Cyclic Functional Collaboration: a scientific approach to housing

by

Sean McNelis
Bachelor of Arts (Hons) (La Trobe)
Bachelor of Theology (Melbourne College of Divinity)
Master of Arts (Swinburne)

A Thesis submitted in total fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2012

The Swinburne Institute for Social Research
Swinburne University of Technology
Melbourne, Australia
... you can have teamwork insofar, first of all, as the fact of reciprocal dependence is understood and appreciated. Not only is that understanding required; one has to be familiar with what is called the acquis, what has been settled, what no one can doubt at the present time. You’re doing a big thing when you can upset that, but you have to know where things stand at the present time, what has already been achieved, to be able to see what is new in its novelty as a consequence. There is a necessity of easy and rapid communication. The point to the university, the research school, the publications, the periodicals, the books, the congresses, is the easy and rapid communication of people working in specialized fields which are reciprocally dependent.

ABSTRACT

The thesis argues that Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing could provide housing researchers with a framework for collaborative creativity that will relate and integrate disparate types of research and present decision-makers with practical advice on future directions for housing.

Housing, as exemplified in the history of Australian social housing, is continually changing and continually presenting decision-makers with a series of problems that need to be resolved, as well as opportunities for future development. Housing research operates across many disciplines. It is characterised by a broad range of methods, epistemological and ontological approaches and purposes. As a result, it is very diverse and very fragmented with researchers having little sense of how different types of research relate to one another. For decision-makers, the problem is how to incorporate this disparate array of research into their decisions.

If housing research is to find solutions to our pressing housing problems and provide practical advice to decision-makers, it must find a solution to its fragmentation, one which will relate and integrate this disparate array of research. The thesis proposes that Cyclic Functional Collaboration (as discovered by Bernard Lonergan, a Canadian methodologist, philosopher, theologian and economist) is a framework which could hold the diversity of housing research together.

Housing research is about asking and answering questions. Very few researchers, however, reflect upon the questions they ask and the type of answer their questions anticipate. Through a phenomenology of housing research the thesis identifies a series of questions. This is complemented by an analysis of research on Australian social housing which identifies different genres whose orientation roughly corresponds with different questions. However, it notes how housing research, operating largely within a common-sense framework, muddles these questions.

The thesis proposes that a scientific approach to housing would distinguish different types of questions and their anticipated answers. It would ask a complete set of eight questions: an empirical question, a theoretical question, a historical question, an evaluative/critical question, a transformative question, a visionary/policy question, a strategic question and a practical question.

These questions are functionally inter-related, they provide a framework for interdisciplinary collaboration and they are ongoing and cyclic, producing cumulative and progressive results.

The thesis sets out a more precise understanding of these questions, their anticipated answers and their relationships.

It concludes by proposing a paradigm shift in our understanding of each genre of housing research.
DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award to the candidate of any other degree or diploma, except where due reference is made in the text. To the best of my knowledge it contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

This text has been edited by David Hudson of the Swinburne Institute for Social Research. The editing: detected and corrected errors and inconsistencies in the text including accepted spelling, punctuation, grammar and usage; ensured accuracy and completeness of references, cross-references and links; and ensured completeness and consistency of format, style and layout. It did not change the substantive content of the thesis.

Sean McNelis
August 2012
PREFACE

For over thirty years, I have been involved in housing management, housing policy and housing research: as a housing manager living on a high-rise public housing estate in Melbourne; as a community development worker managing and developing different types of housing organisations (emergency housing services, housing information and referral services, housing co-operatives and tenant organisations); as a founding member, director and tenant of a small housing co-operative; as a housing policy worker with the Victorian Council of Social Service (the peak community organisation in Victoria), analysing Australian and Victorian government housing policy and in the forefront of community organisations and community housing organisations advocating for better housing policies and developing infrastructure for the newly emerging community housing sector in Australia; as a researcher with Ecumenical Housing, a small but nationally influential community housing organisation that provided social housing and advocated for better housing policy; and, more recently, as a housing researcher at the Swinburne Institute for Social Research (within Swinburne University of Technology).

Seared on my mind through these years of housing work is, on the one hand, the anger, bewilderment, trauma and frustrated hopes of many people seeking but unable to find adequate housing for themselves and their families and, on the other hand, the joy, the freedom, the new hopes, the opening up of new possibilities as others found housing that not only provided shelter but also a place within which they and their families could grow and participate in their local and broader communities.

The consequences of Australia’s housing practices are writ large in the stories of the most vulnerable members of our community. These stories not only witness to the strength of the human spirit, to the value and fragility of human life and to the importance of collaboration for survival, for meaning and for development. They also reveal the inadequacy of the institutions of our society and their failure to respect, protect and support all its members. Those on the margins are deprived of sufficient resources to participate in and influence not just their local environment but also to shape our society. Insofar as current housing practices in Australia contribute to their exploitation, disenfranchisement and alienation, they are an affront to common human decency, to democracy, to the right of each person to a place they feel is their home and to a place where they belong. They are an affront to our common human solidarity and our social responsibility as custodians of the land and of the world’s resources.
It is stories such as these that continue to motivate my housing research (as they do many housing researchers). At the same time, however, I would suggest that it has been the inadequacy of our housing research in the past that has contributed to our current inability to analyse housing situations, to ask the more difficult questions and to think through issues; our failure to provide practical and innovative advice to decision-makers; our bowing to the interests of groups seeking short-term fixes rather than sound long-term solutions. No doubt many housing researchers have done excellent research and proposed good policies, but our common-sense framework for analysis and our often partisan opinions allow decision-makers to dismiss this work too easily as ‘just one point of view’ while their own vested interests remained concealed.

In many ways this thesis is a reflection upon, a critique and an evaluation of my own housing research1 just as much as it is of housing research more generally. It arises out of my dissatisfaction with this research.

The current culture of housing research is founded on everyday common sense, a search for immediate short-term fixes to difficult problems. One sign of this approach is the ever-present question of the usefulness of any research and its practical implications. Over many years I had become increasingly dissatisfied with this style of research. In my view, this dominant and largely unreflective culture is no longer adequate to the task. Already some researchers are aware of this. Of note is Jim Kemeny’s call for theory in housing research, for relating housing to debates in the social sciences and for a greater sense of reflexivity, in particular, by examining the epistemological grounds of what we are doing (among them the questions we pose) (Kemeny 1992: xvii). I would push these further. While the shift to theory is critical, so too is the need for a better understanding of what theory is (King 2009: 51). While we need to relate housing to debates in the social sciences, we also desperately need some way of integrating and relating the disparate array of disciplines (economics, politics, sociology, cultural studies and philosophy) and their various methods

1. This includes: various submissions on Australian and Victorian housing policies (VCOSS 1989, 1990, 1991a, 1991b, 1992, 1993a, 1993b); papers envisaging a future for social housing (McNelis 1992 1993), reviewing performance monitoring (McNelis 1996) and discussing the future of high-rise public housing (McNelis & Reynolds 2001); Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute reports on a private investment vehicle for community housing (McNelis, Hayward & Bisset 2001, 2002a, 2002b), on independent living units for older people with low incomes and low assets (McNelis & Herbert 2003; McNelis 2004); on rental systems (McNelis & Burke 2004; McNelis 2006) and on older persons in public housing (McNelis 2007; McNelis, Neske, Jones et al. 2008); local government housing strategies (Kliger & McNelis 2003a, 2003b; McNelis, Esposito & Neske 2005a; McNelis, Kliger, Burke et al. 2005a; McNelis, Esposito & Neske 2005b; McNelis, Kliger, Burke et al. 2005b; McNelis, Kliger, Burke et al. 2006); papers on housing and disability (McNelis & Nichols 1997; Reynolds, Bigby & McNelis 1999; McNelis, O’Brien, Reynolds et al. 2002) and on asset management (Ecumenical Housing, Property Concept & Management Pty Ltd & Urban Land Corporation 1999).
(qualitative, quantitative, hermeneutical, historical and critical). While we need to acknowledge, put forward and justify the epistemological grounds of what we are doing, we need to do more than just that. We need to find some basis upon which we not only resolve conflicts regarding epistemological grounds but also explain why others put forward contrary epistemological grounds: “If Descartes has imposed upon subsequent philosophers a requirement of rigorous method, Hegel has obliged them not only to account for their own views but also to explain the existence of contrary convictions and opinions” (Lonergan [1957]1992:553).

It seems to me that Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing offers some hope for the future. It is not an approach of my own making. This thesis draws its inspiration from the work of Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984), a Canadian methodologist, philosopher, theologian and economist.

The context of Lonergan’s work was primarily theology and it may seem strange that the writings of a theologian should have any relevance to housing research. Some may view this as taking a little too far Jim Kemeny’s call (1992:11-12) for housing researchers to “return to their parent disciplines and reconceptualize housing according to the theories and concepts prevalent in each area” (King 2009:44). Strange as it may seem, I have come to the conclusion that Lonergan’s insights are not just relevant but extremely important to the future of housing research.

In 2002 when I first began research work in an academic context, I was soon confronted by a vast array of different types of housing research and by the many – and at times acrimonious – debates between different researchers. It seemed to me, however, that these debates were often at cross-purposes because the researchers were doing different things. In reaching this conclusion, I was recalling work by Lonergan on functional specialisation. I had first encountered his writings in the early 1970s and then later on in the early 1980s as part of a Bachelor of Theology. I resolved to undertake some work and did so amid my other responsibilities. I felt, however, that it demanded a more intensive investigation. With housing research primarily oriented towards practical applications, it was a topic well off the beaten track. So, it was only after a long and fruitless search for a way of funding such an investigation that I resorted to undertaking this doctoral dissertation.

While reading Lonergan’s key works, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* and *Method in Theology*, I had found something deeply challenging and attractive. For me Lonergan posed, and continues to pose, a personal challenge, a challenge to authenticity and a challenge to deal with things at a deeper level. As a Catholic
philosopher and theologian of the 20th century, he had cast off the decadent scholasticism he had inherited and began a dialogue between the authentic tradition of Aquinas and contemporary science, mathematics, logic and philosophy. He was not content with simplistic answers. Like the best theologians, he explored the contemporary questions of his day. He understood his faith as consistent with human understanding and reason. He was not simply concerned with method in theology but rather with the unfolding of world process itself in its physical, chemical, biological, psychological, intelligent and religious dimensions. Lonergan was a searcher, not just for an understanding of our world, but for ways in which to make living better for all.

My attraction to Lonergan stems from his critical appreciation of all serious thinkers and from the way in which he dealt with differing viewpoints. He was not content with the way of recognising and tolerating conflicts and differences, nor with the way of forceful and fearful rejection and opposition to alternative views. Such conflicts and differences raised key unresolved questions for him personally. His *modus operandi* was one of integration. He took varying and conflicting viewpoints and reached for a new higher viewpoint, one which integrated the contribution of other viewpoints, and one which sorted out and appreciated their contribution while recognising their limitations.

This thesis is my interpretation of Lonergan’s book *Method in Theology*. However, the thesis is written in the context of housing research, not of theology. Consequently it pivots between my insights into his seminal discovery of functional specialties as elaborated in *Method in Theology* and my insights into the orientation of housing researchers who are embedded within the everyday world of common sense and a particular taken-for-granted research context. My primary purpose in writing this thesis is to communicate to housing researchers a new understanding of science as Cyclic Functional Collaboration (a phrase not used by Lonergan but which captures for me something of his intent). My purpose was not a faithful (and detailed) exegesis of his writings. Rather, I sought to develop his central theme of the dynamic operations of the subject as subject as reflected in the question: what am I doing when I am doing housing research? I would not claim to have adequately interpreted his writings on the functional specialties nor his broader philosophical, theological and economic writings. *Caveat emptor!* (Let the reader beware!) In attempting to communicate Cyclic Functional Collaboration to housing researchers as a new understanding of science, I have had to make decisions about what to include and what to exclude. So, I have deliberately steered away from using Lonergan’s terminology except in some key areas and have not elaborated on some areas which many would regard as central to his work. In my view, to do otherwise would unnecessarily complicate the discussion and
distract the reader from the core issue of what we are doing when we are doing housing research. However, I hope that the Lonergan scholar may forgive such lapses while recognising how I have transposed the key insights of Lonergan into the context of housing research.

As I began more intensive work on functional specialisation some ten years ago, Lonergan pointed me to something beyond my current understanding of science. He proffered an invitation. My beginning was simply a matter of belief that concerted work on Lonergan’s writings would take me into a new world, open up new vistas and new horizons. He, like many scientists, writers, visionaries and social activists, is a prophet pointing to something better. He, like many others, invites us: to become better persons; to take up new challenges; to become cognisant of the injustices we perpetrate and feel the pain of disappointments and sorrows in those around us; to stop and enjoy the moments of laughter and of achievement of ourselves and those around us; to ask new questions and seek new answers; and to love more deeply and intimately. Only after ten years solid work as I ‘retrace my steps’ can I appreciate that I have reached a point where I’m beginning to understand something of what he is offering.

This thesis raises a fundamental question about the current culture of housing research. The thesis is critical of this culture and points to the need for its radical transformation if it is to provide practical and innovative advice to decision-makers. But to get to this conclusion presented a major challenge.

In the process of developing the thesis, I recall four inter-related ‘break-through’ moments. The first was the discovery that an explanation of something (such as housing) grasped the ‘functional relations’ between the relevant, significant and essential elements that constituted this something (such as housing). This grasp left aside those elements that were irrelevant, insignificant and incidental (Melchin 1999, 2003). This understanding contrasted markedly with most social science research, particularly economic research, that I had encountered. Social science research sought explanation of events in the motivations and attitudes of social/economic agents, groups or classes.

In the social sciences, much is made of the distinction between fact and value, between descriptive statements and prescriptive statements, and whether ought-statements can be derived from is-statements. A second break-through moment was the discovery that a theory in the social sciences is a theory of some value or other. Value is to be understood as something worthwhile that is intended (in the
phenomenological sense). It is realised, brought about, created by an individual or a
group through an activity or set of activities or sets of activities. This something
worthwhile intended includes everything created such as health and vitality,
technologies, economic goods and services, political institutions, common meanings
and personal meanings as well as the structures that facilitate and support them that
constitute an economy, a society and a culture. It is these values that need to be
explained and they are explained by reference to the set of activities that constitute or
bring them about. In other words, this is the set of activities and their relations (the
conditions) for the occurrence of this value – this is the set of activities that has to occur
and to occur in certain relations to constitute or bring about this value. It is normative
for the realisation of the value. ²

A third break-through moment was the discovery that a theory answers a what-is-it-
question and that a theory of housing is the set of related elements that are relevant,
significant and essential to the constitution of housing. An explanation is an answer to a
what-is-it-question.

A fourth break-through moment was the discovery that a theory of housing is a set of
related elements which are variable and admit of a range of possibilities. (This explains
why across different countries there are different housing systems.) Further, that what
housing is can be distinguished from how it can be used. Housing has some role,
purpose or function within the constitution of other values. These values are constituted
by their own sets of related variable elements. The role of housing within the
constitution of these other variables may be direct or indirect. Insofar as housing plays
a role in some other value, it has a particular type of hierarchical relationship, a lower
value to a higher value. In this relationship, the higher value cannot be achieved unless
the lower value is achieved. At the same time, the higher value can order or
systematise the particularity of the lower values so the higher value is achieved or
better achieved. Through this distinction (between what housing is and its role or
purpose in the constitution of other things) we can not only explain what constitutes
housing but we can explain an actual operating housing system in terms of (i) a set of

². This break-through moment occurred as a result of my seeking to understand the meaning and
relevance of a comment by Melchin: “The explanandum of economics is ‘value’” (1994:25). It was
further provoked by an article by Sauer (1995) which addressed seven long-standing dichotomies in
social science: fact/value, descriptive/prescriptive, is/ought, positive/normative, ethical neutrality/value
permeation, denotive/normative and cause-effect/means-end.
related variable elements that constitute housing and (ii) a set of other values that order the variable elements in particular ways.3

This thesis, then, involved a slow unfolding series of personal discoveries – personal in two senses. It is through a personal journey of discovery that a thesis – indeed, any research – can make an original contribution to knowledge, a contribution to the history of a discipline or a science, a contribution which is realised through the communication of these discoveries to others. It is by striking out on new paths that individuals have brought about revolutions in science and innovation in everyday living. Both science and society (as constituted by a technology, economy, politics and culture) build upon the discoveries of the past. So too they learn to avoid the mistakes and blind alleys of that past. While I am convinced of the importance of Cyclic Functional Collaboration to the future of housing research and to bringing about a better housing system, whether my personal journey will be a contribution or a blind alley remains to be seen.

And this brings me to another sense of ‘personal’. As a housing researcher enmeshed in a common-sense framework, I found reaching some minimal understanding of each functional specialty a major challenge; I found it very difficult to imagine, to fantasise about something which requires such a fundamental transformation of my thinking and my doing of housing research. The thesis made demands upon both self-understanding and upon decisions I make as to who I will become both as a housing researcher and as person. William Mathews (2005:151) in his intellectual biography of Lonergan notes: “It is important that, at this beginning, we as interpreters try to recognize in ourselves what Lonergan is talking about. Otherwise we will not be able to begin, will fail to gain an entry into his journey and path.” My challenge throughout the long gestation of this thesis stemmed from the great difficulty I faced in grasping who I am and what I was doing. I had to come to some understanding of my practices as a housing researcher, then some understanding of what I was doing when I was evaluating them, and finally some understanding of what I was doing when I decided to implement something new.

There are no certainties as to the success of Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing. Housing research continually faces the problem of the vested interests of researchers, decision-makers, funders, investors, land and building industries, politicians, bureaucrats and others. The scientific approach proposed here includes a process for continually offsetting these vested interests. By confronting them

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3. These last two break-through moments occurred as a result of my seeking to understand ‘what theory is’. Two books by McShane (1970, 1989) were particularly important. The results of these two break-through moments are outlined more fully in Chapter 4.
and by revealing their inconsistencies and limitations, the probabilities of success will be improved. Moreover, this scientific approach will draw upon the resources (and operative solutions) in many different societies, cultures and research traditions, it will sort out their contribution to history, it will provide practical advice to decision-makers and, slowly but cumulatively, it will address the seemingly intractable situations that confront housing today.

After thirty years of involvement in housing management, housing policy and housing research, I still hope for and dream of a better future for households seeking adequate housing. This thesis explores a radical new understanding (and doing) of housing research. In *The Poetics of Space*, the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard wrote:

> Sometimes the house of the future is better built, lighter and larger than all the houses of the past, so that the image of the dream house is opposed to that of the childhood home. Late in life, with indomitable courage, we continue to say that we are going to do what we have not yet done: we are going to build a house. (1969:61)

Through this thesis, I hope to contribute to the building of a new home for housing research. Just as building a home requires co-operation between many different people, housing research requires a global ‘framework for collaborative creativity’ that will continually offset partisan interests, provide practical and innovative advice to decision-makers and bear fruit in a better housing system. I hope that housing researchers will have the courage to leave the ‘childhood home’ of common sense and build the dream home of the future – better built, lighter and larger.

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**Acknowledgements and Thankyous**

My thanks to my supervisors, Professor Terry Burke from the Swinburne Institute for Social Research and Dr Robin Koning from the MCD University of Divinity (United Faculty of Theology). Despite my idiosyncratic ways and, at times, outrageous speculations and conclusions, both were generous in their belief that I was pursuing something worthwhile.

Also a note of thanks to the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) for organising the annual symposium for postgraduate students undertaking theses in housing and to those academics who attended. Their encouragement and at times critical comments provoked further questions and thinking and thus a more refined understanding of the issues. In particular, I would mention Professor Peter Phibbs from the University of Western Sydney, Professor Andrew Jones from the University of
Queensland and Professor Kath Hulse from the Swinburne Institute for Social Research.

Over the course of the past four years, I have appreciated the support and encouragement of members of the Melbourne Lonergan Group. They have met monthly over the past ten years and even now are excited and enthralled by the richness of Lonergan’s thinking. They have given me an opportunity to present my thinking, at times when I was struggling to articulate my thoughts and at other times when my insights still needed further refinement: John Little, Stephen Ames, Jamie Pearce, John Boyd-Turner, Tom Daley, Robin Koning, Chris White and Tony McSweeney. My thanks also to Peter Beer from the Sydney Lonergan Centre for his hospitality during many hours of reading and research at the Centre. At difficult times, when it just got too hard, Tom Halloran was always happy to discuss my latest thoughts.

Thankyou to my postgraduate colleagues at the Swinburne Institute for Social Research who create a congenial atmosphere for research and also kept me going through the tougher times.

I also acknowledge the Swinburne University Postgraduate Research Award (SUPRA) from Swinburne University of Technology and the AHURI Postgraduate Top-up Scholarship from the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute that kept me going financially during the course of researching and writing this doctoral dissertation.

My thanks to David Hudson from the Swinburne Institute for Social Research for editing the thesis and also to Jesse for re-designing to my specifications the ‘Cyclic Functional Collaboration’ diagrams whose original source was a diagram on the SGEME website (www.sgeme.org).

I dedicate this thesis to my family – Brenda, Eamon, Jesse and Maeve – who keep me in touch with the important things in life.
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<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHURI</td>
<td>Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIHW</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Health and Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-M-O</td>
<td>Context-Mechanisms-Outcomes (used in realist evaluation)</td>
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<td>Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement</td>
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PART A:

INTRODUCTIONS
Part A presents two introductions.

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the thesis:

- The problem which the thesis seeks to address,
- The thesis and its relevance,
- The research method,
- The argument and structure of the thesis, and
- The parameters of the thesis.

Chapter 2 is an initial introduction to Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing.
Chapter 1.
Context: Problems, questions and issues in housing

Insofar as there is to be a resolute and effective intervention in the historical process one has to postulate that the existential gap must be closed. In other words, one has to postulate that the people who are seeking to influence history, to put their lever at the vital point in historical process, are not operating, not doing their thinking, planning, and policy-making, from within the pair of blinkers of a personal or communal horizon. They have to be people in whom the horizon is coincident with the field. If they are not, then all they possibly can do is increase the confusion and accelerate the doom.

