

CHAPTER 1

QUALITATIVE HOUSING ANALYSIS: A META-FRAMEWORK FOR SYSTEMATIZING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

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Introduction

This chapter, together with those that follow, builds upon the ideas presented in the previous volume in this series (Maginn et al, 2008). There we outlined our vision for a ‘pragmatic renaissance’ in contemporary qualitative research in urban studies. We argued that to survive as an effective and frequently used tool for policy development, a more systematic approach is needed in the way that qualitative-informed applied urban research is conceptualised and undertaken. In opening this volume we build on these initial ideas using housing as a meta-case study to progress the case for a systematic approach to qualitative research methods. We do this to both stimulate broad debate about the ways in which qualitative research in urban/housing scholarship might be of greater use to policy makers and practitioners, as well as to suggest a way forward in realising the ‘pragmatic renaissance’.

At every point in the policy research cycle, co-ordinated and collaborative partnerships are central to generating reliable data or ‘evidence’ to bring about more effective policy and programme development. In this chapter we elaborate upon and refine our meta-framework, the key inter-related ingredients of which included:

- Replication of research across (and within) broadly similar neighbourhoods;
- A core set of common methods to collect particular types of data;
- A core set of common research questions systematically pursued across all neighbourhoods;
- A systematic style of language and notation enabling qualitative research to be more readily understood and accepted by policymakers; and
- Research findings presented in a conceptual (and quite possibly quantitative) format to illustrate relationships and correlations between variables (Maginn et al, 2008: 15).

Our meta-framework lays the foundations for the development of what we called ‘pragmatic’ or ‘evolutionary’ generalisations which resonate with the concept of

‘naturalistic generalizability’ (Stake, 1978; Stake and Trumbull, 1982). Moreover, our approach draws on the principles that underpin a range of systematic research approaches including systematic reviews, meta-ethnography and realist synthesis that have been at the centre of much philosophical, methodological and epistemological debate in recent years (Dixon-Woods et al, 2006; Doyle, 2003; Hammersley, 2005; Oliver et al, 2005; Pawson, 2002; Pawson et al, 2004; Sampson, 2007; Sandelowski, 2007; Thorne et al, 2004). Such discussion has however, been slow to infiltrate the urban/housing studies domain (Atkinson, 2002; Blandy et al, 2003; O’Dwyer, 2004; Wallace et al, 2006).

Hammersley (1992; 2005), despite his criticisms of empirical generalizability (and theoretical inference), has acknowledged that ‘empirical generalisation does provide a sound basis for claims to the general relevance of ethnographic studies in the case of description and explanation’ (p.93). However, for such generalisations to stand up to scrutiny, he considers that this ‘requires ethnographers to make rational decisions about the population to which [a] generalisation is to be made, and to collect and present evidence about the likely typicality of the case(s) they study’ (p.93). Furthermore, he calls for greater collaboration between qualitative and quantitative researchers and co-ordination within ethnographic research projects. Hammersley (2005) ‘accepts’ that ‘research has an important role to play in providing information for policymaking and practice’ (p.87) and that it can assist policymakers in relation to how policies have been implemented and their impacts on targeted groups. In relation to evidence-based policy making or EBPM, which we discuss in detail later in the chapter, he remains somewhat sceptical, as do we, about the oft declared absolutism ascribed to EBPM, particularly evident in political rhetoric. Hammersley notes that all decisions by policymakers ultimately rely on a blend of evidence *and* judgement. Policy determinations, no matter how well informed by evidence, must be tempered by the reality that ‘no evidence is infallible’. Contradictory evidence may be presented and its generalisability, in statistical probability terms, is problematic in complex and dynamic social settings such as schools or housing estates. Ultimately, policymakers must draw upon their ‘experience and background knowledge’ (p.88) in assessing the evidence and making a final decision. All of this says nothing about the influence of politics, nor the pressure that this brings to bear on so-called ‘techno-rational’ policymakers and the ways in which the decision making process might be compromised, together with the credibility of EBPM.

The complexities that underpin the use of EBPM in the policy research process as a way of addressing social problems, are recognised and confronted by realist synthesis (Pawson, 2002; Pawson et al, 2004). Realist synthesis is part of the broad spectrum of systematic review approaches to EBPM. It lies at the progressive end of this spectrum in that it seeks to unravel ‘what works’ *and* ‘what doesn’t work’ in policy interventions. Other forms of systematic review place greater emphasis (and sometimes, exclusive) on championing what works and identifying the causes of success. Realist synthesis takes a more comprehensive and longitudinal view through a process of iteratively ‘building up a picture of how various combinations of such contexts and circumstance [i.e. theories that underlie social interventions, individuals, interpersonal relationships, institutions and infrastructures] can amplify or mute the fidelity of the intervention theory’ (Pawson et al, 2004: iii). This resonates with what we mean by evolutionary generalisations. Indeed, the systematisation of qualitative research we have in mind mimics the logic of realist synthesis.

We believe that in an evidenced based policy world, such a systematic approach will ensure that qualitative researchers engage strategically in the debates that matter. If we want our work to be one of the foundational building blocks of contemporary policy development, then strategic collaboration and a shared way of working offer a productive way forward. Before detailing our systematic approach it is important to sketch out some of the key challenges that must be understood and overcome: the challenge of understanding the nature of the housing problem; the challenge of scale and extent of the housing problem; and the challenge of EBPM in general and for housing specifically.

The Challenge of Housing

A house is a machine for living in.
(Le Corbusier)

We shape our dwellings, and afterwards our dwellings shape us.
(Winston Churchill)

Any woman who understands the problems of running a home will be nearer to understanding the problems of running a country.
(Margaret Thatcher)

The above ideas of what constitutes a house and/or a home point to different but overlapping *interpretations* of the nature, function and purpose of this significant domestic space. They also suggest the existence and potential of the ‘housing problem’.

Le Corbusier portrays the house/home in a highly functional and utilitarian light; a unit of production that once ‘consumed’ (i.e. lived in) falls under the dominion of its inhabitants. Does this mean that there is no room for the machine to have any reciprocal dominion over its inhabitant/s? And what happens to the ageing machine over time? What are the implications for the cost and value of maintaining, repairing and/or replacing existing machines/housing and increasing/decreasing the overall supply and range of new products?

