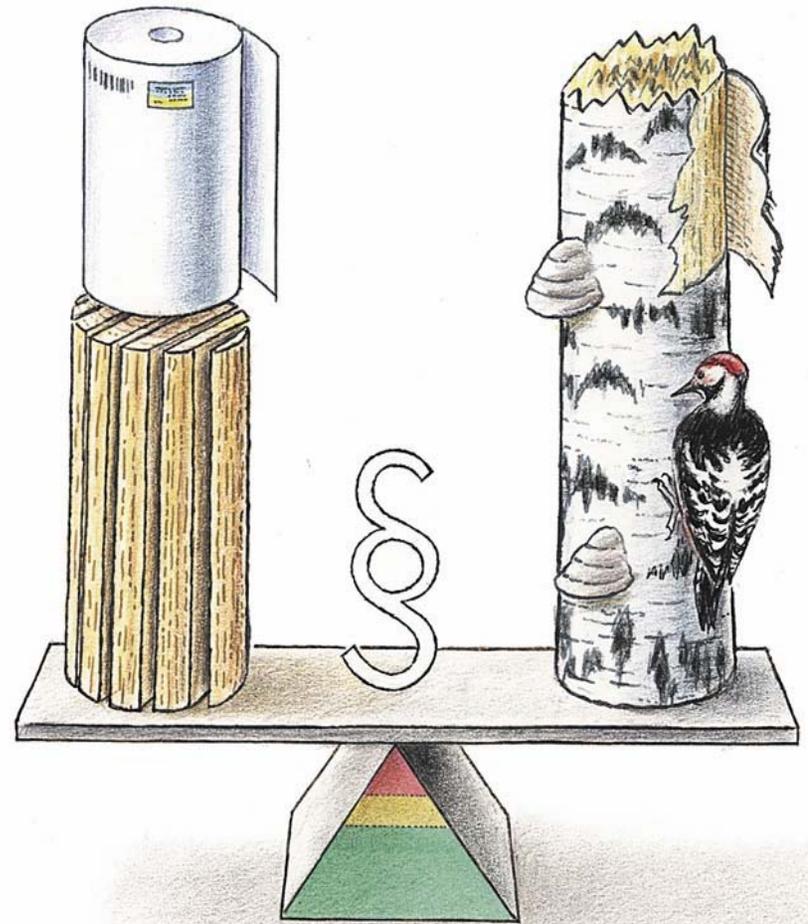

The development of forest ownership and users rights in Sweden

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The development from forest commons in the early 16th century to private ownership in the early 21st century



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- The forest ownership structure in Sweden today very clearly reflects the main objective of the privatisation of forest land two hundred years ago,

i.e. to provide every homestead with enough forest to cover the needs for forest products.