- Bernard Lonergan in Horizon, History, Philosophy
  ([1957]2001c:306)
Housing is regarded as one of the basic necessities of life. The advent of industrialisation in the late 18th and early 19th centuries in Western Europe saw the migration of thousands of people into cities, the creation of slums with their appalling housing conditions and the emergence of ‘the social question’. This was the era when liberal capitalism dominated. One initial response in the mid to late 19th century was to mandate minimal housing standards to improve the health of those living in slums and to prevent the spread of disease (Daunton 1991). Other responses emerged from housing reformers such as Octavia Hill (1883), city planners such as Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City movement (1902) and philanthropists and employers concerned about the plight of the poor. By the beginning of the 20th century, governments began to play some role: local councils directly constructing and providing housing; central governments providing funds to support the initiatives of local councils, philanthropists, co-operatives and other types of organisations. In this way some form of social housing emerged in European countries as a ‘politically acceptable solution’ to the housing problem. This solution received a further boost as a result of the Great War, the Great Depression and the Second World War (Harloe 1995).

Social housing developed in the late 19th and 20th centuries as a solution to the problem of adequate and affordable housing. Whether social housing or, indeed, the private rental market or owner-occupied housing will be forms of housing in the future is impossible to predict. What we can say is that social housing now plays an important role in our society despite its shortcomings. It is not a once-off solution but rather an ongoing and evolving one. Social housing must continue to adapt to the demands of a changing environment. Better forms of social housing will emerge or, indeed, it will provide the grounds for some new and better solution to the problem of adequate and affordable housing.

The future development of social housing provides the context for this thesis. The focus, however, is on the role of housing research in advancing this search for more adequate solutions to the housing problem. It is through understanding and evaluating/critiquing the experience of current forms of housing as well as through our creative intelligence and commitment that better future forms will develop.

The advent of social housing in Australia over the past sixty years marks some progress in providing adequate housing for all households, albeit with many limitations. In my view, however, its development has been haphazard and random as has the housing research supporting these developments. Housing research is not simply a matter of investigating some housing issue and then exploring the implications for current policy, nor is it simply about analysing policies and recommending new ones,
nor is it simply about critiquing the individual and collective decisions of the past and juxtaposing one perspective or interest against another. It demands all of these and more. If we are to have something better than haphazard and random developments in housing, we need to put in place a mode of housing research that links these different aspects of research together in such a way that they promote a continuous flow of improvements, a flow that will be ongoing and cumulative.

This mode of housing research is a scientific approach that, in this thesis, I have named Cyclic Functional Collaboration.

This chapter begins by outlining a context for this thesis (Section 1.1). It begins with a brief overview of social housing and its development. Decision-makers looking to the future of social housing are seeking practical advice from housing researchers. The current state of housing research, however, raises a number of complex problems, questions and issues that are major obstacles to providing such advice and thus, to the future development of housing.

Section 1.2 discusses the proposed solution to these obstacles, the thesis that Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing could provide housing researchers with a framework for collaborative creativity that will relate and integrate disparate types of current research and will present decision-makers with practical advice on future directions for housing. It also discusses the relevance of this thesis. Section 1.3 discusses research methods, Section 1.4 outlines the structure of the thesis and Section 1.5 notes its parameters and limitations.

1.1 Context of thesis

(1) Social housing: an overview

Social housing is constituted by a range of elements such as the acquisition of land and dwellings, the design and construction of dwellings, capital financing and operating finance, eligibility and allocation of households, maintenance, asset management and tenancy management (Ball, Harloe & Martens 1988:5; Burke 1993:25-33; Paris, Beer & Sanders 1993). These are drawn together in such a way that social housing meets particular purposes such as affordability, equity, efficiency and operational autonomy (Bramley 1991; see also Burke 1993:34-37; McNelis 2000; Yates c. 1994) and each element is structured in such a way that it contributes to and complements the others.

Each element is brought about by an aggregate of the regular, repetitive activities of many different people. Social housing is achieved by structuring a broad and diverse
range of inter-linked, repetitive and taken-for-granted activities. The achievement of social housing, then, is a collaborative enterprise (Melchin 1991, 1994, 2003).

To achieve each element in a way which meets the purpose of providing social housing, Social Housing Organisations (SHOs) draw upon, adapt and particularise the taken-for-granted ways of doing things, routines, structured activities, products and services operative within a larger context. Social housing is one enterprise among a very large range of enterprises which meet the material needs of households. It is provided within a larger context of a technology (which provides the know-how for its acquisition, construction, financing and management), an economy (through which many enterprises provide a standard of living), a political system (through which agreement is reached on what is done and how it is done) and a culture (an inherited set of meanings and values that inform our way of living1).

Social housing plays an important role in providing housing to many thousands of Australians.2 It is not static, however. As the research on its history in Australia points out, social housing took particular forms at different times. It continues to evolve.

In the 19th century, charities provided some social housing, mainly to those who were destitute. In the early part of the 20th century, there were some initiatives to develop social housing. It was only in the late 1930s and early 1940s, however, that it became an established housing sector in its own right in Australia. In particular, the 1945 Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement (CSHA) accelerated its development. Under this Agreement, the Commonwealth provided capital funds (at concessional interest rates) for the acquisition of housing stock, and the States (and later Territories) acquired dwellings and managed them. A series of subsequent agreements throughout the remainder of the 20th century continued these basic arrangements but under different terms and conditions. In this way, public housing (housing owned by government) became the dominant form of social housing in Australia. Most States established a specific-purpose housing authority (collectively referred to as State Housing Authorities (SHAs)) to, among other things, manage public housing (Pugh 1976; Hayward 1996). In the mid-1970s in the wake of strident criticism from Commonwealth government inquiries (Australia. Commission of Inquiry into Poverty 1975; Australia. Priorities Review Staff 1975), from industry (Australian Institute of Urban Studies 1975), from community organisations and from public opinion, SHAs

1. Such as the purposes of social housing outlined above.
2. As at June 2010, the social housing sector consisted of 409,270 dwellings and provided housing to 393,845 households (SCRGSP 2011:Table 16A.1, 16A.16, 16A.29, 16A.42). According to the 2006 Census, 5.0% of Australian households occupied social housing (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006c:Table B32).
began to take a more inclusive approach by promoting community housing. This included housing co-operatives, partnerships with churches, service organisations, local government and housing organisations providing emergency housing. Since the 1970s, this community housing sector has slowly expanded as a new form of social housing.

Social housing is ever-changing and there is a recurrent need to adapt to changing circumstances, to take up opportunities as they arise and to deal with threats as they emerge. The need for change in some area of social housing, however, can be distinguished from the need to reach some agreement about what change will be implemented. Not only is there a recurring need to change the materials of social housing, there is also a recurring need to reach agreement about what changes will occur.

Between the inception of social housing and now, there is not only a history of change but also a history of decision-making. In part this history can be traced through the decisions made by governments and/or SHOs (depending upon the extent of their autonomy). Each decision had its context, a series of preceding decisions and actions by a broad range of players – governments, political parties, SHOs, their managers and practitioners, researchers, tenants and their organisations, applicants, advocates, community activists and organisations, architects, planners, local communities, builders, tradespersons, real estate agents, land developers, housing educators etc.

Each player had a different view on the solution to the housing problem. For the most part, all were predominantly interested in immediate short-term solutions. They made their decisions in different ways, however: some were oriented towards improving social housing; some deliberately sought, lobbied for and advocated for decisions that furthered their interests and resisted decisions that were not. Many unknowingly supported and maintained an unjust status quo:

> Individuals may have the best will in the world, may be good and upright, and yet by their actions contribute to social and historical processes which oppress and dehumanize. (Lamb 1982:3)

Each defined a problem in their own way, exerting their influence and power to ensure that others defined the problem in this way. Differing views (and the decisions that stemmed from them) were the source of conflict between players. For the most part, many individuals and groups sought to exercise their power in their own personal interest or in the interest of some group or other. Social housing, as indeed all aspects of society, was a site for different and conflicting views and decisions about its role within Australian society: some regarded it as interference in a free market and sought
to restrict its application, or even its abolition; some regarded it as the only solution to
the housing problem and sought to expand its range, even proposing the abolition of
the private market; others viewed social housing as complementary to both owner-
occupied housing and the private rental market. As a result, conflicts emerged about
the particular elements that constitute social housing (eligibility and allocations, rents,
housing stock, finance, legislation etc.) and about what was to done and how it was to
be done. As the interests of individuals and groups waxed and waned, and as
dominant groups sought to maintain their interests, so too did the particular form of the
elements that constituted social housing change (Kemeny 1981; Ball 1983; Jacobs,
Kemeny & Manzi 2004; Dodson 2006; Lawson 2006).

Social housing emerged as something new in history through some history of personal
and collective decision-making. As the context and environment changed, as the vision
of social housing changed, as understanding of both the environment and social
housing developed, a further history of personal and collective decision-making
maintained and changed social housing.

Decision-making is central to the process of change in social housing. While there may
be different and even conflicting views as to what is the best course of action, their
underlying purpose or motivation is to bring about something better, to bring about
some improvement, to bring about progress in social housing or to use it to make
progress in some other area of social life. Governments have their view as to what is
better; SHOs have their view; tenants and applicants have their view; tenant,
community and advocate organisations have their view; academics have their view;
local neighbourhoods have their view. And even within these different groups,
individuals or sub-groups have their own view as to what is better. We are left,
therefore, with the question: have the changes as a result of decisions in the past
brought about progress in social housing or have they made it worse?

By making progress a core issue for social housing, we immediately face an array of
objections. Who is to say whether some change has brought about progress or not?
On whose criteria can we assess it? Are general criteria relevant to local concrete
circumstances? Are we talking about short-term progress or long-term progress? Are
not all decision-makers formed by their own culture and language, their own society,
their own socio-economic interests, and thus in some way biased with decisions made
in their own interests or that of the cultural and socio-economic groups to which they
belong? Indeed, is it not simply a matter of who had the power to effect changes in
their own interests over and above the interests of other persons or groups?
Those decisions were made in the past. What of the future? Decision-makers now face a different set of issues. Progress, whether some major or minor development in social housing, depends upon our capacity to make changes. What changes we make will in turn depend upon some strategy for effecting those changes, some articulation of what we want to achieve through them, some envisioning of new directions, new policies within a given particular context. It calls for dreams or visions about what the future could be, as well as practicality about what changes have to occur to bring about this near or long-term future. Such change is not simply about the vision and practicality of one person but of a group of people. Where, then, lies the origin and source of a vision for the future? How does this become the vision of a group? What array of persons need to change what they are currently doing, change their habits, change their taken-for-granted way of doing things in order to realise this vision? How are they to integrate this new way of doing within the vast array of things they already do?

Moreover, progress is not simply a matter of continually moving forward. Rather, in seeking to move forward we are confronted by stupidities, greed, entrenched interests and corruption; we are confronted by a current situation in which much social housing is poorly designed, poorly located and poorly maintained and in which tenants have to live in housing that does not meet their needs etc. The implementation of practical ideas are distorted and blocked, not only by deliberate self-interest and egoism but also by unacknowledged assumptions which aggrandise particular groups. We hope for something better but that hope is often strained and even abandoned in the face of continuing failure and disillusionment. Not only is there a need for progress but also of some remediation, some reversal of the destruction.

Sustained progress in social housing is no easy matter.

(2) Housing research and the development of social housing

Decision-makers may regard themselves as competent to make a decision about social housing. They may have some vision on its future or some clear view on what changes they want to implement. They may have accumulated sufficient understanding of its role and how it works. On the other hand, they may have many questions before they reach a decision. Have they properly understood some problem that confronts them? For whom is it a problem? Is their perception of the problem simply a reflection of their own personal interests or the interests of the cultural and socio-economic groups to which they belong? How do they deal with different perspectives on the problem, particularly when they depend upon others (who view it differently) to make changes that will solve the problem? Is the problem they face the real problem or just a
manifestation of a deeper problem? Do they have a sufficient grasp of the details of the problem to propose a change or group of changes that will adequately deal with it? Is the solution the right one? Indeed, is there only one solution? Will the proposed solution create more problems in the future? These are questions that all responsible decision-makers need to face.

They may want answers to some or many of the questions they have, for “in whatever area of experience we are involved, without understanding we are blocked, we cannot go on, nor project our way forward” (Mathews 1987:245). They may want answers to questions about the current and possible future role of social housing, about what is happening within social housing or impacting on it, and about what to do. Alternatively, they may want answers which will, more or less, justify their decision about what to do; they may want answers that accord, more or less, with their view as to what is happening.

Thus, decision-makers may seek views, information and advice from a variety of sources – colleagues, managers, practitioners, tenants, advocates, consultants, experts, academics etc. – to supplement their understanding. In this way, housing researchers may play a key role in the decision-making process.

This view of housing research is often shared by housing researchers but the relationship between research and policy is often a difficult and complex one (Jones & Seelig 2004, 2005). Housing researchers want to maintain their independence and autonomy in their work yet, at the same time, they often want to influence decisions. Decision-makers, while relying upon some types of housing research, often bemoan the relevance of other types of research to their decision-making and even ignore this research because it is not immediately relevant or does not fit with a particular view of social housing.

Nevertheless, the role of housing researchers is not limited by the particular expectations of decision-makers. They can serve the process of decision-making by asking and answering questions that decision-makers don’t ask or don’t want to ask. They may even ask questions about the basis upon which decisions are made, about the values or frameworks or interests of decision-makers. Housing researchers, as researchers, push the questioning process further. They serve decision-making not only by investigating and understanding what is happening but also by working out what could be done to solve problems, by challenging the understanding of decision-makers and by challenging the options they are considering.
The corpus of housing research consists of a very broad range of works: focusing on different aspects of housing – design, technology, economics, social relations, politics, culture, tenure, finance, aesthetics, geography, housing policy, housing discourses etc.; originating in different countries and different cultures; originating from different sources – academia, housing organisations, tenant and community advocates, government and government authorities, local, national and international associations of academics, housing managers and practitioners. For instance, it ranges across:

- works from different academic disciplines:
  - politics (Bengtsson 1995, 2009)
  - economics (Maclennan & More 1997; Gibb 2002, 2009)
  - critical geography (Blunt & Dowling 2006)
  - cultural studies (King 2004, 2005, 2008)
  - architecture (Turner 1976; Oliver 2003)

- works within these disciplines from different epistemological and ontological approaches:
  - social constructionist (Kemeny 1992; Clapham 2004; Jacobs, Kemeny & Manzi 2004)
  - radical empiricist (Dodson 2007)
  - positivist (most current housing researchers)\(^3\)

- works discussing very different aspects of or concerns about housing:
  - tenure (Lawson 2006; Hulse 2008)
  - access (Hulse, Neske & Burke 2006; Hulse, Phillips & Burke 2007)
  - allocations (Burke & Hulse 2003; Hulse & Burke 2005)
  - social cohesion (Hulse & Stone 2007)
  - rent (McNelis & Burke 2004; McNelis 2006)
  - anti-social behaviour (Jacobs & Arthurson 2003; Jacobs, Arthurson, White et al. 2003)
  - social mix (Atkinson 2008)
  - stigma (Atkinson & Jacobs 2008)

\(^3\) See the discussion of horizons in Section 6.4(3).
• asset management (Kenley, Chiazor, Heywood et al. 2009; Kenley, Chiazor & Heywood 2010)
• the meaning of home (Blunt & Dowling 2006)
• housing discourse (Marston 2000, 2002, 2004; Dodson 2007; Arthurson & Jacobs 2009)
• organisational structure (Industry Commission 1993a, 1993b)
• history (Howe 1988a; Harloe 1995; Hayward 1996)
• future prospects (McNelis 2007; Jacobs, Atkinson, Spinney et al. 2010a)

works with different purposes such as:
• theoretical research (Ball 1986, 1998; Ball & Harloe 1992)
• practical research undertaken under the auspices of the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) (Burke & Hulse 2003; McNelis & Burke 2004; Burke & Zakharov 2005; Hulse & Burke 2005; McNelis 2006; Kenley, Chiazor, Heywood et al. 2009; Kenley, Chiazor & Heywood 2010)
• statistical analysis (AIHW 2009; SCRGSP 2011; Australia. Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, various years)
• government inquiries and reports (National Housing Strategy 1991a, 1991b; Industry Commission 1993a, 1993b)
• policy development and its implementation by housing organisations (such as public housing providers) (eligibility and allocations policies, rent policies, asset management policies, maintenance, organisational structure etc.)
• policy analysis and advocacy by community, tenant and industry organisations (Ecumenical Housing 1997; Housing for the Aged Action Group & Ahern 2003; Planning Institute Australia 2007; ACOSS 2008; VCOSS 2008; Housing Industry Association 2008-09; National Shelter 2009; Tenants Union of Victoria 2010).

Thus, housing research is quite diverse. However, it is also very fragmented, with little sense of how different types of research relate to one another.4 Each researcher presents a different perspective on housing. Each has something significant to say

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4. In a broader context, others have also commented on the fragmentation of science. For instance, it was an ongoing concern of the quantum physicist David Bohm. See in particular Chapter 1 `Fragmentation and wholeness` in his book Wholeness and the Implicate Order (Bohm 2002). Edmund Husserl also criticises this fragmentation of science into endless specialties – see Lonergan’s analysis of Husserl’s The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology (Lonergan 2001:Chapter 11).
about housing. Each, either implicitly or explicitly, would hope or even expect that what they had to say would have some impact on housing, either directly by changing some decision or other or indirectly by changing our understanding or our appreciation of housing.

The problem faced by decision-makers is whether and how to incorporate this disparate array of new meanings into their decisions. Of course, one strategy is simply to ignore or dismiss some or all of these new meanings – after all, it does complicate their decisions. Another strategy is to take on board those that accord with their own perspective or concerns. Even if, however, they were open to these various new meanings, they still face some difficult prior questions. Each author purports to make some progress, some discovery or rediscovery of something important. How then do decision-makers get ‘up to speed’ with ever new research and new policy proposals? How are they to assess whether it is relevant to their situation? How do these new meanings relate to one another? How do the remote meanings of philosophy, ontology and epistemology or of theory relate to the day-to-day practicalities of decision-making and its implementation in new practices?

It is not just decision-makers who face difficult and complex issues, however. Just as progress in social housing is not easy, progress in housing research is also not easy. Housing researchers suffer the same limitations and constraints as do decision-makers. They too make their own decisions as to their vision for social housing and it is within that context that they decide what is important to investigate, what data and what theoretical framework is relevant, and what policies and directions will better realise that vision. Just as decision-makers bring with them their blind spots, their history and its economic, social, political and cultural biases and prejudices, so too do researchers. Such biases and prejudices may support those of the decision-makers and so we have situations similar to that documented by Chris Allen (2009) where researchers impose their cultural expectations of one group upon another and then develop methods of data collection and conceptual frameworks which justify these expectations.

Housing research seeks to squarely address the problems confronting social housing. Yet, there is the history of actual research which is economically, socially, politically and culturally biased in order to preserve and/or extend the interests of a particular group. Is there any way out of this impasse?
If housing researchers are to provide decision-makers with practical advice, we need to envisage some method for addressing this complex of problems, questions and issues.

This thesis proposes such a method – Cyclic Functional Collaboration. It is a scientific approach to housing that promotes a more consistent approach to making progress rather than leaving it to random human decisions and actions. It proposes a method whereby we can address the complexities and difficulties of housing research and decision-making as well as promote progress, not simply in some ad hoc random way, but in a consistent, ongoing and cumulative way.

1.2 The thesis

(1) The context: summary

The context within which housing (and, in the example above, Australian social housing) operates is continually changing. There is a recurring need for decision-makers to adjust housing policy continually so that it meets the challenges and the problems that a changing context produces. Thus, there is a recurring need for research to understand this ever changing context and to present decision-makers with practical advice.

The starting point for the thesis is that the current process for providing practical advice to decision-makers (so that they can effect progress in housing) is flawed and inadequate. For the most part, decision-makers and researchers operate out of an everyday common-sense framework. As a consequence, both advice and decisions are oriented to immediate short-term solutions to problems. Sometimes deliberately but more often unknowingly, they further entrench the taken-for-granted power relations within society and continue the self-aggrandisement of particular groups and, thus, fail to meet the problem adequately. Advice that is contrary to these entrenched interests is easily rejected as ‘just one opinion’. Further, the advice presented to decision-makers is fragmented by discipline and by different types of research. It is ad hoc and often irrelevant to the situation, or regarded as irrelevant.

(2) The key questions

Decision-makers need to draw on a very broad range of research. They rely upon others, particularly housing researchers, to bring this material to them in such a way

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5. A fantasy, if you will, in the tradition of Herbert Marcuse: “Without fantasy, all philosophic knowledge remains in the grip of the present or the past and severed from the future, which is the only link between philosophy and the real history of mankind” (Marcuse 1968:155).
that their findings are relevant. They face a practical difficulty, however. How do they take account of and incorporate the range of material required for any decision?

Housing researchers, too, face their difficulties. How are they to provide such advice when housing research is fragmented, when researchers do not understand how their work relates to other research, when housing research is dominated by a common-sense culture and theoretical understanding appears very remote from practical advice, when that advice is not based upon a sound understanding of what is happening, when housing research supports the interests of dominant groups or can be easily dismissed because it doesn’t do so, and when that advice does not address key questions, when that advice is neither practical nor strategic?

There are many instances of good decisions supported by practical advice from housing researchers. However, can we get beyond a random and inconsistent approach to housing research to one in which the work of all housing researchers is oriented towards providing the practical advice that decision-makers need?

(3) The hypothesis
My hypothesis is: that Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing could provide housing researchers with a framework for collaborative creativity that will relate and integrate disparate types of current housing research and will present decision-makers with practical advice on future directions for housing.

(4) The argument of the thesis
The ‘science wars’ notwithstanding, the thesis proposes a new understanding (and doing) of science. This scientific approach to housing is oriented towards progress both in greater understanding and in the implementation of better practices. It is not just science as the advancement of knowledge (Blaikie 2003:10f).

