to kin strategies within the peasant families, and less as a result of institutional changes and various landlord strategies. In the Prussian Stawenow villages it seems like serfdom caused an extreme high degree of transfers to sons and sons-in-law,<sup>7</sup> but the number of events analysed is quite low, and no transfers to widows or widows' new husbands are reported. In the Danish case attention is drawn to the low degree of kin transfers on Zealand before the 1760s. It is worth noting that the Danish studies are not based on family reconstructions, but on notes in the compulsory tenant contracts, which possibly could have caused some bias to non-kin. Nevertheless, in contrast to the Latvian case the transfers to sons and sons-in-law increased sharply in Denmark after the abolishment of serfdom in 1788. In the Danish case the formal peasant emancipation was combined with a general strengthening of the tenants' position, including the rights to decide upon their successors.

Looking at the distribution between succeeding sons and daughters of the former tenant, 20 percent of all transmissions in Scania went to a son and 11 percent to a son-in-law. This implies that 64 percent of the transmissions to children went to sons and 36 percent to sons-in-law. Compared to other European studies this is a very high share for sons-in-

---

<sup>7</sup> The author does not consistently discriminate sons from daughters and sons in law; consequently all these transfers are here presented together.

law, where the transmissions in about four out of five cases favoured the son. However, the share of transfers to sons-in-law among tenants in Scania was more similar to the patterns on freehold and crown land in adjacent parishes, where 70 percent of transmissions to children went to sons and 30 percent to sons-in-law (Dribe & Lundh 2005a).

Table 3 here

Moving over to the Scanian case in more detail, Table 3 shows the distribution of new tenants by period and age of the outgoing tenant. Over time there was a decline in the frequency of transfers to kin, from 52 to 34 percent of all transfers, and a corresponding increase in transfers to non-kin. These changes support our hypothesis on new landlord strategies after the 1820s. Also on freehold and crown land previous research has revealed tendencies towards more non-kin transmissions in the course of the nineteenth century. The phenomenon has been explained by the expansion of the land market and the increasing value of land which made intergenerational transfers arranged within the family more costly for those who did not take over (Dribe & Lundh 2005b).

On freehold land we know that a large part of land transfers before the mid-nineteenth century took place in connection with retirement, which normally happened between 50 and 60 years of age (Dribe & Lundh 2005b; Gaunt 1983; Cederlund 1965). These transfers were often arranged within the family and formally took the form of a gift. When inheritance was later to be subdivided between the siblings the chosen child had to compensate the other siblings, but often this was facilitated by a low valuation of the farm. When this became more difficult as the land market developed, and the real value of the farm became apparent to all heirs, more and more intergenerational transfers of land was channelled through the market (Dribe & Lundh 2005b). It is also well established that the same kind of retirement system was practiced on the manors in the area under study (Lundh & Olsson 2002). In Table 3 it is clear that transfers to children were much more common when the outgoing tenant was older than 50, and thus the chance of retirement was large, while it was rather uncommon among younger tenants.

However, it is noteworthy that also among older tenants transfers to non-kin were important, and in the final period they made up almost half of all transfers.

What happened with the outgoing tenants at transmission? Looking first at all transmissions in Table 4, 37 percent stayed on the farm while another 4 percent moved within in the parish, but did not take over any other farm. 20 percent left the parish and 22 percent died, and in 7 percent of the cases the outgoing tenant continued as a tenant somewhere else in the parish. Over time migration after transmission increased a bit while it became less common to farm until death. As expected there are large differences by age. Among tenants age 50 and below, out-migration was most common, but second most common was that the outgoing tenant died. In 13 percent of the transfers the outgoing tenant went on as tenant at another farm in the parish, and 15 percent became a lodger at the farm. Thus, at least among the young tenants there seems to have been quite a bit of turnover unrelated to death or retirement, in which the outgoing tenant in many cases continued as tenant on a different farm. This clearly contradicts a simple picture of a manorial system where tenants remained bonded to their farms for life. Even though transfers followed by migration and new tenancy in a different place increased over time they were both common also in the earlier period.

