



Needs-Tested and Market-Based Social Rented Housing: The Extreme Case of Norway?

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Abstract

In this article we introduce an ideal type we call “needs-tested and market-based social rented housing (SRH)” which is fleshed out and compared to the complex empirical reality of the Norwegian SRH sector. The ideal type may arguably serve as a useful theoretical point of reference both in case studies and in comparative research, and is inspired by the literature on housing regimes, pro-market housing policies, as well as the empirical example of Norwegian SRH. In our contribution to the special issue, we discuss how and to what degree the Norwegian case deviates from the defining features and internal logic of the ideal type, drawing on comprehensive empirical evidence. We also ponder to what extent the policy challenges plausibly associated with the ideal type are evident in Norwegian SRH. In our conclusion, we argue that, as expected, Norwegian SRH in urban areas matches well with the ideal type since it is highly needs-tested and directed at the most disadvantaged households for a limited period. Nonetheless, geographical variation, urban-rural differences, third-generation rent controls, institutional divergence, and discretionary exceptions mean that there is a far from perfect fit between empirical reality and theoretical ideal type. We also argue that many of the policy challenges plausibly associated with the ideal type, such as NIMBYism, housing shortages and complex needs assessments, are present in Norwegian SRH. Increased provision of social housing could probably mitigate at least some of the challenges discussed in the paper, or so we argue in our concluding reflections. However, significant state investment would require a major policy shift from the Norwegian government – a government that, despite access to black gold from the North Sea, has been reluctant to spend heavily in the SRH sector.

Keywords

ideal type, needs-testing, Norway, social rented housing

Introduction

Social rented housing (SRH) in Norway differs markedly from the three other Nordic cases covered in this special issue (Grander & Sørvoll, 2023, 2024). Unlike its universal counterparts in Sweden and Denmark, it is not formally open to all citizens but rather strongly needs-tested. Furthermore, the political strength of tenants and residential democracy

in SRH is much weaker in Norway than elsewhere in the Nordics. Moreover, SRH in Norway accounts for significantly less of the housing stock and is much more targeted than means-tested SRH in Finland (Grander, 2024; Lilius & Nielsen, 2024; Nielsen et al., 2023; Rasinkangas et al., 2024). Entering SRH in Norway has been compared to “crawling through the eye of a needle” (Sørvoll, 2023a, p. 11), as only the most disadvantaged households normally have a chance of accessing this highly rationed form of housing. Only approximately 4 percent of the Norwegian housing stock is SRH (Osnes & Sørvoll, 2023).

In this article, we compare the Norwegian SRH sector with an ideal type constructed by the first author. The ideal type has six main features – market-based housing provision, for-profit administration, needs-tested housing allocation, fixed-term tenancies and periodic eligibility reviews, market-based rent setting, and selective economic support – and may arguably serve as a fruitful theoretical point of reference in other case studies and comparative research. Our ideal type “needs-tested and market-based SRH” is partly inspired by the literature on housing regimes (Grander & Stephens, 2024) and the market-friendly housing policy often preferred by economists (Astrup et al., 2022). Apart from these theoretical sources of inspiration, the empirical case of highly needs-tested SRH in urban Norway is the main building block of the ideal type (see for instance Sørvoll, 2019, 2023a). This means that the similarities between ideal type and empirical reality uncovered by our study are by no means coincidental and even fully expected. It follows that the main goal of our comparative analysis is to identify the institutional characteristics and practices in the Norwegian SRH sector that differ from the defining features and internal logic of the ideal type. Whereas ideal types are abstract concepts meant to cover the essential features of social phenomena (Swedberg, 2018), real-life institutions and practices are almost always complicated and messy. As we will return to below, the latter is also true for SRH in Norway.

In what follows, we also discuss to what extent policy challenges empirically and theoretically associated with highly needs-tested SRH manifests themselves in the Norwegian case. These challenges include policy conundrums related to housing provision (NIMBYism and shortages), allocation (complex needs-testing), residential environments (violence and conflict), tenure security, and housing affordability. By highlighting some of the challenges of market-based and needs-tested SRH, we relate the ideal type to the current policy debates concerning Norwegian SRH. This is arguably of particular value in a special issue focusing on policy challenges connected to public and social housing in the Nordic countries (see also Grander, 2024; Nielsen et al., 2023; Rasinkangas et al., 2024).

In addition to the theoretical contribution to the international SRH literature constituted by the ideal type, the article provides an updated overview of the Norwegian case based on rich data, namely a survey answered by 48 percent of the municipal SRH providers in Norway, supplemented by 25 qualitative interviews with SRH bureaucrats in large- and medium-sized municipalities. The survey conducted in 2023 provides new information about key characteristics of the Norwegian SRH sector, including rent setting, tenancy arrangements and policy challenges. Thus, the article adds to the growing body of scholarship on Norwegian SRH (Brattbakk & Sørvoll, 2024; Elvegård & Michelsen, 2015; Elvegård & Svendsen, 2017; Johannessen et al., 2023; Jusufović, 2023; Sørvoll, 2023a; Turner & Aarland, 2023).

We start the article by presenting the ideal type of “needs-tested and market-based social housing” and continue by outlining its potential policy challenges. In the next section of the article, we present the empirical foundations of the paper. Then we move on to the comparison between real-life Norwegian SRH and the ideal type and discuss the policy challenges empirically traceable in the Norwegian case. In the concluding remarks of the

article, we summarize our answers to the article's main research questions: 1. How and to what extent does the real-life Norwegian SRH diverge from the defining features and internal logic of the ideal type "needs-tested and market-based SRH"? 2. To what extent are the policy challenges theoretically and empirically associated with this ideal type evident in the Norwegian case?

Needs-tested and Market-based Social Housing: An Ideal Type

Ideal types are theoretically constructed concepts that are designed to capture the essential features of significant social phenomena, such as "capitalism", "bureaucracy", "the welfare state" or "social housing". Following the lead of Max Weber's classic sociological theorizing, we regard ideal types as heuristic tools that aid empirical studies by providing simplified points of comparison for complicated real-world phenomena (Swedberg, 2018, p. 184). Thus, the ideal type we introduce in this paper, "needs-tested and market-based SRH", does not exist in any real-life context but is an abstract concept useful for studying, assessing, and comparing key features of existing SRH sectors.

