The Allmännytta - for the Market or for the Many?
A qualitative study on competing ideals in Swedish public rental housing during the current housing shortage

Tove Henriksson
The majority of Sweden’s municipalities have for the last decade reported a housing shortage. This housing shortage, created by a combination of low construction rates and a rapidly growing population, has resulted in the biggest building boom Sweden has seen since the Million Dwellings Program. Although building rates are high, there is a continuous trend of housing becoming increasingly expensive, and the housing shortage today is mainly that of affordable rental housing. During the great housing shortage of the 20th century, the allmännytta, Sweden’s public rental companies was created and their role has traditionally been to provide affordable rental housing for all. Since the 1990s this role has changed and in 2011 the allbolagen 2010:879 was implemented, requiring these previous non-profit companies to act according to business principles, in addition to being socially responsible. This thesis’ investigates the role of Swedish public rental companies in regards to the current housing shortage and in the light of this law change. This is done through the use of qualitative interviews with representatives of the municipality, the tenant’s association and the allmännytta in the cities of Uppsala, Västerås and Örebro. The study finds that the business principles of the allbolagen 2010:879 is interpreted in different ways by the different allmännytta companies. It further finds that the role of the allmännytta in regards to the housing shortage still is to build rental housing, but the limitations created by the requirement of business principles makes this increasingly difficult as the allmännytta cannot act in ways different from the private sector. Instead they try to take their role of being socially responsible through other, related projects and by housing a disproportionally large amount of those incapable of acquiring housing on their own. Affordability is also increasingly made difficult as the municipality set related goals for the allmännytta’s housing construction, such as sustainability, which pushes prices up. Originally created to deal with the housing shortage of the 20th century, the gradual changes of housing politics since the 1990s renders the allmännytta as neither responsible nor capable to deal with the housing shortage of today by providing and constructing affordable housing. The study finds that the role of the allmännytta in regards to the housing shortage is conflicting, as older ideals of the Folkhem and newer principles of neoliberalism are entangled.

Keywords: housing shortage, allmännytta, public rental housing, neoliberalism

Handledare: Brett Christophers
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1. INTRODUCTION

Moving to a new city is a life changing, exciting experience. So is moving away from home for the first time, starting a family or beginning a university degree. For a growing amount of Swedes these life changing events are increasingly complicated due to a current housing shortage that push housing prices up, making the introduction to the residential market less attainable. Over the last decade the majority of Swedish cities have experienced a housing shortage, where the housing stock has not been able to meet the need of a rapidly growing population. This shortage is present throughout the nation; 243 out of 288 municipalities stated that they had a housing shortage in Boverket’s 2018 Bostadsmarknadsenkät (residential market survey). Boverket, the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, further states that by 2025 over 710,000 new housing units are required to be completed nationally in order to meet the demand, half of them needed to be completed by 2020 (Boverket 2016). This translates to a building pace of 88,000 housing units a year, a pace not seen in Sweden since the days of the Million Dwellings Program. This high population growth is most intense in the larger metropolitan areas of Stockholm, Malmö and Gothenburg and but is also of prominent concern to middle sized cities such as Uppsala, Västerås and Örebro, where the population growth per capita, and building rate per capita has been among the highest in the country (Länsstyrelsen Uppsala, 2017; Örebro kommun 2017; Svd 2018).

Since the 1990s up until the last few years the construction of housing in Sweden has been limited, which in part explains the housing shortage of today. Increased construction of housing has become the obvious solution to solve the housing crisis, by simply building it away. The lack of housing and the high demand, coupled with low interest rates and generous mortgages have, however, pushed housing prices up, both for cooperative apartments (bostadsrätter) and rental apartments (SOU 2015:48). The rising prices has made housing costs an intensifying struggle for an increasing number of people and alongside this shortage is a growing tendency of segregation and inequality in the residential market (Hedin et al, 2012; Andersson & Turner 2014; Grundström & Molina 2016). In fact, the rents and costs for housing are increasing at a much higher pace than the average salary, and people are in general spending a larger share of their disposable income on housing (SOU 2015:48).

Also, the newly built housing of today, and of this century, is generally aimed at a well-to-do middle class and has predominantly had the tenure of cooperative housing, a tenure form where you buy the right to dwell in an apartment from a cooperative organization (bostadsrättsförening), rather than the apartment itself (SOU 2015:48). Housing construction is expensive in Sweden, both for co-operative apartments, and especially so for rental apartments, as high rents are required to cover the cost of construction (Hyresgästföreningen 2017; SOU 2015:48). At the same time large renovations of older housing stock, especially of the housing dating back to the Million Dwellings Program era of the 1960s and 1970s are expected to increase rent levels additionally (Hyresgästföreningen 2017). To combat this and
to increase mobility into and within cities most state-led investigations and several scholars have pointed to the need of an increase in the number of affordable rental apartments in order to meet the demands of the residential market and to create fair and equitable housing for all. This thesis will focus on these issues by paying particular attention to the municipality owned rental companies of Sweden, the allmännytta (which can be roughly translated into for general public’s good) rental companies. They are the municipalities’ main tool for housing provision, and are by law required to act in a socially beneficial way. These rental companies often house a large proportion of people with lower incomes (Magnusson & Turner 2008). For most of the 20th century the residential companies of the allmännytta were the main actor responsible for the construction of affordable rental housing and about half of Sweden’s rental stock is owned by the allmännytta today (Boverket 2008). The allmännytta’s role has changed however, and in 2011 a new law, the allbolagen 2010:879, was implemented, which states that these public rental companies are – in addition to acting in a socially beneficial way – to act according to business principles. This thesis will investigate the role of allmännytta during the current housing shortage, where demand of affordable rental is most pressing. To investigate an interview study in the cities of Uppsala, Örebro and Västerås were conducted with actors working with the allmännytta in different ways. Interviews were made with the allmännytta company in each city, but also with representatives of the municipality and with the tenant’s association in order to gain a comprehensive insight into the perceived role of the allmännytta during today’s housing shortage.

1.1 Research purpose and aim
The purpose of this master thesis is to examine the perceived role of the Swedish municipality owned public housing companies, the allmännytta. The implementation of the allbolagen 2010:879 made these public rental companies give up their non-profit status and act according to business principles instead. This change has attracted attention to the role of the allmännytta, as they are simultaneously to be socially responsible as well as to act according to business principles. The prevailing housing crisis has put the allmännytta in the spotlight as they are the main provider of municipally owned rental housing, and the main tool for the municipalities’ law-bound responsibility to ensure all citizens housing. This master thesis aims to investigate the role of the allmännytta, and to do this by investigating its role in regards to the housing shortage in the light of the 2011 law changes.

1.2 Research questions
In order to investigate the perceived role of the allmännytta three research questions were formulated to guide the study. These are as follows:

- How is the housing shortage perceived by the different actors?
- How is the term “business principles” of the Allbolagen (2010:879) interpreted?
- How is the role of the allmännytta in regards to the housing shortage perceived?
1.3 Disposition

The thesis is divided into a number of chapters. In the chapter *Background and literature review* a short history of the Swedish residential market during the 20th will first be presented, as it allows for an understanding of the politics and shifts that has created the current stock. Further, it serves as an important background to the understanding of the housing shortage of today. Secondly, the neoliberal shift that came to the fore during the late 20th century in Europe and Sweden will then be discussed, followed by a short description of the residential market of today. After this there will be a presentation of the allmännytta and how the political shift of the late 20th century affected it. Following these background sections is a brief description of the research conducted on the role of the allmännytta.

Following the background chapter is the *Method* chapter. Here the choice of method – qualitative interviews – is presented and explained, as is the selection process, the construction of the interview guide, conducting the interviews and ethical concerns. Last in this chapter is a description of the analysis of the gathered material.

The *Results and analysis* chapter is divided into three main parts, each part based on one of the research questions. The first parts deals with how the housing shortage in each city is perceived. Following this is a discussion on how the different public rental companies interpret the term “business principles” of the *allbolagen 2010:879*. These two sections lead to the main part of the results and analysis, namely a discussion on how the interviewees perceived the role of the allmännytta in regards to the housing shortage.

Under *Concluding discussion* the findings of the essay are discussed from the perspective of previous research. Firstly, the chapter presents that the interviewees understand the housing shortage, in accordance to the literature, as consisting predominantly of a lack of affordable rental housing, which the allmännytta does not explicitly feel, nor are, responsible to provide. Even though they are not and do not feel responsible to provide this type of accommodation, they still expand extensively on ways they try to supply more affordable rentals. Secondly, the concluding discussion states that the business principles of *allbolagen 2010:879* are interpreted in different ways by the three allmännytta companies. Further this chapter discuss how the role of the allmännytta seem to be, to some extent, a conflict between the concept of business principles and that of social good. The allmännytta is, as the result chapter will show, to act under the same conditions as private rental companies, but still expected to provide somewhat different housing. This is in the concluding discussion interpreted as an example of how neoliberalism takes its form not as a clear cut from previous ideologies, but as an intermingling between old and new ideals as described by Beaten (2011). The writings of Grander (2017) are also lifted in this chapter, as his research is focused on this duality, through which he explains that the allmännytta might take on a more residual role in the future.
2. BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins with a section describing the history of the Swedish residential market during the 20th century, which will provide a background for the context the allmännytta has acted within. Following this historic overview is a section describing how the last decade of the 20th century experienced a break from previous housing politics, followed by a section on the consequences of this shift. With this in mind, the next section will present current conditions of the Swedish residential market today. After this, I will delve into the topic of municipality owned public rental companies, the allmännytta, and their role on the Swedish residential market. The shift in housing politics during the 1990s has had an impact on the allmännytta too, which will be explained. Penultimately the law change and the creation of the allbolagen 2010:879 will be discussed, with its root in the political shift of the 1990s, how it changed the non-profit nature of the allmännytta and research connected to this change. To conclude the background and literature review chapter is a short introduction to the residential market and the allmännytta companies in the three cases.

2.1 The Swedish residential market during the 20th century

In order to understand the structure of the residential market and the current housing shortage that many Swedish cities experience it is helpful to be knowledgeable about the politics that historically shaped it. The composition of the Swedish residential market is in many ways unique, and is often considered an example of how a modern welfare state provides housing in an equitable way (e.g., Hedin et al. 2012, Christophers 2013). During the 20th century the residential market and the Swedish housing stock went through several shifts that have defined the urban landscape of our cities, as well as the composition and conditions of the residential market. The first politically radical shift was the creation of the “Folkhem” – “the people’s home” – during the 1930s and 1940s. The Folkhem was in broader terms a political concept initiated by the Social Democratic party and included a multitude of aspects such as workers’ rights and education initiatives, but as suggested by its name housing was very much its central pillar (Welin & Bildsten 2017, p. 4; Grundström & Molina 2016, p. 320). The creation of the Folkhem was based on a strong political will to combat the poor housing conditions, among the worst in Europe, which plagued the Swedish residential market during the first decades of the 20th century.

2.1.1 Welfare state investments - creation of the Folkhem and the Million Dwellings Program

In the decades leading up to the 1930s Sweden experienced a severe housing crisis (Welin & Bildsten 2017, p. 4). A rapid rate of urbanization meant that a steady stream of people immigrating to cities made available housing scarce. In addition to this influx of people, the cost of construction skyrocketed during the First World War, leaving many people homeless or put in emergency housing. The conditions for tenants were made even worse as the government in 1923 made a series of subsidy cuts for housing construction. In the following
years the *Hyresstegringslagen 1917:219*, a regulation controlling the rental increases a landlord could demand of his tenants, was removed. These deregulations caused a wave of evictions and made the housing shortage even more pressing since the lack of available housing allowed landlords and residential companies to claim ever rising rents (Boverket 2007, p. 40). Due to the high construction costs, and the general risk of investing in housing, the building industry was unwilling to build and to invest. If housing was built at all it was usually highly speculative in nature, with short-term goals of high profits. Because of the high demand of housing and low level of regulations, builders could build low quality housing and still charge high rents. The rents of newly built housing was often significantly more expensive than what an average income earner could afford, and much higher than the rents of the existing stock, stifling the housing production further (Boverket, 2007, p. 20).

The 1920s saw a rising degree of overcrowding in Swedish cities as people huddled together in small apartments in order to make ends meet. In addition to the severe housing shortage of the residential market, the quality of the existing housing stock was in most Swedish cities often poor and unsanitary, as famously described by Ludvig “Lubbe” Nordström in the 1938 work *Lortsverige* (Boverket 2007, p. 43, Nordström 1938). As much as 73 percent of housing in working class residential areas lacked central heating and 85 percent had no bathroom or shower (Grundström & Molina 2014, p. 320, Hirdman, 1989). The crude living environments and the vulnerability people experienced in the residential market created the political initiatives that were the starting point of the “Folkhem period”. The severe consequences of the deregulations of the 1920’s would have a long lasting impact on housing politics for decades to come and be formative in the creation of the Folkhem period (Boverket, 2007, p. 40).

The Folkhem period would see “an exponential increase in the amount of high quality housing” (Grundström & Molina 2016, p. 317). During the 1930s, the ideal of the Folkhem – a good home for all people – was started to be realized through a combination of affordable, low-or-no-interest state loans for housing. This meant that people could afford buy or build their own home and that housing construction became associated with less risk for residential companies. The proportion of built apartments financed by interest free state loans increased from five percent in 1939 to 100 percent in 1942 (Boverket, 2007, p. 45). A set of regulations were also created during the 1930s and 1940s, with laws being implemented to regulate the rent levels (*Hyresregleringslagen 1942:429*) and to ensuring housing through making it a state responsibility (*Bostadsförjningslagen 1947:523*). Grundström and Molina describes how a major reason “for the success of the model was [this] complex and effective system of regulations and subsidies, which succeeded in keeping the housing market protected from capitalist speculation in land and in housing”, trends that had dominated the residential market in the years before (Grundström & Molina, 2016, p. 320). The laws and regulations implemented during this era formed a foundation for Swedish housing policy that would remain almost intact up until 1991 (Clark & Johnson 2009, p. 176). It was also during the 1930s that the first municipally owned rental companies, the allmännytta, were created as well
as the tenants’ association (Hyresgästföreningen) (Nilsson 2000, p. 11; Grundström & Molina 2016). The municipal housing companies were prioritized in the distribution of state loans for housing, and they were given loans considerably more advantageous than those granted private companies – as their final objective was to ensure “service provision rather than profits” (Movilla Vega, 2017, p. 44). One central aim of the Folkhem was to provide housing for “the people”. In order for this goal to be realized it was important for the municipality owned housing to cater to all citizens, and not only towards residual, vulnerable groups. A goal of “tenure neutrality” was therefore core to the ideal of the Folkhem, which means that the type of tenure one resides in should be a matter of choice – not of income – in order to prevent certain types of tenures becoming stigmatized (Welin & Bildsten 2017, p. 5).

For four decades the housing standard of the Swedish housing stock kept increasing and the housing shortage was gone by the late 1970s and shortly replaced by a housing surplus (Grundström & Molina, 2014). This was mainly achieved through a large push to build a million housing units in the period 1965-1974, more commonly known as “Miljonprogrammet” – the Million Dwellings Program, which Grundström & Molina dub the “second phase of the Folkhem” (2014, p. 323). The Million Dwellings Program was financed by the state through subsidized construction costs in order to create good-quality, affordable housing to meet the high demand.

Although the Million Dwellings Program effectively eliminated the housing shortage and created good quality housing in abundance, it was – and still is – a project that has faced severe criticism. Even though most of the Million Dwelling Program stock is single family housing, or smaller two to three stories multi-family housing, the structures most associated with the Million Dwellings Program are areas dominated by high rises (Boverket 2014). The rate of construction was exceedingly high: 80 000 housing units were built in 1963 alone. This was made possible through the use of prefabricated housing models, which had a rather uniform expression (Movilla Vega, 2017). These monotonous areas of high rises are often located on the outskirts of cities, making them isolated from other areas of the cities. This created difficulty for transportation and mobility and the attractiveness of these areas quickly diminished (Boverket, 2007). Due to the low rents these Million Dwelling program areas have from their completion had a high amount of low income residents, and in later years these areas have experienced an intensifying social and ethnic segregation (eg. Andersson et al. 2003; Andersson & Molina 2003; Andersson, Turner & Holmqvist 2010). The Folkhem period, where construction of housing was dominated by state subsidies, low interest loans and regulations effectively built the housing shortage away over the 40 years it remained the political ideal. The housing stock of Sweden went during this period from being among the most derelict and overcrowded in Europe, to providing good quality housing for the general public.