Churchill acknowledges the complex and dynamic character of the housing system by suggesting that a deep symbiotic relationship prevails between humans and their houses/homes. This relationship is profound, so much so that it has woven itself into the fabric of society. A house is much more than just a physical structure situated on a piece of land – it is a home – and as such, constitutes a ‘core institution of modern British [Australian and American] society’ (Saunders, 1990: 263; also see Perkins et al in this volume). Accordingly, housing and those who inhabit it, is endogenously and exogenously inscribed with all manner of symbolic meanings which project the overall idea(l) that the home is a space of ontological (in)security (Saunders, 1990; Mallett, 2004; Dupuis and Thorns, 1998). Public housing stock, estates and tenants, for example, have come to be stigmatized as the tenure of last resort – dumping grounds for the marginalised or socially excluded who supposedly exhibit high levels of anti-social behaviour (Jacobs and Arthurson, 2003; Palmer et al, 2004; Murie, 1997). Similarly, the symbolic messages evoked by gated communities and inner-city neighbourhoods undergoing gentrification reinforce old notions of class, community, segregation and territoriality. In a post 9/11 world obsessed with securitisation these emerging patterns of urbanisation take on an increasingly sinister tone (Blakely and Snyder, 1997; Atkinson and Flint, 2004, Atkinson and Bridge, 2005). Interesting philosophical, methodological and policy questions emerge in relation to how to deal with the ever complex housing problem.

The final quote by Margaret Thatcher resonates strongly with Saunders’ (1990) simplistic theoretical inference that ‘[e]ach household is in [a] sense a ‘society in

miniature' with its own system of authority, its own mode of production and its own traditions and way of life' (p.266). Both Thatcher and Saunders suggest, explicitly and implicitly, that the housing problem is fraught with a variety of management, social, cultural, economic and political challenges. Interestingly, in (qualitative) methodological terms Thatcher's quote resembles a conclusion that would not be out of place in an (auto-)ethnographic analysis of her role as Prime Minister and (dutiful) housewife. Moreover, she infers some generalisations, albeit somewhat crude and in the context of political rhetoric. First, a home and the national economy are broadly identical systems, thus echoing Saunders claim, but operating at different scales. Thatcher also evokes a double-edged 'generalised' notion about women and men. On the one hand, she suggests that women are more knowledgeable than men when it comes to running things. And, on the other hand, this knowledge is a product of the fact that a woman's place is the home – oft seen as a subjugating and powerless place (see Saunders and Williams, 1988; Darke, 1994)!

All up these differing interpretations of housing/home illuminate the 'housing problem' as a complex function of both *quantitative* and *qualitative* factors. Accordingly, to better understand and address the housing problem, it is clear that policymakers need to employ a mix of both quantitative *and* qualitative research methods.

The Challenge of Scale and Extent

Forster (2004) has noted that 'Australia's cities are, above all, residential environments' (p.78). This maxim arguably applies to all major metropolitan areas in both developed and developing nations. As urban/housing economists are fond of reminding us 'the housing stock is heterogeneous, with dwellings that differ in size, age, style, interior, features, utilities and location' (O'Sullivan, 2007: 283). Such heterogeneity, combined with the multitude of policy domains and structural forces that impinge upon housing, underscore the complex and dynamic nature of the various problems that bedevil the housing system. Despite this complexity and dynamism, policymakers (and other stakeholders) have sought to (re)solve the 'housing problem' since its emergence as a public health issue in the mid 1800s (Malpass and Murie, 1990). They have approached this in different ways, to varying degrees and through the use of different mechanisms that reflect different ideological positions.

In its simplest terms the ‘housing problem’, historically and contemporaneously, has revolved around three basic inter-related factors – *quantity*, *quality* and *accessibility*. The nature of these has meant that the housing problem has tended to be viewed through a predominantly quantitative lens. In turn this has placed an emphasis on the *scale* and *extent* of: (i) the mismatch between demand and supply of housing (i.e. quantity); (ii) the proportion of the housing stock deemed to be sub-standard, unfit or inhabitable (i.e. quality); and (iii) the (un)affordability and socio-spatial costs/benefits of housing (i.e. (in)accessibility). These inter-related factors have far reaching positive and negative ‘spill-over effects’ depending on whether people live in ‘good’ or ‘bad’ housing and by extension, estates, neighbourhoods or suburbs (Maclennan and More, 1999: 17). In short, housing may be viewed as the fulcrum around which a myriad of other policy questions and problems relating to individual and household health (mental and physical), education, employment, and social inclusion/exclusion stem.

Given the basic components of the housing problem, housing questions tend to be framed by policymakers, researchers and the general public in terms of *scale* and/or *extent*. In simple terms this translates into the following type of questions. What is projected population/household growth and demand for new housing by Year *X*? How much public/social housing and/or private housing will need to be provided to meet this projected demand? How many homeless people/households are living on/in (i) the streets, and/or (ii) temporary/emergency accommodation? What is the demographic profile of the street and mainstream homeless population? How many households are in housing stress (i.e. paying 30 percent or more of their income on housing costs)? How many defaults/foreclosures have there been due to the sub-prime mortgage crisis? How many owner-occupiers are in negative equity as a result of increasing interest rates and economic recession? What proportion of the housing stock is deemed to be sub-standard, unfit or inhabitable? Invariably, these questions lead to two bottom line quantitatively-framed policy queries: First, how much will it cost government/taxpayers to ‘fix’ the housing affordability, homeless or disrepair crisis? And second, how long will it take to fix the problems?

Let us assume for a moment that an ideal policy world exists, a world where policy commitment, public expenditure and other forms of government regulation (i.e. planning and environmental policy) are unproblematic. Such a world would enable governments, construction time lags aside, to readily and quickly roll out a programme

to increase the supply of housing. This undertaking would clearly have the *potential* to make significant gains in resolving the housing problem. Indeed, such a strategy may well result in a reduction in the number/proportion of homeless people or unfit housing stock. Further, there may be an increase in the supply of affordable housing, providing additional entry-level home buyers with an opportunity to get a foot on the housing ladder. Such a supply-driven programme, is however, unlikely to have a universal impact across all target groups afflicted by the various housing problems outlined above, even those that are a matter of simply increasing supply. This should not be read as a fatalistic comment on the efficacy of housing policy *per se*. Rather, it should be interpreted, to steal a phrase from Pawson and Tilley (1997), as a ‘realistic evaluation’ of the complex nature of the housing problem, the social world and the inherent limitations of any policy. In other words, the housing problem is more than just a numbers game. As Gaber and Gaber (2007: 2) have recently noted:

The large-scale public housing projects built in the 1950s and 1960s are classic examples [of the old adage of pay now or pay later]. Professionals now widely recognise that these projects were a bad idea. However, at the time, quantitative planning research pointed towards high rates of poverty and the high cost of housing. The housing projects were seen as the *solution* (emphasis added): move thousands of low-income residents into huge, high density residential facilities that can accommodate thousands of individuals (but which, as we know now, show little consideration for basic community life needs).