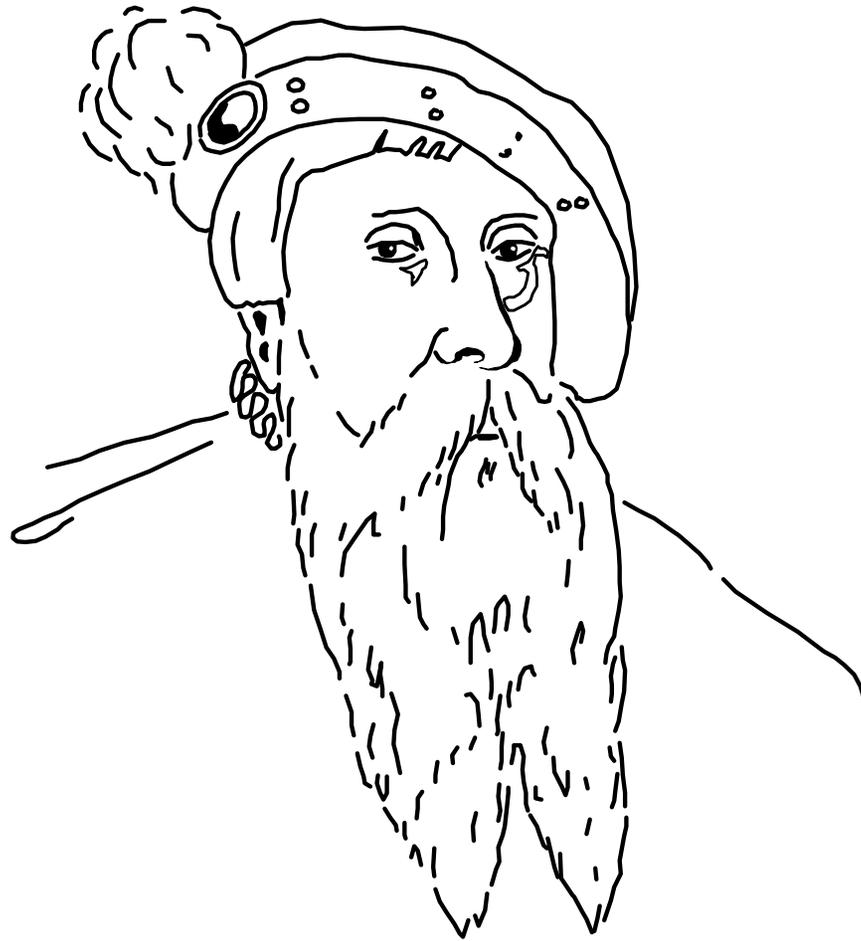
Traditional land tenure in Europe

- Privatisation of forest started later than privatisation of **agricultural land**
 - Cultivated land is a result of hard labour, and man has right to the fruit of his labour.
 - Hence, cultivated land can be held with strong tenure rights, and transferred through inheritance or commercial transactions.
 - – On the other hand, extensively used land had no distinct owners, but was held as commons by villages.
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European universities of the 13th century- two complementary rather than opposing perspectives:

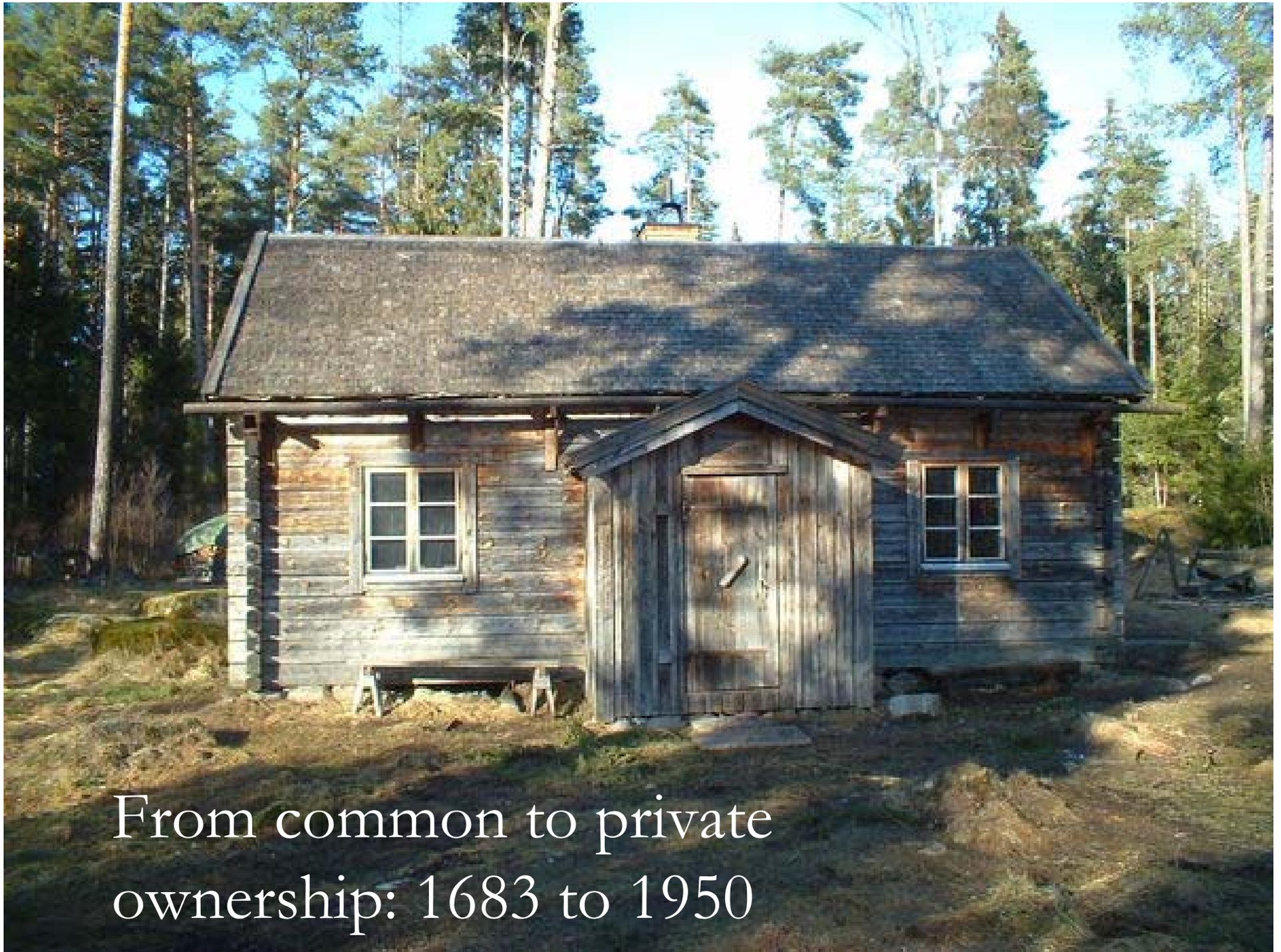
- *dominium directum*, a formal ownership right, including rights to sell, bequeath the lands
 - *dominium utile*, a user right, which could be customary, or well defined and upheld in court
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Land tenure in early modern Sweden