When constructing ideal types, the goal is to arrive at clearly defined concepts that avoid the confusion, imprecision, and ambiguity of everyday language (see for instance van Riel, 2022). If we state that social housing in country X is "needs-tested and market-based", readers may get a vague idea of what we are referring to. However, they will not know the precise criteria behind the label. The general purpose of ideal type construction is to craft logically coherent descriptions with an internal logic that may function as theoretical points of comparison in empirical studies (Bengtsson & Grander, 2023). Building and expanding on Sørvoll (2019), the ideal type "needs-tested and market-based social rented housing" has the following characteristics:

- 1) **Market-based housing provision.** Production and procurement of social housing is market-based. There are no brick-and-mortar production subsidies of any kind, and land for construction is not provided by the government at prices below market rates.
- 2) **For-profit administration.** The companies that build and manage SRH are not prohibited from making a profit by legislation or internal guidelines. On the contrary, they are expected to operate as private business-like for-profit companies in line with New Public Management (NPM) ideals. Market-based housing provision and for-profit administration entails that management and provision of SRH is predominately financed by tenants' rent payments.
- 3) **Needs-tested housing allocation.** Vacant housing units are allocated to households who are judged to have the highest needs for social housing. This typically means allocation to households who for whatever reason are not able to acquire housing of a decent socially accepted standard in the private rental market or owner-occupied sector.
- 4) **Fixed-term tenancies and periodic eligibility reviews.** Fixed-term tenancies and periodic eligibility reviews are meant to stimulate tenant turnover and free up space for new entrants with greater needs than (some of) the existing tenants. Recurring needs-testing of this variety does not only entail that tenants are required to move out of SRH if they no longer satisfy the eligibility criteria, but also means that SRH households are regularly upsized or downsized depending on the floor space deemed to match appropriately with family size when eligibility reviews are conducted. The overriding goal is to match SRH resources (housing units and floor space) with the standardized needs of the target group. For instance, this means that households living in four-room apartments are downsized to smaller SRH units when their children leave the family nest.

- 5) **Market-based rent setting.** There is no rent regulation or rent ceilings administered by the central or local government. This is meant to stimulate tenant turnover as tenants that do not qualify for means-tested housing allowances have few if any economic incentives to stay in SRH. Moreover, market-based rents finance the management and provision of SRH.
- 6) **Selective economic support.** Tenants that cannot afford market-based rents – defined as tenants with housing cost burdens preventing them from financing housing and other essential commodities (food, clothing etc.) that match their needs – receive housing allowances or other forms of income support that covers at least some of their housing expenditures.

The internal logic that unites the six features of the ideal type is the goal of minimizing costs and limiting SRH to households unable to acquire socially acceptable housing in the private market for as long as they are judged to need it – and no longer – without exception. Periodic eligibility reviews, fixed-term tenancies, and market-based rents means that needs-testing is taken to the extreme. Examples of moderate forms of needs-testing include testing eligibility before entry but refraining from subjecting existing tenants to periodical eligibility reviews. SRH sectors with below-market rents are also by default less needs-tested than the ideal type, as market-based rents are purposefully designed to motivate better-off tenants to move to create vacancies for households with greater needs.

The internal logic of the ideal type means that all resources in a broad sense (location, standard, and floor space) are rationed and matched with the needs of individual tenant households. For instance, fixed-term leases and periodic eligibility reviews are policies designed to foster frugality as they enable SRH providers to terminate tenancies or down-size households at relatively frequent intervals, and thus create space for new entrants without investing in expensive new homes. Cost efficiency is also ensured by the combination of market-based provision, for-profit administration, and market-based rents as the latter finances the management and provision of SRH, whereas selective economic support exclusively targeted at the poorest tenants is meant to prevent public spending on those that can afford to pay to stay in an apartment.

The ideal type presented above is purposefully extreme in its one-sided emphasis on fine-tuned cost-cutting and needs-assessment. In its purest form, it could hardly exist in any real-life context. Like other ideal types, such as Weber's "rationale bureaucracy", it is a stylized theoretical model that is meant to illustrate the internal logic encompassed in certain empirically observed phenomena (Byrkjeflot, 2018, p. 23).

Needless to say, ideal types do not fall from the sky into the minds of scholars. There are rather an infinite number of empirical and theoretical sources that may inform them, and for the sake of transparency scholars must be open about their intellectual debts. In our case, the essential features of the ideal type "needs-tested and market-based social rented housing" were crafted with the aid of one empirical example and two theoretical inspirations. The empirical building block of the ideal type is admittedly the real-life Norwegian SRH sector, particularly the case of Oslo, as examined in previous studies (Elvegård & Svendsen, 2017; Johannessen et al., 2023; Sørvoll, 2019, 2023a, 2023b). As noted in the introduction, this entails that the broad similarities identified between empirical case and ideal type below are fully expected, and partly serves as an illustration of the empirical relevance of the ideal type. The main goal of the empirical analysis is therefore not to identify similarity – a wholly expected outcome given the empirical foundation of the ideal type. Our aim is rather to uncover how and to what extent the Norwegian case differs from the

features and internal logic of the needs-tested and market-based extremity represented by the ideal type.

The first theoretical inspiration behind the ideal type is the market-friendly approach to housing policy favored by many economists. In this theoretical world, a lightly regulated housing market will normally provide housing of sufficient quality and quantity for most consumers. According to this line of reasoning, any distributional challenges are best countered by direct income transfers to households struggling to afford housing, and direct market interventions are preferably kept to the minimum required to address market failures (see for instance Astrup et al., 2022; Galster, 1997; Quigley, 1999;). In a market-friendly housing policy following these precepts, social housing is thus a residual alternative for disadvantaged households unable to acquire adequate housing that correspond to their needs, even if provided with cash transfers, due to one or more factors limiting their ability to convert economic resources into acceptable housing outcomes. Such factors may include discrimination by private landlords, disabilities, illnesses, or concurrent substance abuse and mental health disorders (see Astrup & Nordvik, forthcoming).

The literature on housing regimes is the second theoretical inspiration behind the ideal type (see for instance Grander & Stephens, 2024; Hoekstra, 2020; Ruonavaara, 2020). A housing regime may simply be defined as the organization of the provision, consumption, and distribution of housing in a state, region, city, or municipality. The six features of the ideal type “needs-tested and market-based social rented housing” all cover key aspects of the provision, consumption, and distribution of housing in a society. Thus, the ideal type has been designed with the aim of covering all the main functions required of SRH providers in a modern housing regime: provision, allocation, rent setting, administration, tenancy arrangements and selective economic support.