Identifying the scale and extent of housing problems, and responding by increasing the supply of, and accessibility to housing to meet general needs and demands, are important aspects of the housing policy process. But this is only part of the solution. Policymakers have to recognise the *contextual* and *cultural* underpinnings of the housing problem in order to address specific issues at the heart of the housing problem – issues such as homelessness, affordability and the importance of what home *means* to individuals and households – issues that are at the centre of this book. Understanding the underlying context and culture of housing problems is vitally important given their socio-cultural significance, cross-cutting policy centrality, and quantitative and qualitative character. Ethnographic and related research typologies endeavour to get ‘under the skin’ of social phenomena. In this book we advocate ‘lifting the roof’ off housing problems through the use of qualitative research to expose their interior design and milieu (see Franklin, 1990 and Chapter 12 in this volume).

The Challenge of Evidence-Based Policy

For many policymakers, academics and students of public policy, the rise of evidence-based policy making (EBPM) since the late 1990s represents a kind of ‘McDonaldization’ of the policy research process. EBPM franchisees seem to have set up shop along the corridors of power in Whitehall (London, UK), Capitol Hill (Washington DC, USA) and most recently Parliament House (Canberra, Australia). Put simply, EBPM essentially advocates the use of standardised and scientized research approaches such as (quasi-)experimentation, random controlled trials (RCTs) and systematic reviews which are (supposedly) capable of generating *hard* evidence that has the power to identify the *causes* and *generalizability* of policy problems and, more importantly the relative effectiveness of different interventions. EBPM derives its philosophical, epistemological and methodological inspirations from the natural and physical sciences, especially medicine, which are underscored by beliefs and commitments to notions of objectivity and the existence of universal laws (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). EBPM, when used in policy analysis research, lays claim to being fundamentally concerned with identifying ‘what works’. As Nutley (2003: 3) has noted in relation to experience in the UK:

When setting out the government’s modernising agenda, Tony Blair declared that ‘what counts is what works’. This was intended to signal the end of ideologically-driven politics and herald a new age, where policy making would be driven by evidence (particularly research evidence) of what was proven to be effective in addressing social problems and achieving desired outcomes.

When Tony Blair proclaimed his intention to ‘depoliticise’ the policy-making process, and initiate a new agenda in urban and housing policy, as well as other policy arenas, a collective ‘hooray’ could be heard across the UK housing/urban studies research community for two inter-related reasons. First, the new policy agenda, with social exclusion/inclusion at its heart, witnessed the setting up of a raft of area-based pathfinder programmes and initiatives. These ranged from urban regeneration (National Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and New Deal for Communities) to health (Health Action Zones), education (Education Action Zones), employment (Step Up) and crime (Safer Communities Initiative). They reflected, initially at least, an administration genuinely interested in, and committed to tackling social problems after 18 years of Conservative Party led governments. And second, this new policy agenda, which had an evidence-based mantra at its heart, indicated that the government would have to

increase expenditure in policy research and evaluation of its various programmes (Lawless, 2007; NRU/ODPM, 2005; ODPM, 2002, 2004).

As New Labour settled into office and rolled out its evidence-based policy agenda, debates about what counted as evidence and what methodologies were appropriate for collecting and analysing the ‘right’ kinds of evidence quickly emerged (Davies et al, 2000; Davies, 2004; Kushner, 2005; Sanderson, 2002; Wells, 2007). As Glasby et al (2007: 325) have noted:

...how could anyone claim that [public] services should not be based on what we know to work? However, as argued [previously], the call for evidence-based policy and practice is essentially a statement of dilemma rather than a positive blueprint for a way forward... Thus, what constitutes valid evidence? Who decides? Do certain types of evidence seem to be treated as more legitimate than others? What happens when evidence is fragmented or even contradictory? How much evidence does there need to be before we can confidently develop and roll out a particular policy? [...] ...evidence-based practice [is] too dominated by formal (often medical) research and by traditional research hierarchies, which prioritise quantitative research (particularly systematic reviews and randomised controlled trials).

Similar debate has raged in the US. The form of evidence-based research espoused by the Bush administration is epitomised in the *No Child Left Behind Act* 2001, which privileges evidence generated by experimentation and randomised controlled trials (RCTs) (Torrance, 2008; Howe, 2004). This has led to critics branding the US government’s approach as ‘methodological fundamentalism’ given that it denies a proper and full role for qualitative research approaches (Lincoln and Canella, 2004). Traces of methodological fundamentalism have also been found in the UK. Some British commentators argue that suspicion about the efficacy of qualitative research can be found in a key government report, *Quality in Qualitative Evaluation: A Framework for Assessing Research Evidence* (Spencer et al, 2003). Torrance (2004), for example, argues that this *Framework* has the potential to undermine academic freedom. His concern is shared by Kushner (2005) who notes the *Framework* ‘places on government an unreasonable responsibility to manage and guarantee the independence of an evaluation’ (p.116). While Tony Blair’s claim of de-politicising policy research may have been laudable, it was naïve of him to think that such an aim could be realised. As any student of public policy knows all policymaking is an inherently political activity (Hogwood and Gunn, 1984, Ham and Hill, 1993); this is particularly true of housing

policy which has been used in various ways to elicit political support at the local and national level (Malpass, 2005).

Evidence-based policy has not yet been taken up with the same gusto in Australia, although Marston and Watts (2003) noted several years ago that Australian ‘policymakers working in both the community and government sectors are increasingly using the language of evidence-based policy’ (p. 148). It now seems likely that this will be ramped up given the recent change of federal government and the fact that the new Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, has declared himself an advocate of EBPM.

I’m a Labor moderniser. Always have been, always will be and what that’s on about is good evidence based policy in terms of producing the best outcomes for this nation, carving out its future in a pretty uncertain century where things are fundamentally changing. (ABC Lateline, 2007)

If EBPM is taken up by the current Australian government and urban/housing policy issues put back on the federal policy agenda, then this is likely to provoke another collective ‘hooray’ from urban/housing researchers. Acceptance of the ‘evidence’ in the recent Senate Select Committee on Affordable Housing Report (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008), by both the Prime Minister and Minister for Housing, may well herald the commencement of a new EBPM focussed era in Australian housing policy and research. However, the ‘hooray’ may be seriously tempered if ‘evidence’ is only perceived to be ‘reliable’ when derived quantitatively. As O’Dwyer (2004) has noted in a critical review of EBPM and its potential implications for Australian housing policy:

The diversity of methods used to produce evidence in the social sciences, particularly those used by qualitative researchers, means that some bodies of evidence will be unfamiliar to public policy makers, and many dismissed. Those types of evidence most easily understood or familiar tend to be favoured (which usually means quantitative) (p.15). [...] The insistence on data derived from randomized controlled trials in medicine has had the effect of devaluing qualitative research and evidence. There is a need for qualitative evidence to be summarized and synthesized with the same degree of rigor as randomized controlled trials to counter this perception. Moreover, both quantitative and qualitative research and data are usually required for the highest quality of evidence in public policy (Davies 2000 p. 292) (p.16).