The thesis argues that housing research is a matter of asking and answering different types of questions; that these questions, while operative within the corpus of housing research, are not sufficiently distinguished; that progress is hindered because of a lack of awareness of these questions; that the whole corpus of housing research can be incorporated within a single framework in which housing researchers can locate their work more precisely. Thus, the thesis argues for an integrated view of housing studies, one in which the contribution of each person is (i) related to progress and development in housing and (ii) related to the contribution of other persons. This implies a radical restructuring of the way in which housing research operates, a series of paradigm shifts in our traditional understanding of research, theory, history, critique and
implementation. It is a series of paradigm shifts which differentiates housing research according to the questions it asks and the methods it uses to answer them. It thus becomes far easier to relate different pieces of work to one another and to the overall goal of progress.

As a scientific approach to housing, Cyclic Functional Collaboration proposes a complete ordered set of eight inter-related questions about housing: an empirical question, a theoretical question, a historical question, an evaluative/critical question, a transformative question, a visionary/policy question, a strategic question and a practical question. It is a complete set of questions as no other questions are relevant. It is an ordered set of questions as they relate to different stages in the process from the data of the current situation to the results of creating a new situation. The questions are inter-related in that each has a specific function in relation to other questions and in relation to the whole.

Each question anticipates a particular type of answer and requires a particular method to answer it. An individual researcher can deal with each, in turn, as separate questions. However, each question can form the basis for a functional specialty as groups of housing researchers specialise in the method for answering one question. As the complexity of issues increases, as methods for answering these questions become more specialised, housing research will be more effective if housing researchers collaborate by passing on their results to the next functional specialty. This collaboration bears fruit that is not possible through researchers working individually.

The eight functional specialties are divided into two phases: understanding the past and looking to the future. The first four (the research functional specialties) seek to understand the past: Research deals with the empirical question; Interpretation with the theoretical question; History with the historical question; and Dialectic with the evaluative/critical question. The second four functional specialties (the implementation functional specialties) look to the future: Foundations deals with the transformative question; Policies with the visionary/policy question; Systematics with the strategic question; and Communications with the practical question.6

If Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing is to be effective, it needs to address the situation of everyday living, the complex of events associated

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6. I will use these terms (with the initial letter in upper case) to refer to the functional specialties throughout this thesis. The terms used here for the functional specialties have a technical meaning. Thus, ‘Research’ and ‘Policies’ as functional specialties should not be confused with how these terms are generally used. The more technical meaning of the functional specialties is outlined in Part B of the thesis.
with housing (the empirical question); adequately understand these events (the theoretical question); recognise the different trajectories of housing within different societies and cultures (the historical question); recognise and critically evaluate conflicting movements and groups, conflicting understandings and conflicting policies within housing, and thus reveal the limitations and address the practices of dominant groups (the evaluative/critical question); transform the basis upon which the future is constructed (the transformative question); be visionary, envisaging directions or policies which are new to housing (the policy question); strategically locate these new housing directions and policies within the larger context of existing technological, economic, political, cultural and religious structures, institutions and capacities (the strategic question); and propose particular practical changes in the housing practices of individuals and institutions that will effect a new direction or policy (the practical question).

This thesis argues that Cyclic Functional Collaboration does this.

Cyclic Functional Collaboration is a new understanding of science and a new way of doing science. It is a method that brings researchers together in a new way, in a ‘framework for collaborative creativity’ (Lonergan [1972]1990:xi). It is a method which relates the work of housing researchers wherever they are. It is not confined to local groups working together but is global in scope. It is a method for meeting the ongoing and recurring problems, issues and questions confronting housing. As it presents decision-makers with practical advice, it is a method for bringing about cumulative and ongoing progress.

(5) The relevance of the thesis

The relevance of the thesis and its contribution to knowledge is threefold.

First, housing research is fragmented, with many different types and styles of work apparently unrelated to one another and to an overall goal. By asking some basic questions about housing research – what are we doing when we are doing housing research? – the thesis seeks to locate these different types of research within a larger framework. Cyclic Functional Collaboration meets the desperate need for something better than current forms of collaboration in housing research. It provides a ‘framework for collaborative creativity’ which respects the interests and skills required for different types of work while locating these within a larger framework.

Second, Cyclic Functional Collaboration links research and policy with theory and practice, enabling housing researchers to provide practical advice to decision-makers.
Third, Cyclic Functional Collaboration provides a framework for interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary collaboration. Housing researchers are increasingly recognising this need (Maclennan & Bannister 1995; Winter & Seelig 2001; Sibley, Hes & Martin 2003; Lawrence 2004; Lawrence & Després 2004; Bridge, Davy, Judd et al. 2011; Phibbs & Thompson 2011). *Housing, Theory and Society* describes itself as a journal that “furthers the agenda of housing research as an integrated, multidisciplinary field that is theoretically-informed and embedded in wider societal issues” (Housing Theory and Society 2011). While the aspiration is strong, the difficulties and obstacles of working across disciplines are very apparent. There is a real need to find a common framework within which many different disciplines can operate. Cyclic Functional Collaboration shifts the focus from the culture and frameworks of disciplines to the questions that underpin them. It proposes a common framework based upon a complete ordered set of inter-related questions. As outlined in Chapter 4, it also suggests that rather than understanding these disciplines in terms of their products and methods, we understand them in terms of their function within a larger heuristic.

### 1.3 Research method

Method is the process whereby we bring about some result. Now that result can be envisaged as some endpoint or as some interim point on the way towards that endpoint. So it is within housing research that an investigation consists of a series of steps, each of which reaches some interim result which contributes, in some way, to some endpoint result. Such a series of steps may include:

- Defining the problem more clearly, which involves setting out a series of questions whose answers are interim points to solving the problem

- Reading the research relevant to that problem in order to, among other things, (i) find out the experiences of others and their reflections on and understanding of the problem and (ii) work out ways in which the series of questions could be answered. This too involves a series of steps, each of which produces some interim result such as searching out and determining the relevant research, prioritising what research will be read and to what extent, reading each book/article, assembling the results of each book/article, determining gaps in the research etc.

- Undertaking some field research. This may include some combination of undertaking a survey, interviewing participants and observation. It also involves a series of steps, each of which produces some interim result such as drafting a set of questions, piloting these questions, engaging participants,
distributing the survey or undertaking interviews or making observations, developing a framework of analysis, analysing the results and reaching some conclusions.

- Writing up these conclusions. Again this involves a series of steps, each of which produces some interim result such as structuring the report into sections.

I have outlined here the standard social science research model consisting of a series of steps (and a series within each step). Some activities within each of these steps are external to the researcher while others are internal to the researcher. Indeed, for each external activity there is a parallel internal activity. So, the doodling, drawing, sketching, writing etc. that is involved in defining a problem has a parallel set of activities such as asking questions, hypothesising, considering, thinking etc. that guide the external activities within each step, such that each step is achieved and contributes to reaching some endpoint of the overall research project.

Further, as the housing researcher proceeds through these external processes, the internal processes may change the researcher such that they understand and define the problem in a new way. As they do so, they change the external processes. These internal processes are the source of creativity, innovation and progress. They do not follow the logic of the external process such as that outlined above. The process of learning, of discovering, of understanding can be slow and incremental. At other times it can occur rapidly in leaps and bounds. It can occur at any time within the external process and require that this process begin again on a different basis. So it is through some combination of these internal and external processes that we make progress in understanding a problem (and its solution).

My starting point for this thesis is this standard social science research model. Within the framework of this model, the research method incorporated four stages as follows.

**Stage 1: Researching Cyclic Functional Collaboration**

The first stage sought to clarify the hypothesis. It addressed a first set of inter-related questions concerned with the proposed functional division of labour. What is the origin of the proposed functional division of labour? What problems were emerging in the human sciences that led to its discovery? What are the eight functions, how are they related to one another and how will its implementation contribute cumulatively and progressively to better housing outcomes? How has it been utilised in various fields?

This first stage sought to understand more clearly the eightfold functional division of labour – its origin and rationale, the functions and their relationship, the functional
division of labour and its relationship to progress and decline. This involved reading and re-reading key literature, in particular, the work of Bernard Lonergan and Philip McShane, a key exponent of functional specialisation. Other key writers included Kenneth Melchin, William Mathews, Michael Shute, James Sauer, Mathew Lamb, Frederick Crowe, Alessandra Drage, Darlene O’Leary and John Benton.

This stage provided the heuristic or analytical framework for the next stage.

**Stage 2: Analysis of housing research**

The second stage involved an analysis of research on housing, in particular, Australian social housing.

The key question that informed this analysis was: What is each author doing? This involved a second set of inter-related questions: What methods inform this research? What theories inform this research? What is the relationship between theory and practice? What are the linkages within housing research, between research and policy, and between policy and the implementation of new practices? How well do these linkages address issues of collaboration and implementation?

This second stage occurred in four steps. A first step assembled the relevant material, the data for the thesis. The particular focus was the corpus of research on Australian social housing. This included books and sections of books; academic articles; reports produced for SHOs, Commonwealth government, State/Territory governments and advocates for social housing; and reports produced by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute. While the primary focus was on Australian social housing, this was complemented with selected material from Australian and overseas housing research more generally.

A second step analysed this body of work, seeking an understanding of how the authors reached the results they did. In short, the methods they used, not simply the techniques they used to gather and present various types of data, but how they moved from this data to an understanding of some aspect of housing research.

A third step and one of the more difficult steps analysed the theoretical frameworks and methods that this body of work draws on either explicitly or implicitly, e.g. the structures of housing provision by Michael Ball and Michael Harloe, social constructionist theory as used by Keith Jacobs, Jim Kemeny, Greg Marston and others, and critical realist theory as used by Julie Lawson etc.

A final step evaluated the adequacy of this housing research.
Stage 3: Synthesis of key issues and emerging needs

While the focus of the second stage is on analysis, the focus of the third stage is on a synthesis of key issues and emerging needs. This third stage sought to address a third set of questions related to the proposed hypothesis, viz. that Cyclic Functional Collaboration is a scientific approach to housing, one which will provide decision-makers with practical advice. What are the methods that underpin current housing research? What are the different genres of housing research? What are the shortcomings of current housing research? What attempts have been made to link different types of housing research? Why will the adoption of Cyclic Functional Collaboration be better than the way in which housing research is currently structured? How will it deal with the complex issues now confronting housing research? Why should housing researchers implement Cyclic Functional Collaboration? If they did adopt it, why will the advice they present achieve cumulatively and progressively good social housing outcomes in Australia?

This third stage occurred in two steps. A first step identified specific issues confronting method and theory in housing research that indicate the emerging need for new directions, new schemes that can better support this research. A second step assessed whether the proposed hypothesis had anything to offer in relation to these issues and the emerging need for new directions.

Stage 4: Writing up the results

The fourth stage involves writing up the results of the previous three stages in this thesis.

While these four stages reflect the standard social science research model and an initial starting point or method which would bring about some result, the endpoint of the thesis is a new social science research model. As the thesis unfolded, I began to call into question the standard model of research.

The research method, then, operated at two levels. On one level, there was the material about Cyclic Functional Collaboration (Stage 1 as outlined above) and about housing research (Stage 2 as outlined above). As data, this material was but black marks on a page (or computer screen), sounds in the air or memories recaptured in imagination. It is data whose significance and meaning is yet to be understood. It is data which is subject to inquiry and questions.

On a second level was the challenge of personally differentiating the eight different types of questions (and their anticipated answers) that brought about progress in my own understanding of this material (from Stage 1 and Stage 2). These are questions
that I spontaneously asked. Yet it was only by paying attention to what I was doing that I could (i) differentiate these different types of questions, (ii) grasp what I was doing in the process of answering each type, i.e. the method by which an answer is sought to each question, (iii) relate each type of question to the others and (iv) affirm that it was by seeking answers to all these questions that I made some progress in understanding the topic of my thesis. This is a long and gradual process (which still continues), yet it was essential to understanding Cyclic Functional Collaboration and to differentiating the different types of research within Australian social housing. Moreover, as this understanding unfolded I began to grasp the inadequacies of my initial starting point, the standard model of stages in research.

The method of the thesis, then, involved a much more iterative process than the four stages of a standard model would indicate: my understanding of research (and some of the associated problems) at the outset of this thesis provided an implicit initial heuristic for understanding Cyclic Functional Collaboration; my reading and reflection on Cyclic Functional Collaboration (Stage 1) challenged this initial heuristic as well as my own understanding of what I was doing and invited a higher viewpoint on research; this higher viewpoint on Cyclic Functional Collaboration and what I was doing provided a heuristic for my understanding of what I and other housing researchers were doing (Stage 2) and for my understanding of the key issues and emerging needs within housing research (Stage 3); but my reading and reflection on housing research, as well as my attempts to identify the key issues and emerging needs, further challenged the adequacy of my understanding of Cyclic Functional Collaboration and invited further reading and reflection seeking a more nuanced viewpoint. And so the process recommenced once again.

The real work behind the thesis was the slow and difficult work of ‘fantasy and lateral thinking’ (Kemeny 1992:xviii). On one level, it required me to come to some understanding of the variety of methods used in housing studies, to reach as best I could for some viewpoint which would integrate these methods as a single whole such that they were related to one another, and thus to understand the corpus of housing research in a new way. Just as a theory of housing does not focus on the actors or social agents but rather on those sets of activities of actors/social agents that constitute housing, so too a theory of scientific method does not focus on housing researchers but rather on their activities that find expression in their writings or the results of utilising particular methods.

On a deeper level, however, it required the long and difficult work of distinguishing within myself the various processes going on within me as subject and, within this vast
array of processes, clearly identifying and distinguishing those that constitute the process of research from those that constitute vitality, sociality, creating something worthwhile, and loving and being loved. And then, there is the difficulty of expressing and communicating that understanding. As Philip McShane (1976:11-12) notes, this is no mean task:

Just as the non-physicist can identify and distinguish the colours of the rainbow, so the philosopher may identify and distinguish types of understanding. But such identification by the philosopher is no more the generalized empirical method that is generative of scientific metaphysics than descriptive identification of types of flowers is scientific botany…

This notion of a generalized empirical method, a self-attentive pursuit which has the dimensions of a science, may be unpalatable to some, incredible to others. But on its operative admission stands or falls the project of ongoing collaboration. One may find… the projected self-attention obscure. If so, one must begin from precisely that discovery: ‘He can contrast that experience of not understanding with other experiences in which he felt he understood. Then he can turn his efforts to understanding his experiences of understanding and not understanding. Finally, when proficient at introspective understanding, he can move to the higher level and attempt to understand his successful and unsuccessful efforts at introspective understanding’. The entire project is no mean task… It is concretely emphasized… by indications of time and lifetime. I have spent many months struggling self-attentively towards an understanding [of experiences of understanding]. I have spent several years introspecting my insights in physics, chemistry and biology in order to bring me to some appreciation of the autonomy or non-reducibility of botany.

Obviously, if there are scientific insights within this area of self-attention, they are no more communicable in brief than the insights of Quantum Theory can be communicated in a short course in physics.

1.4 The structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into three parts. Part A introduces the problem of progress faced by decision-makers as well as the proposed solution, Cyclic Functional Collaboration. Part B works through each of the eight functional specialties that constitute Cyclic Functional Collaboration, elaborating on a more precise understanding of the eight questions. Part C argues that Cyclic Functional Collaboration is a new ‘framework for collaborative creativity’ that will relate and integrate disparate types of current housing research and will present decision-makers with practical advice on future directions for housing.

Part A consists of two introductory chapters. This Chapter 1 has introduced the twofold problem faced by decision-makers: the fragmentation of research such that it fails to provide practical advice to decision-makers; and the limitations of the personal and communal horizon of researchers and decision-makers such that they operate in the interests of dominant groups. It also introduced Cyclic Functional Collaboration as the
solution to this problem, the research method, the argument and structure of the thesis and, in the following section, the parameters of the thesis.

Chapter 2 introduces Cyclic Functional Collaboration. It presents an initial description and locates its origins in finding a solution to the problem of progress. It also points to some examples of the emergence of Cyclic Functional Collaboration in different fields where authors reflecting upon their discipline have sought to bring some order to it and have divided up the work either spontaneously or deliberately into the specialties that constitute Cyclic Functional Collaboration. Of particular note is the work of Michael Oxley who calls for a new form of collaboration in comparative housing research. Chapter 2 concludes by considering Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing. It distinguishes different types of questions. It notes that some questions precede others. It proposes that a scientific approach to housing would be one which would incorporate all the questions that could be asked and that these would be inter-related. This complete ordered set of eight inter-related questions consists of an empirical question, a theoretical question, a historical question, an evaluative/critique question, a transformative question, a policy question, a strategic question and a practical question. These questions underpin eight functional specialties.

Most housing researchers operate in the everyday world of common sense and this is the starting point for Part A. Thus, the description of Cyclic Functional Collaboration is introductory. The task in the remainder of the thesis is twofold: first, to develop a more precise understanding of each question/functional specialty; and second, to grasp Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a whole in which each functional specialty plays a role in relation to progress and to other functional specialties.

Part B, then, moves towards a more precise understanding of each of the functional specialties, one which distinguishes more clearly between them. It is focused on distinguishing between the functional specialties and their underpinning question (and anticipated answer) rather than on the relationship between the functional specialties. It consists of five chapters: the first four (Chapters 3 to 6) discuss the research functional specialties: Research, Interpretation, History and Dialectic; the fifth (Chapter 7) discusses the implementation specialties: Foundations, Policies, Systematics and Communications.

The chapters in Part B follow a similar six-stage pattern (with some variations). First, each begins with an appeal to the experience of a researcher undertaking research. This phenomenology of research highlights some aspect of research and orients the
Second, this orientation is followed by a review of a genre or genres within the corpus of research on Australian social housing that correspond with this orientation. It aims to show that there are different forms of housing research going on. Third, it presents a summary of what these authors doing in these genres. Fourth, an attempt is made to develop a more precise understanding of the functional specialty. Fifth, this more precise understanding is illustrated. Sixth, each chapter concludes with some comments which reflect upon the implications of this functional specialty for housing research.

Part B shows that, in some sense, there is some parallel between the methods used in an unreflective way within the corpus of research on Australian social housing and the methods that constitute Cyclic Functional Collaboration. However, Cyclic Functional Collaboration envisages a paradigm shift in research. It envisages a radical change in our understanding of what it is that we are doing when we are doing housing research. Each chapter reaches some disconcerting conclusions. As each moves towards a more precise understanding of each specialty, it envisages a paradigm shift in the question and the method that underpins the genre(s) of housing research discussed in the chapter.

Part C brings us back to Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a whole. Where Part B differentiated the functional specialties, Chapter 8 asks how they relate to one another such that together they constitute Cyclic Functional Collaboration and bring about progress in a cumulative and ongoing way. It discusses the fuller meaning of Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a theory of scientific method grounded in the decisions of housing researchers to operate within a ‘framework for collaborative creativity’. It then goes on to discuss Cyclic Functional Collaboration as functional collaboration and as cyclic collaboration.

Chapter 9 presents an overall summary of the thesis and makes some concluding remarks.

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7. It should be noted that this phenomenology of research goes beyond one of the limitations of traditional phenomenology; that it has not sufficiently explored rationality. “Phenomenology is concerned with what is evident. The thematic treatment of what is evident is considered secondary, merely the phenomenologist’s report. But there has not been done a phenomenology of rational consciousness, of the process of asking, Is it so?…” (Lonergan [1957]2001a:275)
1.5 The parameters of this thesis

As the discussion of the research method in Section 1.3 above indicates, this thesis has some peculiarities that may present some difficulties for the reader who is unfamiliar with Cyclic Functional Collaboration. It may be helpful, therefore, to note from the outset some of the parameters and limitations of the thesis, what the thesis does and does not do.

To anticipate a technical discussion in Chapter 4, the thesis is operating within the functional specialty Interpretation. It is concerned with an explanatory definition of a scientific approach to housing research. The thesis seeks to present a theory of scientific method referred to as Cyclic Functional Collaboration and its implications for housing research. Communicating this theory, however, presents a very real problem because it is outside the taken-for-granted structures of current housing research. In my view, most housing research is locked into the everyday world of common sense. My starting point is a housing researcher who is, as I was (and to a large extent continue to be), embedded in the everyday taken-for-granted world of common sense. The key question addressed to this researcher throughout the thesis is: what am I doing? This is not an easy question to answer, yet the meaning of Cyclic Functional Collaboration cannot be understood without some quite refined understanding of this question. Though it takes as its starting point a housing researcher operating within the everyday taken-for-granted world of common sense, it presupposes Cyclic Functional Collaboration with its eight functional specialties.

In *Housing and Social Theory* and elsewhere, Kemeny has called for a shift to theory in housing studies. What such a shift might mean depends upon an answer to the question: what is theory? In Chapter 6 this question becomes: what am I doing when I am theorising? Answering such a question is not enough. A shift to theory in housing studies depends upon a decision of the housing researcher to act in accordance with that answer. It is this decision that displaces a researcher into the world of theory. I would understand this shift as more of a ‘displacement’ into a new world rather than a shift that is continuous with the everyday taken-for-granted world of common sense.

A decision to shift into the world of theory, however, presupposes an answer to another question, one which evaluates whether it is worthwhile doing so. To advert to this presupposition raises the question: what am I doing when I am evaluating? These

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8. It is this question that Peter King (2009:51) asks at the conclusion of his article on ‘Using Theory or Making Theory’: “Perhaps this paper should be taken as a challenge to established approaches to housing and social theory: as a questioning of what we mean by theory; what its possibilities and limits are; and, in consequence, what we take housing to be.”
‘what am I doing?’ questions presage a shift into another world: the world of the subject as subject. This thesis, then, presupposes not just a single displacement into the world of theory but rather a double displacement: a displacement into the world of theory and a more radical displacement into the world of the subject as subject.9

As outlined in Section 1.3 on research method, Cyclic Functional Collaboration appeals primarily to evidence that lies within researchers themselves, the subject as subject, and secondarily to evidence of the subject as subject expressed in the writings of housing researchers. Thus, it relies heavily on a housing researcher being willing to undertake and then actually undertake the long, slow and difficult process of self-appropriation to grasp what is going on when they are doing housing research. Cyclic Functional Collaboration requires a refined grasp of oneself as subject. This is one limitation to the thesis. Insofar as I have made some progress in grasping myself as a subject, some progress in distinguishing and relating the questions I ask, and some progress in grasping the operations and their combinations whereby I answer those questions, then I have some understanding of Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a theory of scientific method.