Crown, peasants and companies:
leading motifs in Swedish forest tenure
policy

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- The Swedish central government was weak until the ascendancy of the Wasa-dynasty in 1523.
 - The surrounding forest land was held in common, with right of access to household timber and firewood, grazing etc., for landed as well as landless local people.
 - The Crown from time to time invited colonists from the Finnish parts of the realm, familiar with shifting cultivation methods - in no-man's land.
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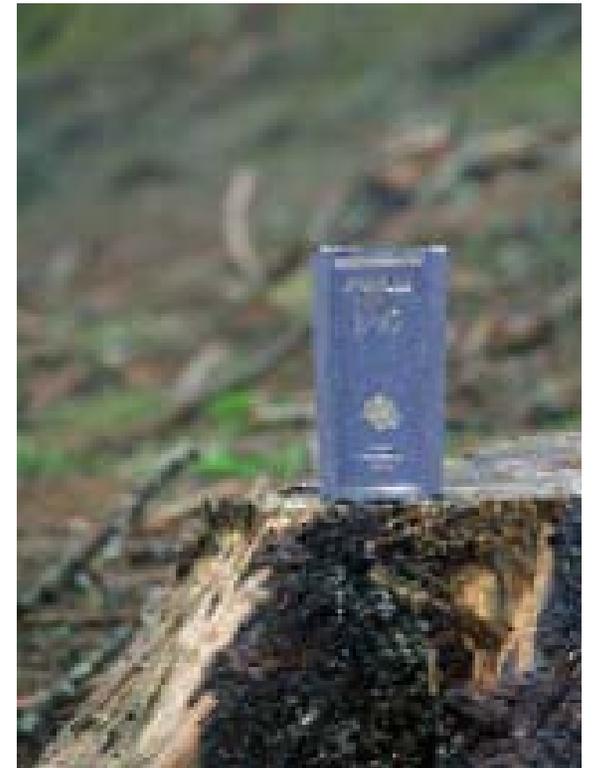
From common to private
ownership: 1683 to 1950

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- Since there was little use for the vast timber resource, other than for household purposes, the Crown did initially not bother about **defining the exact user rights** that the settlers could exercise.
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An example of the development after 1850:

- In 1781 - 67 Swedish dollars (*riksdaler*)
- In 1811 - 267 dollar
- In 1840 - 1100 dollars.
- In 1864 - 40 000 dollars.
- In 1872 - 300 000 dollars.
- The estimated standing value was 2.5 million dollars.