We believe that EBPM is likely to persist globally, and given the Australian Prime Minister’s position on EBPM, its take-up looks certain for our nation. It is our hope that the politicians and senior policymakers responsible for devising the principles for

applied policy research and evaluation in an EBPM context will recognise and accept the valuable contribution that all forms of research – *both* quantitative and qualitative – bring to our understanding and more efficient and effective resolution of complex housing/urban problems. This volume, together with our previous book, represent an attempt to alert policymakers and other researchers (quantitative and qualitative) of this fact.

We are also of a mind that if qualitative research(ers) were to boycott or reject EBPM this would be tantamount to reverse methodological fundamentalism. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 6-7) have shown, qualitative research is renowned for its methodological, theoretical and epistemological eclecticism and openness.

Qualitative research, as a set of interpretive activities, privileges no single methodological practice over another. As a site of discussion, or discourse, qualitative research is difficult to define clearly. It has no theory or paradigm that is distinctly its own. [...] multiple theoretical paradigms claim use of qualitative research methods and strategies, from constructivist to cultural studies, feminism, Marxism, and ethnic models of study. Qualitative research is used in many separate disciplines, as we will discuss below. It does not belong to a single discipline. Nor does qualitative research have a distinct set of methods or practices that are entirely its own. Qualitative researchers use semiotics, narrative, content, discourse, archival and phonemic analysis, even statistics, tables, graphs, and numbers.

Accordingly, qualitative research is constantly evolving and diversifying in response to the challenge of understanding equally dynamic social phenomena through different lenses. For some, however, this trait might suggest that qualitative research(ers) is/are fractured. This would be wrong since quantitative research(ers) also use a range of methods to analyse particular phenomena in order to understand their complexity. Whilst qualitative research may not privilege one approach over the other, its historical evolution shows that different methodological and epistemological paradigms have come to periodically dominate the landscape. This is captured in Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) so-called eight moments in qualitative research. The current backlash towards 'scientifically conservative' and 'quality controlled' EBPM in the US and UK respectively is understandable and a position that we generally support. Hence, there is a need to engage and convince such policymakers of the power of interpretivism in its own right as a source of 'valid' evidence to be considered within EBPM.

At the same time however, we are of the view that there is merit in qualitative urban/housing studies scholars engaging with EBPM in a more systematic manner. We propose a framework, outlined at the beginning of this chapter, that has the potential to develop what we term ‘pragmatic/evolutionary generalisations’. This call to adopt a more systematic approach might be viewed by some readers as positivistic, an ‘exaggeration’ or anathema in the context of qualitative research (Hammersley, 1992). The systematisation we propose is not designed to exclude or eradicate basic/traditional or critical forms of qualitative research. In fact, our approach sees all forms of qualitative research playing a crucial role in enhancing our understanding of social problems, enabling the development of effective policy resolutions. What we are suggesting is that an element of strategic and operational co-ordination and ‘standardisation’ be introduced, to varying degrees, across and within basic/traditional, critical and applied forms of qualitative research conducted in applied and academic research domains. We now turn to the arguments for this approach, as well as the specifics of our proposal.

A Meta-Framework for Systematic Qualitative Research

Our meta-framework bears many of the hallmarks of the principles, design, and logic of pre-existing (qualitative) systematic research practices. These include: (i) the literature review, (ii) systematic reviews, (iii) meta-ethnography/synthesis and (iv) realist synthesis. In summary, our framework is a simplified cross-pollination of these various approaches with realist synthesis being the dominant research genre. A key challenge for systematic review practices is synthesising ontologically, epistemologically and methodologically inconsistent evidence from across previously conducted research (Wallace et al, 2006). Hence, we make a call for some practical methodological *harmonisation* and *standardisation* across and within different qualitative methods that would be informed by greater *co-ordination* between policy research stakeholders for future research.

One of the major dilemmas for systematic reviews beyond research conducted under experimental or RCT conditions is that whilst it seeks to synthesise the outcomes of broadly similar past research, each project tends to differ somewhat in terms of the specific research questions guiding observations or semi-structured interviews and/or focus groups. So whilst systematic reviews may be comparing ‘apples with apples’ the apples often differ somewhat in terms of their colour (red –v– green –v– yellow) and,

more importantly their varieties (Red Delicious, Gala, Fuji, and Braeburn [reds] –v– Granny Smith, Grenadier, Pippin and Newton [greens] –v– Golden Delicious, Golden Russet, Golden Earl and Maidens Blush [yellows]). Understanding such subtle differences is important in terms of establishing the overall ‘best’ and ‘worse’ possible use (e.g. snacking, cooking or drinking) for each specific variety of apple. This analogy seeks to highlight the underlying complexity to policy problems and interventions. As Pawson et al (2004: iv) note:

In short, social interventions are complex systems thrust amidst complex systems. Attempts to measure ‘whether they work’ using the conventional armoury of the systematic reviewer will always end up with the homogenised answer ‘to some extent’ and ‘sometimes’, but this is of little use to policy makers or practitioners because it provides no clue as to why the interventions sometimes work and sometimes don’t, or in what circumstances or conditions they are more or less likely to work, or what can be done to maximise their chances of success and minimise the risk of failure.