Following the million programs was a period of what Grundström & Molina label as the “deregulating Folkhem housing” era, an era they consider spanning from 1974 to 2006.
As implied above, the Million Dwelling Program was after its completion in 1974 continuously critiqued throughout the 1980s due to the monotonous aesthetic dominating these areas and their tendency toward social segregation. During the 1980s, the focus of housing politics shifted from combatting the housing shortage that had preoccupied previous decades, to upkeep of the created stock and investments in better, more attractive living environments. This meant that developers that previously relied on state subsidies to construct housing now had to rely on only rents to maintain their housing and their companies. Construction was still heavily subsidized by the state, which kept rents down, but strained the national economy and contributed (together with a high degree of debt for both households and residential companies) to the financial crisis that prevailed in Sweden during the early 1990s (Welin & Bildsten 2017, p. 5). The overall slowing of the Swedish economy experienced in the late 1980s was often blamed on the welfare state in the political discourse, and the welfare state “was increasingly viewed as the root cause of [the] relative economic decline” (Hedin et al. 2012, p. 444). Increased attention was given towards other systems of housing, in particular to the neoliberal models that had been adopted over the previous decade in most of Western Europe. This interest was especially focused on the systems in the UK and the US, where market principles and home ownership were and continue to be high ideals (eg. Kemeny 1981; Bratt 2012; Whitehead 2011).

2.1.2 The “system switch” in housing politics of the 1990s

Following the criticism of the Million Dwellings Program paired with a stagnation of the Swedish economy, the housing politics of the 1990s shifted dramatically. Influenced by neoliberal market policies that had become increasingly common in Europe, much of Swedish housing politics of the 1990s were dominated by a widespread withdrawal of state investments and deregulation. Clark and Johnson (2009) describe this as the “system switch” in Swedish housing politics, and Turner and Whitehead even describes it as “the Swedish grand restructuring” (2002, p. 201). In 1991 the social democratic government was, for the first time since the 1930s, replaced by a conservative government, led by Carl Bildt. Hedin et al. (2012) describes how deregulations of the residential market were a priority for this government, the termination of the department of housing being one of the first decisions the government made. They further describe how under “the new regime, housing was not to be distinguished from any other commodity. Long-standing legislation regulating the housing sector – and standing in the way of commodification of housing was nullified” (Hedin et al, 2012, p. 444). The political ambition of this market oriented shift was to free the state of the financial burden created by state loans and subsidies. Although these decisions were made by a right winged government, Hedman (2008, p. 17) describes how there had been widespread political agreement that state subsidies had to be rectified, since the housing shortage was considered dealt with. The hope was that the removal of this financial burden would combat the trends of high interest rates, low growth and a growing budget deficit that afflicted the Swedish economy during the financial crisis of the early 1990s (Boverket 2007, p. 9). By applying market principles one also hoped to encourage competition among residential
companies, which would keep housing costs down, increase the types of housing available and in turn encourage the freedom of choice in the residential market (Boverket 2007, p. 25).

Further, in 1985 the credit market had been deregulated, which meant that residential companies could get cheap loans and continue construction, even without state investments (Lönn Borg-Andersson & Boksjö 1999; Boverket 2007). The removal of state investments effectively transferred the responsibility and risk of financing housing from the state to housing owners and the credit market (Welin & Bildsten 2017, p. 5). Housing was, at this point, considered a very low risk endeavour for banks to grant loans. Since the 1940s there had been almost no loss in the residential sector, and loans were during the 80s given out freely to both residential- and construction companies as well as to homeowners. However, it would turn out to be the opposite, and practically everything that had been built between 1985 and 1993 was overvalued and over-mortgaged, which contributed greatly to the financial crisis of the early 1990s. (SOU 2015:58; Borg-Andersson & Boksjö 1999). The consequences of the withdrawing state in housing provision, coupled with the economic crisis, were immediate, and the late 1980s and early 1990s saw increased housing costs for tenants and owners alike by 30 percent. This depressed the demand for housing, making residential prices drop substantially between 1992 and 1995 (Welin & Bildsten 2017, citing SCB 2005). At the same time housing went from being a tremendous cost for the state, costing as much as 25-35 billion Swedish crowns per annum in the late 1980s, to becoming a state income, bringing in 31 billion Swedish crowns in the year of 1999 alone (Lindbom 2001, p. 508; Clark & Johnson 2009, p. 181 – both citing the SOU 1999).

In accordance to neoliberal housing politics in Europe, the tenure neutrality ideals (that home ownership and renting was neutral to reside in) was to some degree abandoned and home ownership premiered over renting (Dewilde & De Decker 2016, p. 129). Changes in legislation allowed public rental companies to sell housing stock, which several did. Some, such as the municipalities of Nacka and Danderyd, went so far as to sell out their entire publicly owned housing stock (Öhman 2008). Conversion of rental housing was also made easier, where conversion into cooperative housing could take place if half of the residents desired to (Andersson & Turner 2014). Turning private- and public rental housing into cooperative housing became a common occurrence since it generally meant that tenants could make a considerable profit of the conversion. For some cities this caused dramatic changes to the structure of the rental stock; in inner city Stockholm, for example, the rental stock went from 73 percent to 36 percent over a twenty year period, whereas cooperative housing went up from 26- to 62 percent (Andersson & Turner 2014, p. 4). Although most cities did not experience a change this dramatic, a significant impact was made on the residential market and on the amount of rental stock throughout the nation, especially in the central areas of cities (Andersson & Turner 2014, p. 4). Even though the changes in housing politics introduced by the conservative government were met by strong criticism from the social democrats, the following social democratic government quietly endorsed them and kept the new system (Hedin et al. 2014, p. 445). The last decades of the 20th century thus saw a
departure from the high degree of state involvement of the Folkhem period, to an increased importance of private actors. The responsibility and economic risks were transferred from the state to housing owners and private companies.

2.2 Implications of the political shift in housing

The trend of housing politics aligning to market principles is, as implied above, not unique for Sweden, but has come to influence most European countries’ residential markets. Neoliberalism came to the fore in the late 1970s following the oil-crisis and a general decline in the economy of most European welfare states. Famously hard to define, characteristics of neoliberal ideology is a free market logic, where the market is thought to cater for citizens/consumers need if left be. Through deregulations and a withdrawal of state interventions the market is thought to work at is best. Further, Baeten (2011) describes how the neoliberalization of housing politics is much more than just the rolling back of state interventions, which he considers to be the initial stage in the implementation of neoliberal policies. He means that a neoliberal housing market also influences planners and the means and ability they have to affect the planning process, as well as what they plan. Grundström and Molina makes a similar claim, by highlighting how the neoliberal policies that were implemented during the 1990s made housing at the turn of the millennia a strategy by which municipalities could use to attract the floridian “creative class” (Grundstöm & Molina, 2016, p 325). Some researchers see the implementation of neoliberal ideals as a clear break - a “system switch” (Clark & Johnson 2009) - from previous social democratic policies, and consider Sweden to have become one of the most liberal residential markets in the world (Lind & Lundström 2007, Hedin et al 2012). Others perceive it as a process where even though “there may be sustained efforts to discredit social-democratic ideals for the city, [...] these ideals are not easily or simply abandoned. Rather, neoliberalisation builds upon them and molds them to suit its own purposes” (Beaten, 2011, p. 26). This makes neoliberalism and its effects difficult to pinpoint as it becomes intertwined with previous ideologies. Christophers (2013) presents a similar view on the neoliberal processes in Sweden and describes the current system as a hybrid between neoliberalism and the older social democratic system.

Research explicitly linking the introduction of neoliberalism in residential markets to social polarization are in the plenty. Throughout Europe housing is becoming less affordable. Dewilde & De Decker (2016) and Dewilde (2017), for example, states that the more a state have followed neoliberal policies – the more commodified housing has become – the trickier it has become for low-income earners, renters in particular, to find affordable housing. Mustered et al. 2017 describes how residential markets are becoming increasingly polarized, with socioeconomic segregation increasing in all of Europe, something they attribute to the changing housing policies. Even countries that have traditionally been thought to have a high degree of social equality and low tendencies of segregation experience these trends, such as the Netherlands and Austria (eg. Gent 2012; Kadi & Mustered 2015; Mustered et al. 2017).
Although the introduction of neoliberalism in Swedish housing politics has had several rewards – for example unburdening the state of large economic outputs in times of economic distress, there has been more research connecting it to trends similar to those in Europe (Holgerson 2017, pp. 98-109). Already in 2002 Turner & Whitehead warned against the housing policy shifts in Sweden, referring to the trends of segregation and socioeconomic polarization that were becoming increasingly notable in other European countries (Turner & Whitehead 2002). In later years they have been joined by researchers connecting the political shift of 1990s with trends of increasing segregation, social polarization and residualisation in Swedish cities (Andersson & Turner 2014; Hedin et al 2012; Grundström & Molina 2016). Bergenstråhle (2006) connects the changes in housing politics with trends of increased rent levels, lowered affordability and increased polarization between tenures that have characterized the Swedish residential market during this century. Housing prices in all tenure forms have also increased sharply since the 1990’s both in absolute numbers and as a part of income (Holmqvist & Turner 2014; SOU 2015:48). Clark and Johnson (2009) defines seven main consequences of the “system switch” where, apart from the consequences mentioned above are: a decline in new production, increased residential crowding, public housing increasingly operating by profit or being shut down. Overall, these studies show that socioeconomic segregation in cities and between tenures are increasing. Housing is becoming less affordable, especially for those with lower economic income, both in Sweden and in Europe at large.

2.3 The residential market of today – housing shortage and a lack of affordable rental housing

The financing and risk taking that providing and constructing housing entails were with the political changes of the 1990s shifted from being the responsibility of the state to that of homeowners and residential companies (Welin & Bildsten 2017). Housing, which had been sees as the core of the Folkhem and a cornerstone of the Swedish welfare system, was considered less of as a social right and, in accordance to neoliberal ideology, increasingly viewed as any other commodity (Hedin et al 2014; Welin & Bildsten 2017). Providing housing is, however, still the responsibility of the municipality through the law of kommunernas bostadsförsörjningsansvar 2000: 1383, which states that municipalities are required to ensure housing for all its residents. The tools of the municipalities to ensure housing are limited, and they cannot construct housing by their own means. Instead they control construction through the owning and selling of land, through their planning monopoly and by being able to influence the municipally owned allmännytta. To cater for those that are unable to acquire housing on the regular market, there is a secondary market, where the municipality sign contracts for apartments with both private and public rental companies. These are usually spread around the cities’ housing stock, and the allmännytta takes a great responsibility to ensure this.
Shadowed by the financial crisis of the 1990s, the first decade of the new millennia saw a low rate of construction in Sweden (Welin & Bildsten 2017). The level of construction up until the 2010s has been limited due to a number of factors such high construction prices and a lack of competition, high prices of land, a slow planning process and a general political disinterest as the housing shortage was seen as a “thing of the past” (Nilsson, 2000; Boverket 2007; SOU, 2015:48). At the same time the population of Sweden has risen, with both growing birth rates, a net in-migration and a strong degree of urbanization, making many Swedish cities face a housing shortage once again (Länstryrelserna 2018). This demand is felt throughout most of the nation, with 243 of 288 municipalities claiming they have a shortage in Boverket’s latest residential market survey (bostadsmarknadsenkät) (Boverket 2018). The housing shortage is most pressing in economically strong cities and to make up for the previous low rates of construction, the last few years have seen a building boom. Boverket has estimated that 88 000 new housing units needs to be completed a year by 2025 in order to meet the current demand (Boverket 2017). The last few years have seen an exponential increase in the amount of housing built, with 48 000 housing units completed last year alone, which, although the highest in over 25 years, still cannot meet the estimated demand (SvD 2018). This rate of construction can be compared to 2010 when 6000 apartments were completed and to the 13 000 completed during 2015 (Hyresgästföreningen 2017).

The majority of housing that has been built during the building boom is constructed by the private sector. The private sector has generally built cooperative housing aimed at relatively well to do middle class (SOU 2015:48). In the last year there has been a growing political will to build rental apartments, but the costs of these have also been expensive, even more so than that of cooperative housing (Hyresgästföreningen 2017). The distribution of Swedish public rental housing is done through the use of queues, where time is the deciding factor. The applicant with most time in the queue receives an available apartment, meaning that attractive apartments require more queuing time. Many private rental companies use similar systems or share the same queue with the public rental housing companies. The lack of housing has made these rental ques very long during the past decade, and on average there is an expected queuing time of four years in order to access a rental apartment (Hyresgästföreningen 2014). In addition to this, older rentals often have substantially lower rents and longer queuing times than those in newly built rentals, since the rents need to finance the construction costs (SOU 2015:58, p. 338). This creates a mismatch of the residential market and

in the most attractive city parts where average- or high income earners get to live in attractive areas with substantially lower rents than the rents the residents in newly built rental companies get to pay even though these companies have a higher income” (“Mest attraktiva stadsdelar [...] [d]är normal- eller höginkomsttagare får bo i attraktivt belägna bostäder med väsentligt lägre hyra än den hyra som boende i nybyggda hyresrätter får betala trots att dessa hushåll har högre betalningsförmåga. (SOU 2015:58, p. 115)
The long queues have in turn contributed to making home owning and cooperative apartments premiered, since those who can afford it avoids the queue by buying. This has in turn pushed prices of cooperative housing up, excluding an increasing amount of people from this market (Christophers 2013). Even though there is a tenure neutrality ideal in Sweden, the rising housing prices has resulted in an increasing segmentation between tenures and “the higher the income, the lower the probability of being a tenant” claims Holmqvist & Turner (2014, p. 246), a trend that has been intensifying over the last few years. Concern has also been voiced in regards to the Swedish housing market becoming overheated due to the rising housing costs. For example, both the International Monetary Fund, the European Commission and the OECD has warned that the housing prices and mortgage levels are a too high in Sweden, and could potentially lead to economic instability (SOU 2015:48).

Prices of housing has not only risen, but risen faster than the relative incomes in Sweden, making people spend more of their disposable income on housing. A pressing concern of the Swedish residential market today is therefore not only that there is a lack in the number of housing units. As housing prices have during this century continuously been pushed up, both for homeownership and rental tenures, fewer and fewer people can afford to either buy their apartment or to rent it (Christophers 2013; Holmqvist & Turner 2014; SOU 2015:48; Länstyrelserna 2017). The lack of affordable housing has increased the level of social contracts on the secondary residential market (Boverket 2017). A public investigation from 2015 went so far as to state that the lack of affordable rental housing is now so pressing for vulnerable groups that a “non-presumptive discussion about alternative forms of ‘Social Housing’ or ‘Affordable housing’ is necessary” (SOU 2015:48, p. 16), which would mean a complete abandon of the general system of Swedish public housing. Lind (2016), however, claims that the housing shortage is not a problem mainly for those on the secondary residential market, since the municipality are bound by law to accommodate them. Rather it is for those that are not on the secondary market, but who are unable to afford regular housing, and have limited time in the rental queue where the demand for housing is most pressing.