The reader may note that some elements of a traditional thesis are insufficiently developed. Within housing research (and more broadly, social science), there are many highly contestable issues, each with a very extensive literature, each subject to wide and intense debate, each with a long and complex history. Jim Kemeny (1992), Chris Allen (2005, 2009), Tony Dalton (2009) as well as Rowland Atkinson and Keith Jacobs (2009) among others have noted how housing research has deliberately or unconsciously served vested interests. They have raised issues about the structure of the housing research industry, about the way in which problems are defined, about the quality of research, about the rise and fall in its fortunes, about the shift by governments towards contracting out research to accounting firms and consultants, and about the funding, organisation and politics of housing research.

The thesis touches upon but also skates over a raft of difficult issues such as the history of understandings of method and of science. It does not seek to understand, critique and evaluate other views of scientific method such as those proposed by Karl Popper, Imre Lakatos, Paul Feyerabend, Jurgen Habermas, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Max Weber, Roy Bhaskar etc. and their protégés. It does not attempt to search out the

9. The subject as subject is discussed more fully in Chapter 6. Here I want to highlight the gap between the current culture of housing research and what is proposed in this thesis, and the difficulty this presents in communicating this theory of scientific method. As the epigraph to this chapter notes, "complete self-development is a long and difficult process" and "the less developed one is, the less one appreciates the need of development".

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best methods of the past and reach an integral view, one which will resolve the
conflicts between them. It does not discuss whether the implementation of Cyclic
Functional Collaboration is worthwhile nor does it discuss how Cyclic Functional
Collaboration could be implemented in housing research. A fuller view of Cyclic
Functional Collaboration would deal more thoroughly with different philosophical
approaches (cognitional theory, epistemology and metaphysics), different ethical
stances (values, means/end, is/ought) and different understandings of sociality and
intersubjectivity, history and progress, and science and scientific method.

These are important issues that need to be confronted. The many different and
conflicting views on them deserve to be taken seriously. As proposed in Chapter 6, it is
the role of the functional specialty Dialectic to address these differences and conflicts
and to reach for a higher integrated viewpoint. They are, however, beyond the scope of
this thesis.10 I am simply seeking to address a prior question: what is a scientific
approach to housing? I am seeking to operate within the second functional specialty
Interpretation by outlining a theory of scientific method. Without a theory of scientific
method, we do not have a framework or heuristic to understand adequately the history
of housing research and how it has changed or is changing. Without an answer to this
key question, we cannot proceed to deal with differing and conflicting views emerging
in history nor do we have a framework to evaluate and critique housing research.

Put simply, the thesis ‘practises what it preaches’. It seeks to operate within one
functional specialty and in this way makes a contribution to the whole. In doing so, it
provides a framework, a heuristic for addressing the range of issues outlined above.

Notwithstanding, the range of literature that could be considered is very large indeed,
for the thesis touches upon many areas of social science – the nature of science,
method in science, research methods, theory, history, critique, evaluation, comparative
studies, epistemology, policy analysis and development, strategic planning,
implementation, economics, sociology and cultural studies. I have, thus, been
compelled to contain the range of literature considered and have done so in three
ways. Firstly, as the thesis is primarily concerned with a scientific approach to housing,
I have focused primarily on a limited corpus of housing research, viz. research on

10. To undertake Dialectic in any adequate way is well beyond the scope of this thesis. As outlined in
Chapter 6, it is simply not good enough to juxtapose one framework (that of the original author) with
another (that of the housing researcher). It demands that a housing researcher reveal the grounds on
which they propose their own framework as the basis for critique and evaluation. It demands they
reveal their own grounds for progress. It demands a searching out of the best of the past and its
integration in a larger framework. It demands the hard road of appropriating the complex dynamics of
the subject as subject: the dynamic of the desire to understand, the dynamic of the desire to create
something worthwhile, the dynamic of sociality and the dynamic of love.
Australian social housing. The boundaries of this corpus are loosely defined to include works that relate to social housing in Australia whether written by Australians or by authors in other countries and includes books, articles, reports, policy documents, manuals and other written material.

In the wider discussion of each functional specialty (particularly in Part B), I have selectively drawn on a broad range of literature within housing research and social science to illustrate a particular point and to clarify, by contrast, the position proposed in this thesis with other positions.\textsuperscript{11}

The thesis does not have a specific chapter which is the traditional formal literature review. Rather than reviewing this material at the beginning of the thesis, I have opted to do so where it is most relevant, i.e. within each chapter. As a result, the thesis divides the corpus of research on Australian social housing into a number of genres and allocates particular genres to chapters according to their relevance to the discussion of a functional specialty.

This corpus of research could be divided in different ways according to some descriptive elements such as (i) the type of materials they are concerned with, such as the traditional division between qualitative or quantitative research, (ii) the discipline from which they emerged: geography, economics, sociology, politics, cultural studies, policy analysis etc. and (iii) whether they are social housing specific or locate social housing within a broader context. Such descriptive elements are not adequate. If we are to distinguish and relate these different genres to one another, we need some framework or perspective on housing research. Therefore, I have opted to allocate works to particular genres according to their primary role or function within the broad spectrum of housing research.\textsuperscript{12}

So, the thesis distinguishes the following genres within this corpus: primary research (including the traditional quantitative and qualitative works); works which define social housing (or some aspect of social housing); works which propose analytical frameworks; histories of social housing; critiques of social housing; evaluation studies; comparisons with other countries; works advocating particular philosophical positions; works on research methods; works which aspire to or envisage a new future for social

\textsuperscript{11} It is important to note here that I am not offering an explicit critique or evaluation of these other positions. I am merely highlighting a difference to clarify my own. As will become clear in Chapter 6 on the functional specialty, Dialectic, critique (and evaluation) are specialised and very demanding tasks. It is no longer good enough simply to offer an alternate viewpoint without understanding the grounds for the disputed viewpoint.

\textsuperscript{12} As we will see, however, most if not all works do not have a consistent role but move between many different ones.
housing; works on policy analysis and development; strategic planning works; and works such as practice manuals. This division is guided by the functional specialties, and particular genres are allocated insofar as their basic orientation has some similarity to one of the functional specialties.

As the next chapter will indicate, it is not possible to point to instances in which Cyclic Functional Collaboration has been explicitly adopted and implemented. Nevertheless, it is possible to point to the activities of researchers doing different types of housing research. In his introduction to *Housing and Social Theory*, Kemeny (1992:xviii) referring to ‘a sociology of residence’ notes that “[t]heorising is not merely the mechanical application of ideas from one field to another. It is essentially the use of what C Wright Mills called ‘the sociological imagination’: calling into question aspects of social structure that tend to be taken for granted and using fantasy and lateral thinking in the craft of sociology to solve problems, often reformulated in novel ways.”

This thesis uses ‘fantasy and lateral thinking’ in relation to the structuring of method in housing research. It takes the methods of housing researchers and reformulates them in a novel way. This method is thus discontinuous with past understandings of housing research. So, in some sense, Cyclic Functional Collaboration could be described as a fantasy, a vision of the future, an anticipation of something new. Here it may be worthwhile keeping in mind some of the great discoveries of the past. For example, Mendeleev discovered the periodic table in chemistry. Prior to this event, chemical process already operated but the elements, their structure and their relationship to one another were neither understood nor formulated. Once understood, the periodic table became the foundation for modern chemistry and opened up a vast range of possibilities to human ingenuity. So, this thesis is not a fantasy in the idealist sense of dreaming of some future utopia. Rather, it is an attempt to formulate a discovery of something that already operates (albeit confusedly) – how human history brings about progress – the elements, their structure and their relationship to one another. An understanding of this discovery anticipates the opening up a vast range of possibilities in any area of human endeavour.

The thesis is somewhat lopsided. Part B discusses eight functional specialties, with Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 each discussing one of the research functional specialties, while all the implementation functional specialties are discussed in a single chapter (Chapter 7). This lopsidedness reflects, in my view, the initial challenge facing housing research in Australia (indeed, throughout Europe and North America). Currently, housing research largely operates within the everyday taken-for-granted world of common sense. The challenge is, as Kemeny urges, a transformative shift to the horizon of
theory. Where attempts have been made to shift towards a more theoretical understanding, these, in my view, have not been able to make a decisive break. As I argue in Chapter 6, such a break is not possible without the transformative shift to the world of the subject as subject. By placing theory within the larger framework of Cyclic Functional Collaboration, I propose a notion of theory that differs substantially from that of Kemeny. At the same time, it critically distinguishes theory from Research, from History and from Dialectic (evaluation, critique, comparison and philosophical questions) while relating each of these to theory. Without these distinctions, the nature of theoretical understanding will continue to be confused and housing researchers will continue to retreat to the horizon of everyday living.

There is, however, a further reason for the lopsidedness of the thesis. It reflects my progress in understanding Cyclic Functional Collaboration and the difficulty of envisaging the shape of the implementation functional specialties – Foundations, Policies, Systematics and Communications – as the research functional specialties shift into the horizon of theory. As someone who, for the most part of their career, has undertaken housing research from within the horizon of everyday living, to use ‘fantasy and lateral thinking’ to grapple with the possibilities of implementation within the horizon of theory was a bridge too far.

The parameters and limitations of the thesis relate to my primary goal: to show the significance of Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a ‘framework for collaborative creativity’ for housing research. I simply seek to indicate through an exploration of the subject as subject and, in each chapter, through a phenomenology of research that there are different questions, that different questions anticipate different types of answers and appeal to different types of evidence, that seeking answers to these different questions requires different methods, that these questions and methods are related and are parts of larger whole which is progress in human living. To do this adequately is a huge task, well beyond my capacities. I seek only to point to the possibilities and to the work that still remains to be done. For this reason I describe the thesis as a theory of scientific method and eschew any critique. Any ‘critical’ comments made in the thesis should be understood as a contrast which will highlight how methods within Cyclic Functional Collaboration differ from that which currently prevails.
Chapter 2.  
Cyclic Functional Collaboration as science: an initial description

Dynamically a science is the interplay of two factors: there are data revealed by experience, observation, experiment, measurement; and on the other hand, there is the constructive activity of mind. By themselves the data are objective, but they are also disparate, without significance, without correlation, without coherence. Of itself, the mind is coherence; spontaneously it constructs correlations and attributes significance; but it must have materials to construct and correlate; and if its work is not to be fanciful, its materials must be the data. Thus thought and experience are two complementary functions; thought constructs what experience reveals; and science is an exact equilibrium of the two.

have proposed that Cyclic Functional Collaboration is a scientific approach to the study of housing, but what is a scientific approach to any subject? What distinguishes it from any other approach? Can we have a scientific approach to social science? What is the status of scientific knowledge? These and many more fundamental questions about science have long been debated.¹

At the beginning of his book, *The Beginnings of Western Science*, David Lindberg (1992) reviewed the many different meanings of the term ‘science’. Different traditions describe it in different ways. For example, positivists highlight the empirical aspects; constructivists such as Schutz (1982) and Berger and Luckmann (1971) highlight the role of social agents in constructing the world; critical realists such as Danermark et al. (2002) and Sayer (2010) highlight the objective existence of reality in terms of observation and theorising; Kuhn (1970) and his successors highlight the historical and revolutionary aspects of science; others highlight its logical processes of induction and deduction (Mill [1882]2009).

Many traditions reserve the term ‘science’ for the ‘natural’ sciences rather than the social or human sciences. Some reserve the term to understanding the world rather than applying that understanding. Flyvbjerg (2001), on the other hand, dismisses the traditional understanding of science as ‘epistemic science’, arguing that social science cannot do what the natural sciences do. In his view, the key characteristic of the natural sciences is its capacity to predict. As social science cannot predict, it should abandon its goal of being an epistemic science. He proposes that social science should be a phronetic science. This is where social science is strongest. Phronetic social science deliberates about social actions, in particular, values and power. It operates in a context where variables are dependent upon the context. Flyvbjerg seeks to “restore social science to its classical position as a practical, intellectual activity aimed at clarifying the problems, risks and possibilities” (p.4).

It would seem that the common aim of all scientific disciplines, regardless of their philosophic tradition, “is to advance knowledge in their field, to provide new or better understanding of certain phenomena, to solve intellectual puzzles and/or to solve practical problems” (Blaikie 2003:10-11). In their different ways, they also value methodological accuracy, rigour and precision.

These various descriptions of science and scientific method still do not answer the question: what is a scientific approach to housing?

The purpose of this chapter is to describe Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing studies. It is only in Chapter 8 that an explanatory definition of science will emerge.

Section 2.1 introduces the work of Lonergan and the emergence of functional specialisation in a theological context. Nevertheless, the relevance of functional specialisation extends beyond theology and so Section 2.2 presents an initial description of Cyclic Functional Collaboration in a larger context, while Section 2.3 briefly outlines how scholars in different disciplines are seeking or proposing a more scientific approach to their discipline, one which in some respects parallels what Lonergan proposed. Against this background, the final section, Section 2.4, opens up a discussion of Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing.

2.1 Bernard Lonergan and the remote origins of Cyclic Functional Collaboration

Cyclic Functional Collaboration, or functional specialisation, was a discovery of Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984), a Canadian methodologist, philosopher, theologian and economist. This discovery was first published as a journal article ‘Functional Specialties in Theology’ in Gregorianum (Lonergan 1969). This article, along with an extended introduction and further elaboration of the functional specialties, was published in 1972 as Chapter 5 of Method in Theology (Lonergan [1972]1990).

It is extremely difficult, and apt to be very misleading, to summarise the major directions of a thinker such as Bernard Lonergan. The following are some very general pointers to indicate the territory within which he operated and out of which he discovered Cyclic Functional Collaboration. More precise meanings of what he was up to can only be had by a thorough reading of his writings.

This section discusses the work of Lonergan in two sub-sections. The first is concerned with his search for a practical theory of history. The second is concerned specifically with his writings on functional specialisation.

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2. Cyclic Functional Collaboration is not a term used by Lonergan. He refers to functional specialties or functional specialisation. Cyclic Functional Collaboration is a term that I have adopted to name the totality of the functional specialties.

3. Method in Theology will be referred to from now on as Method.

4. See the series of Collected Works being published by the University of Toronto Press: <http://www.lonergan-lri.ca/store>. As at February 2012, 17 of a projected total of 25 volumes have already been published: Volumes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22.

For an introduction to Lonergan’s life, his leading ideas and his intellectual development, see Lambert and McShane (2010) and Mathews (2005).
Lonergan’s search for a practical theory of history

Lonergan explored the deep desires of the human heart: to love and to be loved; to live in solidarity with one another; to express and create; to discover meaning in our lives and to understand; to grow and to improve (see also Moore 1989; [1957]1992, [1972]1990). Yet, despite these deep desires, he was confronted, as we are too, by a human community in a deep mess: the distortion, the oversight, the ‘dumbing-down’ and even the destruction of these deep desires; the fragmentation of a world divided and exploited by the ideologies of racism, classism, nationalism, colonialism and sexism; material poverty in rich countries and even greater poverty, famine and destitution in other countries; the periodic failure of economies; corrupt and failing political systems; the emergence of bureaucracy and state control; cultures which fail to provide satisfactory answers to our questions about living; the failure of education to cultivate and develop attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible persons; personal histories of betrayal, repressed dreams and minimal expectations; the ‘existential’ gap between the self we are and what we need to learn and become to respond adequately to new situations.

On the one hand, he discerned and articulated the deep desires at the core of our humanity. On the other hand, he was deeply aware of the human situation, what we have created historically. In some measure, we express our desires, we operate and co-operate in meeting these desires: we have created a complex infrastructure of tasks, roles and institutions, ways of collaborating with one another to meet our vital social, cultural and personal needs and desires. Throughout history, we have slowly worked out better ways of providing food and shelter, education and justice, health and recreation, arts and leisure; better ways of relating to one another; better ways of discovering meaning. Rather than achieving these things alone, we have worked out how they can be done collaboratively with different elements being shared amongst many people; we have worked out how we can make improvements in each of the elements.

In some measure, however, we have not met the challenge of ongoing improvement in our institutions, in our ways of collaborating to meet these core human desires. So, for example, economic exploitation has had its justifications in racism, classism, nationalism, colonialism and sexism where individuals and groups aggrandise themselves at the expense of others:

How, indeed, is a mind to become conscious of its own bias when that bias springs from a communal flight from understanding and is supported by the whole texture of a civilization? How can new strength and vigor be imparted to the detached and disinterested desire to understand without the
How can human intelligence hope to deal with the unintelligible yet objective situations which the flight from understanding creates and expands and sustains? (Lonergan [1957]1992:8-9)

The challenge of our deep desires pushes us to look forward to something better, something beyond the narrow confines of our individual and group biases:

The challenge of history is for man progressively to restrict the realm of chance or fate or destiny and progressively to enlarge the realm of conscious grasp and deliberate choice. (Lonergan [1957]1992:253)

The pressing question, then, which Lonergan sought to address is: how do we achieve progress – a moving forward in an integral and concrete way? This question is not new. It is one raised by Plato over 2,000 years ago in The Republic ([360 BC]1892). His answer was to make the philosopher king. Nevertheless, he also recognised the inadequacy of this answer. It is a question which many major philosophers have sought to answer (Bury 1955).

How are we to move forward? What are we to do? Indeed, what is the problem that we need to confront? Lonergan was not interested in some grand theory of history but rather in a practical theory of history (O’Leary 1998), one which looked to the future:

So far from granting common sense a hegemony in practical affairs, the foregoing analysis leads to the strange conclusion that common sense has to aim at being subordinated to a human science that is concerned, to adapt a phrase from Marx, not only with knowing history but also with directing it. (Lonergan [1957]1992:253)

Lonergan’s solution to this problem had a long gestation. It began with a retrieval of the “intellectualist, dynamic, and existential” metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas (and Aristotle) (Crowe 1973; Lawrence 1978; Lonergan 1997, 2000). This metaphysics was in stark contrast to a decadent scholasticism and to the conceptualist and essentialist metaphysics of Scotus and Suarez etc. which have been so trenchantly criticised by recent philosophers such as Heidegger (Lawrence 1978:53).

In his seminal work Insight: A Study of Human Understanding (Lonergan [1957]1992), Lonergan explored the dynamics of understanding. His starting point is that everyday creative moment of ‘insight’, a phenomenon largely overlooked in the history of philosophy. His goal, as he puts it, is this:

Thoroughly understand what it is to understand, and not only will you understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood but also you will

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5. As Marx ([1845]2002) famously said: “Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.”

6. Insight: A Study of Human Understanding (Lonergan [1957]1992) will be referred to from now on as Insight.
possess a fixed base, and invariant pattern, opening upon all further developments of understanding. ([1957]1992:22)

Despite the apparent remoteness of this goal, the book had a practical goal. In his preface he asks: ‘What practical good can come of this book?’. He answers as follows:

The answer is more forthright than might be expected, for insight is the source not only of theoretical knowledge but also of all its practical applications, and indeed of all intelligent activity. Insight into insight, then, will reveal what activity is intelligent, and insight into oversights will reveal what activity is unintelligent. But to be practical is to do the intelligent thing, and to be unpractical is to keep blundering about. It follows that insight into both insight and oversight is the very key to practicality.

Thus, insight into insight brings to light the cumulative process of progress. For concrete situations give rise to insights which issue into policies and courses of action. Action transforms the existing situation to give rise to further insights, better policies, more effective courses of action. It follows that if insight occurs, it keeps recurring; and at each recurrence knowledge develops, action increases its scope, and situations improve.

Similarly, insight into oversight reveals the cumulative process of decline. For the flight from understanding blocks the insights that concrete situations demand. There follow unintelligent policies and inept courses of action. The situation deteriorates to demand still further insights, and as they are blocked, policies become more unintelligent and action more inept. What is worse, the deteriorating situation seems to provide the uncritical, biased mind with factual evidence in which the bias is claimed to be verified. So in ever increasing measure intelligence comes to be regarded as irrelevant to practical living. Human activity settles down to a decadent routine, and initiative becomes the privilege of violence. ([1957]1992:7-8)

In Insight, Lonergan did not reach a full solution to the concrete problem of progress in human history. Rather, he more clearly defined the problem as he explored the role of ‘insight’ in mathematics, science and common sense, identified the flights from understanding that block insight, and redefined metaphysics as the explication of the implicit grounds on which we operate and as the ‘integral heuristic structure’ of our knowing and doing. In that “personal appropriation of the concrete dynamic structure immanent and recurrently operative in his own cognitional activities” ([1957]1992:11), Lonergan identified the grounds for the integration of all forms of knowledge and interdisciplinarity:

If to convince oneself that knowing is understanding, one ascertains that knowing mathematics is understanding and knowing science is understanding and the knowledge of common sense is understanding, one ends up not only with a detailed account of understanding but also with a plan of what there is to be known. The many sciences lose their isolation from one another; the chasm between science and common sense is bridged; the structure of the universe proportionate to man’s intellect is revealed; and as that revealed structure provides an object for a metaphysics, so the initial self-criticism provides a method for explaining how metaphysical and antimetaphysical affirmations arise, for selecting those that are correct, and for eliminating those that patently spring from a
lack of accurate self-knowledge. Further, as a metaphysics is derived from the known structure of one’s knowing, so an ethics results from knowledge of the compound structure of one’s knowing and doing; and as the metaphysics, so too the ethics prolongs the initial self-criticism into an explanation of the origin of all ethical positions and into a criterion for passing judgment on each of them. ([1957]1992:23)

Further, he was able to relate common sense and science:

Perhaps it now is evident that the whole of science, with logic thrown in, is a development of intelligence that is complementary to the development named common sense. Rational choice is not between science and common sense; it is a choice of both, of science to master the universal, and of common sense to deal with the particular. ([1957]1992:203)

While *Insight* does not reach a full solution to the problem of human living, it does reject some solutions and point to the elements of that full solution in what he called ‘Cosmopolis’. This “is concerned with the fundamental issue of the historical process. Its business is to prevent practicality from being shortsightedly practical and so destroying itself” (pp.263-264). It is “concerned to make operative the timely and fruitful ideas that otherwise are inoperative” (p.264). It is not a ‘police force’ (p.263) by which one group imposes itself and its ideas on another. It is not ‘a busybody’ (p.264). “It does not waste its time and energy condemining individual egoism… It is not excited by group egoism” which, in time, “generates its own reversal” (p.264). “It is not a group denouncing other groups; it is not a super-state ruling states; it is not an organization that enrolls members, nor an academy that endorses opinions, nor a court that administers a legal code” (p.266). “It is not easy. It is not a dissemination of sweetness and light, where sweetness means sweet to me, and light means light to me” (p.266). Cosmopolis “protect[s] the future against the rationalization of abuses and the creation of myths” (p.265). “It is a withdrawal from practicality to save practicality. It is a dimension of consciousness, a heightened grasp of historical origins, a discovery of historical responsibilities” (p.266). “[T]wo allies can be acknowledged. On the one hand, there is common sense, and in its judgments… common sense tends to be profoundly sane. On the other hand, there is dialectical analysis; the refusal of insight betrays itself; the Babel of our day is the cumulative product of a series of refusals to understand; and dialectical analysis can discover and expose both the series of past refusals and the tactics of contemporary resistance to enlightenment” (p.267).