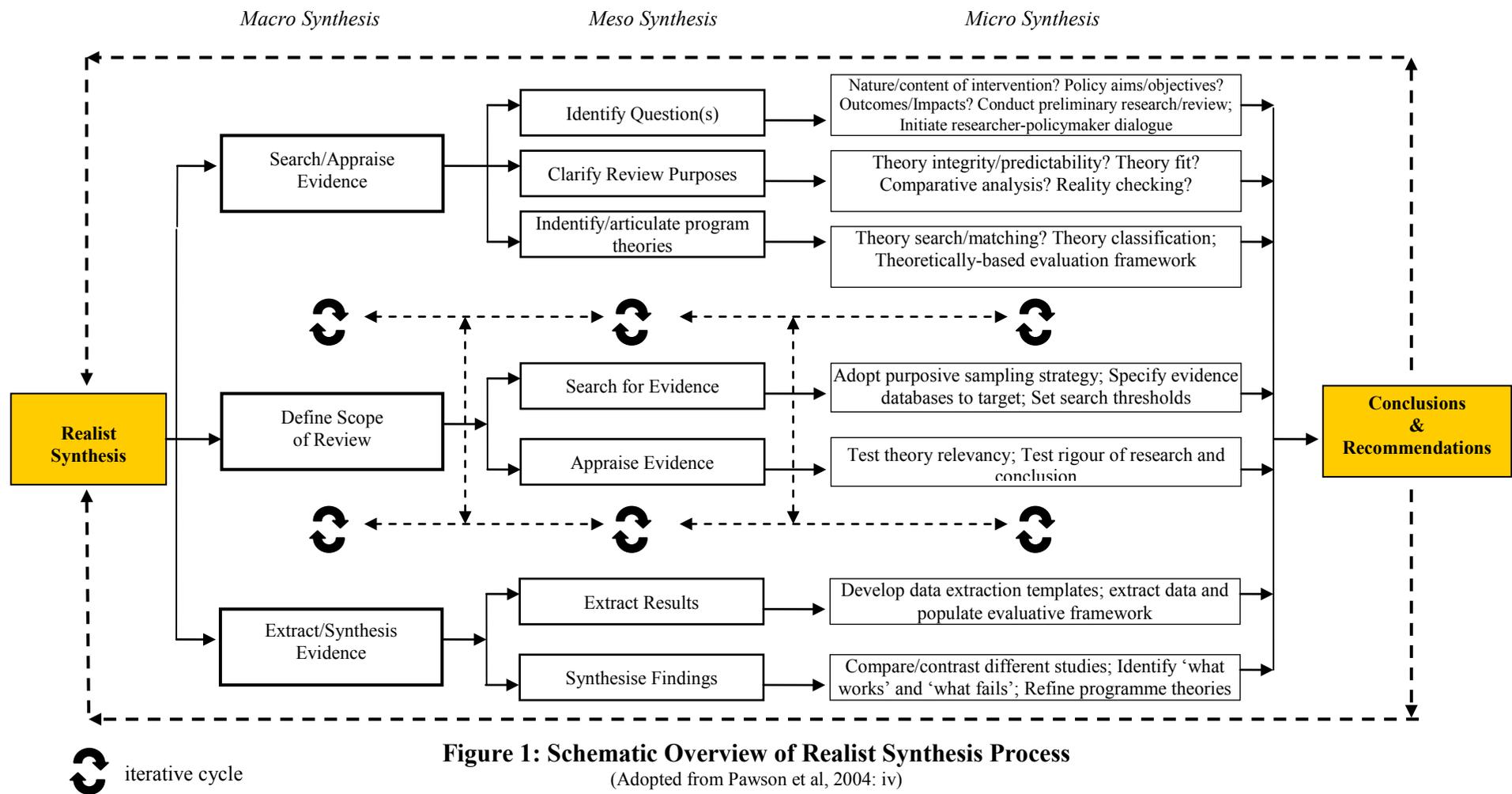
Understanding Complexity

Complexity then is all about understanding the dynamics of context and culture. Realist synthesis offers a way forward. It makes sense of complexity through how it conceives and processes notions of causation, ontology and generalisability – the so-called three logics that underpin EBPM (Pawson, 2002). In relation to causality, realist synthesis adopts a ‘generative approach’ (p.342). For Pawson it is not programme interventions *per se* that bring about success or otherwise, but the underlying reasons/resources they offer different target groups who are themselves endowed with varying underlying capacities and abilities to take advantage (or otherwise) of any intervention. Hence, what matters is the *context* surrounding the intervention and the *culture* across and within any group subject to an intervention. This leads Pawson to state that the ‘vital ingredients of programme *ontology* are thus its ‘generative mechanisms’ (p.342). For EBPM generalisability is of fundamental importance. Traditionally, generalisability in EBPM, which takes its cue from statistical probability, has been interpreted to mean the most successful intervention. Realist synthesis, however, because it is sensitive to complexity, context and culture, offers ‘a tailored, ‘transferable theory’ of what works and what doesn’t work for different groups under different scenarios’ (Pawson, 2002: 342).

It is important to stress that within realist synthesis policy or programme interventions are not viewed as something concrete *per se*. Instead, interventions are ‘theories

incarnate', conceived in the minds of policymakers (Pawson, 2002), and underscored by knowledge claims (i.e. hypotheses) that state that certain outcomes will materialise if certain courses of action are followed (Pawson et al, 2004: 4). Realist synthesis therefore seeks to test–fine tune–retest–fine tune theories/interventions through an ongoing iterative process of systematically collecting and analysing evidence. Figure 1, adopted from Pawson et al's (2004) realist template for systematic review, seeks to capture the overall dynamic nature of the realist synthesis process. As can be seen, the process involves three broad phases of synthesis. We have labelled these 'macro', 'meso' and 'micro' to reflect the realist synthesis approach to understanding complexity, context and culture. The inclusion of 'iterative cycles' (the circular arrows) and the feedback loop (the thick hashed line) represent the 'generative approach' of realist synthesis in overall terms and within each phase of the synthesis process.

The complexity of the realist synthesis process itself, as depicted in Figure 1, clearly indicates that in practice the approach is time-consuming and costly, which probably explains why it is rarely used (Wallace et al, 2006). The likelihood of this approach being utilised within housing studies in the foreseeable future is doubtful as government policymakers (and housing researchers) appear reluctant – methodologically and financially – to commit to this systematic review (Maclennan and More, 1999; Wallace et al, 2006). Housing research does not command the levels of funding that go to medical research, where systematic reviews are common practice. The technical and political hurdles inhibiting realist synthesis taking root in the real world therefore stifles the prospect of enhancing how policymakers make sense of, and improve the interventions they use to tackle different problems – problems that are generally framed through a predominantly quantitative lens. Our meta-framework addresses some of these hurdles by calling for a degree of collaboration, harmonisation and standardisation within qualitative research.



Foundations for a Pragmatic/Evolutionary Systematic Approach

As far as EBPM policymakers are concerned, qualitative research is seen to suffer from three key overlapping broad dilemmas: *co-ordination*, *harmonisation* and *standardisation* across and/or within methods. The framework that we propose speaks to these concerns, providing suggestions to address and overcome them.

As noted earlier, qualitative research has often been viewed as a fractured paradigm given the multitude of methods it espouses to explore social phenomena. Relatedly, there is a lingering bias amongst (some) policymakers about the rigour, reliability and generalisability of findings from qualitative research when compared to those resulting from quantitative methods. This is reflected, for example, in the introduction of quality (control) frameworks for qualitative research conducted as part of government funded inquiry (Bryman et al, 2007; Kushner, 2005; Spencer et al, 2003; Torrance, 2008). If conducted poorly, *all* research, be it qualitative or quantitative, warrants being labelled lacking rigour and unreliable. But in and of itself, well executed qualitative research stands up to the most demanding tests of rigour and reliability. And while qualitative work may not be able to produce statistically significant generalisations, it can generate other forms of generalisations such as ‘naturalistic generalisations’ (Stake and Trumbull, 1982; Ruddin, 2006), analytical generalisations (Yin, 1994; Flyvberg, 2006) and empirical generalisations/theoretical inferences (Hammersley, 1992). Policymakers need to be made much more aware of the potential of these types of generalisations, particularly within the context of complex policy problems such as we find in housing and urban renewal.

