

S11. Affordable housing in Sweden: a typology of entrepreneurial activities

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Abstract

The challenge of providing affordable housing has in Sweden, as in most other countries, become an increasing challenge, facing not just low-income households. This tendency has been the strongest in the larger urban areas but is today a challenge in many parts of the country. Housing in Sweden is partly different from other countries in that there is no social housing. Instead, the housing policy is often described as general, with a large rental sector catering to a broad range of households, and low-income residents are supported through a housing allowance. The housing rental market in Sweden can be divided into two different dominant groups; private companies of various sizes, organized as limited liability companies, and municipal housing companies. Other types of organizations play a small role in the provision of affordable housing today, but they can still have an important role in terms of innovative solutions that more established businesses do not muster. The role of entrepreneurship in the provision of affordable housing is however unexplored in research, particularly in the Swedish context. Our overview shows that there are few co-operative companies and few housing foundations in Sweden. The purpose of this paper is to improve the understanding of entrepreneurship in housing, providing a typology of social entrepreneurs in the Swedish housing market. We use interviews, document analysis and quantitative analysis to map the organizational landscape of the housing sector, with particular focus on the less common types of organizational forms. Our results provide empirical examples of entrepreneurial activities that potentially can contribute to a more socially sustainable housing market in Sweden, but with lessons of interest also for other countries and contexts.

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