In the last chapter of *Insight*, Lonergan returns to this problem of progress in history and develops an extended heuristic structure of the solution, identifying thirty-one elements of that solution. It is not the place here to outline this heuristic structure (and to make sense of it requires a close reading of the previous chapters). However, one element of this solution is collaboration and its grounds in ‘belief’. As Lonergan notes in
Method: “To appropriate one’s social, cultural, religious heritage is largely a matter of belief” ([1972]1990:41). He goes on to note the significant role that belief plays in the advancement of science: rather than continually repeating someone else’s work, the scientist tends to assume the results of previous work and builds upon them. It is when this work runs into problems that previous results are scrutinised more closely. Results are verified and falsified as they are incorporated into new work: “Human knowledge, then, is not some individual possession but rather a common fund, from which each may draw by believing, to which each may contribute in the measure that he performs his cognitional operations properly and reports their results accurately” (p.43). An extended excursus in the final chapter of *Insight* provides the grounds for belief and for human collaboration in meeting the problem of progress in history. However, the unanswered question was: how are we to divide up the work such that the work of one person could draw upon as well as contribute to the work of others?

Lonergan’s discovery in 1965 of functional specialisation as ‘a framework for collaborative creativity’ was his long sought after solution to the problem of progress in history.

(2) Functional specialisation

As Lonergan concluded in *Insight*, the problem of progress is not simply a problem of understanding but also a problem of implementation, of finding a way forward. Further, it is not simply a problem of understanding and implementation once and for all, but of developing understanding and ongoing implementation. It is, then, a problem of method, but one which links developing understanding and continually implementing new solutions in an ongoing cyclic way.

A preliminary notion of method “is a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results. There is a method, then, where there are distinct operations, where each operation is related to the others, where the set of relations forms a pattern, where the pattern is described as the right way of doing a job, where operations in accord with the pattern may be repeated indefinitely, and where the fruits of such repetition are, not repetitious, but cumulative and progressive” (Lonergan [1972]1990:4).

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7. Lonergan is not speaking of belief in a specifically religious sense. Rather, belief grounds co-operation between persons and thus what in the social sciences is referred to as socialisation or acculturation.
The empirical method of science is one set of recurrent and related operations that produces results. By linking this set of operations with the scientist as operating subject, Lonergan extends or generalises this empirical method:

Generalized empirical method operates on a combination of both the data of sense and the data of consciousness: it does not treat of objects without taking into account the corresponding operations of the subject: it does not treat of the subject’s operations without taking into account the corresponding objects.

As generalized empirical method generalizes the notion of data to include the data of consciousness, so too it generalizes the notion of method. It wants to go behind the diversity that separates the experimental method of the natural sciences and the quite diverse procedures of hermeneutics and of history. It would discover their common core and thereby prepare the way for their harmonious combination in human studies ([1974]1985:141).

This common core of operations – experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding – underpin both common sense and scientific method.\(^8\) Within science, this common core of operations is utilised in different ways for different ends. So, in collecting data, the operations are grouped in one way; in seeking to understand this data, they are grouped in another way; in affirming what is (and distinguishing this from what might possibly be), they are grouped in another; in acting upon the data, they are grouped in another (Lonergan [1972]1990:6-13). This correspondence between objects and the operations of the subject provides the grounds on which Lonergan distinguishes between the functional specialties. So, in *Method* he outlines his discovery that progress in human living is achieved in collaboration with others through the totality of eight functional specialties which are internally related to one another.

When Lonergan wrote *Method*, theology, as with many other human sciences, was fragmented with many diverse specialisations developing such that different people doing differing things had little understanding of how their work related to other pieces of work or how their work related to progress in theology. Specialties had developed in two ways. The first way, field specialisation, divides and sub-divides the field of data. For example, history gets divided into different periods, into different countries, into different groups and then into groups within periods within countries. The second way, subject specialisation, divides and sub-divides by classifying the results of investigations. For example, human sciences are divided into subjects such as philosophy, psychology, economics, politics, cultural studies etc. (Lonergan [1972]1990:125-126).

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\(^8\) See *Insight* for Lonergan’s detailed discussion of these operations in both common sense and science.
A third way of developing specialties is functional specialisation which “distinguishes and separates successive stages in the process from data to results” (Lonergan [1972]1990:126). In this way, “functional specialties are intrinsically related to one another. They are successive parts of one and the same process… are functionally interdependent… without prejudice to unity, it divides and clarifies the process from data to results… it provides an orderly link between field specialization… and subject specialization”.

In Method ([1972]1990:127-133), Lonergan is specifically outlining a method for progress in theology. He distinguishes eight functional specialties as follows:9

1. Research “makes available the data relevant to theological investigation” (p.127).
2. Interpretation “understands what was meant” in this data, “in its proper historical context, in accord with its proper mode and level of thought and expression, in the light of the circumstances and intention of the writer” (p.127).
3. History “grasps what was going forward in particular groups at particular times and places” (p.178).
4. Just as “empirical science aims at complete explanation of all phenomena, so Dialectic aims at a comprehensive viewpoint” (p.129). It is concerned with conflicts within historical movements and with diverging viewpoints. It seeks a viewpoint from which it can understand these conflicts and diverging viewpoints. It brings to light differences that are irreducible and differences that are complementary.
5. Foundations provide a basic orientation and, thus, the objectification of the fundamental existential horizons of human knowing and doing as well as the transformations of the subject and their world as both historical and communal.
6. Doctrines express judgements of fact and judgements of value and so are concerned with affirmations and negations about what is known and how to live.
7. Systematics “works out appropriate systems of conceptualization” (p.132), removes apparent inconsistencies and promotes coherence.
8. Communications is concerned with external relations, with communicating results to other disciplines, with transposing results into other cultures.

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9. Chapter 5 of Method briefly lists the functional specialties, with the following chapters dealing with each in more detail.
These eight specialties operate in two phases, the first four specialties in the first phase and the second four specialties in the second phase: “In the first phase one begins from the data and moves through meanings and facts towards personal encounter. In the second phase one begins from reflection on authentic conversion, \(^{10}\) employs it as a horizon within which doctrines are to be apprehended and an understanding of their content sought, and finally moves to a creative exploration of communications differentiated according to media, according to classes of men, and according to common cultural interests” (Lonergan [1972]1990:135-136).

The need for some division of labour is clear from the way work has been increasingly divided according to field and subject. Why does Lonergan, however, argue for a division of labour according to functional specialties? He proposes four reasons, so researchers can distinguish tasks, know what they are doing, curb totalitarian ambitions and resist excessive demands. First, unlike field and subject specialisation which ‘divide the same sort task among many hands’, functional specialisation distinguishes tasks and prevents them from being confused: “Different ends are pursued by employing different means, different means are used in different manners, different manners are ruled by different methodical precepts” (pp.136-137). Second, without distinctions between particular ends, the tasks to be performed to achieve these ends and their associated methodical precepts, “investigators will not have clear and distinct ideas about what precisely they are doing, how their operations are related to their immediate ends, and how such immediate ends are related to the total end of the subject of their inquiry” (p.137). Third, functional specialisation curbs totalitarian ambitions. One type of question cannot dominate another and, while we may do our work alone, we depend upon and build upon the work of others. Fourth, functional specialties ‘resist excessive demands’. Each makes a specific contribution to a complex range of issues and produces ‘the type of evidence proper to the specialty’.

The discovery of functional specialties is one of the crowning achievements of Bernard Lonergan’s life. It was achieved late in his life just before he became very ill.\(^ {11}\) In many ways, Method is a very different book from Insight. Most obviously is the shift in expression from the faculty psychology of Thomas Aquinas to the intentionality analysis.

\(^{10}\) Lonergan understands “conversion” not simply in a religious sense. In Chapter 6, I will refer to it as a displacement of horizons – from the horizon of common sense to the horizon of theory, and from the horizon of theory to the horizon of the subject as subject.

\(^{11}\) A biographical note is important here. Soon after this discovery of functional specialisation in 1965, Lonergan was diagnosed with lung cancer and nearly died while having a lung removed. So, Method was written at a difficult time in his life as he recovered from serious illness (Mathews 1998).
of phenomenology. More significantly, Lonergan’s strategy in his earlier magnum opus *Insight* is missing from *Method*. In *Insight* the reader is challenged by his relentless pedagogical drive in which he poses a set of questions and in answering them moves on to pose a new set. *Method*, however, is more compact. Moreover, Lonergan not only has the task of outlining his discovery of the functional specialties, but also the task of addressing key methodological problems of contemporary theology. As a result, *Method* intersperses an exposition of the functional specialties with a discussion of other problems in theology and does not treat the functional specialties in a thoroughly systematic way. The functional specialties are not well developed, leaving readers with the difficult task of ‘unpacking’ his meaning and working out their significance for themselves. This poses some problems for developing a thorough understanding of functional specialisation and for its application in different disciplines. However, because Lonergan grounds functional specialisation in the structure of all knowing and doing operative within each person, it has relevance beyond theology. It is to this broader relevance that I now turn.

### 2.2 Cyclic Functional Collaboration

Lonergan sought to expand on his discovery of functional specialisation within the context of theology. In this context, functional specialisation constitutes progress in theology and continually “mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix” (Lonergan [1972]1990:xi).

The canvas on which Lonergan was operating, however, was the totality of world process and, within that, the totality of human history. He was searching not just for a method in theology but rather for a practical theory of history.

While his discovery was first put forward in the context of theology, its wider significance was noted (as a criticism) by another prominent theologian, Karl Rahner: “Lonergan’s theological methodology seems to me to be so generic that it actually suits every science” (Rahner 1971, quoted in McShane 2009:23 and fn 120).

In this larger context, functional specialisation has relevance beyond theology. It is this shift in context that has led some authors to search for terms which better express the intent of Lonergan’s discovery and mediate between a cultural matrix and the

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12. *Insight* was largely an exercise in intentionality analysis. The language, however, was that of faculty psychology.

13. This also poses some difficulties for this thesis in that there is no clear systematic exposition of the functional specialties in Lonergan’s writing as a reference point. The approach taken here is the reiterative process of reading and re-reading the texts, learning to differentiate the processes within research and seeking to relate them to one another and to the totality of science.
significance and role of science within that matrix. Philip McShane has variously
described functional specialisation as ‘Hodic method’ (McShane 2002), ‘Global
Functional Collaboration’ (McShane 2008a), the science of progress (McShane 2007c),
‘Galactic method’ or ‘Fusionism’ (McShane 2010a) and ‘the Global Table’ (Benton,
Drage & McShane 2005). Alessandra Drage uses the term ‘the Great Circle of
Feminism’ (Drage 2005). In this thesis, I have opted for the term ‘Cyclic Functional
Collaboration’ to describe the totality of the eight functional specialties and to capture
the significance of Lonergan’s discovery for the whole of human history.

As noted previously, Cyclic Functional Collaboration is a ‘framework for collaborative
creativity’ which envisages both a new understanding of science and a new basis for
 collaboration between scholars, one that is both ‘cyclic’ and ‘functional’.

As ‘cyclic’, it envisages an ongoing cycle of collaboration where new achievements
systematically build upon learning from both the achievements and failures of the past,
however remote that past may be. It envisages the recycling of all of human history, the
experiences and insights of all societies, cultures and religions. Thus, it draws upon the
experiences and the solutions found within ranges of societies and cultures. It
envisages a collaboration that is transcultural and democratic and that respects the
achievements of all societies and cultures. The difficulty we face, however, is that
achievement and failure can be intricately intertwined and very difficult to separate, that
what can be regarded as a significant achievement at one point in time can be later re-
evaluated as of minor significance or as a block to future development and vice-versa.
So, Cyclic Functional Collaboration envisages an ongoing cycle of collaboration where
one specialty continually takes up the results of the work of other specialties,
addresses a particular question and passes on its results to another specialty.

As ‘functional’, this collaboration defines one person’s work according to its role within
a greater whole. Collaboration, therefore, does not depend upon personal or social
relationships, nor does it depend upon the establishment of ad hoc or long-term small
groups of collaboration. Rather, it relates the work of all researchers by relating one
person’s work to another according to the type of work they do within a larger whole. It
is oriented to praxis. It links research and policy, theory and practice. It cycles through
research and implementation to produce ongoing results.

In this new context, new terms are needed to convey a better sense of the eight
functional specialties. Different people, even at different times, have called them by
different names. For example, McShane (1989, 2002) at various times refers to
Dialectic as Discernment and Transformation; Foundations as Displacement and as
Canon-Development; Doctrines as Policies; Systematics as Strategic Planning; and Communications as Applications and Executive Reflection. Throughout this thesis, I largely retained Lonergan’s terms for the functional specialties with one exception: rather than using Doctrines I will refer to Policies. Below is a list of terms I will use for the functional specialties and a brief description of each.

Understanding the Past

- Research: gathering and making available the relevant data
- Interpretation: understanding what is being investigated
- History: understanding what is going forward
- Dialectic: coming up with best story and the best basic directions – evaluating past interpretations, theories and histories

Looking to the Future

- Foundations: expressing the best fundamental directions – working towards a better basis upon which researchers can operate
- Policies: reaching for new guidelines and directions for change
- Systematics: integrating possible directions for change with other theories/other aspects of society
- Communications: working out specifically how strategies (and policies) can be applied within the local context of roles and institutions.14

2.3 Searchings for Cyclic Functional Collaboration

Philip McShane, a long-time proponent of functional specialisation has likened its discovery to that of the periodic table by Mendeleev in 1869, a paradigm shift that eventually transformed chemistry in the 19th century (McShane 2007b,ch.7:7). Initially, the writings of Mendeleev and Meyer on the periodic table attracted little interest. Similarly, the significance of this cyclic functional division of labour has taken some time to be understood and appreciated, even among theologians, the audience at which it was first directed. McShane also suggests that Cyclic Functional Collaboration is not simply the discovery of one person but rather, more deeply, the emergence of a ‘serious group of global inquirers’ (2004d:2) seeking to meet the demands of history for a new way forward: “The division of labour is suggested by the fermentation of centuries” (2002:66). “It is a division of labour based on needs emergent within any

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14. These terms and their initial descriptions are based loosely on McShane (2002:Chapter 3).
discipline” (2008b:5). So, the emergence of Cyclic Functional Collaboration is not simply a discovery by one man, nor is it a discovery relevant only to theology. Rather, it is a phenomenon which is emerging in different disciplines in various ways in order to meet the complex of issues arising within that discipline.

This emergence can be discerned in disciplines as diverse as literature, deep ecology and comparative housing research where authors have had no exposure to the discovery of Cyclic Functional Collaboration but have spontaneously sought to structure their work around some of the functional specialties. In other disciplines such as feminist studies, language studies, economics, and the natural and formal sciences, authors who have affirmed the importance of Cyclic Functional Collaboration have illustrated the possibilities of structuring these disciplines in the light of this discovery.

In the first sub-section below I briefly outline these attempts to structure various disciplines. More extensively, as it is of particular interest here to housing scholars, the second sub-section draws on some reflections by Michael Oxley on comparative housing research.

(1) Structuring disciplines

In their book *Theory of Literature*, Rene Wellek15 and Austin Warren16 distinguished their approach from previous books on literature by asking ‘the right questions’ and providing ‘an organon of method’ (Wellek & Warren 1963:8). They sought to bring some order to literary studies by distinguishing between ‘ordering and establishing evidence’, theory, history and criticism. This structure parallels the first four functional specialties: Research, Interpretation, History and Dialectic.17

Arne Næss (1912-2009), one of Norway’s most eminent philosophers and founder of the ‘deep ecology’ movement, was interested in keeping together a broad movement and sought to bring some order into the implementation of a new relationship between humanity and nature (Næss 1988). He identified four levels in the process from ultimate premises to practical decisions. These levels parallel the four implementation functional specialties: Foundations, Policies, Systematics and Communications.18

In the wake of ferment within feminism (the third wave of feminism) as it seeks to come to terms with the shift from political action to reflective discourse (particularly within the

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17. See Appendix A(1) for a more detailed discussion.
18. See Appendix A(2) for a more detailed discussion.
academy), Alexandra Gillis-Drage (Drage 2005; Gillis-Drage 2010) asks “the number one question about feminism… feminism’s raison d’etre, its purpose, its reason for being” (Gillis-Drage 2010:7) or, to put it another way: “What can you and I do together, communally, to better understand and implement feminism’s future?” (Gillis-Drage 2010:7-8).

She suggests that what is missing is some unifying scheme which would ‘hold together’ the diversity of particular feminisms that were represented both in journals and in political activities. She introduces Cyclic Functional Collaboration or, as she called it in her book, Thinking Woman (Drage 2005), ‘the Great Circle of Feminism’.19 She puts it forward as a way of resolving “questions about a growing opposition between theory and praxis” (p.153). She briefly indicates how the work of feminism could be divided up into those tasks which seek to “make sense of the past” (History, Interpretation and Research), those that seek to “make sense of the future” (Policies, Systematics and Communications), the task of making sense of the many differing positions on progress (Dialectic) and the task of making sense of the whole cycle of moving back into the past and forward into the future (Foundations) (Gillis-Drage 2010:14-17).20

In Shaping the Future of Language Studies, John Benton (2008) presents a methodological challenge to students and professionals struggling with the problem of linguistic universals and the problem of integrating the broad field of language studies. His book picks up the methodological effort of the Greenberg school of linguistics and looks forward to a methodological restructuring of language studies (p.1). His starting point is the need for self-attention among linguists, “a serious self-attentive puzzling over the symbol ‘?’” (pp.2, 78), through which is discovered the ‘core invariant patterns of quest’ that bubble up spontaneously in language users and ground language universals. These ‘core-attitudes’ (what-attitudes, why-attitudes, is-attitudes, what-to-do-attitudes and is-to-do-attitudes) “are elemental to the language user’s self knowledge” (p.22). He proposes two principles necessary for successful restructuring in language studies. The first principle is generalised empirical method. The second principle, functional specialisation, is a ‘way of organizing the entire enterprise of language studies’ (p.104).21

20. See Appendix A(3) for a more detailed discussion.
21. See Appendix A(4) for a more detailed discussion.
Philip McShane has written extensively on both Lonergan’s discovery of functional specialisation (2005a, 2007a, 2007b) and his economics (McShane 1980, 1998a, 2002; Anderson & McShane 2002; Lonergan [1942-1944]1998, [1983]1999). In *Pastkeynes Pastmodern Economics: A Fresh Pragmatism* (2002), McShane presents a devastating critique of current economics and economic education. His aim is “to draw attention to the need for a new generalization in economics, a new theory, a new orientation” (2002:36). For McShane, a division of labour within economics is “the key to the full, distant, transition to a democratic economics” (p.7).22

Other authors explore the emergence of the functional specialties in the natural and formal sciences: McShane (2002:60-61) in physics, chemistry, biology and geometry; Terrance Quinn (2005) in mathematics; and, David Oyler (2010).23

(2) Comparative housing research

In the 1990s, debates took place about the possibility, purpose and methodologies appropriate for comparative housing research. In a series of articles, Michael Oxley (1989, 1991, 2001) developed his view of comparative housing research, culminating in a key article which examined its aims and methodologies. He concluded that “one of the greatest confusions in housing research that covers several countries is to box all such work together and call it ‘comparative’” (Oxley 2001:103). He further suggested that “the use of the term ‘comparative housing research’ should be limited to research that genuinely compares and contrasts”. He continued: “the best of such research produces plausible, evidence-based conclusions about the reasons for the similarities and differences”. In consequence, he recognises how difficult ‘high-level’ comparative housing research is and how much work is required to do it successfully.

Oxley advocates “a more scientific approach” (p.90) to comparative housing research and notes that “[i]t is likely that, to be successful, teams of nationally based researchers would have to collaborate on such projects” (p.103).

He proposes that we divide up the work between four teams: explorers, empiricists, theorists and scientists. Given the current state of housing studies and his interest in high-level comparison, Oxley sets aside the work of explorers (who are generally interested in low-level comparison).24 He then goes on to propose that research teams
be formed according to their particular purpose and method. Thus, empiricists “find more facts and collate and organise these facts” (p.91); theorists “provide ideas to make sense of facts and they may build models and formulate hypotheses” (p.92); scientists “test hypotheses” (p.93).

Each of these teams has a different purpose: “International housing research should not be driven by a single methodological approach. Methods and purpose should go together. A variety of aims demand a variety of approaches. Methodology has to be fit for the purpose and it should be explicit. Too much housing research is without a clear method that has been reasoned to be the best way of tackling a particular issue. This is a reflection of a lack of theorising and a concern to engage in lots of description” (p.103). It is this linking of method and purpose that characterises his article, particularly in his exposition of explorers, empiricists, theorists and scientists.

After his review of different types of comparative analyses, Oxley moves on to the issue of the transferability of housing policy. He notes that while “the purpose of a large number of international housing studies... is to improve policy and practice”, they “typically stop short of transferability analysis”. He further notes that “there is a strong case for making transferability issues more explicit aspects of such work and developing analytical methods that are focussed on housing transferability” (p.98-99). To this end he proposes an examination of policies in seven contexts as follows:25

(i) Investigate the intended purpose of points system rents (PSR) in country A;
(ii) Consider whether it did achieve its objectives in A;
(iii) Investigate the reasons for it achieving its objectives in A;
(iv) Investigate the role of a wide set of circumstances including social, political, economic, and institutional factors in influencing the outcomes in A;
(v) Examine the purpose of social housing rents in country B;
(vi) Investigate the feasibility of introducing PSR in B. The roles of social, political, economic, and institutional factors in influencing potential feasibility could be examined;
(vii) Predict the consequences of introducing PSR in B. This would have to take into account forecasts about a wide range of housing and contextual matters (p.98f).