Other criticisms levelled at qualitative research (particularly by policymakers) include the cost and time it takes to conduct and produce results. For sure, qualitative research may not satisfy policymakers’ and politicians’ contemporary craving for the ‘quick fix’ and ‘one-size-fits-all’ solutions to social problems. Here we are reminded of Gaber and Gaber’s (2007) caution that policymakers can ‘pay now or pay later’ for decisions made in haste to demonstrate action. Such expediency may be very costly, financially and politically, in the long run, given that the complexity of the social world demands a much more considered, systematic and contextual analysis. Similarly, qualitative researchers need to appreciate the contexts in which policymakers are situated. Thus we have the first step of our framework – a call for greater and more genuine forms of

co-ordination and collaboration that will enhance mutual learning between researchers and policymakers. Moves in this direction are already under way within national research programmes administered by bodies such as the UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), and the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI). Such momentum is to be welcomed and will hopefully see the evolution of innovative forms of dialogue and enhancements of sense-making, not just between researchers and policymakers, but also amongst research participants (Torrance, 2008). An emerging example of this in Australia is the recently established National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF) which seeks to be a 'national interdisciplinary effort to help government, industry and community decision makers manage the risks from the potential impacts of climate change' (Department of Climate Change, n.d.).

The high level of co-ordination and collaboration envisaged within the NCCARF when its various inter-related research nodes (of which there are eight) are set up in 2009 also provides an opportunity for the establishment of a centralised research depository for new (and completed) research. The proposed governance structure and research ethos of the NCCARF has the potential to streamline the research synthesis process at the macro and meso level as outlined above in Figure 1.

One of the major challenges facing systematic reviews is how to sift through, select and then synthesise the eclectic array of data generated from already completed qualitative research projects. The process of arriving at the 'right' evidence to synthesise usually involves the application of various tests of methodological quality, appropriateness and focus (Oliver et al, 2005; Thorne et al 2004). We might call such a process 'criteria filtering' or 'synthesis screening'. Arguably, this is necessary in order to avoid evidence overload, as well as ensuring that apples are being directly compared with apples. This leads to the questions of what criteria should be used and who will determine them? Up until now this task has predominantly been assumed by policymakers who, as we have noted, tend to have a 'biased' view of the world due to various contextual factors. Since our meta-framework calls for greater co-ordination and collaboration, the determination of criteria would be achieved through negotiation between all key stakeholders, thereby providing strategic methodological certainty and direction at the three levels of synthesis.

There is a need to introduce a degree of operational methodological certainty for the meso and micro synthesis levels where actual data needs to be collected and processed. We suggest that if synthesis at these levels is to be more streamlined, then relatively clean and orderly evidence is required. In order to generate data of this nature, a degree of harmonisation and standardisation across and within the actual process of collecting and presenting evidence is demanded. A number of strategies to realise this are suggested and as can be seen from the terminology we use, they have positivistic overtones. We acknowledge that this does not sit well with realist synthesis (Pawson et al, 2004) but the style and manner of harmonisation and standardisation that we propose is minimalistic, passive and thus remains sensitised to basic and/or critical forms of qualitative research and its essential interpretivist character. Accordingly, these strategies might be viewed as skin grafts capable of smoothing out some methodological wrinkles when conducting applied qualitative research for the purposes of EBPM.

Replication: The very mention of this term is likely to send a shudder down the spine of many a qualitative researcher given that replication is so immutably a part of (quasi) experimental research. Replication used in this way lays claim to being able to pinpoint the direct causes and effects of problems and interventions. In turn, this provides the impetus for the most effective intervention across the general population, thereby leading to the eradication of the problem. This form of ‘strict’ replication (Tilley, 1996) and generalisability are not what we have in mind. Instead, the form of replication we propose might more accurately be termed *emulation* whereby the aim is to aspire to conduct each successive wave of research in a broadly identical manner. In the event that there are significant deviations or problems in executing successive studies, these should be noted and then critically reflected upon in the next iterative cycle of the research synthesis process so that contingency plans can be devised. The overall aim is to identify the positively and negatively charged patterns in the responses to, and impacts of interventions on different neighbourhoods, groups and communities across case study sites. In the longer term, conducting research in this manner should lead to the development of a sedimentary evidence base, or evidence core, to use a physical geography metaphor, from which coarse evolutionary generalisations can be extracted and/or extrapolated.

Duplication: Realist synthesis talks about the need to utilise purposive sampling in order to avoid evidence overload. We echo this sentiment by calling for the inclusion of *purposive questions* during the data collection phases of qualitative research. In other words, qualitative researchers analysing a particular problem and intervention, say homelessness, should pursue answers to a core set of identical questions. Such questions would frame the type of data sought when undertaking observations. They would be asked directly during interviews, focus groups and even surveys. This approach will facilitate the identification of fine grain evidence within the sedimented evidence core outlined above. These purposive questions, together with the proportion they constitute of all questions asked, would be set by negotiation between all stakeholders thereby providing a sense of operational certainty. Where and when questions are not pursued, or fail to generate any/adequate data, needs to be recorded and scrutinised during the next iterative cycle within the micro synthesis process.

Quantification: Sandelowski (2001) notes that it is pure fallacy to believe that ‘real qualitative researchers do not count’ or ‘cannot count’ (p. 230). Only fundamentalists on both sides of the quantitative-qualitative divide would subscribe to such views. Nevertheless, numbers have tended to be underutilised or inappropriately used in qualitative research (Sandelowski, 2001). When numbers have been used, it has often been done cryptically, without qualification and devoid of any underlying sampling strategy. Hence, it is not uncommon to see and read claims such as the following in qualitative reports: “...‘many’... ...‘a lot’... ...‘a significant number/proportion’...of interviewees indicated that they felt discriminated against”. Whilst there may well be an underlying truth to such claims, in an evidence-based/informed world such claims need to be backed up with hard(er) evidence if they are to meet the test of ‘beyond reasonable doubt’ (Hammersley, 1992). As outlined previously (Maginn et al, 2008) we support methodological pluralism and our meta-framework here calls upon qualitative researchers to embrace traditional forms of quantitative data. These can be generated via surveys, econometric models, GIS predictive modelling or ‘newer’ techniques such as qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) and fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fs QCA) (Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research, 2008). These latter approaches fall under the rubric of systematic qualitative research, but as with our meta-framework and realist synthesis, the intent is to develop in-depth

insights into different cases so as to understand their underlying complexity, whilst also trying to develop some level of generalisation (Rihoux and Lobe, n.d.: 472).

Conceptualisation: In addition to providing policymakers with evidence expressed in a narrative and/or quantitative format as to the nature, scale/extent, causes and generalisability of a social problem and the factors underpinning the success/failure of a policy intervention, there is merit in presenting programme theories and empirical findings in some kind of conceptual or diagrammatic model as per Figure 1. Illustrating theory and research findings in this way can help synthesise, simply and bring to life densely theoretical and empirical writing. Any initial conceptual models devised at the outset would be based on a preliminary synthesis of existing data and used as an empirical and theoretical prop to illustrate:

- the landscape of Problem X at a specific point in time (Xt_0) across various locations ($XL_1; XL_2, XL_3, \dots XL_n$); and
- (ii) the predicted impacts on various groups ($iG_1; iG_2, iG_3, \dots iG_n$) suffering from Problem X as a result of different attributes to Intervention Z ($aZ_1; aZ_2, aZ_3, \dots aZ_n$).