During the last couple of months of writing this thesis, there have been indications of changing trends in the residential market. Due to the rapidly increasing housing prices of the last few years, there has been, as described above, a growing concern regarding the Swedish housing market being overheated and overvalued (SOU 2015:48). A requirement to amortise mortgages to a higher degree was implemented on the first of March this year. This has led to a cooling effect on housing prices and the previous increase has plateaued. Due to this, there have been warnings that housing construction will falter as builders find it less profitable to invest in building housing (Nordenskiöld, Dagens industri, 2018). Just in the last few weeks of writing this essay, there has indeed been reports from Boverket that claims that the building rate is starting to decline, and that the number of construction projects will decrease by 11 percent this year (Boverket, 2018; Lucas, DN, 2018). Boverket (2018) and Länstyrelserna (The County Administrative Boards) (2017) also claim that the lower construction rate could be due to a decrease in the demand of middle class cooperative housing, as previous
construction has rendered this segment of the market saturated. There seem to be limited interest from private actors to build more affordable housing and as construction levels begin to decrease, this would could mean an increased pressure on low income earners. Even as the segment of cooperative housing is starting to become saturated, there continues to be a housing shortage for those with lower incomes.

Although originally created to cater affordable rental housing for the general public, the allmännytta residential companies houses a disproportionately large amount of vulnerable groups and a majority of people with low incomes live in allmännytta rental companies (Magnusson & Turner, 2008). The current lack of affordable housing and their tendency to cater for this demographic makes the allmännytta and its role during the housing crisis important to study. It is also interesting to look at the role of the allmännytta in this case, since they are, except for the planning monopoly and land ownership, the foremost tool municipalities can use in their quest to ensure housing for all. If the interest from private actors is starting to dwindle and the housing shortage still remains, both in general and of affordable housing in particular, municipalities might find themselves struggling to meet their law bound responsibility of ensuring housing for all its citizens. This thesis therefore aims to examine how the role of the allmännytta and their responsibility is perceived during the current housing crisis.

2.4 The allmännytta - public housing for everyone

During the last couple of decades there has been, as described in the previous chapter, an increased vulnerability on the Swedish residential market. Rents and housing prices have risen significantly in relation to income levels, making the conditions of residential market increasingly burdensome for those with less economic means. Even though there is a tenure neutrality goal in Sweden, and in particularly for the allmännytta, which are expected to cater “for everyone”, there still is a tendency for those with lower incomes to live in public rental housing (Magnusson & Turner, 2008). Along with the neoliberal “system switch” of the residential market that presided during the 1990s and changed Sweden’s housing politics dramatically, the role of the allmännytta has also changed.

For most of the 20th century the allmännytta played an indispensable role in constructing the Folkhem by building public rental housing. Throughout its history these companies have been one of the municipalities’ foremost tools when it comes to the provision of housing. The first municipally owned rental companies - the allmännytta - were created in 1936 (Nilsson, 2000, p. 11). In addition to making mortgages interest-free and non-amortising in 1946, the government decided that “all municipalities were [...] to establish municipal housing companies to build and manage flats for rent on a not-for-profit basis” (Movilla Vega, 2017, p. 70). One aim of these public rental companies were that they would stave off speculation, which had plagued the Swedish residential market in the decades before; to better the housing standards and to make the construction of housing more stable (Bengtsson 2015). These municipal housing companies were to, apart from being non-profit, be under direct influence
of the municipality, which in turn answered to the state. By 1947 the new *Bostadsförsörjningslagen 1947:523* increased the importance of the municipality, by giving them a monopoly on planning. This augmented the municipalities’ responsibility to ensure housing for all, and the allmännytta became the premiered way to do this. The allmännytta companies were seen as a part of a more democratic construction of housing during the Folkhem era and were given state loans and subsidies that were considerably more generous than those given to private residential companies. The three decades following the 1940s the allmännytta residential companies grew from having just a few percent to 25 percent of Sweden’s entire housing stock (Bengtsson 2015, p.32). A significant part of this was added during the Million Dwellings Program, where the allmännytta was one of the biggest actors (Boverket 2008). Today, the allmännytta is present in almost every municipality and makes up about 48 percent of all rental housing. Rental housing in general makes up 37 percent, 41 are owned and 22 percent is cooperative housing (SOU 2015:58). The allmännytta still remain the principal tool for the municipality has to ensure the provision of housing. According to the law *kommunernas bostadsförsörjningsansvar 2000:1383* it is the responsibility of the municipalities to ensure housing for all its citizens. By being the owners of the allmännytta they give the companies directives on how they should operate their business. These usually contain economic goals and demands, what type of housing they wished to be constructed or other types of actions they believe the allmännytta should take.

2.4.1 Tenure neutrality ideals

The way a residential market is constructed is often called a “housing regime” (Kemeny 1989). When it comes to the role of rental and public housing Kemeny (2006, citing Kemeny 1995) defines two types of housing regimes – an integral rental market and a dualistic rental market. The latter, which is prevalent in nearly every English speaking country, is marked by having an unregulated private rental market that is open to the public. To cater for those that cannot afford homeownership or the private rental market, there are public rentals that cater to that specific demographic. These are means-tested to ensure that there is no creation of skewed competition with the private rentals. The housing regime of Sweden is the other regime, the integral rental market. In this system public rental housing is aimed at the public, that is everyone, and is thought to have a dampening effect on the rent levels and to provide standards of housing for the private rental sector (Kemeny, 2006). Since one goal of the Folkhem was to keep a tenure neutrality for all citizens, so that no tenure form was stigmatized, the allmännytta was to provide housing in a comprehensive way instead of a residual way – that is for everyone and not just those with less economic means. Having this type of an integral public rental sector the intention was to encourage the mix of social classes and to prevent segregation (Salonen 2015a, p. 13). If one cannot access the public housing by ones’ own means, there exists a “secondary housing market” where the municipality signs contracts with both public and private companies, letting apartments in all parts of the city for this purpose (Grander 2017). This particular integral system of “public housing for all” makes the Swedish allmännytta unique both among its Nordic neighbours and in the rest of the world. This tenant neutrality has been “a guiding star” for the allmännytta throughout its
history – to provide housing attractive enough to include all levels of society. To this day SABO (Swedish public housing organization) states that “Sustainable, Affordable Housing for All – The allmännytta’s most important task” (SABO 2018, the author’s translation).

2.4.2 The “system switch” of the allmännytta
The 1990s affected the way the allmännytta operated dramatically. Nilsson (2000) describes how the housing shortage at this point in time was a thing of the past. Since the original purpose had been to be a tool for municipalities for the construction democratic, high quality housing “for all”, the role of the allmännytta changed. Instead of construction, the allmännytta’s main duties had after the completion of the Million Dwellings Program become centred on upkeep and other social projects. In some municipalities the housing shortage had turned into a surplus, with many apartments empty, which put a strain on the economy. The withdrawal of state funded loans and subsidies put an end to the advantageous role the allmännytta had had in relation to private actors (Boverket 2008). Due to the overall decrease of state investments in housing, and by the neoliberal politics that were increasingly influencing politics in general, the aim was to have the allmännytta approach the market, albeit still be non-profit. The narrative concerning the allmännytta during the 1990s was dominated on claims for it to become more “business-like” and act in a “market-oriented business-mindedness” (Boverket 2008, p. 18).

2.4.3 From non-profit to the market – business principles become law
The neoliberal tendencies that have come to change the nature of the Swedish housing system has also been intensified by entering into the European Union (Holmqvist & Turner 2013, p. 251). In order to protect the competition of the European Union’s inner market state subsidies and state aid are regulated by EU-law. Article 107-109 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union stipulates that states cannot aid or subsidize companies or productions in a way that would skew the competition of the inner market and benefit certain enterprises (SOU 2015:58, p. 143). In order for a state to subsidize a business, the business must be proven as socially beneficial and permission must be granted by the European Commission. In 2002 private rental actors (Fastighetsägarna) filed complaints to the European Commission regarding the non-profit nature of the allmännytta and the state benefits they received. These complaints led to a state public investigation (SOU 2008:38) of the previous law from 2002 which stated that the EU-law could be interpreted in two ways. Either one would have had to change the legislation and remove the non-profit nature of the allmännytta and make it adhere to business principles and in the long term seek profit maximization. Otherwise one could have determined that the social benefits of the allmännytta were enough (SOU 2008:38). In order to be cautious the first option was implemented through the allbolagen 2010:879 which states that the allmännytta should continue to strive for the public good and social responsibility (samhällsnytta), ensuring high quality housing for all, but to act according to business principles. Both Grander (2017) and Holmqvist & Turner (2014) compare the new law changes to that of the Netherlands. The Dutch housing system is similar to the Swedish, being integral in nature, and also faced complaints from private rental companies. They
however, opted for another route, giving the public rental housing a more residual role in order to keep their subsidies. The Allbolagen 2010:879 changed in a way the nature of the allmännytta, going from a non-profit enterprise to competing on the same terms as private companies. These changes of aligning to market principles had, however, been in the works since the 1990s.

2.4.4 Previous research on the role of the allmännytta

Ever since the 1940s there has been - and still is - a compact silence about the role of public housing’s long term strategic policy on the [Swedish] rental market. This suggests a delicate power balance in the housing regime, which obstructs clarity in the political discourse. (Kemeny 2006, p. 16)

The quote above illustrates how there has been limited discussion on the role of the allmännytta both politics and, to at least some extent, academia. Personally, I understand it as if though the law changes of 2011 and the proposition that preceded it (SOU 2008) have made the question of the role of the allmännytta come into the spotlight. For sure, there has been research on the role of public housing in Sweden in regards to the political changes of the 1990s – however, most of this research, as I perceive it, puts the allmännytta as an example of how the welfare state in Sweden was diminishing and withdrawing to be replaced by neoliberal policies, rather than studying the role of the allmännytta in its own right. Turner (1997), being one exception to this, questions the changing housing policy in regards to the allmännytta, claiming that a business interpretation and the subsidy cuts would lead to an increased residual role of public housing. There was also an investigation on the role of the allmännytta on weaker residential markets by Nilsson (2000). He claims that they become more residual on weaker markets, but paradoxically also become more expensive in relation to other tenures due to the extraction of higher rents to make up for the lost rent of empty apartments. After 2008 a small number of studies have looked on the specific role of the allmännytta on the residential market. For example, questioning the tenure neutrality and the success of the aims to cater to all socioeconomic levels are Magnusson & Turner (2008) who, claims the allmännytta to be “social by default”, due to the proportion of vulnerable families residing in the allmännytta.

The most in-depth studies on the changing role of the allmännytta after 2008 is the SABO (Swedish Public Housing Organization) funded research project “Nyttan med allmännyttan” led by Tapio Salonen. This (although still ongoing) project resulted in a collection of essays in 2015. This book, also called Nyttan med allmännyttan includes several perspectives on the role of the allmännytta today. For example, Anders Kjellström (2015) makes an analysis on the EU-law controlling state aid, concluding that Sweden has been too cautious and that there was not necessarily a need to abandon the non-profit approach to public housing. Emma Holmqvist and Tapio Salonen discusses in separate chapters the impact local politics can have on the development and role of the allmännytta, which can differ greatly. Salonen (2015a) states that there is a definite trend of allmännytta housing becoming increasingly residual in
general, but that this varies greatly depending on where you are, where a weaker residential market typically indicates that the allmännytta is moving towards being a residual type of housing. Karolina Windell (2015) considers the interpretation of social responsibility of the allbolagen 2010:879. She describes how companies in general have taken an increased interest in these types of responsibilities, under the label Corporate Social responsibility (CSR). By investing and communicating a good CSR, companies hope that these investments will lead to good publicity, a stronger a brand and an increase in consumption of their particular products. She puts this into perspective of the social responsibility of the allmännytta and concludes that the allmännytta can to a high degree interpret what is meant by social responsibility. This in turn makes the concept weak, one being able to claim social responsibility for a variety of investments and initiatives.

Most relevant for this thesis are the two chapters by Martin Grander, in which he delves into the topic of the role of the allmännytta in regards to the interaction between the social responsibility and business principles, which the allmännytta by law is required to act according to. He furthers this research in a 2017 article where he states that there are three different levels of social responsibility that the allmännytta engages in. The first is to have a good relationship to the tenants and to be inclusive. Secondly, the allmännytta engages in area-based projects such as employment activities and school projects. He describes how these two levels align with the social responsibility private companies increasingly take, as Windell (2015) also understands it, the so called corporate social responsibility. These social responsibility initiatives has no or little conflict with acting according with business principles, but does not necessarily distinguish the allmännytta from other rental companies. The third level of social responsibility, that he understands the allmännytta to take, is the provision of housing for the general public. This is what he considers to be the distinguishing social responsibility of the allmännytta since it deals with provision of housing to groups that private companies not always consider profitable. Here he sees a clear conflict between acting according to business principles and social responsibility. He understand it as if the business principles hinders the provision of housing for those with less economic means, as the allmännytta cannot construct housing on other terms or have profit levels different than their private counterparts. Instead, as construction is expensive, they have to cater to a well-paid middle class, which is especially true for the expensive newly built which does not only have to pay for themselves, but create profit. This consequently also means that the allmännytta take a larger responsibility to provide housing for the secondary residential market, by signing contracts with the municipality. As fewer people have the means to gain a regular contract, these social contracts are gaining in importance and in number. Grander also states that the allmännytta is well on its way to become a “New Public Housing” where “[t]he ideal tenant has either a high and regular income or else no income at all” (Grander, 2017, p.348). This New Public Housing then becomes selective rather than universal, excluding those groups with less economic means. Grander clearly shows that there is a contradiction between acting socially responsible, if it is not limited to CSR, and to act according to business principles.
The Nyttan med allmännyttan (2015) approaches the changes and challenges the allmännytta faces in a comprehensive way. However, most of the research done by the team of this project is statistics and survey based, especially in regards to how the allmännytta residential companies perceive their role as providers of social good. They do take use of qualitative case studies in three of the chapters, where Örebrobostäder is one of them, but neither Uppsalahem nor Mimer, which are included in this study, are represented. The book was published 2015, three years ago, meaning that most of the data collected by the researchers must have been gathered even earlier, just a few years after the law changes of 2011 passed. Most text in this book describe a residential market where the building boom of the last few years has not completely taken off yet. This thesis aims to further this research, by revisiting the role of the allmännytta, especially in regards to the 2011 law changes as well as to the housing shortage and to provide a qualitative, interview based investigation on these topics.

2.5 The case studies

Three case studies were selected as a basis for the investigation of this thesis. These were the cities of Uppsala and the allmännytta company Uppsalahem; Västerås and its allmännytta company Mimer and finally Örebro and the allmännytta company Örebrobostäder. A short introduction to the cities and the companies are given below.

2.5.1 Uppsala

Uppsala is located in the vicinity of Stockholm, located just a 30 minute train ride to the north of the capital. Apart from the metropolitan regions of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö, Uppsala municipality had the greatest population increase in Sweden during 2005 to 2015, going 183 308 in 2005 to 210 126 in 2915. This means 14.6 percent increase of the population, with most growth concentrated to the city of Uppsala (Boverket 2016, p. 11). The population is estimated to continue to grow and increase by an additional 130 000 residents by 2050, which means that 60 000 housing units need to be completed by then (Uppsala kommun 2016b). The municipality itself plans to have a balance of housing demands by 2022, but due to the increase in population there is a continued need for housing construction (Länsstyrelsen Uppsala län 2017). Uppsalahem AB is the municipally owned rental company in Uppsala. It houses about 30 000 of Uppsala’s residents in 16 000 housing units, including student housing (Uppsalahem 2018a). The company was started was started in 1946 and has housing stock in many areas of the city, but is dominant in areas where there is predominantly Million Dwelling Program housing. The company is relatively small in comparison to the size of Uppsala, and in comparison to this study’s two other cases, where Örebrobostäder for example has 25 000 housing units, but a substantially smaller population.

2.5.2 Västerås

Västerås, located 91 km northwest of Stockholm is Sweden’s fifth largest city. The city has over the last few years experienced a rapidly growing population and it is estimated that the municipality will grow to 230 000 residents 2050. This means an increase of 80 000 residents, going from today’s 150 000, with the majority of this growth occurring in the city of Västerås,
which today have a population of 121 806 (Västerås stad 2017b). This translates into the building of 40 000 new housing units. Bostad Mimer AB is the public rental company of Västerås and one of the oldest allmännytta companies in Sweden, founded in 1920. Mimer owns about half of the rental apartments of the city, which translates to about 11 500 apartments and 20 000 tenants (Mimer 2018).