Policy Challenges of Needs-tested Social Housing

Seen from the vantage point of a government, a real-life SRH sector that resembles the ideal type sketched above may have several advantages. At least in theory, SRH of this variety could be a relatively lean and inexpensive way to satisfy the needs of households unable to acquire decent housing in the private market. On the other hand, commonsense and previous research suggest that needs-tested and market-based SRH may spark political protest and policy challenges related to housing construction, tenure insecurity, housing (un)affordability, complex and costly needs assessments, and the quality and safety of residential environments. Such policy challenges may be countered, blunted, or eliminated by structural factors or mechanisms in a society, and must not be accepted *a priori* without empirical scrutiny of real-life cases.

In the realm of housing construction, there are at least two potential policy challenges: the problem of NIMBYism (not in my backyard) and the concern of whether limited or non-existent state subsidies are sufficient to satisfy the housing needs of disadvantaged households. Whereas new research from Norway arguably calls into question the ability of municipalities to provide enough SRH without financial support from the central government (Oslo Economics & NIBR, 2023; Osnes & Sørvoll, 2023), studies conducted in many national contexts show that social housing construction may lead to opposition from at least parts of the urban population affected (Brattbakk & Sørvoll, 2024). Typical drivers of the latter have been summarized well by Ruming (2014):

Opposition to new social housing has frequently been framed by resident concerns over the changing nature of their neighbourhood and community, fears for increasing social issues such

as crime and anti-social behaviour, worries about the changing reputation of place and possibility of place-based stigmatisation, all manifest in home owners concerns over falling property values [...] (Ruming, 2014, p. 40).

To be sure, opposition to the construction of public rented housing by groups of residents and at least some cultural stigma attached to social housing may exist everywhere, not only in housing regimes characterized by SRH resembling the ideal type. However, it seems plausible that the stigma attached to public housing and urban NIMBYism is stronger in housing regimes characterized by highly needs-tested SRH, as relatively well-off residents may fear increased levels of crime, more antisocial behavior, and reduced property prices in the wake of the influx of neighbors appearing to live on the margins of society. What is more, households with high socioeconomic status may flee areas where new units of SRH are established because they prefer locations without spatial concentrations of people with very low incomes (Galster & Turner, 2017).

Even though individuals with a high socioeconomic status may exaggerate the adverse consequences of SRH in a neighborhood, it seems fair to presume that highly needs-tested social housing may also contribute to residential environments troubled by crime, poverty, violence, and other forms of antisocial behavior. In urban areas with a high number of strongly needs-tested SRH units, it seems likely that there will be at least some serious social problems related to the spatial concentration of tenants characterized by for instance very low incomes, social exclusion, or concurrent substance abuse and mental health disorders. This could in turn lead to adverse “neighborhood effects”, namely “the idea that living in more disadvantaged neighbourhoods has a negative effect on residents’ life chances over and above the effect of their individual characteristics” (van Ham & Manley, 2012, p. 2787).

Recent scholarship also suggests that fixed-term tenancies and market-based rents may endanger the tenure security and housing affordability of SRH tenants (Fitzpatrick & Watts, 2017; Sørvoll, 2023b). Tenants living in needs-tested and market-based SRH may experience both high rents and short tenancies as threats to their long-term residential stability, and their fear of being involuntarily forced to move may in turn lead to political protest. Thus, key features of needs-tested and market-based SRH may not only reduce the ability of municipalities to provide long-term affordable housing to low-income households, but also cause significant headaches for local politicians wary of political protest from their constituents.

Finally, comprehensive needs-testing is a way for governments to cut costs, redistribute resources to the disadvantaged, and target benefits directly to those judged most worthy of receiving them. According to some social policy scholars, however, it is also associated with many problems including stigma for recipients, a lack of take-up, and expensive and complex discretionary administrative decisions (van Oorschot, 1999). In a housing regime where SRH is a limited resource and meant only for the very disadvantaged, the administrative burden and practical difficulty associated with housing allocation and periodical eligibility reviews will surely be significant. Not only must SRH providers conduct complex assessments of the housing needs of the households on the waiting list, but they also try to match applicants with dwellings that are judged to be objectively appropriate for the household in question, for instance in terms of standard, size, and location. Moreover, the subjective preferences and cultural background of applicants may also be considered (see, Ytrehus, 2000, for a critical discussion of the concept of housing need). In SRH sectors that resemble the ideal type sketched above, such costly and complex needs assessments are not only required before housing is allocated to new tenants but are repeated every time

fixed-term tenancies expire. Thus, the housing needs of “insider tenants” are at least implicitly compared to at least some “outsider tenants” on the waiting list every time a tenancy expires, and an eligibility review is conducted (Sørvoll, 2023a).

Data and Methods

Our comparison of the real-life SRH in Norway and the ideal type “needs-tested and market-based social rented housing” is based on rich and comprehensive data. All the empirical material mobilized in the article emanates from the Centre for Housing and Welfare Research’s (HOUSINGWEL/BOVEL) comprehensive research project covering various aspects of the Norwegian rental market (Sørvoll et al., 2022). The institutional features (rent setting, tenancy arrangements etc.), tenants’ social profiles and subjective experiences, social policy practices, and policy challenges of the SRH sector are some of the most prominent topics in this research project, as illustrated by working papers (Brattbakk & Reiersen, 2023; Johannessen et al., 2023; Osnes & Sørvoll, 2023; Turner & Aarland, 2023) and published studies (Brattbakk & Sørvoll, 2024; Sørvoll, 2023a, 2023b). In what follows, we draw on the two sources of data from HOUSINGWEL we see as most relevant for this article.

The most important source of data mobilized in this study is the HOUSINGWEL-survey answered by representatives of 48 percent of local governments, the administrative level that provides SRH in Norway. The survey covered questions about housing allocation, tenancies, rent-setting, social housing needs, and major policy challenges, and was answered by social housing bureaucrats between the 24th of January and the 7th of March 2023. By social housing bureaucrats we here mean employees or managers working in an administrative unit responsible for one or more of these functions related to SRH: planning, building, allocation, tenancies, periodic eligibility reviews and rent-setting.