Explorers are dealing with material about which little, if anything, is known (except to practitioners in a particular country).

25. The particular example used by Oxley is the transfer of a form of points system rents (PSR) from country A to country B.
While Oxley speaks of seven contexts of transferability (and shifts from speaking of purposes and teams to the process of transferability through each context), we can distinguish within these contexts four different purposes (each with some yet to be determined associated method).

The first four contexts (contexts i-iv) are concerned with an already operating housing policy, the points system in country A. Together, it seems to me, they contribute to an evaluation of this policy. In this sense they build upon the work of empiricists, theorists and scientists.

The last three contexts (contexts v-vii) are concerned with whether and how this policy might operate in another country. They show the difficulty of implementation and of transferring housing policies and practices from one country to another. Oxley highlights the need to make this process more explicit. Again, these contexts go beyond the work of the research teams (empiricists, theorists and scientists) and also evaluation, the work of evaluators.

So, we could characterise context (v), “examining the purpose of social housing rents in country B”, as the work of ‘policy-makers’ for it concerns the formulation of some new direction in social housing rents in country B; we could characterise context (vi), “investigating the feasibility of introducing”, a new policy in the context of ‘social, political, economic and institutional factors”, as the work of ‘strategic planners’ for it concerns introducing something new into an already existing situation and this must be taken into account; we could characterise context (vii), predicting “the consequences of introducing” a new policy, as the work of ‘practitioners’ for it concerns what actually happens on the ground.

While each of these contexts of transferability has a purpose, Oxley does not link them to his previous discussion on the research teams. Such a connection which more explicitly links policy with research would add support to his view that “the value of international housing research in policy and practice circles would be greatly enhanced if rather more sophistication were to accompany suggestions about trying something from elsewhere” (p.99).

For this thesis, the key element in Oxley’s article is his search for a more scientific approach to comparative housing research and his proposal for some sort of division of labour among research teams and the transferability of housing policy. This proposal is
not based on data or results, but rather upon stages in the process from data to results, with each stage distinguished according to some purpose and associated method. 26

2.4 Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing

The previous section briefly illustrates how scholars in various fields are seeking a more scientific approach to their discipline. While some have no knowledge of what I have referred to as Cyclic Functional Collaboration, others with this knowledge have sought to show how their discipline could be better structured. While Wellek and Warren reflected upon literary studies and distinguished the different tasks within it, Arne Næss is concerned with implementing something new in the relationships between humanity and nature. Scholars familiar with Lonergan’s discovery reflected on the state of their particular disciplines – feminist studies, language studies, economics, and the natural and formal sciences – and saw the need for some order. In the field of comparative housing research, Michael Oxley proposed a division of labour for understanding housing in different countries. He also indicated the process whereby policies can be transferred from one country to another.

These are varying expressions of the search for a scientific approach to a discipline. To paraphrase McShane (2002:57), the key point is that these various scholars, whether familiar with functional specialisation or not, are not inventing distinctions; rather, they are ordering distinctions invented by centuries of searching in different disciplines. These distinctions are now richly evident in journal articles that collect and organise data, that seek to interpret other scholars in their discipline, and that grapple with the problem of putting in sequence not only the ideas of the past but also the events of the past.

The task I have set myself is to present Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing, one which incorporates both research and implementation. So, in the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss my approach to this issue. This will provide an orientation to Part B and Part C of the thesis.

The importance of a scientific approach to housing research lies in its results. It is through these results that research bears fruit in better housing. Such results presuppose a method, a way of going about getting results. And different methods produce different results. Method presupposes a question to be answered. And

26 For a more detailed discussion of Oxley’s article, see McNelis (2009b).
different methods are used to answer different questions. Unfortunately, as William Mathews (1987:249) comments:

Philosophers of science, with their concern with verification and falsification, or the social framework of scientific inquiry, have not paid nearly enough attention to the anticipatory structures of scientific questions.27

The focus of this exploration of a scientific approach to housing research is on these anticipatory structures of scientific questions – indeed, working out the questions that constitute science.

In our everyday living, we ask all sorts of different questions which emerge from within us as we puzzle about something. We are puzzlers, and questions as thought and formulated emerge as expressions of this puzzling, as expressions of our desire to understand and to solve problems. They reveal something about our dynamic orientation towards understanding and responding. They emerge in response to something that we are interested in or care about or are puzzled by.

As in everyday living, housing researchers ask all sorts of questions about different topics. For instance, Jacobs et al. (2010b) in a recent AHURI research project on the future of public housing ask:

What problems have arisen for the SHAs as a result of trying to manage housing stock in a period of tight budgetary constraints?

How have the major drivers shaping public housing provision (social, economic and political) affected its future role?

How might or should the SHAs prepare for the future policy environment to ensure that funds spent on public housing achieve sustainable policy outcomes?

To what extent is public housing viable in the current policy environment?

What alternative models of provision might be used in the future to enhance the broader role of public housing?

Or again, McNelis et al. (2008) in another AHURI research project on older persons in public housing ask:

27. It is interesting to note how little attention books on method in social science devote to ‘questions’ (apart from questions within questionnaires). For instance, indexes of books on research methods and philosophy of social science rarely include a reference to ‘questions’. For example, Flick, Steinke & von Kardoff (2004), Danermark et al. (2002), Winch (1990) and Sayer (2010). De Vaus (2002) has some initial discussion of ‘research questions’ but not in relation to the anticipatory structure of different types of questions. As noted below, one exception is Blaikie (2003:13ff, 2007:6f) who categorises research questions into three types: what-questions, why-questions and how-questions.
What are the characteristics and housing circumstances of older public housing tenants?

What is the likely future demand for public housing from older persons over the next ten years?

What are the housing policy and management issues associated with older tenants?

What is the role and responsibilities of SHAs in facilitating the access of older people to support services, in particular, to aged care?

What examples of good practice and policy initiatives are there among social housing providers in Australia and overseas?

Like these two examples, a research project will consist of different sorts of questions about a particular topic: What is happening? Why has it happened? Who are the major players and what are their characteristics? Who is doing what? What are the current issues or problems? How can we make things better? How is power being exercised? How has something changed? What is its history? What is driving change? What are its prospects for the future? Who is responsible for what has happened and for what might happen in the future? etc.

Asking questions in the context of everyday living (where immediate practical responses are called for) is very different from asking questions in a scientific context. In the first place, in the context of everyday living, we are apt to ask the same question in different ways. In this context, this is acceptable. However, in a scientific context, we need to be more precise about the questions we ask. In the second place, in the context of everyday living, we are apt to focus on one particular question or even a couple of questions, either to the exclusion of other questions or without recognising how one relates to another.

By focusing on and inquiring into the anticipatory structure of questions we can be much more precise about (i) the intent of our question, (ii) the relationship between one question and another question and (iii) work towards a complete set of questions.

Norman Blaikie in Analyzing Quantitative Data: From Description to Explanation (2003) proposes that:

Research questions are of three main types: ‘what’ questions, ‘why’ questions and ‘how’ questions:

‘What’ questions seek descriptive answers.

‘Why’ questions seek understanding or explanation.

‘How’ questions seek appropriate interventions to bring about change.
All research questions can and perhaps should be stated as one of these three types. To do so helps to make the intentions of the research clear. It is possible to formulate questions using different words, such as, ‘who’, ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘which’, ‘how many’ or ‘how much’. While questions that begin with such words may appear to have different intentions, they are all versions of a ‘what’ question: ‘What individuals...’, ‘At what time...’, ‘At what place...’, ‘In what situations...’, ‘In what proportion...’ and ‘To what extent...’.

For Blaikie, social research can pursue one of a set of eight objectives – explore, describe, understand, explain, predict, change, evaluate and assess social impacts – with the first five being characteristic of basic research and the last three of applied research. These follow a sequence, with the “core of all social research [being] the sequence that begins with the description of characteristics and patterns in social phenomena and is followed by an explanation of why they occur” (p.11-12).29

I would suggest, however, that if we consider our questions more closely, we will find that a range of different types (according to the answer they anticipate) emerge from within us as we puzzle about something.

- what-is-it-questions anticipate that there is something to be understood, something to be made sense of. They anticipate an insight into something within our experience such that we will reach some understanding of the ‘what’ under consideration;
- purpose-questions anticipate that this ‘what’ serves some purpose or role;
- is-it-questions seek a judgement as to whether or not this particular event is the occurrence of a ‘what’;
- change-questions anticipate an understanding of what is going forward in the development of the ‘what’ under consideration;
- how-often-questions anticipate a frequency, the occurrence of the ‘what’ so many times within a group or class or population of events;
- is-it-worthwhile-questions seek an evaluation as to whether it is worth the effort creating this ‘what’;

28. He goes on: “Similarly, some questions that begin with ‘what’ are actually ‘why’ questions. For example, ‘What makes people behave this way?’ seeks an explanation rather than a description. It needs to be reworded as: ‘Why do people behave this way?’.” In my view, however, why-questions intend different things, one of which is what-question. See footnote 30.
29. Blaikie (2007) also discusses types of research questions and research questions in sequence in Approaches to Social Enquiry: Advancing Knowledge.
what-do-I-do-questions anticipate a course of action within which the ‘what’ is not simply understood but will be created.\textsuperscript{30}

This is not a definitive list of questions. It still needs some refinement, but it does begin to sort questions into their basic types and so, we can be more precise about our questions and the answers we are anticipating. Moreover, we can note that some questions presuppose some answer to others, i.e. that there is some order and some relationship between questions. For instance, all these questions presuppose an answer to a what-is-it-question. So, before we can answer a what-do-we-do-question to create housing, we need to know what housing is, we need to know what purpose or role it plays and have decided that it is worthwhile promoting or creating; before we answer an is-it-worthwhile-question, we need to know what is housing that we are deciding about; before we answer a how-often-question or an is-it-question, we need to know whether it is housing that is occurring and distinguish its occurrence from the occurrence of something else. A what-is-it-question, then, provides a context for answering further questions.

Finally, I would suggest that a scientific approach to housing would seek to incorporate all the questions that could be asked of housing – a complete set of questions. Cyclic Functional Collaboration proposes that this complete set of eight questions consists of an empirical question, a theoretical question, a historical question, an evaluative/critique question, a transformative question, a visionary/policy question, a strategic question and a practical question.

A scientific approach to housing, then, is a complete ordered set of inter-related questions. Each is understood in the context of all other questions (the totality of questions) and thus, in relation to each other question.

Part B seeks to develop a more precise understanding of each of these eight questions. Each question is the basis for a functional specialty. It is only when we have a more precise understanding of each question that we will be in a position to grasp the

\textsuperscript{30} While Blaikie just states that there are three types of research questions, I would suggest that this list indicates a broader list of questions. While Blaikie and others would highlight why-questions as seeking an explanation, it is notable that none of the questions in this set asks a why-question. In my view, why-questions intend different answers and so we need to distinguish between different types of why-questions. Why is a house, a house? (i) because it consists of certain materials – bricks, timber, concrete etc., (ii) because these materials are ordered in a certain way, (iii) because it was built by a group of people and (iv) because it meets some purpose (McShane 2003a; see also Aristotle [c. 322BC]2007b:Book II, Section 3). These different answers to a why-question point to different types of causes: material cause, formal cause, efficient cause and final cause.

In his Posterior Analytics ([c. 322BC]2007a:Book II, Section 1), Aristotle discusses different types of question. He also discusses how an understanding of the whatness of something is the same as understanding the why of it (see his discussion of understanding the eclipse of the moon in Book II, Section 2).
inter-relationship between them, their order, that these eight questions form a complete set and that each question forms the basis for a functional division of labour. This is discussed in Part C.

2.5 Summary and concluding remarks

In Chapter 1, I outlined a twofold problem for progress in housing: first, the fragmentation of research such that it fails to provide practical advice to decision-makers considering the future; and second, the limitations of the personal and communal horizon of researchers and decision-makers and, consequently, the ways in which both research and decision-making are skewed, whether deliberately or unconsciously, towards the interests of dominant groups. I proposed that Cyclic Functional Collaboration is a scientific approach to housing that would, on the one hand, systematically deal with the fragmentation of research and provide sound advice to decision-makers and, on the other hand, offset the limitations of personal and communal horizons of researchers and decision-makers.

Cyclic Functional Collaboration may not be familiar territory for those involved in housing research. This chapter points descriptively to various aspects. It has located its origins in the desire of Lonergan to develop a practical theory of history, one which looked to the future, a theory which seeks not just to understand history but also to direct it. While initially expressed within the context of theology, it has a far wider significance – it addresses the problem of how we concretely make progress in any field of human endeavour.

This chapter has also pointed to examples of Cyclic Functional Collaboration emerging spontaneously from many varied attempts at ordering and integrating our thinking and doing in a range of disciplines. The examples, however, do more than this. They begin to expand the notion of Cyclic Functional Collaboration as it shifts from an academic context to the practical context of human living.

In the final section of the chapter, I have proposed that Cyclic Functional Collaboration is a complete ordered set of eight inter-related questions and as such constitutes a scientific approach to housing. As a complete set, it incorporates all the questions that can be asked about housing. As an ordered set, some questions presuppose answers to other questions. As inter-related, an answer to one question provides the data for answering another, and each question relates to the others and to the total set of questions.

Cyclic Functional Collaboration is a method for bringing about progress in any human endeavour. It is 'a framework for collaborative creativity'. This framework is a division of
labour based upon functional specialties in the whole process, from the data of the
current situation through to the issuing of practical advice. Within each functional
specialty, researchers seek to answer to particular question using particular methods.
In this way, the work of one functional specialty explicitly relates to, builds upon and
contributes to the work of others. While each group of researchers focuses on one type
of work, together they bring about progress.

Part B will undertake the initial task of distinguishing and identifying the question (and
its anticipated answer and associated method) which underpins each functional
specialty. It will come to a more precise understanding of each functional specialty.
Part C will discuss Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a whole, as a complete ordered
set of eight inter-related questions that constitute a scientific approach to housing
studies and as ‘a framework for collaborative creativity’ among housing researchers.
PART B:

THE FUNCTIONAL SPECIALTIES

Dialectic - Foundations
History - Policies
Interpretation - Systematics
Research - Communications
The thesis seeks to present Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing. The purpose of Part B is to present a more precise understanding of each of the eight functional specialties that constitute Cyclic Functional Collaboration. Each functional specialty is constituted by a particular type of question and its anticipated answer.

But this in itself presents a problem. To present a more precise understanding of each functional specialty presupposes an understanding of Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a whole. Yet, to communicate an understanding of Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a whole presupposes an understanding of all the parts, their relationships to one another and their relationship to the Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a whole.¹

The problem I face in Part B is illustrated in the following quote from Patrick Byrne (2002:21) regarding the functional specialty Research but the same problem applies to any of the other functional specialties as well.

The term “research” is used widely and in various ways in our contemporary world, especially in university contexts. In this undifferentiated sense, research covers a vast range of very different activities: conducting laboratory experiments in the natural sciences, searching for information in libraries or on the internet, performing statistical analyses of data in the social sciences, discovering new theoretical principles, devising new proofs of problematic theorems, constructing theoretical models, deconstructing literary texts, and constructing critical historical accounts. On the other hand, Bernard Lonergan restricted his use of the term Research to a very technical sense in Method in Theology. There Research refers strictly to the activities involved in one of his eight functional specialties.

My problem? The term ‘research’ along with the term ‘policy’ is most often used in a general sense within housing studies, in what Byrne refers to as an ‘undifferentiated sense’. Within Cyclic Functional Collaboration, however, the term ‘Research’ is used in

1. For example, in the same way, I cannot understand the parts of circle – a centre, radii and plane curve – without understanding what a circle is and I cannot understand a circle without understanding the parts, their relationship to one another and to the circle as a whole. Then again, the reader may dispute this, arguing that in my everyday living I understand what a circle is before I understand its parts. But such an argument hinges on an understanding of ‘understanding’ and here, at the beginning of the thesis, I presuppose an understanding of ‘understanding’.

This problem is referred to as the hermeneutic circle (Heidegger 1973; Gadamer 1975). Lonergan sets out both the problem and ‘the answer’ as follows: “It is understanding that surmounts the hermeneutic circle. The meaning of a text is an intentional entity. It is a unity that is unfolded through parts, sections, chapters, paragraphs, sentences, words. We can grasp the unity, the whole, only through the parts. At the same time the parts are determined in their meaning by the whole which each part partially reveals. Such is the hermeneutic circle. Logically it is a circle. But coming to understand is not a logical deduction. It is a self-correcting process of learning that spirals into the meaning of the whole by using each new part to fill out and qualify and correct the understanding reached in reading the earlier parts” ([1972]1990:159).

An understanding of understanding will be explored further in Chapter 4 where I distinguish between description, on the one hand, and understanding as explanatory, on the other. Further, as we will see, the whole and the parts are grasped as a whole and as parts in a single moment of understanding.
a precise technical sense as one of eight functional specialties. As it is generally used within housing studies, ‘research’ tends to cover in an imprecise way the first four of the functional specialties. As a functional specialty, Research needs to be undertaken “in terms of its functional relations to the other seven functional specialties” (Byrne 2002:24).

Prior to any attempt at presenting Cyclic Functional Collaboration, I have already come to my own understanding of Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a whole and as constituted by each of its parts, the eight functional specialties. This understanding of the whole and the parts is presupposed in my presentation.

In presenting Cyclic Functional Collaboration, I also must begin with some understanding of my audience. So, rightly or wrongly, I presuppose an audience of housing researchers operating within the everyday taken-for-granted world of common sense. So, immediately, I am confronted with a gap in world-views, for an understanding of Cyclic Functional Collaboration presupposes the ‘displacement’ of housing researchers into not only the world of theory but also into the world of the subject as subject. ² A housing researcher operating in the everyday world of common sense has little idea of the world of theory and the world of the subject as subject. ³

My strategy is twofold. The first strategy is to structure the discussion of each functional specialty as a movement from the taken-for-granted world of common sense in which most housing researchers operate to a more precise understanding of the functional specialty. So, the discussion of each functional specialty in Part B follows a six-stage pattern (with some variations). First, it begins with an appeal to the experience of a researcher undertaking research as an initial view of the functional specialty. This phenomenology of research highlights some aspect of research. It asks the reader to reflect upon their experience of doing research, distinguishing one element of this experience from another. The significance of this thesis hinges on the capacity of the reader to make these distinctions within their own experience of doing research. The phenomenology of research orients the discussion that follows. Second, this phenomenology of research is followed by a review of genres within the corpus of research on Australian social housing relevant to the functional specialty. Genres are allocated to each functional specialty according to whether their primary orientation corresponds, in some way, with the initial view of functional specialty outlined in the phenomenology of research. The allocation of works is not always clear-cut as authors

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3. This is further complicated by the extent to which I do or am able to understand and operate in the world of theory and the world of the subject as subject.
shift rapidly from what I would locate in one specialty to that of another, not just within sections but from sentence to sentence. So, continually these authors shift back and forward from what is occurring, to its significance, to what is changing, to whether that is good or bad, to how to improve what is occurring. In my view, they are operating within the world of common sense and have yet to adopt a scientific approach to housing. On the other hand, the different genres of research highlight the way in which different authors are doing different things, albeit in what to me is some muddled way. It is to the core of their work that I wish to point, as indicative of a functional specialty. So, the review of relevant genres seeks to highlight some aspects of what they are doing as significant and relevant, and to ‘overlook’ other aspects as insignificant and irrelevant. Third, a key question is asked of the relevant genres within a functional specialty: what are the authors in these genres doing? So, this stage presents a brief summary of their significant elements. Fourth, an attempt is made to develop a more precise understanding of the functional specialty. Fifth, for the functional specialties Interpretation, History and Dialectic there follows an illustration. (The implementation functional specialties are illustrated by an extended analysis of some work by Jones and Seelig (2004, 2005) on research-policy linkages.) Sixth, each chapter concludes with a formulation of the question underlying the functional specialty as well as some comments which reflect upon its implications for current housing research.

The second strategy regards Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a presupposition or, rather, set of presuppositions for each functional specialty. Cyclic Functional Collaboration presupposes a particular understanding of the world of theory, of the world of the subject as subject, and of the exercise of power whereby the interests of particular groups dominate a society. These are key issues for housing research and a scientific approach to housing must address them. They are discussed where they arise within the functional specialties. Interpretation distinguishes theory from common sense. Dialectic discusses the conflicts that arise as housing researchers operate in the world of common sense and deliberately or implicitly operate within the horizon of one or other interest group. It also discusses the conflicts that arise when housing researchers have not decisively shifted into the world of theory. Foundations discusses the decision facing housing researchers as to which is the best way forward in conducting their research.

The purpose of Part B is to work towards a more precise understanding of each of the functional specialties, one which distinguishes more clearly between them. Its focus is on the individual researcher distinguishing and identifying the question addressed by each functional specialty. Chapter 3 will explore the functional specialty Research;
Chapter 4, Interpretation; Chapter 5, History; Chapter 6, Dialectic; and Chapter 7, the four implementation functional specialties: Foundations, Policies, Systematics and Communications.

Having come to some more precise understanding of each of the functional specialties, I will be in a position in Part C to consider how this is an ordered set of inter-related questions that grounds ‘a framework for collaborative creativity’.
Chapter 3. Research as a functional specialty

[The experiential] is the given as given. It is the field of materials about which one inquires, in which one finds the fulfilment of conditions for the unconditioned, to which cognitional process repeatedly returns to generate the series of inquiries and reflections that yield the contextual manifold of judgments... the given is unquestionable and indubitable. What is constituted by answering questions, can be upset by other questions. But the given is constituted apart from questioning; it remains the same no matter what the result of questioning may be... the given is indubitable... what can be doubted is the answer to a question... But the given is not the answer to any question; it is prior to questioning and independent of any answers... the given is residual and, of itself, diffuse. It is possible to select elements in the given and to indicate them clearly and precisely. But the selection and indication are the work of insight and formulation... the field of the given is equally valid in all its parts but differently significant in different parts... some parts are significant for some departments of knowledge and other parts for other departments... It includes not only the veridical deliverances of outer senses but also images, dreams, illusions, hallucinations, personal equations, subjective bias, and so forth.