2.5.3 Örebro
Örebro, located in the demographic middle of Sweden, situated approximately between Gothenburg and Stockholm, and had during the years 2005 to 2015 a 12.6 percent increase of its population, going from 127 733 residents in 2005 to 144 200 in 2015 (Boverket, 2016, p. 11). They are expected to need to construct 22 000 housing units by 2040 to accommodate a 50 000 people increase in the population (Örebro kommun 2018). Örebrostäd (Öbo), the allmännytta of Örebro, was started in 1946 and has the largest housing stock of the three municipally owned rental companies studied (Öbo 2018). They own over 25 000 units, with the main part in the Million Dwellings Program areas. In comparison to the other two companies and the population of the respective cities, they are by far the largest company, in comparison to the 17 000 apartments of Uppsala and 11 500 of Mimer.
3. METHOD

This chapter contains a presentation and discussion of the methods used in the study. The primary method of the study was qualitative interviews, and a description of these will start off this method chapter. After a general description of the interviews, the selection process of the case studies and interviewees will be presented. The creation and usage of the interview guide will then be described and following this is a discussion on how the interviews were conducted. The second method – a document analysis – used as a compliment when investigating how the housing shortage was perceived, will then be presented. Lastly, a few ethical concerns will be addressed followed by a description of the analysis of the material was made.

3.1 Interviews

The study’s main method for gathering information was through the use of interviews. Interviews were held with actors working with public rental companies. These actors came form the allmännytta themselves, the municipality and the tenants’ association. By having several types of actors I hoped that, through their different perspectives, gain a comprehensive insight into the perceived role of the allmännytta in relation to the current housing shortage and the Swedish residential market in general. The interviews were conducted during the spring of 2018 and had a qualitative approach. The aim of qualitative research is to gain understanding of how and why people and organizations reason and act the way they do, rather than finding generalizable, statistical trends (Trost, 2010, p. 32). Performing qualitative interviews is often compared to having an informal conversation, under which knowledge is produced through the interaction of the interviewer and the interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 18). This was typical for most of the conducted interviews in the study, where the interview was rather unstructured and mostly conducted through the use of open-ended questions. A qualitative method was preferred over a quantitative approach since the purpose of this study is to understand what perception different actors dealing with the allmännytta have of its operations and role, especially in regards to the housing shortage. As shown above under section 2.4.4 several survey based investigations on how the allmännytta interpret their role as an actor of social responsibility have been conducted just a few years back (Windell 2015, Grander 2015a). I wanted to hear the narratives and ideals and the way they talked about the concepts like “business principles” or the lack of affordable housing and not just receive the numbers and figures. By hearing them describing these concepts I hoped to be able to make a more in-depth understanding and comparison to how they perceived their role and the narratives and ideals that lay behind this perception.

3.2 Selection

The three cities that were chosen were so mainly based on their similarities. A great deal of the research and writings on the issues of the Swedish residential market tend to focus on the metropolitan areas of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. The most obvious similarity of the three selected cases in this paper is that are that they population wise are the “next step” after
the metropolitan areas in Sweden - being the fourth, fifth and sixth largest cities. The three cities have also experienced a steep population increase over the last decade. In fact, 80% of all population growth during 2005-2015 happened in the 10 largest cities in Sweden; and this study has selected three of those ten cities that experienced the highest levels of growth per capita (Boverket, 2016). The population increase has led to a housing shortage and these three cities are among those in Sweden that has had the highest building rates per capita over the last few years. The cities are also home to a larger college or university, creating a high demand on housing both by the economically weak students and a high number of young people entering the residential market for the first time after graduation. Another way to study the role of the allmännynna could have been to examine its role in cities of different sizes and to explore if their perceived roles would differ depending on the economic strength or weakness of the local residential market (along the lines of what Holmqvist 2015 and Salonen 2015a studies in the research project Nyttan med allmännynnan). However, since the housing shortage of today predominantly is a lack of rental and affordable housing, which is exactly what the allmännynna traditionally has provided, my intention here was to study three cities that all experienced a housing shortage. Interviewing similar cities facing similar challenges made it interesting to see how the allmännynna, the business principles of allbolagen 2010:879 and the municipalities’ responsibility for housing provision interacted and if there was any differences between the cities. Although similar in size and challenges, it must be emphasized that they are of course unique in their own way, having a diverse housing stock and political history which has shaped their respective residential markets. Including more cases would have added more perspectives and could have allowed for theoretical saturation, but due to the limited time I settled for three. Living in Uppsala, one other important factor that made me choose these three cities were that of distance. By choosing these particular cities, not being to geographically distant it was possible for me to visit them in person under the time restraints of a master thesis.

The selection of interviewees was purposeful. Gentles et al. (2015) describes purposeful sampling by citing Yin (2011) to be the “selection of participants or sources of data to be used in a study, based on their anticipated richness and relevance of information in relation to the study’s research question” (Yin, 2011, p. 311, cited by Gentles et al. 2015, p. 1778). Here I wanted to interview as many actors dealing with the allmännynna as possible, but in different professional roles, so that they would bring different perspectives to the study. A total number of eight interviews were held, three from the municipal offices of respective city; three CEOs from the allmännynna rental companies of each city; and two people from the tenants’ association that works with rent negotiation with the allmännynna. The interviewees and their titles were as follows:

**Västerås**
- Tenant’s association: Johan Kretz, rent negotiator
- Municipality: Helena Felldin, planner and residential strategist
- Allmännytta: Mikael Kjellberg, CEO of Bostad AB Mimer
A common problem with studies based on qualitative interviews is the number of interviews performed, which often are too few or too many (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 129). Kvale and Brinkmann highlights that if the selected number are too few it can be difficult reaching saturation which could enable one to generalise the results and if it is too many there is difficulty coding and analysing (2009, p. 129). The purpose of this study is not to generalize how the interactions between housing provision and business principles is negotiated in every city, but rather to highlight how it can be and how it can differ between them. Even though one can safely assume that every individual within the process have their own take and opinions on the issues they are interviewed in their professional roles, being representatives of the organization they work for. To have more interviews with representatives might therefore not be beneficial just for the sake of it, and it is my assumption that the opinions and thoughts they presented would align with the organizations they worked for. One could argue that if I had limited the study to two cases it would have proved easier to analyze the material, which did prove to be time consuming with three cases, but by having three perspectives I hoped that the findings would be more nuanced. The organizations that were chosen - that is the allmännytta residential companies, the municipality and the tenants’ association - were so because they are institutions that deals directly with the allmännytta. I included the tenants’ association to get the perspective of those directly affected by the housing shortage: the tenants. Also, during the research phase of this project I often found the tenants’ association to be more critical in their publications towards today’s planning and housing provision, in comparison to the municipalities’ and the allmännytta companies themselves.

3.3 Guide
According to Trost (2009, p. 71) one preferably does not utilize a questionnaire with previously formulated questions when performing qualitative interviews, but rather let the interviewee talk freely and decide where the conversation leads. Since I wanted to be able to compare how the different actors reasoned regarding the goals and role of the allmännytta I, however, felt that it was required in order for the conversations to deal with the themes and topics that would give insight to the research questions. Trost mentions, that if one is to have a guide, one should not look at it during the gathering of data, but have it “in the bone marrow”, that is to say by heart. I, however, did bring the interview guide with me and did look at it
several times to make sure that the topics were covered. I did follow Trost recommendations to some extent though and had an interview guide made up of a limited number of themes, in order to make the conversation more natural (2009, p. 72). To begin the interviews I started with rather open-ended questions, usually how they perceived the residential market, and then narrowed down the topics as the interview went along.

Interviewing experts in their field did proved a bit daunting and I found that the interview guide often functioned more as moral support than an actual structure of the interview, but it did make it easy to make sure that all themes were covered. Several of the interviewees had been interviewed by students before and it was apparent that they often explained their work to people outside their field. This was especially evident when they gave longer explanations that felt like they had been repeated frequently. A gentle probe to define or specify a concept would often require some degree of thought as it stepped outside the narrative they were used to present. When constructing the guide I followed Trost’s (2009, p. 71) advice not to have too many questions but rather a short list of areas and specify questions as you go along during the interview. For most interviews I found myself straying from the guide more often than not, and it offered – as stated – more support and a source of confidence that all of the topics had been touched upon during the interview. I believe that this unstructured way of conducting the interview was fruitful because the respondents got to present and explain the topics they considered were important. However, it did prove to be more work during the analysis, since most topics were dealt with during several points in the interview.

3.4 Conducting the interviews
The interviews generally lasted between 40 and 50 minutes and they took place in the offices of the interviewees. Even though there is the risk for disruption, this seemed the better option than others open to me, such as a café or a room at the university (Trost, s. 66). These locations would not be at lesser risk of disruptions, and would have required more effort for the interviewees, making their offices the most practical location. The interviews were conducted one on one, with only me and the interviewee present. Before the interview started the participants were informed about the project and that they were not anonymous. The approximate areas that I wanted to touch upon during the interview were also presented, so that the interviewee knew what would be discussed. The interview guide was then followed, with a great degree of flexibility in regards to how the respondent chose to answer and expand on the themes during the conversation. The interviews were recorded on a smartphone, with me informing and asking for permission before starting it. One often fears that tape recorders might disturb the interview and make the interviewee self-conscious (Bryman 2011). However, I did not find that to be the case - smartphones being an ubiquitous part of most office landscapes and desks - little, if any, attention was paid to it.

As mentioned, interviewing people in their professional roles put me as a student researcher in a particular position. I tried to make sure that I followed the advice of Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) regarding the special concerns that one has to take in consideration when performing
qualitative interviews with elites. As they describe, expert interviewees are very well versed in their field, often having “more or less created ‘conversation tracks’, to tell their point of view” (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 163, my translation) and it was fairly obvious that they were interviewed about these topics a lot. Kvale and Brinkman also describe how it is important to know the “lingo”. I did feel I lived up to this for the most part, but the interviews still varied somewhat in quality as the interviewees did not know which level of knowledge they could expect from me. All of the interviewees were exceptionally kind and accommodating, trying to make me feel at ease, even though they were the ones being interviewed. This helped put some of the pressure of interviewing elites off and helped in establishing rapport. Even though the interviews were generally easy going and pleasant it was fairly palpable when we hit topics that the interviewees would rather not discuss, either due to having repeated them frequently or because the topic was sensitive in nature. Since the topics of the shortage of affordable housing have many topics running parallel to them, such as residualization and gentrification, there were times when the interview became slightly tense. All of the allmännytta rental companies interviewed have at some point received criticism from their local newspaper about these issues, and at times it felt as if though they were weary of how I was to use the material, which might have affected their willingness to share the full extent of their perspective.

One of the interviews was conducted over the phone, us not having the possibility to meet up in person. This is usually thought of as a bad thing, but can, when interviewing elites, be beneficial due to its efficiency both for them and for yourself (Harvey 2006). The interviewee did not have to make any arrangements, more than being by the phone and proved efficient for me too as I could transcribe most of the conversation while it was ongoing. Although slightly more awkward than meeting face to face, I agree with Harvey that it is the second best thing to interviewing in person (Harvey 2006).

3.5 Additional document analysis
In addition to the gathering of information from interviews, I used the “guidelines for housing provision” (riktlinjer för bostadsförsörjningen) that each municipality create as a complimentary source of information when investigating the first research question – on how the housing shortage was perceived. A lot of the information I collected from these document also came up during the municipality interviewees of course, but it was beneficial to have these documents as well, since they are official statements on the conditions and strategies for their housing provision, which proved useful as a base of “facts” to compliment the descriptions given by the interviewees.

3.6 Ethical considerations
Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) highlight the importance of ethical considerations and informed consent in relation to interview studies. Qualitative interviews are usually performed when social scientists want to understand personal experiences and perceptions of social phenomena. These kinds of sensitivities often create the need for confidentiality and
anonymity in order to protect interviewees from the consequences their sharing of sensitive information could have (Kvale & Brinkmann, pp. 86-87). However, since in this type of study, where the interviewees are interviewed in their role as representatives of their organization, anonymity felt like less of a concern. The results were interpreted not as the individual opinions of the interviewees, but as the views of the organization, from the perspective of that particular individual. To highlight this I have chosen to describe the interviewees according to their professional role or as a representative of their organization, instead of using their name in the results chapter. At points however, in particular when discussing the residential market or concepts more in general, the interviewee would add a “in my personal opinion”. These claims were then interpreted as such. Where the line between the personal opinions and the views of the organization went was at times hard to distinguish, and when reading the results one should have this duality between professional representation and individual opinion in mind.

Also, since there is only one CEO of a company, and often a very limited amount of “residential strategists” at the municipality, a full anonymity felt out of bounds. To achieve informed consent, the study was shortly described by email when contacting the interviewees and in the beginning of each interview. Before each interview began I informed the interviewee that the study was not anonymous and asked whether they were comfortable with this.

3.7 Analysis

The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Thorough notes were taken during the interviews, where the time was occasionally marked. Analysing the results from an interview can be performed in an inductive manor, where you go into a situation not expecting to find a certain type of answer, but identify themes afterwards, going from the specific to the general (Trost, 2010, p. 36). If one on the other hand examine things from a given theory or hypothesis that is from the general to the specific, the method is deductive. The interviews were conducted in an abductive manor, which is a middle ground between the inductive and deductive and where I did anticipate that certain themes would crop up in response to questions, but were open to identify other themes as well (Trost, 2010, p. 37). Kvale and Brinkmann highlights that one must in large have decided on how to analyse the material gathered before starting the interviews (2009, p. 206). I found that having an interview guide helped in this, since creating them made me specify what areas I was most interested in analysing.

The transcribed interviews were printed and coded with inspiration Glass and Strauss (1967) from grounded theory as Bryman (2011) describes it. Here the coding, which is a central part of grounded theory, was performed in a focused way where I looked for certain categories relating to the housing shortage, by marking with different coloured pens. As suggested by the abductive approach I did focus on categorizing through my research questions but tried to be open minded to other interesting findings that could relate to my results. Qualitative research
has historically had to defend itself regarding the rigour and reliability if its result. One way that is often cited as a way to know if you have completed an interview study and reached some type of rigour is through theoretical saturation, where you as research start to anticipate the answers experiencing as if the same thing is repeated (Bryman, 2011, p. 516). I would not go so far as to claim this happened during this thesis, but several themes did occur repeatedly through the interviews, indicating that these themes might be more representative than the interviews in general. However, since there is only a limited number of people and cases in this study, partly due to the time constraints to perform and analyse the in-depth interviews, one should not interpret the results as generalizable for all of Swedish public rental housing, but rather to indicate tendencies. Further studies and interviews should be conducted with more companies if one wants to make generalizable claims about the role of the allmännytta.
4. RESULTS

The results section is divided in three parts, each section based upon one of the research questions. The first part will present how the different actors perceived the residential market and the housing shortage of their respective city. This section is followed by a rendering of how the different allmännytta representatives understood the term business principles of the *allbolagen* 2010:879. Lastly, the main research question of the thesis will be investigated, that is how the role of the allmännytta is perceived in regards to the housing shortage.

4.1 How is the housing shortage perceived?

To start off each interview the interviewees were asked to describe the current situation of the residential market in their respective city. In order to deduce how the different actors perceived the role of the allmännytta, and specifically its role during the housing shortage, it was imperative to size up how they perceived the housing shortage itself and the challenges it poses. If the different actors interviewed considered existing trends of the housing market a non-issue, they would simply not consider the role of the allmännytta in it. This was not the case and the interviewees expressed a similar understanding of the residential market, albeit to different degrees. In this section of the results, the interviews were complemented by the guidelines for the ensuring of housing (riktlinjer för bostadsförsörjning) that each municipal by law (*Lagen om kommunernas bostadsförsörjningsansvar 2000:1386*) must have. These also contained a description of the residential market, its challenges and the strategies by which the municipality aimed to approach these issues. The main reasons behind the housing crisis, as presented by interviewees and the guides, are the growing population, a lack of affordable housing; a mismatch and stagnation of the residential market; and the impending and ongoing renovations of the Million Dwelling Program areas.