In what follows, we report key descriptive statistics from the survey, using more advanced quantitative methods has not been our ambition. The results from the survey provide a good overview of the general features and the institutional variation at the local level in the real-life Norwegian SRH sector. The respondents represent municipalities encompassing 78 percent of the Norwegian population and 76 percent of the SRH-stock. All types of municipalities with respect to geography and population size responded to the survey, but representatives of large urban and suburban municipalities are overrepresented in the sample. Nonetheless, as illustrated by Table 1, the survey obtained a respectable response rate of 33 percent even from small municipalities with less than 5000 inhabitants (see the working paper Osnes & Sørvoll, 2023, for detailed information about the design and results of the HOUSINGWEL survey).

Table 1. Response Rate among Municipalities

Population	Number of municipalities	Number of responses	Percentage, responses
Under 5000	174	58	33%
Between 5000 and 9 999	71	35	49%
Between 10,000 and 19,999	47	25	53%
Between 20,000 and 59,999	49	37	76%
Over 60,000	15	15	100%
Overall	356	170	48%

Source: Osnes & Sørvoll, 2023, p. 20.

In our analysis, we supplement the survey data with in-depth qualitative research. We are fortunate enough to have qualitative interviews with social housing bureaucrats from 25 municipalities at our disposal. The interviews were conducted in 2022 with representatives of the fifteen largest municipalities and ten other local governments. Of the latter, all municipalities are large- or medium-sized by Norwegian standards with populations ranging from 56,000 to 6,000. All interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis. Our approach to thematic analysis may be described as deductive or top-down, in the sense that we have coded the data with the aid of pre-formed research questions, hypothesis, and theoretical concepts (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 58). Thus, our qualitative analysis in this study has centered on topics and contextual interpretations related to the ideal type and its related policy challenges. Due to space constraints, however, we have limited the quotes and direct references to the qualitative material in the text to a few key examples in the article's sections on discretionary exceptions, geographical variation, institutional differences, and policy challenges.

Even though the data we draw on in what follows provides richer insight into SRH in the most urbanized parts of Norway than in sparsely populated mountain, inland and coastal regions, the data presented above arguably provides us with a solid empirical foundation to answer the article's main research questions: 1. How and to what extent does the real-life Norwegian SRH diverge from the defining features and internal logic of the ideal type "needs-tested and market-based SRH"? 2. To what extent are the policy challenges theoretically and empirically associated with this ideal type evident in the Norwegian case?

Comparing the Ideal Type to the Empirical Reality of Norwegian SRH

Below we systematically compare real-life SRH in Norway to all the six characteristics of the ideal type.

Market-based Housing Provision

Local governments must generally buy or build SRH at prices determined in the markets for land, labor and building materials. In contrast to the first feature of the ideal type, however, local governments have been able to apply for selective investment grants from the Norwegian State Housing Bank (*Husbanken*) since the mid-1990s. This investment grant has been exclusively used to finance housing meant for disadvantaged groups that are unable to access housing in the private rental or owner-occupied sector. Moreover, it has been a relatively minor burden on the state's purse (Sørvoll, 2021, pp. 236–237). In 2022, a mere 209 SRH units were partly funded by the investment grant (NSHB, 2023). The marginal and precarious position of the SRH investment grant underscores the strongly market-oriented and homeownership friendly character of the Norwegian housing regime (Sørvoll et al., 2024). However, the grant's existence since the 1990s illustrates that municipalities have not been completely without government support when trying to provide new SRH homes at terms otherwise largely dictated by the market. Moreover, municipalities and private companies may also receive favorable loans from the State Housing Bank to build SRH units. However, like the investment grant, the scale of this policy instrument is limited, constituting 6 percent of the value of the Housing Bank's new loans in 2023 (NSHB, 2024).

Currently, the future of the investment grant is in serious jeopardy. The government budget for 2023 did not initially include any financial support for the procurement or construction of SRH. In the revised budget, however, the investment grant was temporarily reintroduced as part of the government's strategy for the provision of housing to refugees

fleeing the war in Ukraine (Osnes & Sørvoll, 2023, p. 75). Since there was no social housing grant in the 2024 budget or the recent housing policy white paper (Meld. St. 13 2023–2024), it seems to have been permanently abolished.

For-profit Administration

On balance, it would be misleading to say that SRH providers in Norway generally function as profit-oriented businesses. Instead, they generally aim to fulfill the housing needs of the most disadvantaged in the housing market (Husleielovutvalget, 2024) and do not engage in business activities that are not connected to this overarching goal. However, since subsidies from the central government are very limited (or non-existent) and municipal budgets are tight, SRH providers are forced to place cost efficiency high on the agenda. Moreover, the tenants' rent payments are the major source of income for SRH providers (Husleielovutvalget, 2024), some of which make substantial profits. Some municipalities have also established business-like companies (*Kommunale foretak*) that build and manage SRH. In 2023, 17 of the 100 largest local governments had such business-like companies (HOUSINGWEL, 2023). *Boligbygg KF*, the company that provides, owns, and manages SRH in Oslo, annually transfers a large share of its profits to the city's coffers. Between 2016 and 2020, it transferred almost NOK 1.776 billion to the local government (Nilsen, 2021). Although Oslo is not representative of the country, these transfers provide a good illustration of the profits that may accrue from the provision of SRH in Norway.

Needs-tested Housing Allocation

SRH is typically comprehensively needs-tested. According to the HOUSINGWEL survey, 86 percent of municipalities stress that the homeless and households that are in danger of losing their homes are given priority when SRH is allocated. Furthermore, 56 percent of local governments reported that "inadequate housing", for instance because of unhygienic or cramped conditions, was a factor that was considered in allocation decisions. The local government bureaucrats that answered the survey also reported that households with children and individuals struggling with concurrent substance abuse and mental health disorders are prioritized. However, only 14 percent of municipalities indicated that they enforced unconditional income criteria or income ceilings. In 75 percent of the municipalities, moreover, low-income is only necessary but not sufficient to qualify for SRH, according to the survey. This reflects that Norwegian SRH is very close to the ideal type in the realm of needs-testing.

In Norway, municipalities are legally responsible for assisting disadvantaged households to obtain adequate housing, but these households have no individual right to SRH, and municipalities are not under any legal obligation to supply it (Innst. 85 L. 2022–2023). Thus, municipalities aid households with a weak bargaining position in the housing market through several different policy instruments. In this context, it is often the households that struggle with multiple forms of deprivation that are prioritized when SRH is allocated. Households that first and foremost have affordability challenges are primarily given other forms of assistance, such as housing allowances, social assistance checks, or government-backed starter mortgages (*startlån*). In short, SRH in Norway is a last resort for households that can find no other place to live (Sørvoll, 2023a), and are severely challenged when it comes to converting their economic resources to an adequate dwelling that corresponds to their needs (see Astrup & Nordvik, forthcoming). This is reflected in the composition of the newcomers to SRH in 2022. Of the people that moved in during this calendar year, 33 percent were refugees, 17 percent were substance abusers and/or struggling

with mental health disorders, 34 percent needed assistance in their homes, and 15 percent were deemed to have “other problems”, according to Statistics Norway (SSB, 2024).