Alfred Schutz notes that “the starting point of social science is to be found in ordinary social life” (1972:141). This is the taken-for-granted everyday world in which we live and carry on our day-to-day affairs. One of the elements in this taken-for-granted everyday world is housing. In this world of common sense, we take for granted the ways of understanding and doing: “It means to accept until further notice our knowledge of certain states of affairs as unquestionably plausible… Common sense thinking simply takes for granted, until counterevidence appears, not only the world of physical objects but also the sociocultural world into which we are born and in which we grow up. This world of everyday life is indeed the unquestioned but always questionable matrix within which all our inquiries start and end” (Schutz 1982:326-327). This world is one “which existed long before our birth, experienced and interpreted by Others, our predecessors, as an organised world. Now it is given to our experience and interpretation” (Schutz 1982:208).

For Schutz:

[the structure of the social world is meaningful, not only for those living in that world, but for its scientific interpreters as well. Living in the world, we live with others and for others, orienting our lives to them… [The social scientist’s] data… are the already constituted meanings of active participants in the social world. It is to these already meaningful data that his scientific concepts must ultimately refer: to the meaningful acts of individual men and women, to their everyday experience of one another, to their understanding of one another’s meanings, and to their initiation of new meaningful behaviour of their own. (1972:9-10)

The taken-for-granted everyday world of common sense is constituted by individuals who continually seek ways in which to express the meaning of themselves, of their relationship with one another and of their relationship with the world. Their meanings find expression in the materiality of the world. These expressions encompass both external events (states or actions) and internal events (states, actions, experiences etc.). They include attitudes, beliefs, opinions, feelings, emotions, values, habits, expectations, motivations, skills, capacities, personal and social characteristics, material characteristics (of buildings, of habitats, of environments), language, clothes, decorations, art, music, sounds, dance, performance, video, film, symbols, signs, customs etc. This diverse manifold of expressions as meaningful events is the starting point for social science (and for housing studies).

Schutz, through the work of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1971), is very much associated with qualitative research (and the social constructionist tradition of sociology) (Ritzer 2003:373). Meaningful events in this taken-for-granted everyday world can not only be described by participants and observed and recorded by researchers but they can also be counted and associated with other meaningful events.
So, signing a lease is a meaning event but it is one in which the number of times it occurs within a given time-period and geographical area can be counted; it is also one which can be associated with other events (such as a level or range of incomes) within the same time-period or geographical area.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the functional specialty Research. Its starting point is the taken-for-granted everyday world of meaningful events. The chapter begins with a brief reflection on one aspect of research as a preliminary way of distinguishing the functional specialty Research (Section 3.1). Section 3.2 reviews particular genres of research on Australian social housing. These can be broadly referred to as primary or field research. Section 3.3 asks: what are these primary researchers doing? This section provides a ‘lead into’ Section 3.4 which seeks to come to a more precise understanding of Research. Section 3.5 concludes by considering some implications of a more precise understanding of Research for current housing research.

3.1 Research: an initial view

In his book *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Lawrence Neuman describes social research as “a way of going about finding answers to questions” (2006:2). All research begins with a question. It may be formulated or it may be just a sense of being puzzled. Whether formulated or not, my question is about something, for example, housing. This something (housing) precedes my question and provokes the puzzlement that issues in my question. Further, my question issues in an inquiry or investigation which, initially, turns to what I currently understand about this something (housing) but looks beyond this. While seeking something more, my inquiry turns to occurrences of this something (housing), to the context within which it occurs, to events that occur in the same time and place and to events that precede or follow it. In doing this, I turn to what is given, to what precedes my question and, by asking my question (and possibly a series of subsequent questions) about what is given, I move towards some discovery of the meaning or significance of what is given.

In asking and answering questions, I spontaneously distinguish two movements: a first movement turns to the field of materials, to what is given (the data) which provoked the question and about which we inquire; the second movement is the discovery of an answer to the question. This discovery is meaning or significance (interpretation) which is what my initial question intends and which is arrived at only at the end of my inquiry. A discovery integrates or provides a higher viewpoint on some set of data within the field of materials.
3.2 Primary research in Australian social housing

A review reveals three genres within the corpus of research on Australian social housing that have as their primary orientation the first movement in asking a question, the turn to the occurrence of events. These genres make available different types of data, data that is turned to, attended to and gathered in response to a question. These genres are commonly referred to as primary or field research. They include some component of gathering the data that is relevant to an understanding of social housing. This activity is the most prevalent within social housing research. The difficulty, as we will see, is that researchers do not advert to the distinctions between gathering data, interpreting data, noting changes in data and critiquing or evaluating data.

Initially, when speaking of research on social housing, various forms of quantitative and qualitative research come to mind. However, as this section indicates, research on social housing extends wider than this. At the outset, it is important to note that research, as the gathering of data relevant to social housing, is often embedded within genres of social housing research where the research is undertaken for another purpose. Indeed, most research on social housing appeals in some way or other to data as evidence in support of its argument. The focus here, however, is on genres of primary or field research. Part of the task will be to distinguish research from other additional purposes. While research can be embedded within different genres, the research component can be used by other authors for different purposes. Below I distinguish between three genres that yield three different types of data: data gathered through the observation of events (observable data), data gathered on how participants experience events (participant data), and data which links events together and describes a particular process (descriptive data). A final section notes that historical data is not a separate genre.

(1) Observable data

The most prevalent type of data on social housing is data which is produced by an observer counting events, either a whole population of events (a census) or a selected population of events (a sample). This type of data asks how often something occurs within a selected population of events.

1. That there is a distinction between quantitative and qualitative research is often taken-for-granted in social research. It is also the subject of much debate (see the discussion in Danermark et al. (2002:Chapter 6) on moving beyond the quantitative/qualitative division in social research.) While both these forms of research are noted, they are not especially referred to as different forms of research as my focus is on the questions asked and the data turned to, attended to and gathered.

2. In this section of the chapter, my purpose is to show the relationship between the questions we ask and the data that we turn to, attend and gather in seeking an answer to those questions. In Section 4.4 I will explore the relationship between data and theory.
Census data selects a population (persons, dwellings, households etc.) and within this population descriptively defines an event or a range of events (such as characteristics of the population) and counts all instances of the occurrence of this event within a defined area at a defined time. A census is the complete enumeration of the population. Examples of census data on social housing include data produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006a), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW 2009), Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP 2011), COAG Reform Council (2010a, 2010b) and public housing organisations (for example, Victoria. Department of Human Services Housing and Community Building Division 2010).

One example of census data is the ABS Census which selects a population of dwellings, descriptively defines a dwelling (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006b) and then counts the occurrence of dwellings within Australia. It further defines a range of events within this population such as tenure, type of landlord, type of dwelling, size of dwelling etc. and counts instances of these events. It thus provides a count of the distribution of dwellings and its characteristics at a particular time for a particular location or area. This data provides a picture of a state of affairs at some past time. Further, because the counts of characteristics are related to a particular dwelling in a particular time and place, the frequency of counts in one time and place can be compared with another place at the same time or the same place at another time. They can also be combined in any number of ways (as cross-tabulations) to provide some detailed pictures of local areas at a particular time. As a result, census data show different patterns of the occurrence of events at different times and places.

Neuman (2006:Ch 8) outlines various means by which samples can be determined: random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling and cluster sampling. Similar to census data, the sample defines the population, the events or range of events to be counted within this population, the location/area and the time. But rather than counting all instances of their occurrence, only instances within a selected sample of the population are counted.

So, the ABS Survey of Income and Housing Costs is a repeated cross-section survey of a random sample of households representative of the Australian population. At irregular intervals since 1982, the ABS has collected data on “housing-related variables (housing tenure, dwelling structure and location, estimated house value, housing loans and repayments, housing costs etc.), labour market variables (wages, labour force position etc.), socio-demographic information (age, education, country of birth, family type etc.) and very detailed income data (specified by source of income and on a
current weekly and previous financial year basis)” (Dockery, Feeny, Hulse et al. 2008:29; see also Australian Bureau of Statistics 2009).

Sample data can be used not only to count events that are external to a person such as dwellings, rooms, households, tenures, activities, habits etc. but also events that are internal to a person such as decisions, motivations, views, attitudes, feelings, experiences, values, self-understandings/meanings, beliefs, opinions, expectations etc. While the range of some events admits of discrete differences, other events are continuous. Through the use of techniques such as a Likert scale, rank-order scale, Guttman scale etc., researchers demarcate segments along this continuum. In this way, levels of satisfaction, strength of desires, attitudes, preferences, feelings, beliefs etc. can be counted. For example, the National Social Housing Survey (Roy Morgan Research 2007, 2008a, 2008b) records the level of tenant satisfaction with services and dwellings, the extent to which social housing meets tenant needs and preferences (location and amenity).

While Census and sample data provide data at a particular place and time, this data can also be extended to estimate data at another place and time or, in the case of sample data, about the whole population. McNelis (2007) uses 2001 Census data on low income persons over 55 years who are renting in Australia (and each State/Territory) and the mortality rates of persons over 55 years to estimate future demand for social housing. These estimates are based on changes in data in the past which are projected forward, in particular, the trends regarding mortality rates, to provide a state of affairs regarding the demand for social housing at some future time. There is an assumption that what happened in the past in relation to mortality rates among a certain population will happen in the future. The understanding sought here regards the likely occurrence of events, not an understanding of why they occurred.

‘Client data’ collected by an organisation for management purposes can also be used for research purposes. For example, the Victorian Office of Housing collects data on their dwellings and their tenants to assist with asset and tenancy management. As reported (see, for example, Victoria. Department of Human Services Housing and Community Building Division 2010), it can be used for research purposes.

(2) Participant data

Participant data is data on how a person experiences their situation. It is gathered through a variety of techniques: interviews, focus group discussions, personal reflections, personal observations about self and reactions/responses, and audio and video narratives. Through these techniques, the researcher seeks to “take us, as
readers, into the time and place of the observation so that we know what it was like to have been there. They capture and communicate someone else’s experience of the world in his or her own words” (Patton 2002:47). It describes “lifeworlds ‘from the inside out’, from the point of view of the people who participate” (Flick, Steinke & von Kardoff 2004:3). Participant data includes decisions, motivations, views, attitudes, feelings, experiences, values, self-understandings/meanings, beliefs, opinions, habits, expectations etc. of a population. Three examples of such research are outlined below.

The first example within social housing research is the work of Hulse and Saugeres on home life, work and housing decisions (2008) for the AHURI National Research Venture 1. This investigated the linkages between government housing assistance and economic participation as a complement to the quantitative work (Dockery, Feeny, Hulse et al. 2008). A review of previous research evidence (Chapter 2) resulted in a series of questions on these linkages. To find answers to these questions the study undertook in-depth interviews with 105 recipients of housing assistance. It reported on their ‘attitudes, preferences and decisions’ in relation to various types of economic participation: “The research explores the factors that shape current decision-making about economic participation in the context of past experiences of housing and economic participation and aspirations and plans for the future. The research investigates both practical considerations for people in receipt of housing assistance in considering economic participation, such as balancing paid work with caring for children or maintaining mental and physical health, but also underlying social factors and cultural values about the role and value of different types of economic participation in relation to other contributors to individual and family wellbeing” (Hulse & Saugeres 2008:2). With extensive quotes from interviewees, the study reported in some detail on various aspects of the linkage between housing assistance and economic participation. It collected data on the life histories of interviewees (family breakdown, residential mobility, child abuse, family violence, educational levels, employment and housing) along with their current attitudes to education, housing assistance and economic participation; their current view that ‘paid work had both financial and non-financial benefits’; and their current views on paid work and barriers to entering paid work (mental and physical health problems, caring for children and other relatives, place/location, and transport and housing issues): “Our qualitative research into the attitudes, preferences and decisions of housing assistance recipients has found that the factors that encourage or discourage them in making transitions into various forms of economic participation are complex and interrelated” (Hulse & Saugeres 2008:92).
A second example is a study of older persons in public housing (McNelis 2007; McNelis, Neske, Jones et al. 2008). The authors had articulated a series of questions (McNelis, Neske, Jones et al. 2008:1,11) to which they sought answers. The first part of the study (also referred to in Section 3.2) sought to understand “the likely future demand for public housing from older persons over the next ten years” (McNelis 2007). The second part sought answers to these questions by interviewing older people living in public housing (38 interviews), service-providers supporting to older people in public housing (13 interviews), SHA frontline staff (15 interviews) and SHA area/regional managers (9 interviews) in order “to identify and explore more fully the policy and management issues confronting public housing providers” (McNelis, Neske, Jones et al. 2008:3). While this study highlighted the differences in views expressed by the different groups of people interviewed, it was focused primarily on synthesising these different views in the form of policy and management issues which older people present for government and public housing providers.

A third and more complex example is a research paper by Burke, Pinnegar, Phibbs et al. (2007) for the AHURI National Research Venture 3 whose research question was: how do we assess and address housing affordability for lower income households in Australia? This overarching question was broken down into a number of secondary questions. Primarily, the question addressed by this research paper was: Who has an affordability problem? How has this changed over time? (Yates, Milligan, Berry et al. 2007:1f) Previous research papers had identified the scale of the affordability problem and its spatial, tenure and household-type distribution. This research paper sought “insight into how both renters and purchasers experience, identify and negotiate housing affordability in their everyday lives” (Burke, Pinnegar, Phibbs et al. 2007:8). The study sought answers through a series of postal surveys, focus groups and in-depth interviews. For the most part, those involved in the focus groups were selected from participants in the postal surveys, and those involved in the in-depth interviews from participants in the focus groups. The postal surveys not only collected responses from participants on their demographic and housing status but also on the ‘scale and extent of affordability constraint experienced’ (Section 3.3) and the trade-offs they make within these constraints (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). In these surveys, it was possible to link certain demographic, income and housing characteristics with (i) affordability constraints and (ii) the observations, experiences, desires and perceptions of survey participants.3 The research goes further by presenting typologies of renters and

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3. Throughout this Research Report, the authors go beyond the empirical data and report on insights, implications, findings and evaluations.
purchasers. These aim “to provide an effective means of capturing different ways of negotiating housing affordability by households through capturing particular drivers and similar outcomes” (p.56). Typologies are an imaginative synthesis that put together certain aspects of the data in different configurations, in this instance, a cluster of experiences, attitudes and strategies.

(3) Descriptive data
Descriptive data describes a sequence of events in which only some events are understood by the participants. The description of events is pieced together by a researcher from the experiences of a range of participants either directly or indirectly. For instance, McNelis (McNelis & Burke 2004; McNelis 2006), in seeking to understand how social housing rent-setting and finance works in various countries, takes materials from various sources – documents, surveys, interviews, personal experience and accumulated knowledge – and describes the sequence of events in relation to rent-setting, operating finance and capital finance across a range of countries. These descriptions differ from country to country and within countries but they are then used as the basis for a more general theory of rental and financial systems (McNelis 2009a, 2009b).

Another example is the study by Hulse and Burke (Burke & Hulse 2003; Hulse & Burke 2005) on allocations policy. In order to answer their questions about the current state of allocations policy, its directions and characteristics (Hulse & Burke 2005:3) began by defining an allocations systems in social housing as a “multi-layered process in which policy and practice decisions are made about the access of households, both new applicants and existing tenants, to social housing based primarily on administrative criteria and processes” (p.6). They then went on to develop a conceptual framework for social housing allocations (Burke & Hulse 2003; Hulse & Burke 2005:Chapter 2). Around this framework, the authors gathered data which described various aspects of allocations in Australia (State/Territories) and overseas. But what this study also highlights is the way in which a housing researcher can descriptively put together material from various sources. As the study indicated in an introductory note:

This was an exploratory study in view of the lack of any previous national, sector-wide research. Consequently, the research design involved use of multiple methods to build up an account of allocations systems in Australian social housing. These methods were both quantitative and qualitative, and the findings were compared and cross-checked against each other, consistent with the principles of triangulation. This approach recognised both deficiencies in available data and the likelihood of differing perspectives, given the complex and multi-layered nature of allocations, the inherent tensions of any form of administrative rationing system, and the
dynamics of administrative systems dependent on social interactions for their implementation.

Research methods included a documentary review of past social housing allocations policies and practices in Australia and a review of the literature. The research undertook a detailed analysis of available secondary data and scoped current policies and practices. This was supplemented by small-scale surveys of housing practitioners in the public and community sectors, together with a policy workshop and interviews with key program managers which covered both formal and particularly informal allocations. The research also included a primarily web-based examination of overseas reforms. (Hulse & Burke 2005:ii)

Descriptive data is not limited to economic processes but can also encompass events with political and cultural meanings. For instance, Marston (2000) appeals to the views expressed in interviews and documents as evidence of changing discourse about public housing in Queensland and subsequent conflict between ‘policy actors’; Blunt and Dowling (2006) appeal to a range of different views to show the different meanings of home; and Dodson (2007) appeals to discourses and practices around social housing in various countries, particularly Australia and New Zealand, to show how governments change housing policy through changes in discourse.

(4) A note on historical data
Social housing research is not limited to recent events. Observable data, participant data and descriptive data can be gathered, through various techniques, on the more or less remote past. Indeed, social housing research has a relatively long history in Australia, even pre-dating the establishment of State Housing Authorities in the late 1930s and early 1940s. For example, various public inquiries and royal commissions in Victoria inquired into the housing conditions in Melbourne and sought some solution to this problem. The 1913 Joint Select Committee (of the Victorian Parliament) into Housing and the 1914-18 (Victorian) Royal Commission into the Housing of the People in the Metropolis reported on overcrowding, poor standards, shortages, high rents and poor health of residents based upon interviews with witnesses and visits to ‘slum areas’ (Harris 1988; Howe 1988b)

These reports, subsequently, became data for Harris and Howe as they sought to understand the history of social housing in Victoria. In doing so, they interpreted this data in a new context. For example, Harris noted ‘the lack of statistical evidence on housing’ and the complaint of one witness that ‘available information dealt only with the whole of the metropolis’, and concluded that “most of the evidence taken during the Royal Commission tended to be impressionistic and value-laden”. Despite this lack of
evidence, “the inquiry… provided a focus for the housing reform movement and… for the expression of possible solutions to the housing problem” (pp.10-11).

In the 1930s, as chair of the Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board, Oswald Barnett pioneered new social research in Australia at a time when legislative change depended upon Royal Commissions and public service techniques, when universities undertook little social research and when private foundations (such as in the United Kingdom and the United States) did not exist in Australia (Howe 1994:13). The board commissioned a survey of nearly 86,000 dwellings which included not only descriptions of dwellings and living conditions but also photographs, graphs and other visual material (Howe 1988b). Its report was used extensively to lobby the Victorian government to establish a Housing Commission to provide public housing. It went further by spelling out in some detail various aspects of this Housing Commission based upon its investigations of public housing overseas, for example, a range of schemes for rent adjustment in England (Victoria. Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board 1937:60ff; McNelis 2000:38ff).

While these public inquiries and royal commissions undertook research as part of their work, their purpose was part of the political process of working out a legislative response to areas of very poor housing conditions etc. They appealed to this research as evidence of the need for and support for their legislative program.

3.3 What are these primary researchers doing?

I began this review of Australian social housing research by distinguishing between (i) the data which the researcher turns to, attends to and gathers and (ii) the conclusion or viewpoint or significance they reach as an answer to a question. The review pointed to different types of data: observable data, participant data and descriptive data. This data can be gathered about current meaningful events or about meaningful events in the more or less remote past.

So what are these different primary researchers doing?

First, the field of materials that primary researchers turn to or pay attention to will be any expression of human understanding and living that is relevant to an understanding of housing. As noted in the introduction, these encompass both a range of external events that can be seen, heard, touched and smelt as well as a range of events that occur within each person. As noted in the epigraph for this chapter, these events are simply what are given. They are disparate, diffuse, unrelated and without significance. As events, they are unquestionable because they have already occurred. While a researcher can ask questions about their significance or about how they came to occur,
as events they are prior to questions. That they occurred does not change as a result of questioning. As expressions of human understanding and living, they incorporate both human intelligence and stupidity, responsibility and irresponsibility, collaboration and alienation, love and hatred, self-sacrifice and self-aggrandisement of persons, groups and nations.

Second, the field of materials attended to by the primary researcher and, subsequently, the type of data gathered differs according to the question asked. As questions vary, so too does the data to which they turn vary in answering that question: observable data, whether simple frequencies or more complex associations between events, answers the question: how often?; participant data answers the question: how do you understand what is happening?; descriptive data answers the question: what is the sequence of events that led to another event? So, the data turned to, attended to and gathered is a function of the question asked. In turning to and attending to the data, researchers are selective and their selection depends upon the originating question.

Third, researchers use different techniques to gather different types of data. Observable data, as the name suggests, assumes some descriptive definition of social housing and its characteristics, uses surveys to count instances that meet these definitions and then collates and manipulates this data. Participant data uses surveys, interviews, focus groups etc. to get participants to express their own understanding of themselves (feelings, values, beliefs) or perceptions of others. Descriptive data accumulates a picture or description of a sequence of events by supplementing knowledge gained from personal involvement with descriptions from other people involved at different points in the sequence.

Fourth, for all researchers, gathering data is a practical task. It demands a particular set of skills: the skill of observation; the skill of asking the right questions of people; the skill of structuring and organising surveys; the skill of collating and testing the validity of data; the skill of presenting data etc. It demands an attentive researcher, one with a capacity to notice details, albeit sometimes quite subtle ones. It demands the skill of conversation. It demands sensitivity to people and a capacity to relate directly and easily.

