

Horgby, Björn, Egensinne och skötsamhet. Arbetarkulturen i Norrköping 1850-1940. Self-will and dilicence. Working-class culture in Norrköping, 1850-1940. Stockholm: Carlssons 1993

Abstract

This study deals with changes in working-class culture in Norrköping, 1850-1940, a major swedish town dominated by the cotton and wool industry. The cultural changes analyses by using the concepts of diligence and self-will; strategies which affected processes of disciplination. Self-will was a way for workers to avoid being controlled, to create a life space of their own and to relate to one another on their own terms. In keeping with self-will, diligence was a strategy for distancing oneself from middle-class hegemony; it didn't stop at dissociation, it also took up the struggle for hegemony. To reach this distant goal it was necessary to use a long-term strategy primarily consisting of personal diligence, educational projects and the organised creation of publicity, capable of competing with that of the middle class.

The processes of disciplination and patterns of socialization affected worldviews in working-class culture in a rationalistic direction. The important concept of honour, that functioned as a cultural grammar, was however more or less resistant to changes during the period 1850-1940. Another important cultural code was the mentality for long-term and short-term planning, which affected both economical behaviour and organizational patterns. Diligence as a strategy required long-term planning whilst self-will required planning in the short-term.