As an intervention unfolds and the research policy process is enacted, the conceptual model would constantly evolve to reflect progress (or regress) from the baseline position. Qualitatively, quantitatively and conceptually plotting the nature, scale, direction and pace of change over time brought about by particular aspects of an intervention helps visualise and, more importantly, strengthens theorisation of the evolutionary pathways of subsequent iterations of Intervention Z .

So Where to From Here?

The four principles of replication, duplication, quantification and conceptualisation form the foundations of our pragmatic/evolutionary systematic approach. Is this a workable way forward for qualitative researchers who want to contribute to policy in an EBPM world? Is this an approach that will enable the strengths of qualitative research – its ability to incorporate complex contextual and cultural social phenomena – to be incorporated into policy in an EBPM environment? Is this a palatable way forward for qualitative researchers? Will it compromise what we do best or will it showcase our flexibility and ensure that we thrive along with the critically important insights that our research has to offer? The future will no doubt reveal answers to these questions. Our

main hope is that what we have proposed here, and what follows in the rest of the book, stimulates debate and helps to strengthen qualitative research – basic, critical and applied - and its vital contribution to our general and policy understanding of complex urban and housing issues.

Structure of the Book

Having opened the book with these bold suggestions for the future direction of qualitative research in housing studies and urban scholarship more broadly, we then present the work of contemporary researchers who provide strong evidence of the efficacy of qualitative research for policy development. Using a methodology underpinned by its own ‘systematic logic’, each author shows how this can be employed in particular types of housing research and in turn, how the outcomes of such activity can be applied to policy development. Critical reflections are offered throughout on the challenges this posed for the researchers and how their learning might be applied to other research questions and situations.

Part 1: Home and Homelessness

The first three chapters (Part 1 of the book) address issues of home and homelessness. Chapter 2 “House and Home: Methodology and Methods for Exploring Meaning and Structure” by New Zealand academics Harvey Perkins, David Thorns and Anne Winstanley admirably sets the scene. Seeped in the massive and ever expanding literature on what house and home *mean*, they argue that the physical site of this everyday space continues to be important, despite some researchers asserting its diminishing role in a mobile social world. Indeed, Perkins, Thorns and Winstanley declare that the centrality of home in people’s lives may well have grown in recent times, and with declining reserves of oil and the urgent need to live in more sustainable ways, localism may well be on the rise. For them, home is a “centrally important local site” which defines internal and external relationship building and which is impacted upon by extern forces. Accordingly, to comprehend the meaning of home it is necessary to understand *both* “the subjective experiences of housing and neighbourhood *and* the social, economic and regulatory forces that influence those experiences”. A qualitative methodology is the most enabling as it permits the researcher “to capture and combine elements of subjective everyday experience and wider structural considerations”.

Drawing from their ongoing study examining the meaning of house and home in Christchurch, New Zealand, Perkins, Thorns and Winstanley substantiate this claim. They explicate their multiple methods which include in-depth interviews with householders and city planners, video and audio recorded house and garden interpretative tours and analyses of real estate advertising and ‘lifestyle’ magazine texts. This approach has enabled the researchers to understand how the sense of home, place and identity is developed, as well as affirming the importance of meaning and structure in interpretations of house and home. The authors detail how they operationalised each method, reflecting on the challenges encountered in encouraging participants to “tell their own stories” and the difficulties of writing up the narratives. This was especially confronting given the multiple themes uncovered by the researchers which influence meanings of house and home.

If we acknowledge ‘home’ as central in individual and collective life, then to be homeless has far reaching ramifications for both those intimately concerned, policy makers and service delivery professionals. Chapters 3 and 4 speak to different aspects of researching homelessness, asserting the utility of qualitative methods in being able to understand the complexities of the condition in ways that are respectful of, and sensitive to those being researched.

Drawing on a wealth of their own experience – a collaboration of practice, research and academic interest in homelessness – Robyn Martin and Nola Kunnen unravel many of the challenges in understanding the meaning of homelessness. More importantly, their chapter provides practical suggestions for sensitively researching those who are homeless in an empowering and inclusive way. Drawing from lessons learned in undertaking applied social research projects that directly and indirectly examined pathways out of homelessness, the authors suggest three key principles and seven specific strategies for inclusive research practice with diverse stakeholder groups (including research participants, staff who deliver and manage services for homeless people, decision-makers, funding bodies and senior management involved in the research). There is a practical set of principles and strategies which can be applied by others undertaking research on homeless or other vulnerable individuals. For Martin and Kunnen inclusive research practices address issues such as power differentials between researchers and stakeholders; the relationships between the stakeholders; ways

in which differences in positioning or agendas can be successfully negotiated within qualitative research projects and the importance of research teams regularly discussing their emerging understandings of the research topic. These are critical issues for *all* researchers and arguably, for all research.

The themes of understanding the complexity of the research process and the ways in which those being researched are treated and valued in that process are illuminated in a different way in chapter 4 by Catherine Robinson. Using the term '*felt homelessness*', to incorporate the bodily and emotional experiences of those who are homeless, Robinson argues that qualitative research methods afford the best opportunity to develop a holistic understanding of homelessness. Specifically she points to reflexivity and empathy, "two of the unique, embodied research tools offered within qualitative research practice", as providing the best way forward to understand the felt-experience of homelessness. In turn this opens up the possibility for a policy response and service focus that is based on *care*. Robinson's methodological approach is also an empowering one for those who are being researched – or as she puts it, "an intervention into their emotional silencing". What follows is a personally moving piece that clearly demonstrates the humanity and relational nature of the research process (in Robinson's terms the "bodily resonance of researcher and researched") and the challenges that this poses for the scholar and ultimately, policy maker and service provider.

Part 2: Researching Complex Housing Needs and Worlds

The next three chapters are grouped under the theme of researching complex housing needs and worlds. These include issues in both developed and developing countries, as well as the housing needs of marginalised groups. In Chapter 5 Graham Martin looks at how qualitative research assists us to better understand the multifaceted nature of gentrification in developed countries. His particular focus is the impact of the regeneration of inner city areas on the original inhabitants from *their* perspectives. This is an issue which is poorly understood when compared to other more positive aspects of gentrification for cities. What do those who remain think of the social, cultural and physical changes to their neighbourhoods and their new neighbours? Drawing from his research in the gentrified area of Notting Hill, west of London, Martin discusses the methodological difficulties in developing a common language around the central concern of the study – that of "neighbourhood change and the identity of place". He

also considers problems in devising and implementing particular methodological approaches (accessing potential interviewees and the interview process) and the analysis of collected data and its representation. This chapter highlights the importance of flexibility in the field, particularly in the face of unexpected outcomes that contradict prevailing academic discourse. The on-going challenge for qualitative researchers in how data is used and represented is Martin's other key concern. The issue here is that of generalisation and how, as Martin puts it (quoting Silverman, 1993), "inferences about wider theoretical and empirical questions might be made from the utterances of individuals". This chapter provides valuable insights for researchers facing similar methodological unease as well as reinforcing the overarching mantra of this book – the criticality of ongoing and honest reflective research practice.