Table 4 here

If we look at the transfers when the outgoing tenant remained as a lodger on the farm (i.e. retired) in Table 5, 44 percent were to a son and 23 percent to a son-in-law, while 31 percent were to a non-kin tenant. Comparing these figures to the situation on freehold and Crown land in the same part of Scania it is clear that even though transfers to children clearly dominated in both cases it was to a somewhat lower extent on manorial land than among freeholders and Crown tenants (79 percent sons or sons-in-law and 21 percent non-kin, see Dribe & Lundh 2005b). Quite naturally, when the outgoing tenant became a lodger on another farm or at a croft in the parish the most common was that the farm was taken over by a non-kin tenant, but in about 10 percent of the transmissions a son-in-law took over the tenancy.

Table 5 here

Looking at new tenants when the outgoing tenant either moved out of the parish or remained a tenant in the parish, it is quite clear that non-kin dominated greatly (86–90 percent) in transfers where the previous tenant remained at the farm to manage part of it, moved to another farm in the parish or out-migrated. In about 10 percent of the transfers other kin took over.

When the previous tenant had died the widow took over in 26 percent of the cases<sup>8</sup>, and the widow's new husband in 26 percent. Thus, in more than half of the cases when the previous tenant died the widow or her new husband took over, while in 13 percent of the cases the farm went to a son and in 8 percent of the cases to a son-in-law. On freehold and Crown land in the same area it was more common that farms were transferred to sons (31 percent) and widows (36 percent), but less common that the widow remarried and transferred the farm to her new husband (12 percent) (Dribe & Lundh 2005a). That widows experienced lower chances of becoming independent farmers on manorial land than on freehold land was also shown in a competing risk analysis of widowhood strategies in the same area as studied here (Dribe, Lundh & Nystedt 2007). Thus it seems as if widows had fewer opportunities on noble land to farm themselves and thereby maintain their independence. On the other hand they seem to have had the opportunity to remarry and thereby retain their social position as tenant spouse (cf. Myking 2004 for similar results in Norway).

There were also pronounced differences in tenancy lengths for different types of transmission, as shown in Table 6. Transmissions following shorter tenancies (less than 10 years) usually went to non-kin (71 percent) or less frequently to other kin, while it was very rare that such transfers went to children. Transfers after long farming times (20 years or more) most often involved children. Normally these are the same cases when the

---

<sup>8</sup> In order not to overestimate the transfers to widows, we disregard the transmissions with short length where the widow in practice never was the head of the farm, and condition that a widow had to be

outgoing tenants retired on the farm.

Table 6 here

We have demonstrated that children frequently took over the tenancy when their parents came close to retirement and, what is equally important, they approached a marriageable age themselves. Sons also took over more often than daughters (sons-in-law). Table 7 shows that the availability of children by age and sex clearly mattered for whom took over. In cases where the farm was transferred to a son families had an average of 1.8 sons over 20 years of age and 2.2 daughters in marriageable ages, while in cases where sons-in-law took over mean number of sons in this age groups was only 0.8, while the corresponding figure for daughters was 1.7. This shows that when there were sons available in the right age the farm was most often transferred to one of the sons, even if there were also daughters available. It could be interpreted as a sign of a son-preference in choosing the new tenant. However, it is noteworthy that sons-in-law were not only chosen in cases where there were no sons over 20 available, even though the number of sons on average was less than when sons took over.

