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Mapping spatial differences in forest land conveyances between Swedish male and female forest owners

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Abstract: The transfer of the farm land from one generation to another is a crucial issue in a farming society. Traditionally, the principle of transfer to the first born (son) has been practiced in most parts of Sweden with the exception of the province of Dalarna. However, there has been a general shift in tradition towards an equal rights situation during recent decades, implying that the number of forest owners in Sweden has increased from about 200 000 to 350 000 in one generation. One third of the forest owners are sole owners, one third owns with their spouse and one third owns with relatives. It is likely that these different ownership-constellations affect management practice and together with differences in conditions for the forest conveyance (inheritance, legacy, purchase or relative-purchase) generates different incentive structures for forest management. Previous results based on an inquiry study of transfer forms for acquisition of property, indicates that women take over their properties as inheritance/legacy to a greater extent than male owners while the latter more often buy their properties.

The question addressed in this paper is if inheritance patterns still are the same as they have traditionally been, and what consequences this has on the possibility to run the farm in an optimal way. Another question addressed is whether forest land conveyances still differ between different regions in Sweden. Data for all conveyances in Sweden for the period January 2005 to September 2007 are provided by Lantmäteriet (the National Land Survey of Sweden). The data are divided into gender and type of conveyance. Results show differences between male and female forest owners with respect to conveyance forms for acquisition of property and the cost per hectare for buying property. Furthermore, data indicate whether patterns of forms for acquisition differ between different regions.

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