

Seminar 17: Homelessness in Sweden (Floor -1, Room 8)

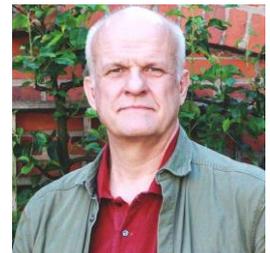
Chair: Kjell Larsson, SE

Marcus Knutagård and Arne Kristiansen, SE: Reception – Hospitality and Hostility



Marcus Knutagård is an associate professor at the School of Social Work, Lund University. His research interests include housing policy, homelessness and the importance of place for how social work is organised – its moral geography. Two of his ongoing research projects are “Scanian homes: Reception, settlement or rejection – homelessness policies and strategies for refugee settlement” and “Take away – disinvestment of established methods when implementing new psychosocial interventions for homeless people and people with mental health problems”.

Arne Kristiansen, PhD, is associate professor at School of Social Work, Lund University. His research interests include homelessness, substance abuse and service user involvement. He is currently involved in two research projects: “Scanian homes: Reception, settlement or rejection – homelessness policies and strategies for refugee settlement” and “RECO - Resilient Communities by Sustainable Welfare Transformation”



The aim of this paper is to analyse the practice of reception of newly arrived migrants. The paper is part of an ongoing project Scanian homes: Reception, settlement or rejection – homelessness policies and strategies for refugee settlement. 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. The project consists of several sub studies. In this paper we will particularly focus on the focus group interviews conducted with social workers with a responsibility of coordinating housing and accommodation for refugees and homeless people in ten municipalities. Theoretically, the paper draws on Zacka's (2017) discussion on street-level bureaucrats' moral dispositions of taking a reductive position that tend to become pathological. Street-level bureaucrats are those who implement policies. In this way, we try to analyse municipalities as having a policy making disposition that is either enforcing, indifferent or caregiving. In some contexts, they have the possibility to act as sensible moral agents, while in other contexts, their agency is severely undermined. Our preliminary results show that 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.

Marie Nordfeldt, SE: Civil Society's (new?) Roles in the Field of Homelessness – a Follow Up Study

Marie Nordfeldt has a PhD in Human Geography and is a professor in Social work at Karlstad University. Her research mainly concerns the role of civil society within the field of welfare, both social welfare issues such as e.g. homelessness and broader issues involving service and infrastructure. She has been involved in several research projects and evaluations focusing



homelessness. Currently she runs a project on CSOs work and initiatives for persons in a situation of homelessness, financed by the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF).

Civil society organisations (CSOs) have a long tradition of advocating for, and providing services to, people in a situation of homelessness, especially for persons in acute homelessness. In Sweden, CSOs have in this respect served the role of being a social security network beyond the public social services. In this paper I investigate the current roles of CSOs within the organisational field of homelessness and, analyse whether the division of labour between the public social services and civil society has changed during the latest decades. The paper is based on a follow-up study of a study conducted in the end of the 1990's (Nordfeldt 1999) and thereby give a long-term perspective on the role of CSOs within the field of homelessness. The method used is semi-structured interviews with representatives of (18) CSOs working within the field of homelessness in Stockholm and Gothenburg, both the "traditional" organizations included in the 1990's study, and more recently initiated organisations, and relevant documents. Theoretically the article is inspired by neo-institutional organizational theory. Findings suggest that the division of labour is rather intact, CSOs still make up a niche to care and provide services for acute homeless persons, although the cooperation with the public social services has increased over time. The role as an "mediating link" identified as important in the 1990's study, i.e. to support persons to establish or re-establish contacts with the public welfare system. This role has both grown in scope and become more structured, e.g. advocating for individual rights, providing legal advice and an additional role during the latest years include it-support in digital contacts with public authorities, healthcare, landlords and others.