Table 7 here

It is also clear that farms were transferred to widows or their new husbands primarily in cases when there were no marriageable sons or daughters available. It can be interpreted as being an interim solution until the children became old enough to take over themselves. The same is also true for transfers to non-kin which usually took place when no children over 20 were available, but when there were a fair number of children under 20. In most of these cases the outgoing tenant left the farm to take over another farm in the parish or to leave the parish altogether. Transfers to other kin took place when there were no children at all over 20 and no, or only few, children under 20. Some of these cases involved unmarried tenants handing over their farms to their brothers or brothers-in-law. There were a number of transmissions, for example, where an elder son took over

---

registered as a head for at least two years in the poll tax registers to make it a transfer to a widow.

the farm but did not manage (or want) to get married within a couple of years, and instead handed over the farm to a brother or a brother-in-law. In some cases they left the parish, and it is possible that they married someone outside and took over a farm in a different place.

Thus far we have looked at various bivariate associations between the outgoing and incoming tenant. Next we turn to a multivariate analysis where the transformed probability of different types of incoming tenants was modelled as a function of the status of the previous tenant at transmission (alive and married, dead, widow or widower), age of outgoing tenant (and age squared), availability of children over 20 (both sons and daughters over 20, only sons over 20, only daughters over 20, only children below 20 and no children), which estate the farm belonged to (Kågeröd, Duveke, or other, external, estates) and period (1766–1829, 1830–1859).

First we estimated a logit model on transfers to kin vs. non-kin for the whole sample (44 cases were excluded because we lacked information on the age of the outgoing tenant). The odds ratios and p-values of this estimation are displayed in Table 8. Kin transfers were clearly more likely when the outgoing tenant was dead or a widow than if the previous tenant couple transferred during their life time. Older tenants also transferred to kin more often than younger tenants, even though the effect seems to have declined at older ages. Having both sons and daughters over 20 considerably increased the likelihood of kin transfers, and conversely having only children under 20 or no children at all greatly diminished the likelihood of transferring to kin. Transfers outside the two big estates in the parishes were more likely to go to kin, which might testify that the position of the tenants were stronger on these farms compared to farms more directly under the manorial system. Finally, transfers to kin declined in importance over time.

Table 8 here

To delve deeper into the determinants of transfers to children we estimated multinomial logit models on the transfers to sons, sons-in-law or other kin vs. non-kin for a sub-

sample where there were children present. These estimates are reported in Table 9. Death and widowhood affected transfers to other kin much more than transfers to children, which only seems natural because many of these transfers involved widows and their new husbands. There was not much difference in the effects between transfers to sons and sons-in-law.

Table 9 here

Older outgoing tenants were more likely to transfer to children, but less likely to transfer to other kin. Having both sons and daughters increased the likelihood of transfer to a son compared to having only daughters over 20 or only children below 20. Interestingly there was no difference in the chance of a son transfer between families who had both sons and daughters over 20, and those having only sons over 20. This must be interpreted as a clear sign of a son preference in choosing the new tenant. As long as there was a son over 20 in the family it did not matter whether or not there were also daughters over 20 available.

For transfers to sons-in-law this is clearly different. Having only daughters more than doubled the likelihood that a son-in-law would take over compared to a situation where there were both sons and daughters over 20 available. In situations where there were only children below 20 the likelihood of transfer to all kinds of kin was lower (although the effect is not statistically significant for non-kin).

Previously it was shown that transfers to kin seem to have been more common on farms belonging to estates outside the manors' home parishes or to the small estate in Kågeröd (Möllarp). Here it is clear that this effect was most pronounced for transfers to other kin but also seems to have been present for transfers to sons. Transfers to other kin also appear to have been more frequent on farms belonging to the Kågeröd estate than to the Duveke estate. Turning finally to the period effects, transfers to all kin declined over time, and the decline seems to have been particularly strong for transfers to children.

## Conclusions

The manorial system was a salient feature of the preindustrial economy from the early Middle Ages onwards. The manor was a vital institution in this period – indeed for a long time perhaps the most important economic unit of preindustrial Europe (cf. North & Thomas 1973). Despite its importance it is usually not in the focus of economic history when we get into the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when most attention is devoted to the development of the market economy and capitalistic institutions in agriculture as important factors behind industrialization and modern economic growth.