4.1.1 A growing population

All three cities have had a steep increase in the population over the last few years, which all interviewees point to as the main factor behind the lack of housing. The municipality representative of Västerås states that Västerås is estimated to have a continuous growth of its population, from 150 000 to 230 000 residents by 2050. The guidelines for housing provision (bostadsförsörjning) confirms this and further describes how there is a need to add an additional 40 000 apartments to the housing stock of Västerås in order to cater for this growth (Västerås stad, 2017). The representative also describes how Västerås municipality aimed at having 4000 apartments built between 2014 and 2017, and that 3142 were completed. Over the next few years, 2018-2021, she describes how Västerås aims to have an increase in the construction levels, with the aim to complete approximately 5000 apartments during these three coming years, in order to catch up with the growing population. This has put an increased strain on the municipality to get more plans in order so that construction can take place. Mimer, the allmännytta of Västerås, has also felt this increased demand in housing, having received a goal to build 200 apartments a year, in comparison to the around 100 apartments they have built in years before. They have even been able to exceed this goal in
the last few years, according to Mimer’s CEO, having started construction of around 350 apartments during last year alone. The municipality has a goal that there should be about 1500 apartments built every year, and the 350 that Mimer builds is a substantial part of that, as well as a substantial addition to their own stock of 11 500 housing units.

In Uppsala, the municipality representative describes that Uppsala has had a rapid increase in their population, and that this trend will continue. The surge will intensify because of an ongoing project where the city aims to build an entire new residential area in southern Uppsala. The guidelines for Uppsala claims that Uppsala municipality will reach 300 000 people by 2050, from its current 210 000 (Uppsala kommun 2016). This means that about 2500 people will be added to the population each year and that 67 000 new housing units needs to be completed by the middle of the century, with most being situated in Uppsala city. The explosive population increase has led to an exceedingly high rate of construction and about 2000 housing units are being constructed each year (Uppsala kommun 2016). The CEO of Uppsalahem confirms the trends that the municipality representative and describes how they will build a fourth of this, around 500 apartments a year. The representative also express concern towards recent (just a month or so before the interview) trends of the residential market starting to cool down. If prices start to deflate there might be a decline in the construction pace, which she consider worrisome in light of the continuing growth of the population.

Örebro’s municipality representative describes a similar trend where Örebro has had an exceptionally high increase in population, with the guidelines describing how Örebro will go from 132 000 residents to 150 000 in 2050 (Örebro kommun, 2016). The situation on the residential market here is slightly different though. The representative explains that Örebro was quite quick to start their building boom, ahead of most other cities. For several years a very high rate of construction has dominated the Örebro residential market and by looking at the sheer number of apartments there has, in theory, been enough housing units built to cover their existing population. In their guidelines the municipality state that there is a continued need for 900 apartments a year, to provide for the enduring population increase. Last year the municipality submitted to the Länsstyrelsen’s yearly residential market survey (bostadsmarknadsenkät) that they no longer had a housing shortage, and that their residential market was in balance. This year, however, the representative describes that this statement was detracted, and that the year’s residential market survey of this year once again expresses that Örebro indeed does have a housing shortage. While the housing shortage has been addressed in absolute numbers the representative describes how there still is a shortage in one section of the market, namely rental apartments and in particular of those with lower rents. The tenants’ association representative in Örebro, shares this perspective, claiming that the tenants’ association often feel as if though the municipality often has looked at “two staples”, one that is number of people and one that is number of housing units, and that having them match not necessarily will solve the housing shortage, as people with less purchasing power will continue to face a shortage of apartments adequate to their needs.
It is clear to see that all of the representatives view the increasing population and the housing shortage that comes thereof as the foremost reason and challenge of the residential market in each city. As recently reported in the news during the writing of this thesis, there have been indication of a dampening of the residential market, and construction numbers have gone down in comparison to last year (eg. SvD 2018). In Uppsala, the municipality has aware change and are apprehensive of the consequences this could have as population numbers continue to soar. Also, even if there continues to be a high level of construction most of the interviewees point toward a similar trend to what Örebro municipality representative is describing; that even though the construction rate is high, affordable housing is lacking.

4.1.2 Lack of affordable housing – a mismatch of housing and stagnation of the residential market

In addition to the rapid increase of the population that the three cities experience, the interviewees also describe that there is a mismatch and stagnation in the residential market of their respective city. In Örebro, which has by the number of housing units put an end to their housing shortage, the CEO of Öbo, describes how a housing shortage persists, but only if you look a certain parts of the market. He exemplifies this by their rental queue, where the waiting time varies greatly depending on the apartment. Over all Öbo has 172 000 people in their queue, although most are not actively applying for an apartment but are collecting points for future need. In order to get a “normal apartment” (“vanlig lägenhet”), which the CEO of Öbo here defines as not newly built, one requires a minimum of seven years in the queue. In order to get a “normal apartment” (“vanlig lägenhet”), which the CEO of Öbo here defines as not newly built, one requires a minimum of seven years in the queue. To access newly built apartments, which usually have a significantly higher rent than the existing stock, there is an almost non-existent waiting time. He explains that for one project last year, in a newly built complex of 135 apartments, they had 35 empty apartments empty on the day when renters gained access to the newly built. Five months later they still had 16 apartments unoccupied in that complex. Now all of their housing stock is occupied, but he consider this, together with the much longer waiting time for a “normal apartment” to be a sign that there is a demand for more affordable housing, and possibly a decreasing demand for pricier apartments. He, however, sees the high rents of newly built housing as a problem of today and that it is temporary. Even though much more expensive than the existing housing stock today, in ten years these apartments will not be considered expensive. He states that since one “cannot build old housing” and that newly produced housing always is expensive, it is troublesome for those that cannot afford a high rent right now, but that these problems hopefully will eventually be solved by themselves as the new stock ages.

The representative from the municipality of Örebro also expresses concern about the lack of affordable housing. She explains this to be a problem of a mismatch and stagnation in the residential market. There is a tendency in Örebro, she implies, that people live in housing which could accommodate someone else's needs better than their own. This is especially true for those residents that are getting older, but still lives in houses or larger apartments. There is little economic incentive for this group to move to an apartment, which might fit their needs
better, due to taxation laws and the low cost of living they have in their current dwelling. The municipal guidelines also highlights this issue, stating both that “the movement of the residential market is too low” (“Rörligheten är för låg på bostadsmarknaden”) and that “there is a great need of more affordable apartments” (“Det finns stort behov av fler billiga bostäder”) are two of the most pressing issues of the residential market as of today (Örebro kommun 2016, p. 5). There is a hope that the newly produced housing complexes will create movements in the residential market, creating a “flyttdkedja” that will free up more affordable housing. In particular, the representative highlights the need of more rental apartments, due to the long queues, which she considers to be a “great injustice” (“stor orättvisa”). If you are well established in Örebro, that is you either have a high income, so you can afford to buy an apartment, or if you have a long time in the Öbo queue, you will not experience a housing shortage. For those who are unestablished on the residential market, that is those who cannot afford to buy an apartment and that have little time in the queue, the lack is most pressing. Sometimes their only option is to live in newly built, even though they are more expensive than what would be affordable. Further, she describes how there has been challenges to house those on the secondary housing market. This is usually solved by the use of contracts written with private and public residential companies, which grants the municipality the right to rent a percentage of their apartments reserved for social responsibility. Here Öbo takes a on a big responsibility. For those who have low incomes, but still are not entitled to living support (försörjningsstöd) and the secondary market, the situation is the most pressing, especially if they cannot live up to income demands from the rental company, or have a too little queuing time.

This perception is confirmed by the interview conducted with the tenants’ associations’ representative of Örebro. Due to the lack of housing he means that an increasing amount of residents cannot find rental housing for a reasonable cost in relation to their income. He sees this as a hinder to attracting labour, as the city is currently able to attract only those that have higher salaries. Professions that are not as well paid have a harder time finding their way to Örebro, even if they are in demand. He also perceive that there is a mismatch of housing. He gives the same example as the municipality representative, stating that it is often cheaper for elderly to live in a big apartment or house than to move into a smaller, new one.

In Västerås, Mimer’s CEO also describe how the waiting time for newly built housing is much shorter than the time needed to be spent in the rental queue in order to access existing stock. One can access newly built apartments almost immediately. He experiences that the “highest demand is for large apartments at a low price level” (“Det största behovet är en lågt prissatt stor lägenhet”), but, as Öbo stated, these are not possible to build. A similar view is given by the representative of Västerås. She says that even if not every person can afford the newly built stock, which generally has been cooperative housing, she hopes that the increase in housing will have other effects on the residential market, which she consider to be stagnant today. The representative of the municipality further describes how Västerås still has a high degree of affordable housing, only that there is a mismatch of needs. The guideline for the
ensuring of housing states the same thing; that it is “important that the new housing being built creates a movement on the residential market so that people who live in the existing stock takes the opportunity to move to housing more suitable for their needs” (“Det är därför viktigt att de nya bostäderna som byggs skapar en rörelse på bostadsmarknaden så att personer som bor i det befintliga beståndet tar möjligheten att flytta till bostäder som passar deras behov bättre”, p. 6). The representative means that this has not been investigated thoroughly by the municipality yet, but that if the hoped for movement does not occur, it might create a continuous shortage for those with lesser means. The representative of the tenants’ association in Västerås, agrees that an increased movement of the residential market could be of importance to better the conditions of it, but that this would still not be enough. He describes that construction of housing aimed at “ordinary people” (“vanliga människor”) is a must if the housing shortage for lower income earners is to be solved. He understands both the rental and public housing sector as building “by the waterfront” – attractive and more expensive than necessary if one is to cater to the needs of the entire demographic.

Uppsala experiences very similar trends to the other two cities, where there is a growing lack of affordable housing. Uppsalahem has 100 000 paying customers in the municipality owned queues. The CEO of Uppsalahem, describes that most are, as in Örebro, not actively seeking an apartment but collecting queuing points for another day. However, there can be several hundred people in queues for a single object, especially from the older housing stock. For newly built projects, the number of people applying is much fewer. He further expresses that even though there are other actors on the market now building rentals, they are constructing most of the rental stock. One hope of the newly built housing complexes is that they, even though expensive, will create movements in the residential market – a “flyttkedja”. The representative of the municipality also mentions the lack of affordable housing as a pressing concern, as well as a need for more rental housing. This is also described in the guidelines for the ensuring of housing, where it is stated that more rentals need to be built in order to create “a more flexible residential market and to enable more people to have their own accommodation” (“en mer flexibel bostadsmarknad och möjliggöra för fler att skaffa ett eget boende”, Uppsala kommun, 2016, p. 15).

4.1.3 Impending and ongoing renovations of housing stock

Lastly, there was one additional factor that the interviewees claimed potentially could make the challenge of the lack of affordable housing even greater. All three representatives of the allmännytta emphasize that there are impending renovations of the Million Dwellings Program, of which the allmännytta owns a great deal, particularly in high rise areas. Since the million programs are about half a century old, they are in need for larger renovations and this will mean large investments from the allmännytta. The CEO of Öbo describe how the renovations will be costly, since the conditions of the stock are often worse than expected. Renovating these apartments will inevitably drive prices up, since rents of this part of the stock are too low to cover the costs of the renovations. This could, potentially, make housing
provision of those with less economic means even more pressing, according to the two representatives from the tenants’ association.

To summarize, the housing shortage in the three cities are a result of a rapid population increase. Even though the rate of construction is high, even so high that the shortage should be taken care of in Örebro, there still seems to be a lack affordable housing and rental housing. The understanding of their respective residential market aligns neatly with current writing on the residential market, both in Sweden (Holmqvist & Turner, 2014, SOU 2015: 48, SOU 2015:58, Hyresgästföreningen 2017) and in Europe (eg. Dewilde & De Decker, 2016; Dewilde, 2017). There is a hope that this issue will eventually take care of itself, as the newly builts are expected to create movement in the residential market and with time become less expensive in relation to existing stock. The success of “flyttkedjor” is contested and there is uncertainty regarding whether they occur in the way desired (SOU 2007:14, p. 90; SOU 2105:48). The current lack of rentals and affordable housing makes the allmännytta’s role particularly interesting to study. Being the largest provider and builder of rental housing, they also generally cater disproportionally towards those with less economic income (Magnusson & Turner 2008).

As described in the background and literature review chapter of this thesis, the role of the allmännytta has traditionally been to build housing for everyone, including those with less economic means. For most of the 20th century this was done by state investments that ensured that the allmännytta could build on a non-profit basis. The changes in housing politics since the 1990s has changed this and the 2011 law change now stipulates that they have to act on the same terms as private companies and in accordance to “business principles”. The following section will investigate how the different public residential companies understand the concept of business principles.

4.2 How is the term “business principles” of the allbolagen interpreted?

The implementation of the allbolagen (2010:879) in 2011 changed the conditions for municipally owned public housing, as described under section 2.4. Instead of working according to the previous non-profit basis, the public rental companies are expected to work in accordance to “business principles”. To understand how the role of the allmännytta in regards to the housing shortage is perceived, I wanted to discern how the allmännytta companies interpreted the “business principle” part of the new law, as it can affect their ability to provide housing for those with lower incomes. In this section only the perspectives of the allmännytta is presented, in contrast to the other two section of this results chapter where all representatives’ perspectives are taken into account.

4.2.1 Interpretation of business principles and collaboration with the municipality

The allmännytta is owned by the municipality and from them they receive their owner directives (ägardirektiv). The owner directives entails instructions on what the municipality want the allmännytta to focus on during the coming year and which profit level they should secure. The way the allmännytta collaborates with the municipality therefore affects to some degree their interpretation of “business principles”. The way Uppsalahem interprets “business
principles” is, according to the CEO, to act in a way that does not create unfair competition with the private companies. He describes that previously the municipality could simply tell them to “build here and demand these rents” (“bygg här till de här hyresnivåerna”), and that profit levels in when constructing was less concern as they were non-profit. This allowed them to build in ways that a private actor could never do, but that this changed with the law changes of 2011. Now they can no longer build a project and have a low rate of return since it would affect the competition negatively; that is to say that they must not have markedly different profit levels from private competitors. He adds, that they do have slightly lower profit levels, but that this is justified by the social responsibility they take, catering to groups such as students and elderly, which the private sector does not to any greater extent. If there is a lack of competition in an area, such as in the countryside around Uppsala, they can build there with a slightly lower rate of return, he adds, because of the lack of competition.

He also describes how the municipality give them owner directives each year in November, which are relatively similar each year and contain a demand on the return on assets, which usually is around 3.8 percent, or two percent plus inflation. The content of the directives is discussed between them and the municipality through the year, and there are meetings every month for further discussions. When asked if he feels as if though the municipality are sensitive to their reality when it comes to the profit demand he pauses and states that “well, that is getting tougher and tougher I would say” (“nja, det blir tuffare och tuffare skulle jag vilja säga”), but also emphasizes that he considers the discussion with the municipality to be good. He further explains that Uppsalahem is concerned that the municipality will continue to demand the same rate of return in the future. This would mean an increased financial strain for Uppsalahem, because of the large investments that are required in the Million Dwellings Program and due to rising interest rates.

In Västerås, the CEO of Mimer describes a similar interpretation of the business principles, that they should act in a way that does not hinder competition and that they are to have a reasonable rate of return. He describes a similar collaboration with the municipality and that they have a high degree of agreement. In contrast to Uppsalahem, he on the other hand, describes how they struggle to live up to the demands put on them from the municipality. Their profit demand is to have a return on assets of three percent. Today Mimer does not reach this, they have a rate of return of around 2.2 percent, but are supposed to by 2020. He describes that it might not seem like a big difference, but that is “50 million crowns we have to struggle for” (“Det är 50 miljoner vi har att kämpa med”). They also have demands on the equity ratio of the company, with a requirement of 20 percent and a goal of 30 percent. The CEO, describes how they previously could look at the entirety of their stock and that it was doing alright, but now you need to look at each individual project, which intensifies the need to have reasonable profit levels.

