

# **The Political Ideology of Housing and the Welfare State in Scandinavia 1980-2008: Change, Continuity and Paradoxes.**

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## **Abstract**

How did the political ideology of housing change over the last thirty years in Denmark, Sweden and Norway? In the years from 1980 to 2008 was housing policy portrayed as a part of the universal welfare state in dominant political discourses, or was it described in the language of selective social policy and the market? How did the concepts of the housing market and homeownership change in the main political discourses in Norway, Sweden and Denmark from 1980 to 2008? These are the main questions posed in this paper on the political ideology of housing in Scandinavia in the years of deregulation, privatisation and restructuring. My point of departure is the ideology which arguably dominated the political discourse on housing in Scandinavia the first four decades after the Second World War. I argue that this social democratic ideology, with its distinct conception of welfare policy, the market and home ownership, still was a powerful discursive force from 1980 to 2008. However, in this period a large gap opened up between the Social Democratic Parties universal discourse and the selective and market oriented housing policies of Scandinavian governments.

**Keywords:** Deregulation, Discourse, Housing Policy, Political Ideology, Scandinavia, Welfare State.