A similar focus on peasant-proprietors (freeholders, etc) is evident in the literature on inheritance and land transmission, and its important role for social reproduction, access to marriage, and old-age security in preindustrial Europe. In this study we have aimed at deepening our knowledge about these conditions in a manorial system which was highly present and vital until the final decades of the nineteenth century in large parts of Europe.

Our results clearly indicate that similar strategies of land transmission applied in the manorial system as on free land owned by peasants. This is also supported by results from other parts of eastern and central Europe, with a similar manorial system as the one in southern Sweden. Typically half the tenancy transmissions in the eighteenth century went to kin and the other half to non-kin; the share of kin transfers being somewhat higher for freeholders. Such figures, however, conceal important differences between different types of transmissions. It is possible to identify two broader kinds of transmissions with clearly different characteristics.

As was the case on freehold land, transfers to children were most important when tenancies were transferred in conjunction with retirement, i.e. when the outgoing tenant was over 50 years of age, often had managed the farm for 20 years or more, and remained as a retired lodger on the farm after transmission. This shows that the institution of peasant retirement was not a peculiarity of the freeholding peasants, but something much more universal. It was a natural and efficient way both of finding a new tenant for the

landlord and to take care of aging tenants. In a majority of these cases the farms were transferred to children, but there was also a considerable proportion – about 30 percent – of these transfers that went to non-kin, which is considerably higher than on freehold land. There were also clear indications of a son-preference in choosing the new tenant, even though farms were sometimes handed over to sons-in-law also in cases where there were marriageable sons available.

It is important to note, however, that these kinds of intergenerational transfers only constituted a part of all transfers. In more than 40 percent of all transfers the outgoing tenant was under 50, and in almost 30 percent of the transfers the outgoing tenant moved to become a tenant elsewhere or left the parish altogether. This clearly contradicts a simple picture of the manorial system where tenants were born and died on the same farm, without possibilities of migration or changing living conditions. In these kinds of transfers a great majority of the new tenants were not related to the outgoing tenants in any way. Instead, the landlord can be expected to have acted actively in these transfers.

It is also clear that landlord strategies differed considerably between different kinds of tenant farms. Landlord involvement and selection of tenants was more active if the farmstead was situated in the vicinity of the manor, and thereby was more important for the supply of boon work, while succession at more distant farms often was left to the outgoing tenant to decide upon.

In the nineteenth century, following commercialization and increased farm outputs, higher land prices forced freeholders to adopt new inheritance strategies, more often resulting in land transfers through the market, and increasingly to non-kin. The same market expansion promoted new landlord strategies as well, with a more thorough selection of tenants, which coincided with more active landlord strategies in terms of demesne expansions and by means of implementing short-term leases. One of the consequences for the tenants was a decrease in intergenerational transfers to kin.

As a whole the analysis presented in this paper demonstrates both similarities and

important differences between the manorial system and the rest of the agrarian sector. It shows how landlords managed their estates to lower transaction costs not only in choosing the tenants but also in arranging care for elderly former tenants. As the agrarian economy developed in the nineteenth century, the management of estates changed, and the impression given is that the landlords took firmer control over the process of land transmission as land values increased.

## References

Blum, J. (1978) *The End of the Old Order in Rural Europe*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Cederlund, C. O. (1965). Undantagsinstitutionen i Mönsterås socken 1860–1960. In: Å. Domeij (ed.) *Stranda härads hembygdsförenings årsskrift 1962–1964*. Norrtälje.

Cerman, M. (2005). *Social structure and medieval land markets in east-central Europe*. Paper at the conference “The Rise, Organization, and Institutional Framework of Factor Markets” in Utrecht, 23-25 June, 2005.

Cerman, M. (2008). Social structure and land markets in late medieval central and east-central Europe *Continuity and Change*, 23: 55-100.