Uppsalahem and Mimer understands the business principles and their owner directives in very similar ways, although Mimer expresses a high degree of pressure and some difficulty to live
up to the demands. The way that Öbo reflects on business principles, and particularly on the owner directive is starkly different from the other two companies. Firstly, the CEO promptly states that they receive no owner directive, but “work with goals and budget” (“arbetar med mål och budget”) instead. He describes that when the law first came into place their interpretation at that time was that they were to act just as any other residential company, but that he “absolutely doesn’t see it this way today” (“så tolkar jag det absolut inte idag”). Today Öbo interprets the requirement of acting according to business principles as having reasonable rate of return in the long run, and that this is done by looking at “entire picture” (“hela bilden”) of their residential stock. Whereas all residential projects should be alright financially, they do have some room for there to be lower profits for some projects, as long as they in the long run have a reasonable rate of return. As long as Öbo has a good financial status, which they do, no one could claim that they were not conducting their company in a way that is not conducive to business principles, according to the CEO. He describes that the municipality “doesn’t govern in a way that is too controlling, they have a clear goal with us, we discuss and work together” (“de styr inte på ett sätt där man överstyr, de har ett tydligt mål med oss, vi diskuterar och samverkar”). They do have demand to have a 3.75 percent return of assets, which he finds reasonable. It used to be five percent, which Öbo could live up to, but felt that due to impending investments (building and renovating) it was better if they lowered it. The collaboration is described as such:

Instead of saying ‘earn the last million’ they say ‘build an attractive city’; ‘have a reasonable rate of return - but build an attractive city’. This I consider a great opportunity as a residential owner - to have an owner that does not only focus on the last penny

The equity ratio of the company is also not thought of as a great concern to either the municipality or Öbo - “If we have an equity ratio of 10, or 15 or 20 percent - is whatever” (Om vi har en soliditet på 10, 15 eller 20 procent är skitsamma”) the CEO states.

Although having similar demands on profit levels, the way they talk about these demands differ. Whereas Mimer and Uppsalahem states that the municipality puts pressure on them to have higher rates of return than they currently, or potentially would prefer, Öbo seems to have more influence on the municipality in their collaboration. According to Grander (2016a) larger companies typically have a more “business as usual” approach to the law changes of 2011, and can claim more social responsibility in this way. He also claims that where demand on the residential market is highest, there also seem to be the less economic constraints than for the allmännytta on weaker markets. Öbo is definitely a bigger company than both Mimer and Uppsalahem, and does seem as such to have a greater leverage in the collaboration with the municipality. Öbo also has a more business as usual approach to the law changes, focusing
more on that the company as a whole is doing reasonably well in the long term. Both Mimer and Uppsalahem focuses more on being business like, in the way that they should disturb competition on the market and therefore must act in similar ways to the private sector.

4.2.2 Decisions according to business principles - but with motivations of social good

There is also one tendency that becomes very clear to me during the discussions of business principles and during the interviews with the representatives of the allmännytta in general. When the allmännytta operates and make decisions that according to “business principles” are reasonable and wise, these decisions are continuously backed up with a narrative of social good. This happens throughout the interviews, in everything from discussing rent levels after renovations to trying to make the newly built stock cheaper. I will lift one example from the interview with Mimer, which I think highlights this interaction between business principles and social responsibility.

In the days just before my interview Mimer in Västerås sold some 749 apartments to a nationwide private company in an area dominated by Million Dwellings Program housing. The deal had happened just a few days before, and from the reaction I got when we discussed it, I gather that it has received some negative attention in the media. The background of this transaction, according to the CEO, was to increase their equity ratio as their owner, the municipality, wants Mimer to increase this to at least 20 percent. However, this is not the only reason for the transaction, the CEO continues. He describes how “we owned nearly all of the rentals in the area. To increase the attractivity we sold some stock, so that there over time will be more alternatives created” (“Vi ägde nästan alla hyresrätter där. För att höja attraktiviteten väljer vi att sälja 750 lägenheter där, så att man får över tiden fler alternativ”). By selling to a private alternative he means that the general attractivity of the area will increase as there will be more options and more actors to help lift the attractivity. The representative at the tenant’s association that I speak to just an hour or so afterwards also bring this transaction up. He considers the transaction to the nationwide company poor and believes that the buyer will not treat the sold housing complex in a way that will benefit its residents. Rather they will drive rents up significantly by renovation and eventually sell the complex. He believes that, from a social perspective, it would have been better if the housing complex stayed with the allmännytta, which he feels takes better care of the interests of its residents. The transaction of the sold housing is based on the demands by the municipality and therefore could be interpreted as part of acting according to sound business principles, having a high equity ratio ensuring the economic sustainability of a company. However, by the way he extensively describes the transaction, bringing up positive impacts such as how increased attractivity will lead to decreased segregation, it becomes obvious I think, that there also needs to be another narrative to support a thing as simple as the selling of one’s stock if one is an allmännytta residential company. For most private companies I assume this would be a non-issue, if they have to sell in order to increase their equity ratio they will simply sell, and that is that.
I interpret this as if though the allmännytta is under pressure and expected to have a social agenda for their actions, even in transactions that are based on the demands of their owner and most likely are highly reasonable if one is to act according to business principles. This pressure seems to not only be because of how the law states that the allmännytta must act in a socially responsible way, but also as remnants from their previous role during the Folkhem era, when they were able to provide low income housing aimed towards all income groups. The defensive attitudes that sometimes crop up during interviews when discussing thing related to affordability implies that they have received negative criticism for not living up to their previous, non-profit identity, which further implies that expectations on the allmännytta to be socially conscious and to supply affordable housing for all, persists.

As a short summery of this section, in regards to the second research question on how the “business principles” of allbolagen 2010:879 is interpreted by the allmännytta companies, one can state that the three companies interpreted the term in somewhat different ways. Uppsalahem and Mimer expressed an interpretation much more aimed at not disturbing competition on the residential market, whereas Öbo interpreted it in a “business as usual” way, where business principles was interpreted as having a reasonable rate of return in the long term. Although given similar demands on profits from their respective municipalities the pressure put on the company was perceived differently, and so was the influence and cooperation with the municipality. Here as well, Öbo seemed to have more influence on the demands put on them, whereas Mimer and Uppsalahem described themselves as struggling, or potentially struggling, to meet the demands of the municipality. Lastly, this section described how actions that according to business principles are reasonable are continuously backed up with motivations of social good, and that there seem to remain an expectation on the allmännytta to act in a socially good and responsible way even when acting according to business principles and demands made by the municipality.

4.3 The role of the allmännytta in regards to the housing shortage

As described in the first part of the result section, the housing shortage consists mainly of a lack of affordable rental housing. When the allmännytta was created during the Folkhem era, this was the exact type of housing they originally were to provide. The provision of affordable rental housing “for all” is what set them apart from the private sector and is what defined their “social responsibility” during this era. In regards to the housing shortage of today, their most prominent role is still that of being builders and providers of rental housing, which will be described in the first part of this section of the results. The allbolagen 2010:879 still states that the allmännytta must work to be “socially responsible and socially good” (samhällsnyttig) in general.

However, as the second part of this section will show, and is implied in the first part of the results, their role of being socially beneficial is to some extent in conflict with the term “business principles”. The high construction prices and the requirement to act according to “business principles” mean that the allmännytta cannot ensure social responsibility through
the construction of affordable housing, as one traditionally would have expected them to do during a housing shortage. Their original role of being socially beneficial by constructing affordable housing during the 20th century, is transformed during this housing crisis into constructing not-so affordable housing and providing social good in other ways. The second section also describes how, as housing costs are increasing overall, there is a trend that an increasing number of people are left outside the regular residential market. The interviewees claim that the allmännytta is not responsible for the affordability of the regular market, but do, however have a greater responsibility for the secondary market, potentially making the allmännytta more residual.

Further, as the third part of this section will show, the housing that the allmännytta do construct are increasingly supposed to fill goals other than being affordable, such as making the city more sustainable and attractive, as will be shown in section three. These goals are set by the municipality and to some extent premiered over the allmännytta providing more affordable rent levels. Consequently, their traditional role as builders of affordable housing become even more unattainable and limits their ability in regards to the housing shortage. The role of the allmännytta during this century becomes that of constructing not-much-more affordable housing than its private counterparts. This is partly due to high construction costs, but also due to socially responsible and beneficial being reinterpreted to mean other projects and goals than affordable housing.

4.3.1 The allmännytta as providers and builders of rental housing

The most prominent role of the allmännytta in regards to the housing shortage is that of being builders and providers of rental housing. All three companies have a building pace that is high in comparison to their size, as is presented in the first section of the results. They are also the largest contributor of rental housing, as the private sector mainly has been interested in building cooperative housing. This makes their role central to the issues of the residential market today. As presented in the first section of this thesis’ results, the housing shortage is predominantly, as it is in Sweden in general, that of rentals and more affordable housing. The representative of Örebro municipality highlights how since it has generally become more difficult for the general public to gain access to housing - the allmännytta plays an important role. If you cannot afford to buy your first house (or your second or third) it is important to have a functioning rental market. And of course there are private options, but there the criteria for how to apply for these is different - they can decide who they want to rent to. The allmännytta does not function in that way.

There has been an increase in the number of private rental companies building in each of the cities but they still represent a “miniscule part” (“försvinnande liten del”) according to Uppsalamem, a view shared by Västerås and Örebro allmännytta too. These companies also, as implied by the quote are able to choose their tenants more selectively than only providing a queue, which can act exclusionary, and are generally more expensive.

The construction of rental housing is stated as inevitably expensive, however – even for the allmännytta – which is a statement made by every single interviewee. They explain this as being due to a myriad of factors, such as high construction costs, lack of competition among builders, and expensive material, along with other factors also lifted by literature on the topic in general (see eg. SOU 2015:48). Because of the “business principles” of the allbolagen 2010:879 the allmännytta no longer operates in a non-profit way. Instead they are expected to act in a way that is similar to private companies in order to ensure that competition exits on fair terms. The construction that is made by the allmännytta cannot have lower rates of return than their private counterparts, and thus what they build become similar to that of the private stock. The representative of the tenants’ association in Västerås describes how the allmännytta used to be able to “scorn what the private companies were doing, but now they feel that they have a duty to become increasingly like them” (“tidigare kunde allmännyttan bara fnysa åt busarna i branschen [...] idag anser man att man nästan att man har ett ansvar att snegla på dem och göra som dem”). Just by the action of building rental housing, however, there is a hope that movements on the residential market will occur. The example most provided by the interviewees is a hope that elderly will leave their larger houses and move into a new apartment that are more suited to their needs and that this will in turn free up some of the existing, more affordable stock. The predominant role of the allmännytta during the housing crisis of today become the construction of rental housing, similar to the production of the private sector.

Affordable housing, the main lack constituting the housing shortage, is something that the allmännytta can only play a limited part in addressing. The representatives from the municipalities strongly emphasizes that the allmännytta is not given any type advantages, whether in regards to land use or any other of factors, that would allow them to build cheaper – since this would disturb competition. In addition, the representative from Västerås states that the allmännytta does not have “a bigger responsibility in comparison to other landlords” (“inget jätteansvar i förhållande till andra hyresvärdar”) to cater for those with less assets or to provide more affordable housing. As most research shows the housing projects of private and public residential companies are similar both when it comes to rental levels and expression (Länstyrelserna 2018; SOU 2015:48; Lind 2015; Grander 2016a), something that is confirmed by the interviewees.
However, there simultaneously exists expectations that the allmännytta is to act in ways different from the private cooperative- and rental companies. The CEO of Mimer in Västerås describes how they generally build in ways that differ from the private sector:

The cooperative housing has historically invested in things that meets the eye, whereas we have built other qualities that is not as easily seen, but creates lower upkeep costs in the long run. We invest in things such as energy effectiveness, better sound proofing, better materials [...] [The cooperative] has decorated their apartments, they have another aesthetics. A flashier microwave oven, a slightly flashier stove; a better, flashier bathroom cabinet. Things that sells [...] My view on what the cooperative business has done is to focus on the group that can pay the most. And then the demands are higher

This implies that there exists an ideal among the allmännytta to act and build according to values different from that of the private sector. Instead of focusing on aspects that sell, they concentrate on factors that will allow the housing to be cheaper and more durable in the long run. He does, however, also claim that they too build stock that is similar to what the private companies are building. Apart from this quote, it generally seems as if the traditional Folkhem ideals have a stronger hold in Västerås, than in the other two cities. For example the ideal of building for all - for a general public - is much more emphasized in regards to discussing the housing shortage and their general goals than in the other two companies. In contrast to what the private companies produce the CEO states that they do not intend to provide and build housing aimed at one sector of the market but rather to cater “for every Västeråsare” (för alla Västeråsare”) by

building in three segments, with the same amount of housing in each segment [...] where the product in more affordable areas has a simpler standard and what we build in more expensive areas looks like what the cooperative companies built.

This means that they build in all parts city, and not only where there is most profit, or the lowest rents, but rather to build in a comprehensive way. Since the 1990s this goal of the allmännytta, to provide housing for everyone, has become increasingly difficult and
politically contested (Magnusson & Turner 2008; Grander 2015; Grander 2017). Uppsalahem describes, however, that over the last couple of years there has been a growing political interest for them to again aim at different segments of the market when building. He states that “we have always tried to do this, but not had the possibility” (“det här är något vi alltid försökt göra, men har inte haft möjligheten”. Although not able to construct affordable housing he does describe that they have continuously tried to keep rent levels down through other ways, such as lowering operating costs. He further describes how they do not only build where there is most profit but “where the municipality wants us to, in contrast to others who build where there are ‘raisins in the cake’ [at the sweet-spots]” (“Vi bygger där kommunen vill att vi bygger, medan andra bygger där det finns ‘russin i kakan’”). In regards to the private companies, the representative of Öbo describes Öbo, although the largest rental company in Örebro by far, as complementing the private sector and to encourage their collaboration. If a private company wants to construct housing, the Öbo representative describes that they say “if you build, we won’t - but if you don’t build we will” (“bygg ni, så bygger inte vi - men bygger inte ni, då bygger vi) in order to keep the construction rate up. This can be interpreted as if though they have the ability to build where private companies do not see enough profit to build, and that they do not feel threatened of the competition that private companies bring, but rather look at them as collaborators.

None of the allmännytta residential companies consider themselves to be directly responsible to offer more affordable rents, and that this is not their role. The representative from Mimer at one point in the interview even states “we are a residential company. That there exists poor people in society is not our responsibility. [...] These issues can only be properly dealt with by politicians” (“Vi är fastighetsägare. Att det finns fattiga människor i samhället, det är inte fastighetsägarens uppgift att försöka utjämnna inkomstskillnader. [...] Det är politikernas ansvar att balansera de frågorna”). Uppsalahem also describes how they are not responsible to offer affordable housing, emphasizing that “we take a social responsibility - but not by the way of cheaper rents” (“Vi tar ett socialt ansvar, men inte genom att kunna erbjuda billiga hyror”). Whilst both companies clearly states that it is not their responsibility to provide cheap housing, they do bring up an abundance of different projects they work on that will help keep rents down or allow people into their rentals in other ways. Mimer describe how they build “Kombohus” – a standardized, readymade house that makes for lower rents and Upssalahem describes how Öbo builds these houses, something that they for a long time were not allowed to themselves, but that they just received permission to build a limited number of these types of houses in Uppsala. Also, in addition to these houses they describe how there is a possibility to nowadays apply for a small state aid that the Boverket got permission for the European commission to hand out. By using these state aids they are able to build small one or two room apartments with lower rents, which can mean going from approximately 8000 crowns for a newly built two room apartment to 6000 crowns, according to the representative of Mimer.
So, the allmännytta companies play an important role during the prevailing housing crisis as the main providers and builders of rental housing. However, when it comes to affordability, there are conflicting narratives. Originally created to build affordable housing for the general public, there seems to be remnants of that ideal that are alive and well today. Mimer repeatedly states that they are and build “for every Västeråsare”; Uppsalahem explains how they have always aimed to do this, but not been able to. They describe how they build in ways and in areas different and less profitable than the private sector and generally speak extensively about how they try to lower rents. At the same time as they describe themselves as having somewhat different aims from the private sector, they simultaneously claim not to do so, not to have any different interests and especially not to compete on different terms. The allmännytta is not premiered by the municipality, is required to act on the same terms as the private sector and claims no responsibility to provide affordable housing for the general public. Even though their role as providers of rental housing is considerable, their traditional role as providers of affordable housing during today’s housing shortage is increasingly limited, even though it still lives on to some degree in their different projects aiming to keep rents down.