In Chapter 6 Michal Lyons takes the focus to housing issues in developing countries with his discussion on the use of mixed research methods in policy evaluation. His two year study on Sri Lanka's post-tsunami housing policy shows how quantitative and qualitative data can be triangulated in different ways. Further, Lyons demonstrates the value of qualitative methods in contributing to understanding different aspects of policy process and impact – no doubt of value to researchers in *both* developing and developed countries. The focus of this chapter is however, firmly on the use of mixed methods and the questions which inevitably arise when qualitative and quantitative approaches are used together. Lyons draws on his work in Sri Lanka to reflect on the different ways in which mixed methods can be used to evaluate policy. The critical issue is contextual relevance and again, the need to be a reflective researcher throughout the process, responsive to changing situations and unexpected outcomes.

Chapter 7 returns to considering housing issues in developed countries. Delia Lomax uncovers complex issues for researchers working with Gypsy/Travellers in the UK and Europe. These issues have parallels for researching the housing needs of other minority groups, particularly those who have a history of being monitored and controlled by state agencies, and are accordingly suspicious of authority and government figures. Lomax's discussion also raises dilemmas for researchers who are funded by government – not only might those subject of the research be unwilling to participate, but the results of such inquiry may be unpalatable for the funding bodies. In considering the key challenges investigating the housing and accommodation needs of Gypsy/Travellers,

Lomax is particularly interested in developing inclusive research strategies that will maximise participation. Her vision is a collaborative research partnership, where Gypsy/Travellers work as community researchers and in the development of peer-led research.

Part 3: Community and Housing

The final main section of the book turns the spotlight on community and housing issues. Chapter 8 leads off with its discussion of residents' perceptions of environmental quality in their local neighbourhoods. Mags Adams, Gerry Moore, Tim Cox, Ben Croxford, Mohammed Rafae and Stephen Sharples describe an innovative approach which they have developed to understand the role of human senses in shaping urban experiences. Incorporating photo-survey, a soundwalk and one-to-one photo-elicitation interviews, they have been able to incorporate the visual, olfactory and auditory senses of urban residents in order to better communicate perceptions of local environmental quality. Situating their work in the theoretical context of 'sensory urbanism', Adams et al detail their qualitative research methodology, showing how it enabled the city centre residents to articulate different issues and problems encountered inhabiting an inner city area. An evaluation of the approach examines its effectiveness in engaging residents, as well as its usefulness for policy makers responsible for developing inner city areas where multiple activities and uses must co-exist day and night.

Chapter 9 also focuses on resident perspectives with Kathy Arthurson's examination of the role of qualitative research in identifying how social mix is perceived. Policies to create and support socially mixed suburbs are pursued by housing providers and policy makers convinced of its benefits – particularly for disadvantaged residents. However, there are gaps in understanding the outcomes of policies to change social mix, suggesting that the potential benefits may be over-emphasised in pursuit of an ideal and harmonious community. Arthurson shows how qualitative methods can provide a comprehensive understanding of the outcomes of social mix policies to ensure that they are applied from an informed platform. Adherence to a philosophically worthwhile social goal can sometimes blind us to the reality of the outcomes for individuals and communities. What Kathy Arthurson illuminates is the need for researchers and policy makers to be aware of pursuing their own 'hoped-for' results which, when comprehensively assessed, are simply not there.

In Chapter 10, Talja Blokland and Paul Maginn shed light on the largely untapped potential that ethnographic research affords for the development and application of informed housing policy. They are particularly interested in place-related systems of meaning that shape residents' perceptions of housing, their neighbourhoods and their participation *and* non-participation in local decision-making forums. Blokland and Maginn discuss the utility of ethnography for housing studies broadly as a precursor to a detailed foray into two case studies – one from the Netherlands; the other situated in the US. What they show is how ethnographic research produces different knowledges when compared with quantitatively-informed approaches. Specifically, ethnography has the ability to detect the not-so-loud voices in local neighbourhoods and the factors underpinning 'non participation' in decision making forums. This opens up a way forward for policy makers genuinely desirous of hearing all stakeholders in complex and contested situations.

The final chapter in this section is also concerned with citizen participation but its focus is on public housing and the use of grounded theory – a particularly rigorous and systematic qualitative methodological application. In concert with all the contributors to this volume, Dawn Jourdan agrees that understanding housing needs and appropriate policy responses is a complex and contextual process. And while mixed qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches offer a useful lens to derive informed knowledge, Jourdan argues that grounded theory, as developed by Glaser and Strauss, affords a philosophically compatible and methodologically rigorous approach for housing studies. She outlines the specifics of grounded theory before examining how it might be used to facilitate the development of new theory in housing research. Jourdan illustrates her point by drawing on the use of grounded theory to study an intergenerational planning process for the redevelopment of public housing. Her chapter concludes with a discussion of how researchers might bring grounded theory into the mainstream of housing research.

Our book concludes with Adrian Franklin's chapter, "Ethnography and Housing Studies Revisited". Franklin opens his chapter by reflecting on the legacy of the paper he wrote in 1990 which made a strong argument for the use of ethnography in housing studies. In revisiting the work, he finds its direct impact has been minimal despite the

enthusiasm at the time for ethnography's ability to address the shortcomings of positivism in housing research. Franklin's historical review shows that the potential of ethnography has not been realised in housing studies. He posits three reasons as to why this is the case – one to do with methodological (mis)understandings in the way that ethnography has developed; another related to the reluctance of funders to support ethnographic research; and the third to do with the absence of ethnography in policy relevant research. And while these reasons might explain why ethnography has not blossomed in the past, Franklin asserts that they are grounds for reasserting the arguments first put in his 1990 paper. This he does in the final chapter of the book, and in looking at more recent housing scholarship, shares his delight in discovering a rich source of ethnography focusing on home. Franklin's reflections on the importance of true ethnography in understanding 'cultural milieu' in housing provision is ultimately an unsatisfying one. He especially laments the ways in which governments have often focused on quick-fix solutions for housing problems, ignoring the recommendations of researchers, designers and planners to ensure the provision of socially and culturally appropriate housing and neighborhoods. Whether the future will reveal a different trajectory for ethnography remains to be seen – and while researchers may be totally convinced of its efficacy, in an EBPM world the arguments for its use will have to be stronger than ever!

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