Drike, M. (2000). *Leaving Home in a Peasant Society. Economic Fluctuations, Household Dynamics and Youth Migration in Southern Sweden, 1829-1866*. Södertälje: Almqvist & Wiksell International.

Drike, M. & Lundh, C. (2005a) Gender Aspects of Inheritance Strategies and Land Transmission in Rural Scania, Sweden, 1720–1840. *History of the Family* 10: 293–308.

Drike, M. and C. Lundh (2005b) “Retirement as a strategy for land transmission: a micro study of pre-industrial rural Sweden”, *Continuity and Change*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 165–191.

Drike, M., Lundh, C. & Nystedt, P. (2007). Widowhood Strategies in Pre-industrial Society. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 38:207–232.

Gaunt, D. (1983) The Property and Kin Relationships of Retired Farmers in Northern and Central Europe. In: R. Wall, J. Robin and P. Laslett (eds.) *Family Forms in Historic Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goody, J, Thirsk, J & Thompson, E. P. (1976). *Family and Inheritance: Rural Society in Western Europe 1200-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Guinnane, T. W. & Miller, R. I. (1996) Bonds without Bondsmen: Tenant-Right in Nineteenth-Century Ireland. *The Journal of Economic History*, 56:113–142.

Hagen, W (2002), *Ordinary Prussians. Brandenburg junkers and villagers, 1500–1840*, New York : Cambridge University Press.

Holmlund, S. (2007). *Jorden vi ärvde. Arvsöverlåtelser och familjestrategier på den uppländska landsbygden 1810–1930*. PhD diss. Stockholm University, Department of History.

Lundh, C. & Olsson, M. (2002) The institution of retirement on Scanian estates in the nineteenth century, *Continuity and Change*, no. 17 (3), pp. 373–403.

Lundh, C. & Olsson, M. (2009), Tenancy Contracts in Scania from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century, in *The development of leasehold in northwestern Europe, c. 1200–1600*, B. v. Bavel & P. Schofield (eds.), CORN publication series nr 10, Turnhout: Brepols, pp. 113–137.

Mitterauer, M. & Sieder, R. M. (1982). *The European Family: Patriarchy to Partnership from the Middle Ages to the Present*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Moring, B. (2003). Conflict or Cooperation? Old Age Retirement in the Nordic Past. *Journal of Family History* 22: 50-70.

Myking, J. R. (2004) Attractive Marriage Partners? Tenant Widows and Remarriages in Western Norway in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century. *Scandinavian Journal of History* 24:225–239.

North, D. C. & Thomas, R. P. (1973). *The Rise of the Western World. A New Economic History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Offer, A. (1991) Farm tenure and Land Values in England, c. 1750–1950. *The Economic History Review*, 44:1, pp. 1–20.

Olsson, M. (2002) *Storgodsdrift. Godsekonomi och arbetsorganisation i Skåne från dansk tid till mitten av 1800-talet*, Lund/Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International

Olsson, M. (2006) Manorial Economy and Corvée Labour in Southern Sweden 1650–1850, *Economic History Review*, vol. LIX, no. 3, pp. 481–497

Perlestat, M. (1998) *Den rotfaste bonden – myt eller verklighet? Brukaransvar i Ramkvilla socken 1620–1820*, Malmö.

Rosén, U. (1994) *Himlajord och handelsvara. Ägobyten av egendom i Kumla socken 1780–1880*, Lund: Lund University Press.

Sabean, D. W. (1990). *Property, Production, and Family in Neckarhausen, 1700-1870*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Skrubbeltrang, F. (1978) *Det danske landbosamfund 1500–1800*, København : Den danske historiske forening

Svensson, P. (2009) Land market, property rights, and agricultural transformation in southern Sweden, 1680–1870. In: G. Béaur & P. Schofield (eds.) *Property Rights, Land Market, and Economic Growth in Europe (13<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries)*. Turnhout: Brepols publishers.