Fixed-term Tenancies and Periodic Eligibility Reviews

The survey confirms that a three-year fixed-term lease is the most prevalent tenancy agreement in the Norwegian SRH sector. According to the survey, 83 percent of local governments offer these tenancies “often” or “always or nearly always” to new tenants. This reflects that SRH is explicitly defined as temporary housing in most municipalities: the general idea is that tenants who no longer satisfy the entry requirements should move out when their tenancies expire. In a context of SRH scarcity, tenant turnover is desired to free up space for households on the waiting list (Osnes & Sørvoll, 2023). Some of the tenants that leave SRH become homeowners with the help of state-backed starter mortgages (*startlån*), a policy instrument championed by both the state and the municipalities (see Santiago & Aarland, 2023, for a good introduction to starter mortgages).

To ensure efficient use of floor space, moreover, households that shrink during tenancy periods are often given a new lease on the condition that they agree to move to a smaller apartment. Downsizing of this variety is meant to free up large SRH units to households with children. The results of the HOUSINGWEL survey show that the largest urban and suburban local governments practice downsizing with the highest frequency. Fourteen of the fifteen largest municipalities responded that they “often” or “always or nearly always” downsize shrinking households to smaller apartments during periodic tenancy reviews. Thus, the ideal of SRH as a temporary stopover and the recurring optimization of the distribution of floor space make the Norwegian case a close match with the ideal type in the realm of tenancy agreements.

As one might expect, however, the Norwegian case is more nuanced and complex than the ideal type. Both the survey and the qualitative interviews show that SRH providers regularly use their discretionary power to give some tenants longer leases. The tenants who are granted longer tenancies are households that are judged to have a particularly strong need for residential stability, such as individuals with disabilities and the elderly. Among the respondents to the HOUSINGWEL survey, 40 percent stated that they “often” or “quite often” gave leases that exceeded three years to elderly households. In recent years, moreover, children in SRH and their need for residential stability has been a topic raised in the housing policy debate. As a direct result, Oslo and Trondheim, the first and third cities in Norway, respectively, have decided to introduce longer leases for households with children. In Oslo, the city government decided to give seven-year leases to families when they enter the SRH sector (Husleielovutvalget, 2024).

In addition, many tenants get their tenancies renewed when they expire. Only 18 percent of the municipalities renew less than half of the leases of tenants that apply for an extension, according to the HOUSINGWEL survey. Moreover, 22 percent of local governments reported that they “always or nearly always” renew tenancies. Frequent tenancy renewals and discretionary use of long leases illustrates that Norwegian SRH providers strive to strike a balance between two competing policy aims, namely greater tenant turnover and the protection of the residential stability of tenants judged to need a long-term home (Sørvoll, 2023a). Thus, contrary to the pure ideal type of “needs-tested and market-based SRH”, Norwegian local governments do not pursue increased tenant turnover at all costs. Interestingly, 85 percent of the respondents in the HOUSINGWEL survey answered that it had become harder to promote exits from public housing since insider tenants have become increasingly disadvantaged, and therefore not equipped to fend for themselves in the private

market. In addition, 37 percent of the respondents stated that it was easier for tenants to get a lease renewed than being allocated SRH in the first place. Such protection of the residential stability of insider tenants at the expense of disadvantaged outsiders on the waiting list is a clear deviation from the ideal type.

Market-based Rent Setting

Almost 70 percent of the local governments that responded to the survey reported that they determined rents with reference to market prices in the private rental sector. A minority of 12 percent reported that they employed the principle of “market rent”, meaning a price that was equal to the rent of a comparable apartments in the private market. However, a majority consisting of 57 percent of the municipalities stated that they employed so-called *gjengs leie*, a method of rent determination based on the average market rent of comparable dwellings in terms of standard and tenancy arrangement in a geographical area. The principle of “average market rent” means that rents in large parts of the Norwegian SRH sector lag somewhat behind the rent level in the private market. Consequently, *gjengs leie* has been described as “delayed market-rent” (Sørvoll & Astrup, 2023).

Moreover, both SRH and private rental housing is subject to a system of mild third-generation rent controls where “rent increases are controlled within a tenancy but are unrestricted between tenancies” (Kettunen & Ruonavaara, 2021, p. 1448). Within a tenancy Norwegian landlords may increase rents in accordance with the growth of the consumer price index (KPI) once a year. In addition, landlords are allowed to adjust rents to the “average market rent” every three years (Husleielovutvalget, 2024). Thus, tenants in the SRH sector are to some extent protected from large and sudden rent increases within a tenancy. On the other hand, most disadvantaged SRH tenants in Norway pay monthly rents that resemble the rent level in the private market. Apart from Oslo, however, it is hard to estimate the exact difference between market prices and “average market rent” due to the lack of publicly available rental market statistics (BB., 2024).

On balance, large parts of the Norwegian SRH sector conform quite closely to the ideal type in the sphere of rent setting. However, the existence of mild third-generation rent controls illustrates that the Norwegian case deviates somewhat from with “needs-tested and market-based SRH”, as tenants are somewhat protected from sharp price increases regardless of their income.

Selective Economic Support

In accordance with the expectations of the ideal type, SRH tenants that are unable to afford the rent may apply for different forms of selective economic support from the government, including housing allowances from the state (*statlig bostøtte*) and social assistance (*sosialhjelp*), as well as housing benefits from the municipalities (*kommunal bostøtte*) in some cases. In Oslo and Bergen, the municipality supplements the rather meager housing allowance provided by the state with more generous housing benefits for SRH tenants. This arguably reflects the need to strengthen the affordability of SRH in two relatively speaking expensive housing markets (Osnes & Sørvoll, 2023).