4.3.2 Social responsibility in other ways than constructing affordable housing
If the municipally owned rental companies increasingly struggle to fill their original role as providers and builders of affordable rental housing, it has been questioned what their role on the Swedish residential market is today. The research project “Nyttan med allmännytta”, led by Tapio Salonen, dives in to this topic by studying the role of the allmännytta from several different perspectives. Both Windell (2015) and Grander (2016a) study the relationship between allbolagens 2010:879 requirements of the allmännytta to be both socially responsible and to act according to business principles. As the role of the allmännytta traditionally was to provide affordable housing, but is increasingly limited to do this, they emphasize their role as socially beneficial in other ways and through other types of projects. For example, Uppsalahem has abolished their previous demands on income and references so that to open up to a larger number of people being able to access their apartments. Further, Öbo describe how they work extensively with other social projects, such as the employment of people from their local area, offering education to their residents, hiring the local youth for summer jobs and providing homework assistance, initiatives that also Mimer and Uppsalahem have similar versions of. Mimer and Öbo both claim that if there was no social good from the allmännytta, the companies would have no legitimacy as a municipally owned company, and might just as well be sold. As it becomes increasingly difficult for them to live up to their traditional social responsibility of building affordable housing – as they did during the housing crisis of the previous century – they explain how they are socially beneficial through these kind of projects instead. Quite a few of these social initiatives that the companies describe could be considered Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives, as Windell (2015) understands them. Windell explains how an increasing amount of companies take on these responsibilities as they both bring social good and increased profits. These initiatives, that according to both Windell and Grander (2015a), does not collide with the requirement of
business principles, and can even be very much according to business principles since they increase publicity and strengthen the company's brand. Not being able to construct affordable housing, the allmännyttta takes on these types of social responsibilities instead, making them socially responsible in other areas than their traditional role of building affordable housing, during the current housing shortage.

Further, the housing shortage of today and the continuously rising housing prices has created a trend where an increasing amount of people cannot find accommodation on the regular residential market. As the municipalities are required to ensure housing, according to the law of Kommunala bostadsförsörjningsansvaret 2000:1383, they provide housing for this group on the secondary residential market. This is done by the municipalities signing contracts with both private and public rental companies, usually where they provide a certain percent of their stock, for the purpose of accommodating this group. Lind (2016) describes how a growing number of people are on the secondary market for no other reason than having a too low income to afford the regular market. The role of allmännyttan in regards to this is worth mentioning because, as Uppsalahem explains they “take a greater responsibility of those that cannot acquire an apartment by their own means, [but] otherwise we do not have a greater responsibility than the private sector” (“Vi har ett mycket högre ansvar för dem som inte kan skaffa bostad och tar ett större ansvar, i övrigt har vi inte något större ansvar”). To accommodate those looking for affordable rents on the regular market, the allmännyttta has no greater responsibility, but for those on the secondary residential market, they are the biggest provider. The representative of Örebro municipality makes a similar claim about the growing secondary residential market, adding that if you are on the secondary market you might have it easier than those who are not applicable for this type of housing. For those who have low incomes, but just enough to not be accepted on the secondary market you have a much harder time to find accommodation, a trend that could intensify if the housing shortage of affordable rentals continues. The representative of the tenants’ association in Västerås describes how this, in a way, is contradictory. If fewer people can afford the normal rental stock, then more people will have to be directed to the municipalities’ secondary market. If the allmännyttta is to provide for this (potentially) growing group there is a risk that the allmännyttta will take on a more residual function and its role in regards to the housing shortage will be less about providing housing for all, as according to the Folkhem ideals. Instead the role of the allmännyttta will move towards becoming more residual, housing the poorest (Grander 2017).

Martin Grander (2017) describes how this is a trend that is establishing itself among the allmännyttta in Sweden. He studies the interaction between business principles and social good in the allbolagen 2010:879. According to him, there are three levels of social good or responsibility that the companies can provide. The two first levels deal with the types of initiatives as mentioned above, where the company increasingly performs social responsibility through social projects such as employing of local residents or offering homework assistance. These projects usually have no conflict with that of business principles, but acts as a type of corporate social responsibility (Windell, 2015). The third level, which is the provision of
affordable housing for all, Grander describes as increasingly difficult to achieve. Providing affordable housing and this responsibility is therefore gradually abandoned to the benefit of the two first levels. He means that as the allmännytta can interpret their requirement to act socially responsible in other ways, the role of the allmännytta might change from being a residential company aiming to provide housing for all towards a “New Public Housing”. Grander mean that this “New Public Housing” will increasingly cater to the needs of two groups. If affordability of the residential market continue to decreases, the movements (flyttkedjor) hoped for does not materialize and if thresholds to get onto the market continue to become higher, the people being able to afford living in the allmännytta will be the same segment of people who the private companies aim their production towards. The other segment is those outside the regular market requiring housing through the secondary market, which to a large part are accommodated by the allmännytta. That the allmännytta do consider themselves more responsible towards this group and if the trends of decreased affordability remains dominant there is a potential (according to Grander) that the allmännytta’s role will become ambiguous, and provide residual housing for those who cannot find accommodation in any other way and simultaneously provide housing for the well-to-do. The role of the allmännytta could thus be transformed into catering to larger groups of vulnerable people, and become more residual instead of general.

The municipality and the allmännytta are restricted in their ability to provide affordable housing today, due to the “business principles” of the allbolagen 2010:879. This means that the housing available to you, if you are not established on the residential market, might not be suitable for your needs or desires. For those who are, due to lack of funds to buy or having too little time in the rental queues to receive low-cost housing, without affordable option there is little choice but to live in a rental apartment that is more expensive than what is reasonable. It becomes obvious that the municipalities and the allmännytta are limited to ensure housing to mean simply housing people, increasingly through the secondary residential market (SOU 2015:58; Grander 2017), and not necessarily housing them adequately. If you are on the regular residential market, even though you struggle, it is your own responsibility to solve those issues. The role of the allmännytta thus transforms from its original role, to provide affordable housing for all during the housing crisis of the 1900s to construct and provide rental housing, not for the general, but for the relatively well to do and the poorest simultaneously; and their traditional role of social responsibility from providing affordable housing to related social projects.

4.3.3 Other goals competing with affordability
Apart from being the municipalities’ largest provider of rental housing the allmännytta is also the only residential company that municipalities can affect directly. The interviews indicated that there exists expectations on the allmännytta to realize different types of goals, and that affordability might not be the only priority the municipalities have in regards to the allmännytta. The representative of Uppsala municipality explains, during her interview, that since the housing that is being built today will last for a long time, it is important to have the
long term perspective, in addition to the short term goals. Since the allmännytta is the only residential company that the municipality can affect directly it seems as if though there is a general ambition for the municipalities to set a standard for the building sector by giving the allmännytta demands to realize certain goals in their construction projects.

For example, Uppsala municipality has a goal that the entire municipality will be fossil neutral by 2025. The CEO of Uppsalahem describes how this puts pressure on them to invest in expensive, but more sustainable building materials and to invest in more sustainable construction processes, which typically are high emission projects. By giving the allmännytta these demands, they become a show-by-example to the construction sector of how building can be made more sustainable. The construction of housing is almost exclusively conducted when there is some type of shortage, and construction at high rates only when the housing shortage is pressing, as it is today. The role of the allmännytta during this housing shortage thus not only becomes that of simply providing rental housing, but rental housing connected with certain types of goals and values projecting the goals of the municipality in general. By building more sustainably the rent levels are pushed up, due to the costs related to materials and the construction process, albeit for a vital cause. The tenant’s association of Västerås explains how Västerås’ municipality put a lot of emphasis on sustainability aspects as well, demanding the use of sustainable but highly expensive materials, which has resulted in some of Västerås most expensive rents. He, however, is critical of these projects and believes that the municipality wants the allmännytta to build these projects to show of Västerås capabilities – that they are prestigious rather than solely focused on the social good.

Increasingly the housing construction chosen are decided through the use of architecture competitions, he explains, and these premiere other factors (that, implied by the representative of tenants association, should be of less importance to the allmännytta) over affordability, such as sustainability and attractiveness.

Attractiveness is something that also occurs repeatedly during the interviews. The CEO of Öbo states that this is the overarching goal of Öbo – to build an attractive Örebro – a statement that is brought up several times during the interview. The representative of Västerås municipality also states that it is an overarching goal for the municipality to become an attractive city. When asked to describe what they mean by attractiveness, they give answers that are somewhat vague – but still feels remarkably close to the writings of Richard Florida (2002) on how to attract the creative class, by having an “attractive city”. They mention factors of the likes of aesthetics, pleasant outdoor spaces, liveability and likeability as well non-residential factors such as a having a good cultural life and sporting venues. Having an attractive housing stock, in addition to having a well functional residential market is mentioned by more than half of the interviewees as important factors when it comes to attracting people to look for employment in their respective city. In Uppsala, there has been a newly accepted architecture policy in order to make sure that Uppsala stays attractive and that the buildings constructed fit well into the existing stock. This also increases the price levels,
Uppsalahem explains, since it means that they cannot build prefabricated housing, which otherwise could have been a way to reduce construction costs and decrease rent levels.

The allmännytta is thus not only expected to build a large number of rentals to stave off the housing shortage, while doing this they are also used to achieve other goals. As during the Folkhem era, it is my interpretation, that the construction projects that the allmännytta undertakes today reflects the ideals and values of the municipalities and politics in general. Whereas the allmännytta’s dominant role during the housing shortage of the 20th century was to provide affordable housing for all, according to the principles of the Folkhem, today’s allmännytta is to construct rentals that help create sustainable and attractive cities, the “guiding star” of our age. That housing is used to create attractivity in cities is something that Grundström & Molina (2014) connects with neoliberal ideologies of cities competing for a floridian “creative class” that will stimulate economic growth and prosperity. Having an attractive city is also premiered over the ambition of having low rents, at least if one is to listen to the tenants’ association, although judging by the extensive discussions the representatives of the allmännytta had about keeping rents down, I am not sure if this is a completely fair statement. However, one thing can be stated – the ensuring of affordable rents are not hindered only by the high construction costs, but also because municipalities place additional demands on the allmännytta’s housing construction. Being the foremost tool that the municipality owns to ensure housing, they also become an actor by which the municipality can set the standard of the residential market by reflecting other values deemed equally or more important. The role of the allmännytta during the housing shortage thus becomes not only the provision of rental housing, but also to some degree provide housing reflecting current ideals and values. There still, as shown in the second section of the results, remains an expectation on the allmännytta to act socially responsible in accordance to the Folkhem ideals, but these are increasingly difficult to live up to, and somewhat contradicted if one simultaneously is to build attractive cities.
5. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

This thesis set out to investigate the role of the Swedish public rental housing in regards to the allbolagen 2010:879 of 2011 and the current the housing shortage. The first research question examined in the study aimed to gain an understanding of the current housing shortage, and how it was perceived by the different actors. The actors perceived the shortage as being due to low construction rates in earlier years coupled with a high population growth. This shortage was also understood by the interviewees and by the literature (see section 2.3) to not only be a shortage in the total number of housing units, but of affordable and rental housing in particular. This concurs to an ongoing trend of housing becoming less affordable and fewer people being able to get onto the residential market. In the simplest terms the housing shortage is not only in regards to the amount of housing that is being built, but also that an inflated number of people have to spend larger parts of their disposable incomes on housing and an increasing number of people are struggling on the residential market. These trends are visible not only in Sweden but throughout most of Europe (eg. Gent 2012; Kadi & Mustered 2015; Dewilde & De Decker 2016; Dewilde 2017) and is often connected to an introduction of neoliberal ideologies and policies during the late 20th century (Lind & Lundström, 2007; Christophers, 2013; Hedin et al. 2014).

As the housing shortage is predominantly defined by a lack of affordable rental housing this puts the role of the allmännytta in the spotlight. Originally created to provide affordable housing to a general public during the housing shortage of the 20th century, the allmännytta’s possibility and role during the housing shortage of today is, however, vastly different. Since the 1990s there has, as described in section 2.4.1, been an increased expectation on the allmännytta to act in accordance to market and business principles, so that the state and municipalities are not financially burdened by housing costs and risks (Boverket 2008). In 2011 this tendency was made into law through the implementation of the allbolagen 2010:879, which states that the allmännytta is to act in both a socially responsible way and according to business principles and no longer work on the non-profit basis they previously acted according to.

The study aimed to investigate the role of the allmännytta and its role during the current housing shortage, in light of this law change. To understand how they view this role, the allmännytta’s interpretation of the term “business principles” of the allbolagen 2010:879 was the focus of the second research question. It was found that the different allmännytta companies understand the term in different ways. There is especially a difference between the larger company Öbo, which has a more “business as usual” approach to understanding the term, and how the other two companies interprets it. Rather than having Öbo’s interpretation that “business principles” is having reasonable rates of return in the long term, the other two companies, Mimer and Uppsalahem, emphasize that the law requires them to act in ways similar to the private companies, in order to not create conditions of unfair competition. Salonen writes in the Nyttan med allmännyttan (2015) that the term being interpreted in
different ways is something that the lawmaker probably had in mind, since different allmännytta companies operates on vastly different residential markets. However, that the interpretation of the term differs even in cities that in many ways are similar and face a similar set of issues in regards to their residential markets is interesting. This would be worth revisiting and investigating further through additional in-depth studies, as this in extension will affect the way the allmännytta perceive their role, their responsibility and ability to cater to different sectors of the market.

The final research question and central aim of the thesis – understanding the perceived role of the allmännytta during the current housing shortage – was then investigated. Originally created to provide affordable rental housing during the housing crisis of the 1900s; it was found that during the current housing shortage the role of the allmännytta is still that of being the main provider and builder of rental housing – which increasingly is what the housing shortage consists of. However, partly due to high construction costs and partly due to the implementation of the allbolagen 2010:879, the allmännytta is increasingly limited to provide affordable housing, and neither the municipalities nor the allmännytta perceive the allmännytta as responsible for providing this type of accommodation. As this was the original purpose of the allmännytta, however, there seem to be a lingering ideal for the allmännytta to do this, although no longer their main aim. Though expressing that they cannot offer more affordable rents in comparison to private rentals, particularly in newly built housing, the representatives of the allmännytta companies simultaneously discuss at length different projects that aim to lower or ease the rent level. All three companies discuss a number of enterprises that has this goal, from building prefabricated housing (Kombohus), trying to make operations more cost effective, limiting renovation costs and so forth. At the same time as they perceive themselves as less responsible to cater to the general public, they extensively discuss strategies that aim to give a broad number of people the opportunity to reside in their stock.

