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Hantering av hemlöshet

En kartläggning och analys av organiseringen av lokala hemlöshetsystem i Sveriges kommuner

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av

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- I. Wirehag, M. (2019). Counting and mapping local homeless service systems in Sweden. *European Journal of Homelessness*, 13(1), 159-180.
- II. Wirehag, M. (2021). Gatekeeping, managing homelessness and administrating housing for the poor: The three functions of local housing services for the homeless in Sweden. *European Journal of Homelessness*, 15(1), 83-107.
- III. Wirehag, M. & Mellberg, J. (forthcoming). The growth, range and mix of actors in local homeless housing services in Sweden, 2011-2018. (Inskickad till Tidskrift för boligforskning).
- IV. Wirehag M., Andersson L., Hjern A., & Ascher H. (2020). Living situations among undocumented migrants in Sweden: the effects of exclusion from fundamental housing rights. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 30(2), 239-248.

ABSTRACT

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The general aim of this thesis is to study the organization of housing services for persons living in homelessness in Sweden. Three areas are in focus. The first concerns how the right to housing assistance is interpreted in different municipalities and how assessment and placement processes for housing interventions are organized. The second focuses on which types of housing interventions are used and how these differ across Sweden. The third looks at which actors take part in the provision of housing services. The thesis is based on four studies, and both quantitative and qualitative methods are used. The aim of study I is twofold: first, to map and explore the extent and variation of local homeless service systems in Sweden's municipalities and, second, to explore the possibilities and limits of using available secondary data on homelessness and homelessness housing services when analysing local homeless service systems. Study II aims to explore and compare how local social services organize and manage housing services for the homeless. More specifically, the detailed functions of local homeless services are scrutinized, such as rules and regulations regarding interventions and how they are specified in different types of municipalities. Study III addresses how housing services for persons living in homelessness have grown and changed between 2011 and 2018, focusing on the actors involved (municipal, non-profit and for-profit organizations) as well as how homeless housing services vary between different types of municipalities. The aim of Study IV is to explore the housing situation of undocumented migrants in Sweden and its association with the state of their mental health.

One result of this thesis is that there seems to be a trend towards assessment processes relating to homeless problems taking on stricter forms. Many municipalities have developed a clear requirement profile for who should receive housing due to homelessness. It is clear that a lack of housing is not enough to be eligible for help. A person also needs to fit the mould of the traditional client categories used by social services. Another result is that there is a high degree of isomorphism, i.e. agreement, between the municipalities in terms of how they design their work in the homelessness field regarding the overarching models to organize housing interventions, predominantly the staircase model. There are similarities in how social services have developed functions that resemble housing agencies with a social agenda. At the same time, important details diverge between municipalities. Conditions for the termination of housing assistance or eviction from occupancy, duration of residence and methods to surveil and control the tenants differ. These differences clearly impact the individual's chances of obtaining long-term housing. The results also show that there are groups of structurally homeless and hidden homeless who cannot access the housing services provided by social services. When it comes to actors in the field, the results suggest that both for-profit and public actors play a major role in the system, while non-profit actors only play a minor role, particularly outside main and large cities. The results presented in this thesis have implications for research, policy and practice. Among other things, creating cohesive rules regarding the length of social contracts as well as termination of these contracts, so-called hidden evictions, may be one important step for both policy and practice. Another important step for research would be a political decision to make detailed data available on local placements within the local housing services for persons living in homelessness in a national registry, to better allow study of the functioning of housing interventions.