Geographical Variation, Discretionary Exceptions, and Deviation from the Ideal Type

As illustrated above, SRH in Norway shares many similarities with the ideal type of “needs-tested and market-based SRH”. This is not surprising given that the Norwegian case is a major empirical inspiration for the ideal type, as previously stated. However, the Norwegian

case does not match perfectly with the ideal type. For a start, Norwegian SRH does not constitute a pure form of needs-tested and market-based housing. Examples of impurity include third-generation rent controls, frequent tenancy renewals, long leases for some tenants, and deviation from strict for-profit administrative principles. Furthermore, Norwegian SRH is arguably a housing sector that is rife with discretionary exceptions to protect tenants. Thus, the qualitative interviews we conducted in 25 municipalities show that real-life practices frequently differ from the expectations of the ideal type. For instance, one of our informants from a medium-sized SHR provider stressed that they did not adjust all rents upwards universally every year but made discretionary exceptions for tenants that risked becoming dependent on emergency cash transfers from the social services. In addition, even if SRH households are judged to occupy excessive floor space, the interviews reflect that local governments do not always downsize them when their tenancies expire. Even though municipalities are generally eager to free up floor space to house families with children, one- or two-person households may be allowed to keep on living in large apartments if it is considered beneficial to their well-being (see also, Sørvoll, 2023a). This diverges from the strict internal logic of the ideal type, as it strays from the administrative principle that all resources, including floor space, should be matched with the standardized needs of different household sizes.

It should also be noted that the Norwegian SRH sector is characterized by significant geographical variation and institutional differences. Even though most local governments use some form of market rent and three-year tenancies, these are not universal institutional features. This is illustrated by Tables 2 and 3 below. To name just one example, almost 30 percent of the respondents in the HOUSINGWEL survey reported that they used methods of

Table 2. Rent-level Determination for All or Most New Tenancies. Total and by Municipality Population Size. Figures reported as percentages (%)

	Under 5000 (N = 58)	5000– 19,999 (N = 60)	20,000– 59,999 (N = 37)	Over 60,000 (N = 15)	Total (N = 170)
Market rent. A rent that is equal to the market rent for comparable rental properties in the private market.	13.8	15.0	8.1	0.0	11.8
Average market rent. The rent is calculated based on the average market rent for comparable rental properties in the private market, but the actual rent is slightly below the level in the private market.	36.2	61.7	73.0	80.0	57.1
Cost-covering rent. The rent is calculated to cover the costs of ongoing operations and maintenance, as well as alternative return or the cost of the capital invested in the property.	8.6	5.0	2.7	6.7	5.9
Expense-covering rent. The rent is calculated to cover the expenses of ongoing operations and maintenance, as well as the ongoing capital expenses.	3.4	3.3	5.4	0.0	3.5
Historical rent. Adjustments of a historically determined rent level.	27.6	6.7	2.7	0.0	12.4
Affordable rent. The rent is determined with reference to the residents' ability to pay.	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.6
Other calculation methods.	5.2	3.3	8.1	6.7	5.3
Don't know.	5.2	5.0	0.0	0.0	3.5

Source: HOUSINGWEL survey 2023.

rent determination that were not connected to the prices in the private housing market. For instance, 12 percent of municipalities answered that their rent-setting practices meant some form of adjustment of the “historic” rent level established at one point in time. As illustrated by the Table 2, historical rents are most prevalent in the smallest municipalities with a population below 5000 inhabitants.

In general, moreover, small local governments far from major population centers stray further from the ideal type of “needs-tested and market-based SRH” than larger and more centrally located municipalities. Compared to the norm in the cities, towns and suburban municipalities, the SRH sector in rural parts of Norway is less needs-tested and more directed at key workers in the public and private sector (Osnes & Sørvoll, 2023; see also Meld. St. 13 2023–2024, p. 57). Among municipalities with less than 5000 inhabitants, 57 percent “often” or “always” grant periodic lifetime leases to tenants, according to the survey (see Table 3). This signals that SRH is not necessarily meant as a temporary alternative in rural parts of Norway.

Table 3. Prevalence of Different Types of Tenancy Agreements. Total and by Municipality Size. Figures in percentages (%)

	Under 5000			5000 – 19,999			20,000 – 59,999			Over 60,000		
	Always/ Often	Never/ Rarely	N	Always/ Often	Never/ Rarely	N	Always/ Often	Never/ Rarely	N	Always/ Often	Never/ Rarely	N
Indefinite-term tenancies	57.1	42.9	55	33.9	66.1	59	25.7	74.3	35	28.6	71.4	14
Fixed-term tenancies with a duration of 3 years	60.0	40.0	55	91.5	8.5	59	100.0	0.0	36	100.0	0.0	15
Fixed-term tenancies with a duration of less than 3 years (according to the provision in § 11-1 of the Tenancy Act)	12.2	87.8	49	10.7	89.3	56	11.4	88.6	35	25.0	75.0	12
Fixed-term tenancies with a duration of 5 years	4.0	96.0	50	6.9	93.1	58	11.4	88.6	35	15.4	84.6	13
Fixed-term tenancies with a duration of more than 5 years	0.0	100.0	50	1.7	98.3	58	3.0	97.0	33	0.0	100.0	13

Source: HOUSINGWEL survey 2023. *The response options “Often” and “Always or almost always”, and “Rarely” and “Never or almost never” have been combined. Option “Don’t know” is omitted from the table.

As indicated by one informant representing a medium-sized local government in the north of Norway, rural municipalities often use SRH to satisfy a broad specter of housing needs:

We have many municipal apartments, but that is partly because we need to provide rented housing to people that come to work in the municipality [...] a large share of our rental housing stock is let out to people that are not “disadvantaged in the housing market”, according to the official definition, but that clearly have housing needs. The private market is unable to deliver. You know, a private rental market does not exist.

Similar views are voiced in the HOUSINGWEL survey. According to one respondent, SRH tenants in the rural municipality she represented were mainly “people without special

needs”. Another respondent stated that “the private rental market is very small. Therefore, it is the municipality that must provide housing, not only to the disadvantaged, but also to refugees, newcomers, temporary workers [...] and others” that are unwilling or cannot afford to buy a home. In our view, the excerpts from the survey and interviews hint at the main reason for the broader role of SRH in rural municipalities. Akin to the situation in other rural areas in the Nordic countries, the fact that property prices in the second-hand market are often lower than building costs means that private capital and prospective homeowners are reluctant to invest heavily in new housing (Eliassen et al., 2020). In this context, municipalities are forced to supplement the private market by providing rented housing to more than just the core target group of Norwegian SRH.