Also, affordability is not only limited by high construction costs, the study finds. Being the only residential company the municipality can influence, they are given other directives that the municipality considers important to implement. As they construct housing in order to stave the shortage, the housing they produce is also to act as a setter of the standard for other residential companies. Trying to become more sustainable and attractive, the municipalities use the allmännytta to achieve these goals, in a way they cannot prompt private companies to do. By requesting that they use sustainable materials and high quality architecture, the prices are also pushed up. The role of allmännytta during this housing crisis thus is not only constructing rental housing, but to construct housing according to the political ideals of today, such as attractivity and sustainability. Although not responsible to provide affordable housing, this ideal from the Folkhem simultaneously live on with the new ideals of being market oriented and constructing housing according to political ideals of today.
Further, the study found that even as the original role of the allmännytta, providing affordable rentals, is rendered increasingly difficult there still remain a consensus among the majority of interviewees that the allmännytta do play a role that is significantly different from private rental companies. This role is to be socially beneficial, because as the CEO of Öbo states, if they do not take responsibility in a way different from the private sector “they might as well sell us” (“annars kan de lika gärna sälja oss”). They increasingly take this responsibility through related social projects, such as educational efforts or employment projects. These initiatives, however, are as Windell (2015) and Grander (2015a) describe not necessarily different from the types of Corporate Social Responsibility that private companies undertake. Rather, they can even be claimed to act according to business principles, as they help create a stronger brand, which resonates well with consumers. Further, these types of social responsibility are not the only ways the allmännytta take their role of being socially responsible and beneficial. One way that they do take larger responsibility than their private counterparts is through the contracts they offer on the secondary residential market, a role that is becoming increasingly important as the housing costs rises in proportion to incomes and the number of people on this market increase (Grander 2017).

Grander (2017) explains that the housing construction of the allmännytta is similar to the private actors, aimed at a well to do middle class, and as shown in chapter 4.3.3, can sometimes even be more expensive due to goals of sustainability and attractivity. He explains how this implies that the allmännytta is becoming a “New Public Housing”, catering for both the same segment as the private sector and simultaneously taking a larger responsibility for those who are the most vulnerable on the secondary residential market. The allmännytta is not perceived as capable nor responsible to cater for a less economically strong segment of the population, but is simultaneously described as taking a larger responsibility for those incapable to find housing on the regular residential market, potentially making it more residual. The Folkhem ideal of affordable housing for all is being replaced by housing constructed according to neoliberal business principles and ideals of attractivity, making housing expensive and increasingly unattainable for larger groups of people. At the same time the allmännytta’s role of being social responsibility is taken through social projects and through providing housing to the poorest through the secondary market. This study’s main contribution in regards to existing research is to strengthen the claim Grander (2017) makes about Swedish public rental housing becoming more residual and expensive at the same time, since the results of this study aligns with his claim. The study also shows how other ideals and values are sometimes premiered over affordability in the construction projects of the allmännytta. Further this study claim, that even if the allmännytta is not responsible for – and increasingly incapable to – provide affordable housing, there remains a strong idea that it should be an aim of the allmännytta. This is shown as affordability and the keeping rents down, is something that all of the studied allmännytta companies talk extensively about and still are actively trying to accomplish. If the current trends continue and the shortage of affordable housing persists, it would not be out of bounds to expect that the trends described by Grander (2017) to be increasingly questioned by academia, society in general and by the
allmännytta themselves. This is especially so if the allmännytta is, as Grander (2017) describes it, becoming more residual, as this would imply that the general, integral housing regime that has dominated the Swedish residential market since the Folkhem era are changing into a dual-rental system, which would change the core role of public rental housing (Kemeny 2006, see chapter 2.4.1).

The role of the allmännytta during the housing shortage, and in general, seem to be a role that to some extent is balanced between the contradictions created by the requirement that they act both socially responsible and in accordance to business principles. There still prevails an ideal that they are to offer affordable housing for a general public, and to be a socially responsible company to an extent that is not expected from private rental companies. This is made clear as the allmännytta representatives talk extensively about projects they undertake in order to keep rents down. At the same time they are to act under the same conditions as the private companies, to not make decisions that could create conditions of unfair competition and to be a part of creating sustainable, attractive cities. These aims and goals are to some extent conflicting, and I interpret their relationship as an older ideal of a traditional, Folkhem allmännytta, providing affordable housing for all, being entangled with a neoliberal market ideology, which premiers business principles as facilitators and regulators of supply. The introduction of neoliberalism into housing politics is, as described in chapter 2.2, something that Baeten (2011) claims rarely happen as clear cut “system switch”, in contrast to how it described by a number of scholars (eg. Lind and Lundström 2007; Clark and Johnson 2009; Hedin et al 2014). Instead he understand this to be a process, where neoliberal ideologies are intertwined and entangled with previous ones and that these are not always easy to distinguish from each other. Christophers (2013) describe the Swedish residential market with a comparable approach, claiming it to be a “monstrous hybrid”, caught between older narratives of the welfare state and new, neoliberal policies. I interpret the conflicting ideals in the allmännytta as an example of this entanglement and hybridity, where old Folkhem narratives of providing affordable housing for all are entangled and intertwined with neoliberal ideologies of the market. The goals of being socially responsible, as in catering housing for all, and acting according to business principles seem to some extent to be conflicting, if not contradictory.

I also sensed this contradiction during my interviews with the allmännytta. I perceived there to be an expectation of me, as a student researching the residential market, to be highly critical of the lack of cheaper newly built - and that my purpose was somehow to critique them. There was a palpable hesitance when discussing housing for those with lower incomes with both the allmännytta and the municipality representatives which suggest that the topic is highly sensitive. And although discussing it at length, the topic of affordable rents, was also a topic the representatives of the allmännytta were slightly apprehensive to talk to me about. My interpretation of this hesitance is that the allmännytta companies have received a lot of critique in the past, either by the media or academia or both. During the research phase of this project, I did find a number of articles critiquing decisions made by each of the interviewed
companies, criticizing things as having too high profits, or for renovating or selling stock. There seems to be an expectation from media, and through media society at large, that the allmännytta should live up to the role they had during the Folkhem era and provide affordable housing. If they act in a way that according to business principles could be deemed highly reasonable, such as the selling of existing stock, there seems to be a need to justify these actions by asserting a social good. On the other hand, if they are to act in a way that is socially beneficial, but does not generate competitive profit, they risk breaking the law and to upset the private sector. This means that social projects increasingly need to be justified as being according to business principles (Grander 2015a; Windell 2015). The role the allmännytta is expected to fill seems to be that through market principles house the many, and simultaneously be builders of attractive societies.

To conclude, the question of the role of the allmännytta both in regards to the housing shortage and in general might become of intensifying interest in the future. There is a general hope in most of the interviews that the newly built will eventually create movements on the residential market, and that with time the lack of affordable housing will be solved by itself. However, if these movements do not occur and if the current trend of housing becoming less affordable in general intensifies further, the allmännyttan’s hybrid role as both acting on the same terms as the private sector according to business principles and simultaneously to be a provider of social good might become increasingly conflicting. There is also a hope amongst some of the interviewees that, when the middle class cooperative- and rental housing segment is filled, private actors will start building for those with “normal incomes”. The slowing of the construction rate of this year in comparison to last might suggest otherwise, especially since the housing demand from other market segments than the middle class still is high (SvD 2018, Boverket 2018b). Already, there are existing tendencies of the allmännytta becoming residual, where they house a large proportion of the secondary residential market, as well as those with lower incomes. This could in extension imply an abandon of the traditional, integral structure of the Swedish residential market - the cornerstone of the previous century’s welfare state. As neoliberal market- and business principles have become increasingly dominant in the allmännytta, changing its traditional role, a revisiting on the role and nature of Swedish public housing in general is warranted in the future, both by academia and by politicians.
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**Intervjuer**

Felldin, Helena, planner and residential strategist Västerås kommun
Gimberger, Christin, planner and coordinator for the provision of housing (bostadsförsörjning), Örebro kommun
Kjellberg, Mikael, CEO of Bostad AB Mimer
Kretz, Johan, rent negotiator Hyresgästföreningen Västerås
Kjellin, Marcus, rent negotiator Hyresgästföreningen Örebro
Lindberg, Karin, planner and residential strategist Uppsala kommun
Rohlén, Ulf, CEO of Örebrobostäder (Öbo) AB
Sandberg, Stefan, CEO of Uppsalahem AB
APPENDIX

INTERVJUGUIDE

Allmännyttan

Upplevelsen av bostadsbrist
Beskriv Mimers/Öbo/Uppsalahems mål och funktion i Västerås/Örebro/Uppsala, och dess funktion på bostadsmarknaden
Hur ser ert bestånd ut? Vart finns ert bestånd?

Beskriv Västerås/Örebro/Uppsalas utmaningar just nu. Vad är problemet med bostadsbristen?

Vad har ni för byggprojekt/ utmaningar just nu? Vart bygger ni i staden?
Vad har ni för mål/visioner i nybyggnationer?
Står ni inför andra utmaningar, som renoveringar av miljonprojekt?

Kommunen och försörjningsansvaret
Beskriv hur samarbete med kommunen ser ut

Vilka riktlinjer/ägardsdirektiv får ni?
  • Vad har ni för vision kring det ni bygger? Vad är en bra bostad? För vem?
  • (Vad menar man med attraktivt)
  • Får ni några avkastnings/soliditetskrav?
    • Upplever ni att ni kan leva upp till dem?
    • Upplever ni konflikter vid sättningen av dessa mål?

På vilket sätt använder kommunen er som ett verktyg för bostadsförsörjning?

Är det allmännyttans ansvar att ta hand om bostadsförsörjningen för svagare grupper? Kan ni stå för den? Samarbetar med privata hyresvårdar?

(Upplever ni att allmännyttan har fått ta större ansvar för personer med svagare ekonomi över tid?)

Affärsmässiga principer

Hur tolkar ni kravet på affärsmässiga principer?
  • Tolkas det på samma sätt i alla projekt/ stadsdelar?
  • Tid. Hur sätts målen?

Hur tolkar ni affärsmässiga principer i relation till nybyggnation?
  • Hur blir hyresnivåerna? Stor spridning eller inte? Varför?
  • ((Dessa arkitektoniska krav, varför? Vem ska bo i de husen?))
- Vilka ställer krav?

Arbetar ni tillsammans med privata bostadsbolag? Skiljer sig allmännyttans intressen och byggprojekt från de privata bostadsbolagen? Hur?

Kan ni se tendenser till uttäckningseffekter? Blir socioekonomiskt svaga områden placerade i områden långt från centrum?

Har ni sålt ut något av ett bestånd? Varför?
Vad tror ni det får för effekter? Positiva och negativa?

Avslut
Vad ser ni för utmaningar i framtiden? Vad behövs för direktiv?

Finns det något du skulle vilja tillägga?
Hyresgästföreningen

Upplevelsen av bostadsbrist
Hur ser ni på läget på bostadsmarknaden och hyresnivåerna i Västerås/Örebro/Uppsala?

Vilka är de största behoven/utmaningarna just nu?
• Finns det några grupper som har högre efterfrågan?

Vilken typ av bostäder byggs i staden just nu? Hur blir hyresnivåerna?
• Varför blir det så?
• (Vad tror ni ni man menar med attraktivitet?)

Beskriv ert arbete med allmännyttan
• Uppstår det några konflikter? Hur går hyresförhandlingarna till vid nybyggnation/renovering?
• Fungerar ert samarbete med allmännyttan på ett annat sätt än med privata hyresvärdar
• Ser ni att allmännyttan har en funktion som skiljer sig från de privata?
• Har de det handlingsutrymme de behöver?

Affärsmässiga principer
Hur tolkar ni kravet på affärsmässiga principer? Skiljer det sig från hur allmännyttan tolkar det?

Kommunen har ett bostadsförsörjningsansvar, upplever ni att de har förmågan att leva upp till det?

Upplever ni att det är som att bostäder med låg hyra försvinner?
• Koncentreras dessa till vissa områden?

Uträängningseffekter? Vart flyttar man? Kommer man behöva flytta ut?
Upplever ni att olika inkomstgrupper koncentreras i vissa områden?

Avslut
Vad ser ni för utmaningar i framtiden? Vad behövs för direktiv?

Finns det något du skulle vilja tilläggas?
Kommun

Vad är din yrkesroll?

Utmaningar
Beskriv Västerås/Örebros/Uppsalas bostadsmarknad just nu?

Vad ser du som de största utmaningarna för bostadsförsörjningen de kommande åren?
  •  Vad finns det för behov?

Nybyggnation
  Vilka visioner har ni med nybyggnationerna? Vilken roll har allmännyttan i detta?
Samarbete med allmännyttan
Beskriv samarbetet med allmännyttan

Skiljer sig arbetet med allmännyttan från arbetet med privata hyresvärdar?

Utträngningseffekter? Vart flyttar man? Upplever ni att olika inkomstgrupper koncentreras i vissa områden?

Vad ser ni är utmaningarna i framtiden?

Vad anser ni är de största utmaningarna för Västerås/Örebro/Uppsalas bostadsförsörjning?
TRANSLATED INTERVIEW GUIDE

The allmännytta

Perception of the housing shortage
Describe Mimers/Öbo/Uppsalahems goal and function in Västerås/Örebro/Uppsala, and in relations to the residential market.
Describe your housing stock? Where is you housing stock located?
Describe Västerås/Örebro/Uppsalas residential market.
Is there a housing shortage? In what way?
Do you have any current construction projects? Where?
What are your visions and goals when it comes to the construction of housing?
Are you facing other challenges, such as renovations of the Million Dwellings Program?

The municipality and the ensuring the provision of housing
Describe your collaboration with the municipality
What guidelines/ owner directives do you receive?
  • What visions/ goals do you have toward newly built houign? What is good accomodation? For whom?
  • (What do you mean by attractive?)
  • Do you receive any economic demands, rate of return etc?
    • Do you feel you can live up to them?
    • Are there any conflicts as these goals are set?

In what way do the municipality use the allmännytta as a tool in the provision of housing?
Is it the responsibility of the allmännytta to house vulnerable- and economically weaker groups of people? (Can you?) Do you collaborate with the private rental companies?
(Do you experience that the allmännytta has )

Business principles
How do you interpret the term ‘business principles’?
  • Is it interpreted in the same way for all your projects/areas?
  • Timeline. How are the goals set?

How is the term ‘business principles’ interpreted in relation to housing construction?
  • Rental levels? Different levels? Why?
  • ((Describe these architecture policies/ directives? What intention are they created? For whom?))
• Who makes the demands?

Do you collaborate with private companies? Are the interest/roles of the allmännytta different from the private companies? (How?)

Are there any signs of residualisation?

Have you sold any of your stock?
Why?
What kind of effects do you think this has? Positive and negative?

**Ending**
What are the future challenges? What kind of directives do you think are needed?

Is there anything you would like to add?
The tenants’ association

Perception of the housing shortage
Describe the situation of the residential market and rent levels in Västerås/Örebro/Uppsala?

What are the greatest needs/challenges of the moment?
  • Does the housing shortage affect different groups in different ways?

What type of housing is built today? Resulting rental levels?
  • Why?
  • (What do you think they mean by attractivity?)

Describe you work with the allmännytta
  • Are there any conflicts?
  • Do you collaborate with the allmännytta in ways other than with the private rental companies?
  • Do you consider the allmännytta to have a role that is different than the private rental companies?
  • Do they possess the tools needed?

Business principles
How do you interpretation the demand of ‘business principles’? Is there any difference to how the allmännytta perceives it?

The municipality are by law required to ensure the provision of housing, do you feel they are able to?

Is there a trend of housing becoming less affordable?
  • Are these effects particularly palpable is certain areas?

Residualisation? Where does one move?
Do you experience that certain groups are increasingly concentrated into certain areas?

Ending
What are the future challenges? What kind of directives do you think are needed?

Is there anything you would like to add?
The municipality

Describe your professional role?

Challenges
Describe the residential market of today in Västerås/Örebro/Uppsala?

What are the greatest challenges to the ensuring of housing provision in the coming years?
  • Which type of housing is needed?

Housing Construction
What are your visions of the housing construction? What role does the allmännytta have?

Collaboration with the allmännytta
Describe you collaboration with the allmännytta

Is the collaboration different than with private companies?

Do you experience that certain groups are increasingly concentrated into certain areas?

Ending
What are the future challenges? What kind of directives do you think are needed?

Is there anything you would like to add?