The companies' land acquisitions and their political consequences



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- Once the industry had achieved greater economic stability, and partly in response to the **frequent litigation over the logging rights**, companies started to buy land.
 - “stop law”, as it was commonly named, was introduced in 1906, preventing further company acquisitions in Norrland.
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- Then period from 1850 to 1900 was thus a highly turbulent period, when the full consequences of the transition from forest commons for subsistence used to an exploitable natural resource became obvious.
 - This finally led to the breaking of political blocks, and the introduction of adequate and successively stricter silvicultural legislation, starting with the first Forestry Act in 1903.
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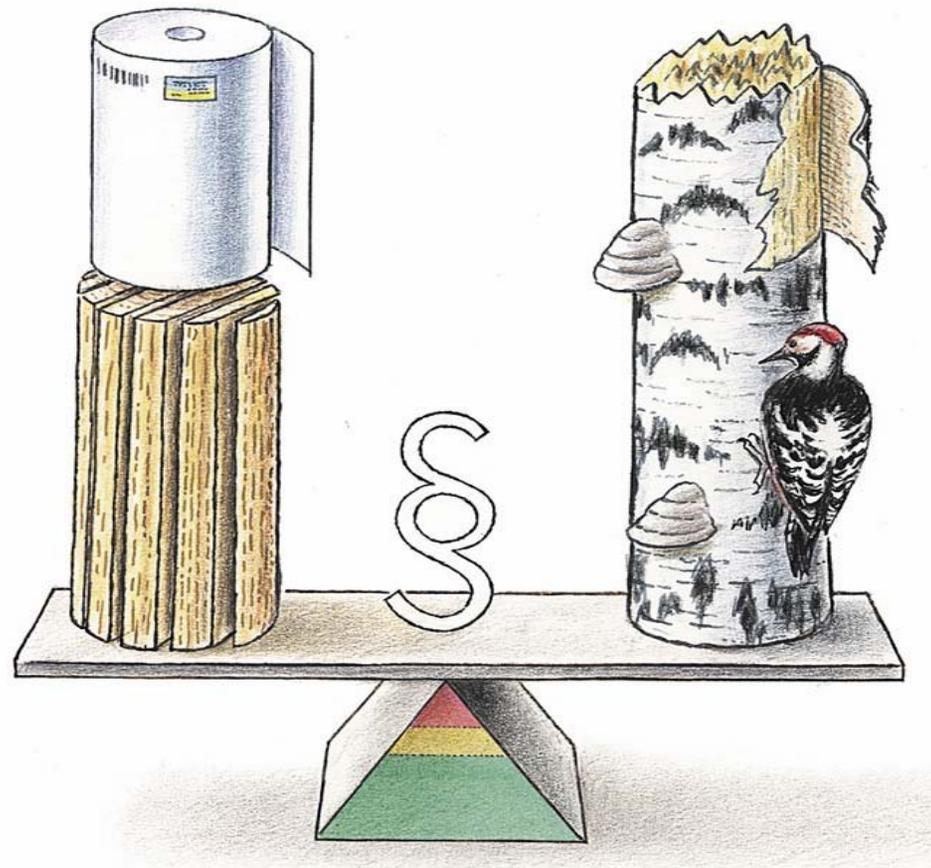
Back to multiple user rights

- In the early modern time the Crown held a claim to an, albeit diffuse, *dominium directum* over all forest, while the local population held various user rights. Then, ownership and **user rights were fused**.
 - Now, after 1950, we are seeing a development where the former farmer (and all other landowners) have a *dominium directum*, while a number of public and non-owner parties are claiming user rights which considerably intrude on the owners own use.
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“Public” interest in maximal production
-70s



Ownership development up to 2000



**Time for new principles for forest
tenure?**

dominium directum & dominium utile

- I. the attitudes among stakeholders have changed swiftly

 - II. The two perspectives have been fused
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Future forest policy

- I. Land ownership has widely different significance to different categories of owners

 - II. User rights consider several recognized users.
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Thank you for listening 😊

