

Dilemmas and possibilities of small care enterprises: a mixed-methods case study of the customer choice model in Stockholm

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This paper examines the dilemmas and possibilities of small homecare enterprises in the context of the increasingly popular customer choice model in publicly funded homecare services to older adults in the city of Stockholm. To break the oligopoly of the homecare market, a new law favours the development of such small-sized companies from the idea that it will stimulate competition on the basis of quality and the development of different profiles of the services. But previous studies show that customer choice nevertheless favors economies of scale. Small care enterprises have therefore severe difficulties to survive the strong competition on the Swedish homecare market. Given the fact that the majority of the entrepreneurs behind the small private care enterprises are women, of whom some also are immigrants, this study puts particular emphasis on exploring the conditions and dynamics of women-owned small care enterprises. Quantitative and qualitative methods are combined in a longitudinal case study of small care enterprises in Stockholm, using longitudinal prospective mapping of the companies, analysis of policy documents and interviews with owners and managers.