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Reception – hospitality and hostility

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Scanian homes: Reception, settlement or rejection

- *The aim of the project is to investigate the practice, interaction and results of municipal homelessness policies and refugee reception strategies in Skåne county in Sweden, in order to identify policy elements that are helpful for providing secure and adequate housing for these groups.*

- *Research team*

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<https://www.soch.lu.se/en/research/research-projects/scanian-homes-reception-settlement-or-rejection>



Sub studies

- Municipal survey autumn 2018
- Case studies in four municipalities (Malmö, Lund, Hörby, Svalöv) with interviews of civil servants, politicians, volunteers, people experiencing homelessness and newly arrived migrants as well as observations and archival studies.
- Study of the municipalities' governing documents, websites and protocols, etc.
- Use of second-hand apartments ("social contracts") in Malmö over time.
- Follow-up of Malmö municipality's guide for emergency assistance to so called structurally homeless, introduced 1 May 2019.
- Study of the housing situation for newly arrived migrants after the subcontracting has ended (Malmö and Hörby).
- Focus group interviews with housing coordinators (equivalent) in six different municipalities.





Street-level bureaucrats' moral dispositions:

- The Enforcer
- The Indifferent
- The Caregiver

”The proper implementation of public policy depends on their capacity to act as sensible moral agents who can, among other things, interpret vague directives, strike compromises between competing values, and prioritize the allocation of scarce resources. And yet, they must operate in a working environment that is particularly challenging and that tends, over time, to erode and truncate their moral sensibilities. While public service agencies depend on the moral agency of street-level bureaucrats, they proceed, at the same time, to undermine that very agency.” (Zacka 2017 p. 4)



A few examples

- ... when you move in, you have an empty shell. "Now you kind of get to start there." (Employee)
- ... yes, there are many newly arrived migrants who move into very, very empty apartments and that you may sleep on the floor for the first few weeks, or at least you sleep the first night with children on the floor. (Employee)
- Then they come to an empty apartment and have nothing, so then we saw a need, apart from the fact that they need to learn a little Swedish and get a little network in [name of town] and so, they needed stuff, furniture and housewares... and clothes... (Volunteer)



Field note

"After about half an hour, [name of the housing coordinator], a janitor and I went to an apartment that they were preparing for a quota family [resettled refugees] that would arrive at the beginning of February. It was a three-room apartment. Bright and nice, but very spartanly furnished. Budget SEK [€ 844.30]. But those who come as instructed by the Housing Act "only get a lamp in the toilet"."

Results

- Several municipalities took up the settlement of new arrivals ambitiously and successfully when The Settlement Act was passed in 2016, and planned for "permanent residence". This law obliges the municipalities to receive and settle a certain number of newly arrived refugees each year.
- The state subsidies initially contributed to the settlement gaining a higher status in the municipality; new administrations were engaged.
- In several municipalities, the ambitions have gradually been cut down or changed direction.
- The length of residence and living conditions for newly arrived migrants vary greatly between municipalities.
- Several municipalities highlight "social dumping" as a problem.



Thanks for listening

References

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