Policy Challenges in Norwegian SRH

In Table 4 we summarize our comparison of the real-life Norwegian SRH sector with the ideal type in a simplified manner that largely omits discretionary exceptions and geographical variation. The table illustrates the many similarities between the two objects of comparison. Below we discuss to what extent the policy challenges we expect to find in “needs-tested and market-based SRH”, as outlined in a previous section of the article, manifest themselves in the Norwegian case. We will mainly focus on SRH in the urban and suburban parts of Norway in this discussion, as SRH in rural municipalities often deviate significantly from the ideal type.

Table 4. Comparing the Ideal Type to Real-life Norwegian SRH

Ideal type: “needs-tested and market-based SRH”	Real-life Norwegian SRH
Market-based housing provision	Yes
For-profit administration	No
Needs-tested housing allocation	Yes
Fixed-term tenancies and periodical eligibility reviews	Yes, but with some exceptions
Market-based rent setting	Yes, but combined with mild rent control & many exceptions
Selective economic support	Yes

Housing Construction and NIMBY Activism

One of the potential challenges of “needs-tested and market-based SRH” is that market-based provision and limited government subsidies may increase the difficulty of building enough units to keep up with the fluctuating housing needs. In the Norwegian case, we have evidence suggesting that this challenge is real, particularly in a context where refugees from the war in Ukraine (2022–) contribute to increasing the competition for scarce SRH resources (Hernes et al., 2023; Osnes & Sørvoll, 2023). One of our interviewees from a medium-sized municipality emphasizes that it is hard to build and adapt the SRH stock to large and shifting needs. “The biggest challenge is that we never really have the housing stock we need, because we experience that needs constantly change. [...] housing provision [...] is really our largest challenge”. Another of the social housing bureaucrats we interviewed stressed that it was difficult to find the capital to invest in new SRH units. Even if old housing units are sold to raise money, local politicians might use the funds to finance a new “city bridge” instead of SRH.

In the HOUSINGWEL survey, nine out of ten respondents answered that there was a need for more SRH units in their municipalities. The respondents particularly highlighted the need for more public rented housing to refugees, households with children, and persons

struggling with addiction, mental health or concurrent substance abuse and mental health disorders. Given these results from the survey, it is possible to question the national government's decision to remove the SRH investment grant from the 2024 budget. A recent evaluation of the grant concludes that it strengthened the municipalities' capacity for long-term planning and was particularly important for the provision of housing to the most vulnerable households, including the homeless. The authors of the evaluation emphasize that the investment grant has been crucial for the local governments' ability to prioritize SRH construction in a world of many rival claims to public investment funds (Oslo Economics & NIBR, 2023). Since the investment grant was phased out as late as January 2024, however, only time will tell, to what extent Norwegian municipalities will be able to build SRH on (almost) purely market-based terms.

In the words of Vassenden and Lie (2013, p. 81), "the Norwegian social housing sector is stigmatized in the broader public, associated with accumulation of social problems in residential areas". Our qualitative and quantitative data reflect that serious social problems are far from universal in Norwegian SRH, nonetheless new public housing projects often face resistance from neighbors anxious about falling property values and the safety of their residential environments (see also Brattbakk & Sørvoll, 2024). Such NIMBY activism reflects the stigma attached to highly needs-tested SRH and is an obstacle to the successful construction of new SRH units in Norwegian cities. In the HOUSINGWEL survey, more than 80 percent of respondents from municipalities with a population exceeding 5000 inhabitants stated that opposition from "neighbors, private businesses and/or associations" to the construction of SRH constituted a challenge to a "high" or to "some" extent. Likewise, NIMBYism and complaints from neighbors was a recurring topic in the qualitative interviews. One informant quipped that "everyone wants us to help people with challenges related to *rus* [alcohol or drug abuse], but nobody wants them as their neighbor".

Residential Environments

In addition to the cultural stigma attached to public housing in a nation of homeowners, there are also some residential environments with a high concentration of SRH that have real challenges related to crime, violence, and other forms of antisocial behavior, especially harmful to children and adolescents (Brattbakk & Reiersen, 2023). Additionally, many of these large public housing projects are in deprived urban areas where neighborhood effects may impact children and youth's social mobility negatively (Brattbakk, 2014). A large majority of municipalities that have more than 5000 inhabitants have problems with "unsafe residential environments characterized by crime and addiction" and "residential environments that are insufficiently suitable for children", according to the HOUSINGWEL survey. Moreover, a majority of municipalities with a population exceeding 20,000 report that violent tenants have become an increasing challenge in recent years. These survey results are arguably connected to the comprehensive deinstitutionalization of care in Norway since the late 1980s (Ellingsæter et al., 2020). For instance, this entails that individuals struggling with serious concurrent substance abuse and mental health disorders are often expected to live in regular SRH. The municipalities must assist and cope with the minority within this group that harm public property, themselves, or their neighbors. In the qualitative interviews, the effect of deinstitutionalization is a prevalent topic. One of the interviewees representing a large city opines that one of the consequences of deinstitutionalization is that there "live very ill people in municipal housing". Other informants stress that the economic and administrative burden related to the most challenging tenants is immense.

Discretionary Allocation

The interviews conducted in 25 municipalities illustrate that social housing bureaucrats engage in complex needs assessments and challenging discretionary practices when allocating housing. Not only must they assess the applicants' individual housing needs on a case-by-case basis, but also compare these needs to the needs of other households on the waiting list, as well as the needs of the tenants whose tenancies are about to expire. There is normally a waiting list, but seniority or time spent on this list does not weigh heavily when homes are allocated. Housing needs trump most other factors. As remarked by one of the social housing bureaucrats interviewed, "it does not really matter when you got on the waiting list, the level of need (*hjelpet behovet*) is what must matter when vacancies" are filled.

In a context of SRH scarcity, a further complicating factor is the matching of tenants with vacant homes and residential environments that correspond to their needs. For instance, most municipalities try to avoid allocating homes to families in areas thought to be unsuitable for children. However, the small size and limited variation in the housing stock generally make it difficult to achieve perfect matches between needs and housing. For example, the desire to house the homeless may lead bureaucrats to allocate housing to individuals in residential environments where they struggle to get along with their neighbors, sometimes to the point where they pose a threat to public safety. Moreover, the structure of the SRH stock influences the time applicants wait in line for housing. All other things being equal, a single-person household stands a better chance of accessing SRH quickly than households with children in a municipality with a low number of family-size apartments (see for instance Jusufović, 2023; Sørvoll, 2023a). Among the respondents to the HOUSINGWEL survey, 73 percent report that the structure of the housing stock influences the distribution of vacant SRH units.

