

S16: Building sustainable relations in the real estate industry – A case study of a real estate firm using different dialogues to establish long-term relations with its tenants in Sweden

Abstract

A main issue in the real estate industry is how to develop long-term relations with tenants to secure stability for the firm and by that also generate sustainable business operations. To remedy this the present study builds on an in-depth case study following the work on how to utilize dialogues as a strategic and operative tool to build sustainable relations with its tenants in different forms. Dialogues have been implemented in both public and private spheres since the 60s and 70s through the citizens' rights movements that pushed urban planning to begin engaging in participatory planning (Lazoroska & Palm, 2019). However, in a more recent turn of events there has been indices pointing towards a more relational turn for understanding how to build sustainable relations in both private and public organizations (e.g., Lawrence, 2002). Here, the dialogue has arisen as a tool due its relational nature since the responsibilities and obligations of landlords has constantly increased and in turn been pushed downward to tenants. In this relational turn the firm that we build the case around has over time worked with implementing new forms of dialogue to inform and co-create a more socially sustainable environment for their employees and tenants.

The firm that we build the case-study around started to implement dialogues in 2013 when they faced a large-scale renovation project of an entire housing area. Both regulations on co-determination and the importance of generating a fruitful discussion with the tenants became the foundation to initiate dialogue as an operative tool for large-scale re-construction of an entire housing area. This became the start of developing different forms of dialogues with tenants spanning in-depth focus groups to very short surveys online. However, fast-forwarding to 2024 the real estate firm in question still struggle with how they are to understand the use and priority of what dialogues to use and when to use them. Hence, the purpose of the current study is to develop insights on the use of dialogues and its place both as a strategic and operative tool that then could lead to more sustainable business practices.