Wetherell, C., A. Plakans and B. Wellman. (1994) "Social Networks, Kinship, and Community in Eastern Europe", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 639–663.

Winberg, C. (1981) "Familj och jord i tre västgötasocknar. Generationsskiften bland självägande bönder ca 1810–1870", *Historisk Tidskrift*, vol. 101, pp. 278–310.

Österberg, E. (1991) 'Land Transactions, Symptoms of Crisis or the Emergence of capitalism in Swedish Peasant Society', in *Plov og pen. Festschrift til Svend Gissel*, Køpenhamn: Det kongelige Bibliotek og Landbohistorisk Selskab.

Table 1. Number of tenancy transfers to kin and non-kin, Scania and earlier studies.

	<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Bohemia</b>			<b>Latvia</b>	<b>Prussia</b>
	Scania	Frydlant	Vissi Brod	Chynov	Pinken-hof	Stave-now
	1769–	1558–	1651–	1625–	1795–	1721–
	1859	1750	1720	1795	1850	1771
Son	129		67	55	97	
Son in law	69		23	12		53
Widow	48				24	
Widow's new husband	36		24			
Other relatives	33		14	4	8	2
<b>Related, sub total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Non-related</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>9</b>
<i>Total number</i>	<i>655</i>	<i>391</i>	<i>184</i>	<i>144</i>	<i>249</i>	<i>64</i>

Sources: Bohemia, Cerman 2005; Latvia, Wetherell et.al. 1994; Prussia, Hagen 2002.

Table 2. Percentage of tenancy transfers to kin and non-kin, Scania and earlier studies.

	<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Bohemia</b>			<b>Latvia</b>	<b>Prussia</b>	<b>Denmark</b>	
	Scania	Frydlant	Vissi Brod	Chynov	Pinken-hof	Stave-now	Jylland	Sjælland
	1769–	1558–	1651–	1625–	1795–	1721–	1720–	1720–
	1859	1750	1720	1795	1850	1771	1759	1759
Son	20%		36%	38%	39%		30%	18%
Son in law	11%		13%	8%		83%	7%	3%
Widow	7%				10%			
Widow's new husband	5%		13%				12%	13%
Other relatives	5%		8%	3%	3%	3%	2%	1%
<b>Related</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>Non-related</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>66%</b>

Sources: Bohemia, Cerman 2005; Latvia, Wetherell et.al. 1994; Prussia, Hagen 2002; Denmark, Skrubbetrang 1978.

Table 3. New tenant by the age of the outgoing tenant (%).

	≤50				>50				All	
	1766– 1829		1830– 1859		1766– 1829		1830– 1859		1766– 1829	
	Son	4	0	3	38	32	37	21	17	20
Son-in-law	3	1	3	19	12	18	12	6	6	11
Widow's new husband	14	8	12	4	0	3	8	4	4	7
Widow	6	3	5	7	5	7	6	4	4	5
Other kin	12	7	10	0	0	0	6	3	3	5
Non-kin	62	82	67	32	51	36	48	66	52	
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	215	76	291	243	77	320	500	155	655	

Table 4. Status of the previous tenant after transmission by age (%).

	≤50				>50				All	
	1766– 1829		1830– 1859		1766– 1829		1830– 1859		1766– 1829	
	Remarried (widow)	5	1	4	0	0	0	2	1	2
Out-migrated	25	36	27	3	16	6	18	26	26	20
Dead	23	13	21	27	18	25	24	16	16	22
Stayed at farm	15	8	13	62	56	60	38	32	32	37
Stayed in parish	4	9	5	3	5	4	3	7	7	4
Tenant at farm	4	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	1
Tenant in parish	13	20	14	2	1	2	7	10	10	7
Other	11	13	12	2	4	2	6	8	8	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	215	76	291	243	77	320	500	155	655	

Table 5. New tenant in respect to what happened with the previous tenant (%).