In highly needs-tested SRH, complex needs assessments are repeated every time a tenancy approaches its end point. In Norway, in which three-year fixed-term leases are the norm, such periodic eligibility reviews increase the administrative burden of employees in the SRH sector. According to one of the interviewees from a large municipality, reviewing tenancies every three years is very time consuming and not worth the administrative cost. She therefore advocated switching to a system based on lifetime tenancies.

Tenure Security and Affordability

In a housing sector functioning exactly like the ideal type of "needs-tested and market-based SRH", tenure security and affordability would presumably be very low: market-based rents would have displaced many tenants that did not qualify for selective economic support, and the ideal of temporary "ambulance service" SRH (Stephens, 2019) would be emphasized in municipal housing policy. As noted above, however, Norwegian SRH providers break with at least some of the theoretical precepts and the internal logic of the ideal type, for instance by upholding third-generation rent control, providing some tenants with longer leases, and renewing tenancies frequently. Nonetheless, previous research and recent history suggests that tenure security and affordability is a challenge for at least a sizable proportion of Norwegian SRH tenants. A qualitative study examining the subjective experiences of tenants living in SRH in Oslo indicates that some tenants regard fixed-term tenancies and market-based rents as sources of anxiety, and threats to their tenure security (Sørvoll, 2023b). Given that many tenancies are renewed and relatively few tenants have realistic chances of becoming homeowners, one could plausibly argue that short fixed-term tenancies in the SRH are not worth the costs in terms of administrative burden and insecurity among tenants. On the other hand, the shortage of SRH calls for some caution. In a situation where

refugees, families with children and individuals struggling with substance abuse and mental health disorders are waiting to be housed within a small public housing sector, it may seem foolhardy to strengthen the residential stability of existing tenants without building significantly more SRH.

What is more, it may seem like a paradox that SRH tenants, one of the poorest groups in Norwegian society (see Turner & Aarland, 2023), must pay a monthly rent that is close to the prices in the private market. In the context of large rent increases and rising prices for food, energy, and other essential commodities the economic situation of many low-income tenants got much worse in 2022 and 2023 (Poppe & Kempson, 2023a, 2023b). Housing allowances and social assistance payments may of course have shielded tenants for some of the adverse effects of inflation, but it is still an open question as to what extent the Norwegian welfare state has protected low-income SRH tenants during the housing cost and living expenses crisis of recent years. However, it should be noted that the city council in Oslo boosted affordability in the SRH sector temporarily in 2023, by increasing the municipal housing allowance to a level where it covered 25 percent of the monthly rent of all tenants (Sørvoll & Astrup, 2023).

Concluding Remarks

In this article we have discussed to what degree Norwegian SRH deviates from the ideal type “needs-tested and market-based SRH”. Our answer to this research question is that Norwegian SRH in urban areas matches well with the ideal type, not least since it is generally directed at disadvantaged households that have challenges that go beyond low incomes, and that may struggle to access adequate housing even if they had been given housing allowances or other cash transfers. Nonetheless, geographical variation, urban-rural differences, institutional divergence, and many discretionary exceptions makes it unfounded to speak of a perfect match between empirical reality and theoretical ideal type. In rural areas it is less common for the SRH to resemble the ideal type, as social housing to a larger extent caters to a wide variety of housing needs. Moreover, deviations from the ideal type include long leases for some tenants, frequent tenancy renewals, discretionary exceptions, third-generation rent controls, and administrative procedures straying from profit-maximizing ideals. One of the clearest indications of deviations from the internal logic of the ideal type, is the fact that many local governments report that it is easier to get a tenancy renewal than a new home in the SRH sector. This seems to signal more concern for existing tenants than newcomers, something that does not follow the ideal type’s logic of recurring needs-testing to reallocate SRH resources to disadvantaged households on the waiting list. What is more, unlike the theoretical precepts of the ideal type, tenants are not always downsized to match floor space with standardized needs when children become adults or otherwise leave the family nest. In short, local governments break with the principles of needs-tested and market-based SRH in some cases, whether because of the local housing market context in the rural periphery or concern for the well-being of tenants.

By using an ideal type as a comparative contrast in our discussion, we arguably come closer to understanding both the main features and the complexities of Norwegian SRH. In one sense, our comparative analysis unmasks a rather extreme form of residual social housing, or “a form of temporary assistance to be withdrawn when tenants cease to ‘need’ it” (Stephens, 2019, p. 40). On the other hand, the ideal type also helps us see that the Norwegian case, with its many features that protect the residential stability of existing tenants, is arguably a soft form of “needs-tested and market-based SRH”. Norwegian SRH is

perhaps best described as an extreme model that is implemented moderately and pragmatically on a case-by-case basis.

In the article, we have also pondered to what extent the policy challenges plausibly connected with “needs-tested and market-based social housing” manifest themselves in Norway. We show that policy challenges related to housing construction, NIMBY activism, discretionary allocation, affordability, and tenure security certainly exist. The emphasis on providing housing to those with the greatest needs is probably an asset in the fight against homelessness (Osnes & Sørvoll, 2023), but may also have a price in terms of geographical concentration of disadvantaged groups and limited tenure security for insider tenants. Arguably, some of the challenges discussed above would have been mitigated by implementing a new government SRH investment program. Increased construction of social housing would provide municipalities with more homes to allocate to refugees, households with children, individuals with mental health disorders, and other groups struggling to access housing in the private rental market or owner-occupied sector. New SRH homes would also increase the room for maneuver for bureaucrats looking to match applicants with appropriate homes in a suitable residential area. The government should also consider concentrating SRH investment to the largest cities, as this would help reduce the relatively underfunded social housing policy field in the largest urban areas compared with middle- and small-sized municipalities (Brattbakk et al., 2016). However, a new investment program would require a major policy shift from the Norwegian government – a government that, despite access to black gold from the North Sea, has been reluctant to invest heavily in SRH. Despite a tendency toward greater interest in the rental sector from policy makers in recent years (Meld. St. 13 2023–2024), Norway is still a country where homeownership is strongly promoted by housing and tax policies (Sørvoll et al., 2024).

Acknowledgments

The study was funded by BOVEL (HOUSINGWEL), a research center financed by the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (KDD.). The authors would like to thank Julia Guillou for research assistance, and Hans Christian Sandlie and Maja Flåto for our research collaboration.

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