	Stayed at farm	In parish, no farm	Out-migrated	Tenant at farm	Tenant in parish	Died
Son	44	0	1	0	0	13
Son-in-law	23	11	1	0	0	6
Widow's new husband	0	0	0	0	0	26
Widow	0	0	0	0	0	26
Other kin	2	4	12	11	10	3
Non-kin	31	86	86	89	90	26
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	240	28	129	9	49	137

Table 6. New tenant by length of tenancy of outgoing tenant (years).

	1–4	5–9	10–19	20+	Total
Son	3	2	14	39	20
Son-in-law	1	4	6	21	11
Widow's new husband	9	6	14	3	7
Widow	2	6	6	7	5
Other kin	14	11	1	0	5
Non-kin	71	71	59	30	52
Total	100	100	100	100	100
N	122	116	159	258	655

Table 7. Mean number of sons and daughters of the outgoing tenant by new tenant.

	Sons		Daughters		N
	Under 20	20 and up	Under 20	20 and up	
Son	0,8	1,8	0,6	1,2	129
Son-in-law	0,7	0,8	0,7	1,7	69
Widow's new husband	1,3	0,3	1,0	0,2	48
Widow	1,8	0,6	1,4	0,4	36
Other kin	0,3	0,0	0,3	0,0	33
Non-kin	1,1	0,3	1,1	0,3	340

Table 8. Odds ratios from logit estimates of transfers to kin vs others.

	OR	p
<b>Civil status outgoing</b>		
Alive, married	1	rc
Dead	7,58	0,000
Widow	9,77	0,000
Widower	1,37	0,379
Age of outg.	0,81	0,005
Age of outg sq	1,00	0,009
<b>Children over 20</b>		
Sons and daugs>20	1	rc
Only sons>20	0,50	0,058
Only daugs>20	0,74	0,433
Only child<20	0,07	0,000
No children	0,10	0,000
<b>Estate</b>		
Kågeröd	1,11	0,671
Duveke	1	rc
Others	3,67	0,000
<b>Period</b>		
1766–1829	1	rc
1830–1859	0,40	0,000
<hr/>		
Number of obs	611	
Wald chi2	127,6	
Prob > chi2	0,000	
Pseudo R2	0,299	
Log pseudolikelihood	-296,8	

Table 9. Relative risks from multinomial logit estimates of transfers to kin vs others.

	Sons		Sons-in-law		Other kin	
	RR	p	RR	p	RR	p
<b>Civil status outgoing</b>						
Alive, married	1	rc	1	rc	1	rc
Dead	0,56	0,180	0,61	0,319	138,11	0,000
Widow	6,42	0,004	7,44	0,025	77,67	0,000
Widower	0,73	0,502	0,99	0,978	3,55	0,240
Age of outg.	2,77	0,000	2,42	0,078	0,80	0,048
Age of outg sq	0,99	0,001	0,99	0,119	1,00	0,207
<b>Children over 20</b>						
Sons and daugs>20	1	rc	1	rc	1	rc
Only sons>20	0,76	0,473	0,05	0,011	1,25	0,728
Only daugs>20	0,04	0,001	2,63	0,025	0,64	0,539
Only child<20	0,06	0,000	0,10	0,000	0,44	0,114
<b>Estate</b>						
Kågeröd	1,12	0,770	0,59	0,184	3,14	0,012
Duveke	1	rc	1	rc	1	rc
Others	2,99	0,065	1,45	0,625	6,30	0,013
<b>Period</b>						
1766–1829	1	rc	1	rc	1	rc
1830–1859	0,33	0,001	0,21	0,001	0,42	0,047
Number of obs	533					
Wald chi2	228,7					
Prob > chi2	0,000					
Pseudo R2	0,467					
Log pseudolikelihood	-349,4					

*Note:* The sample only includes transfers where there were children available.