5. Kemeny discusses some of the difficulties associated with defining what he calls ‘first order’ concepts in housing studies such as ‘dwelling’ and ‘household’. As noted in Chapter 4, this problem arises where a descriptive definition is used rather than an explanatory definition (1992:21ff).
6. This set of skills is different from the set required of a theorist: the skill of asking further questions; the skill of shifting contexts; the skill of picking from a range of possibilities the one that best relates the data. The theorist requires a capacity to grasp possibilities and to work them into new arrangements.
Fifth, all the different types of data – observable data, participant data and descriptive data – document events that occur at a particular time (which can be aggregated into a period of time) and particular place (which can be aggregated into a specified geographical area). It is this concern with the occurrences of events in particular times and particular places that makes a social science empirical. While Neuman, for instance, notes that different approaches to research tend to be associated with either quantitative or qualitative research, he also notes that all approaches are empirical: “Each is rooted in the observable reality of sights, sounds, behaviours, situations, discussions, and actions of people. Research is never based on fabrication and imagination alone” (2006:107). So, the primary question a researcher asks is whether or not certain events occurred.

Sixth, primary research not only documents a certain state of affairs at a particular time and place, it also seeks to associate the occurrence of events with one another either spatially, sequentially or both. It documents the extent to which, or the probability of, different events occurring simultaneously or in sequence, and the extent to which the same events occur in different geographical areas. Through techniques such as cross-tabulations, univariate analysis, bi-variate analysis, typologies etc. researchers can achieve some quite complex associations.7

Seventh, primary research seeks to generalise its findings from one population at a particular time (or period of time) and particular place (or geographical area) to other populations in a different particular time and different particular place. For instance, a sample of a population may be generalised to the whole population or, considering

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7. The term ‘association’ is being used in a technical sense here. An association occurs when events are externally related through their remote or immediate proximity in time and space. A set of events or properties are associated when they regularly and conjointly occur in space and time. Later I will use the term ‘correlation’ to indicate a systematic relationship. A correlation occurs when, through an insight, an internal or systemic relationship between events is grasped. A set of events or properties are correlated where the occurrence of an event or property is conditional upon the occurrence of two or more of these events. An insight or set of insights grasps the sequence of prior events that are required for an event to occur. It grasps the systematic relationship between the sequence of prior events that conditions the occurrence of the event.

These terms are being used in a way that differs from the way other researchers use them. For example, while Blaikie uses both terms he uses them interchangeably: “Two variables are said to be associated if the values of one variable vary or change together with the values of the other variable; the variables are said to be co-related” (Blaikie 2003:89f, 306).

Researchers may hypothesise or theorise about associations (Dockery, Feeny, Hulse et al. 2008). But just because there is an association in time and place, does not mean that the relationship between events is a relationship of significance. Associations in time and place can play a role in discovering the significance or meaning of these events. Moreover, an association in time and place is a necessary condition for this significance or meaning. However, this significance or meaning is not equivalent to discovering the association between the occurrence of these events in time and space. In other words, an association in time and space is not the only condition for discovering the significance or meaning of these events. In the next chapter I will discuss theory. In my view, however, a theory based solely on associations (of time and place) between events is a devalued notion of theory.
some difference, can be adapted to another population in a different time and place. Thus, one of the key problems discussed in research is the conditions under which and the extent to which results can be generalised.⁸

Eighth, while some data is embedded within an interpretative framework that guides the research, such as the work of Hulse and Burke on allocations policy (Burke & Hulse 2003; Hulse & Burke 2005), most data, particularly observable data, is ‘stand-alone’. The significance of this latter data is assumed. As Jacobs and Manzi (2000) note, this positivist approach continues to dominate housing research:

the absence of explicit theory remains a defining characteristic of mainstream housing research... Within this paradigm, the task of the housing researcher is one of discovering objective facts, presenting them in a descriptive format in the expectation that policy makers will take notice and act accordingly.

Though research within the empirical tradition achieves a level of sophistication in its analysis of social phenomena, its primary purposes are to establish facts and to prescribe effective action once problems are acknowledged. Not surprisingly, the conceptual categories used in housing research are rarely scrutinised within this paradigm; instead they rely upon the collection of material evidence to reinforce policy recommendations. It would be erroneous to deny the benefits that ensue from such a view of housing research. Policy-oriented research enables academics to access resources and to ensure scholarship is up-to-date and close to the practical concerns of policy makers. However, there are disadvantages to such an integral connection with a practitioners’ agenda. The resulting research product is often methodologically conservative. In addition, it is difficult to pursue new lines of investigation or, for that matter, to develop different conceptualisations of the policy process. Perhaps the most serious problem is that research of this kind is generally reactive to the professional housing lobby, which limits its opportunities to pursue a critical line of enquiry. Consequently, the positivist paradigm has had an impact on the modus operandi of housing research. Debates tend to be conducted within an agenda dominated by two competing ideologies: either policies should be formulated to bolster market mechanisms, or the role of the state should be extended. (p.35)

Later in the same article, in their advocacy of social constructionism, Jacobs and Manzi note the important relationship between the researcher and what is researched: “Social constructionism... offers an altogether different conception of reality from the one advanced by positivism, as well as a basis from which to understand the contexts and processes of housing... In particular such research emphasises the need to acknowledge both the importance of “subjectivity” and how the act of research entails selection and pre-conceived idealisations, which, in turn, influence the research agenda” (p.36).

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⁸ See, for example, Blaikie’s (2003:Chapter 6) discussion of inferential statistics.
Primary research does not take place in a vacuum. It is not presupposition-less. It entails ‘selection’ and ‘pre-conceived idealisations’. Insofar as a researcher is answering a particular question, it entails a selection of events. The process of selecting is also a process of excluding. This selection and exclusion is a function of the question asked. This question regards the significance of some selected event or events to the exclusion of other events. For example, Neuman (2006) identifies five competing approaches to research – positivist, interpretative, critical, feminist and postmodern – each of which produces different results.9

It is to this question of presuppositions that we now turn to develop a more precise understanding of Research.

3.4 Towards a more precise understanding of Research

Housing research in Australia has sought answers to a range of questions. Through its sophisticated techniques it has gathered a vast array of data and has contributed to an understanding of housing in Australia. But do its techniques and achievements qualify it as a scientific approach? I suggest that they do not, and this section seeks a more precise understanding of Research.

To do so raises some difficult questions about presuppositions that are not so much questions for Research but rather for Foundations. A discussion of these will be left until Chapters 6 and 7. But some indication of the presuppositions of Research is necessary for a more precise understanding of Research.

A first presupposition is Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing. In my assessment, however, the five competing approaches to research identified by Neuman are not scientific approaches to housing. The positivist approach presupposes the dominant culture within a society, while other approaches presuppose those of the non-dominant or oppressed cultures within that society.10 While housing

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9. See also see De Vaus (2002), Crotty (1998) and Blaikie (Blaikie 2003) who argue that different approaches are associated with different traditions in social theory, different research techniques and different sets of data. As a result, the events attended to, focused on and considered relevant depend upon the approach of the researcher. For example, an interpretative (or social constructionist) approach will pay attention to the way in which each person constructs their world; a critical approach will pay attention to the way in which power is exercised within a society; a feminist approach to housing will pay attention to the experiences and observations of women which are overlooked by non-feminist approaches, etc.

10. The dominant orientation of all approaches is immediately practical. They view things in terms of their immediate practical value. It is within the everyday taken-for-granted world of common sense that we live, develop and discover meaning. It is within this world that we develop our interests and commitment to what is of value. It is in view of the demands of everyday living that we attend to and select data, we deem some data more significant than other data. Indeed, we ignore or refuse to acknowledge other events because they are beyond the scope of our interests.
researchers using these other approaches speak of their approach as theoretical and have an awareness of the role of theory as a heuristic within research, they have not thrown off the vestiges of the everyday taken-for-granted world of common sense and have an inadequate notion of theory. Each approach is inadequate as a scientific approach because it does not make the radical and decisive shift to the world of theory.\textsuperscript{11}

A second presupposition is that Research as a functional specialty has a particular role or function in constituting Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing. I have described Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a cyclic dynamic process with each functional specialty related to others and contributing to the whole. It is within this larger dynamic that the role of primary research needs to be understood. An exploration of this role will provide a more precise understanding of the functional specialty Research.

So far this chapter has pivoted on the two movements within asking a question – the first movement turns and attends to the data; the second is a discovery or an answer. The discussion in Section 3.1 did not make any distinction between different types of questions. I simply sought to note how, spontaneously, a question distinguished between data which is attended to and the meaning or significance of that data reached in the answer. Within a common-sense framework, a housing researcher asks all sorts of questions in different ways.\textsuperscript{12} In asking these questions, they attend to different data; in reaching an answer, they select different data. The data attended to and the answers reached depend upon their interests and cultural presuppositions.

\textsuperscript{11} Of course, this claim hinges on an understanding of what is and what is not theory. This is discussed in Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{12} They ask questions about defining housing, about changes in housing and housing policy, about the motivations of social agents operating in housing, about how different groups exercise power to maintain their interests etc. As we will see, these questions arise in later functional specialties in much more profound way. The answers lie not by attending to empirical data, but by attending to the results of a previous functional specialty.

As C Wright Mills notes in The Sociological Imagination: “the everyday empiricism of common sense is filled with assumptions and stereotypes of one or another particular society; for common sense determines what is seen and how it is to be explained” (1970:138). The positivist researcher operates with the context of the dominant culture. By assuming this context, data can ‘stand alone’. Besides this dominant culture within a society, there are also other cultures. Researchers from other traditions operate within the parameters of a particular culture, a culture that informs their taken-for-granted everyday world, and direct their attention towards what is significant within that particular (minority) culture. These researchers subtly and unknowingly give priority to some things over other things, some data is deemed important to collect whereas other data is deemed irrelevant. Neuman describes these five approaches as competing approaches. However, it should be noted that (i) groups (and a common culture) can form around any number of interests and so it may be possible to discern any number of approaches, (ii) as people shift between groups, they ‘spontaneously’ adapt its culture and (iii) depending on the ‘story’ they want to tell, housing researchers can shift between various approaches to housing research.
For a scientific approach to housing, however, it is important to attend to and distinguish different types of questions. Further, it is important to acknowledge that one type of question, a what-is-it-question, precedes other questions. Before we can ask how often something occurs, how it changes over time (through history), what its value is and how we can improve it, we need some precision as to what it is. Later, in Chapter 4 on the functional specialty Interpretation, I will argue that a theory of housing is an answer to the question: what is housing?, an answer which seeks an explanatory definition of housing. It is by answering this question that we can distinguish ‘housing’ from other things. Before we can answer this what-is-it-question, we have to turn to, pay attention to and focus on the data that is relevant to housing. In this context, the context of theory as an answer to a what-is-it-question, the role of the functional specialty Research, is to gather and make available the data that is relevant to answering a what-is-it-question.

A third presupposition is that a scientific approach is cyclic and builds upon the best of its past achievements. Thus, Research will presuppose some already developed theory. In its relation to Research, a theory of housing will function as a heuristic, an anticipation of the significant and relevant data. So a Researcher does not begin with a blank mind (or tabula rasa), but rather with the best heuristic or the most up-to-date theory. It is a theory which gives the best current available answer to the question: what is housing? As a heuristic it guides future Research.13

A fourth presupposition of Research is a stance which recognises that every answer to the question: what is housing?, is incomplete. While a theory as a heuristic guides primary research, researchers are not simply passive recipients of the latest theory. Science is the dynamic interplay between the relevant data and theory.14 So, the functional specialty Interpretation contributes heuristics that anticipate the significance of a set of events. Research, however, as it is governed by the original question: what is housing?, seeks to go beyond a particular answer to the question. It does so by continuing to ask further questions about the data pointed to by this heuristic. Insofar as Researchers notice inconsistencies, unaccounted for events, something that has been missed, there is the possibility that they can point out the inadequacies of the current theory, and the need for a new context or perspective for understanding the

13. As we will see in Chapter 4, this theory integrates the set of related variable elements that constitute housing. Within this theory we can distinguish between the elements that constitute housing and the many roles that housing plays in the constitution of other things. The elements and their relations are particularised by the many roles that housing plays. The role of Research is provide data on the elements that constitute housing and on the various roles that housing plays in the constitution of other things.

14. See the epigraph to Chapter 2.
significance of the data, the need for a new theory. So, within Research, we can distinguish between standard and non-standard research. Standard research is concerned with affirming a current theory at a different time and place or within a different field of study. But non-standard research seeks to notice inconsistencies and events unaccounted for that will upset the current theory. The role of Research, then, is not simply about moving with the stream of standard research but, more fundamentally, about upsetting the stream, about provoking the Interpreter to incorporate these events into a more adequate theory.

Philip McShane (2007a:Chapter 11, p.52) puts it this way:

Research, then, seeks to notice the unsettling, the anomalous from the viewpoint of the present *nomos*... The viewpoint of the present *nomos*, in so far as you are interested in participating in, promoting, advocating, functional specialist work, is your probably quite inadequate viewpoint... That is what you bring to the present research... Research, as a functional specialty, is asked to do this, and no more: no more, that is, except the positive functional move of handing on the problem to the theoreticians, who have to somehow place the new plant, particle, perspective. A tough job.

### 3.5 Concluding summary and implications for housing research

Housing research seeks answers to questions. Within a question we can distinguish two movements: a first movement turns to the occurrence of events which provoked the question and about which we inquire; the second movement is the discovery of an answer to the question. It is a discovery which integrates or provides a higher viewpoint on some set of data within the field of materials.

My review of research on Australian social housing illustrated how this distinction is implicit. In seeking answers to questions, researchers turn to the occurrence of events with the field of materials. These events are the data. They occur prior to the researcher's question. In this sense, they are unquestionable. They remain the same no matter what the result of the questioning may be. They are disparate and diffuse and without significance. It is this appeal to the occurrence of events that constitutes a science as empirical. In seeking an answer to their question, researchers move back and forth – on the one hand, towards the data; on the other hand, towards a discovery, an answer to their question. It is in discovery that disparate and diffuse data are related to one another and the significance of the data (the events) emerges.

The review also showed how approaches asked different questions which led researchers to attend to and select different data. Moreover, the researcher is not simply satisfied with grouping, defining and categorising events, they also seek to associate events with other events either spatially, sequentially or both. But such
associations are relationships in time and place. They are a necessary condition for understanding the significance of events, but are not sufficient for such understanding.

Research asks the empirical question: what events are occurring in this time and place and to what extent are these events associated? An empirical question anticipates the occurrence of events in time and place: it anticipates answers such as the frequency with which events or properties or characteristics occur; it anticipates answers such as participants’ description of feelings, beliefs, attitudes, understandings etc.; it anticipates that events occurs in a sequence. As a result, Research yields observable data which shows the extent to which certain elements in housing are associated (in time and place) with one another; Research yields participant data which shows the extent to which certain elements in housing are associated because participants use housing for their own purposes in particular ways; and Research yields descriptions of sequences of events. The answers to an empirical question can be aggregated into a population of events within a specified time-period, within a specified geographical area or both.

Research, however, is not without suppositions. Neuman (2006), Jacobs and Manzi (2000) and others note how different approaches to social science are associated with different data. The researcher operates in a context from which particular questions emerge. The positivist operates in the context of the taken-for-granted everyday world of common sense and presupposes the particular culture dominant within a particular society. Other approaches such as interpretative, critical, feminist and postmodern also operate in the world of common sense but presuppose a particular non-dominant culture within that particular society. The key problem is not so much that the data that is turned to, attended to and gathered is a function of a particular approach to social research but rather the adequacy of an approach that operates within the world of common sense.

Research, however, presupposes a larger role with Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing. It is a role which presupposes the world of theory. As a scientific approach, it distinguishes between different types of questions and recognises that a what-is-it-question precedes other questions. As we will see in the next chapter, an answer to the question: what is housing? is a theory of housing. Research presupposes some answer to this what-is-it-question, however inadequate it may be. Within Cyclic Functional Collaboration, the role of Research is to notice the anomalies, the inconsistencies and the unaccounted for data in the current theory and to push the Interpreter or theorist beyond the current theory of housing towards a more adequate theory. Within Cyclic Functional Collaboration, the key role of the Researcher
is the search for the occurrence of events which are not incorporated into the current theory of housing.

Such a view of the functional specialty Research has profound implications for current housing research. Operating within the taken-for-granted everyday world of common sense, current housing researchers ask any number of questions and seek answers to these. Their orientation, however, depends upon the researcher’s location within their particular world of common sense with its particular interests. While they ask any number of different types of questions and seek answers to them, their common-sense orientation limits the scope of the data they regard as significant. While their answers address the immediate practical problem, they are inadequate.

A scientific approach to housing, however, recognises that empirical data is related to and contributes to one particular question, a what-is-it-question. Research gathers data or evidence relevant to answering this question. The functional specialty Research, then, envisages a paradigm shift in current housing research from answering any type of question raised, to answering an empirical question, what events are occurring and to what extent are these events associated, within the context of answering the theoretical question: what is housing?

But this more precise understanding of Research presupposes a more precise understanding of theory. It is to this issue that we turn in the next chapter on the functional specialty Interpretation.
Chapter 4.
Interpretation as a functional specialty

An interpretation is the expression of the meaning of another expression. It may be literary or scientific. A literary interpretation offers the images and associations from which a reader can reach the insights and form the judgments that the interpreter believes to correspond to the content of the original expression. A scientific interpretation is concerned to formulate the relevant insights and judgments, and to do so in a manner consonant with scientific collaboration and scientific control.

Since Jim Kemeny wrote *Housing and Social Theory* in 1992, the role of theory within housing research has become much more prominent. Kemeny sought to further the theoretical development of housing research (O’Neill 2008) and outlined two requirements: first, “the need consciously to re-integrate housing into broader issues of social structure”, and second, “to develop a greater sense of reflexivity, by examining more closely the epistemological grounds of what we are doing” (Kemeny 1992:xvii).

Kemeny argues that each discipline in the social sciences (sociology, economics, psychology, politics and geography) ‘dimensions out’ or abstracts different aspects of social relationships. Each has its own set of conceptual tools, its own mode of discourse and its own debates. He puts it as follows:

In general, the social science disciplines can be seen to be based on dividing the social world into a number of dimensions. Sociology, for example, ‘dimensions out’ social relationships which are often conceptualised in terms of the abstraction known as social structure. Economics does the same for the market. Psychology dimensions out individual mental processes. Political science dimensions out power and political institutions. Geography dimensions out space; history dimensions out time, and so on.

Each discipline develops its own sets of conceptual tools for the analysis of its particular dimension. Theories are explicated and tested, and a characteristic mode of discourse is evolved through the generations, with its own major debates and controversies. The point about this is that each discipline is based on researchers being ‘disciplined’ into thinking in certain ways and in critically evaluating existing theories and concepts developed by others within that mode of discourse.

Disciplines are based on a process of conceptual abstraction. That abstraction provides the epistemological basis for the discipline and provides it with a selective frame of analysis. Disciplines are not normally defined in terms of a concrete field or subject of analysis… They are more usually defined by a frame of reference, even if some frames of reference prove in practice to be more amenable to theorising than others. (Kemeny 1992:3-4)

While there is a common reference point for each discipline – the social world – Kemeny does not address the issue of how these different disciplines are related to one another. Without some heuristic that does so, it is difficult to see how housing research can be truly interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary (Lawrence 2004; Lawrence & Després 2004).

Kemeny addresses the second requirement by raising questions about “the substantive focus of housing research, the methods we use, the data sources we tend to take for granted, the questions we pose and the received wisdosms, often from policy-makers, about what does and does not constitute ‘a housing problem’” (1992:xvii). He examines
and critiques ‘first-order concepts’ such as ‘household’ and ‘dwelling’, raising questions about how we use and define them within housing research; he notes the lack of debate in housing research about quantitative and qualitative research, how statistics are socially constructed, and questions the reliability of official statistics; he draws attention to how housing policy debates interweave data, methodology and concepts, particularly in the development of ‘higher level composite concepts’ such as ‘overcrowding’, ‘dwelling type’, ‘housing subsidies’, ‘forms of tenure’, housing class and structuration; and he highlights the importance of researchers reformulating housing problems from a theoretical perspective rather than allowing particular interest groups to define the problem in their own way (1992:20f).

In a series of articles in a 2009 special issue of *Housing, Theory and Society* celebrating 25 years of the journal, David Clapham (2009), Peter King (2009) and Chris Allen (2009) discussed the ongoing debate on the role of theory in housing research while Bo Bengtsson (2009) and Kenneth Gibb (2009) sought to show the value of theory to housing research from their respective disciplines of political science and economics. As Clapham noted in his introduction, the articles spanned a range of views on theory and housing research: Bengtsson and Gibb implicitly supporting the view of Kemeny and others that there is no such thing as ‘housing theory’ but rather social theories that can be applied to housing; King arguing for a theory of housing; and Allen arguing that housing research has no claim to special status among differing views of housing.

Two different approaches to theory – whether housing researchers should simply *apply* social theories from various disciplines or should work to *create* housing theory – imply different understandings of theory. If we are to come to a position on this issue, we need, as King suggests, to answer a further question: what is theory?

This chapter proceeds along similar lines to the previous one. Section 4.1 begins with a phenomenology of research which provides an initial specification of the functional specialty Interpretation as defining what we are investigating. This is followed in Section 4.2 by a review of different genres of research on Australian social housing that seek to define social housing (or some element within it), while Section 4.3 reflects on what these researchers are doing when they are seeking to define social housing (and its various elements).

The goal of Section 4.4 is to come to a more precise understanding of the functional specialty Interpretation which I described previously as “understanding what is being investigated”. In the course of developing this more precise understanding, I will also
do two things: first, I will identify the problem of definition; second, I will use Ball and Harloe’s ‘structures of housing provision’ thesis as a starting point for understanding the key features of Interpretation.

Section 4.5 presents an indicative theory of social housing rent as an illustration. It seeks to spell out the implications of the somewhat complex and dense discussion of Section 4.4. The conclusion summarises the chapter and shows how the dispute between the two different approaches to theory (applying theory to housing and creating housing theory) can be resolved.

4.1 Defining the object of our inquiry: an initial view of Interpretation

In the previous chapter, I used a phenomenology of inquiry to distinguish between data and its corresponding functional specialty Research and the understanding or interpretation of the meaning or significance of that data and its corresponding functional specialty Interpretation. Further, I noted that the role of Interpretation was to answer a what-is-it-question with the corresponding role of Research as providing the data relevant to answering that question or to upsetting the current answer. So, while the functional specialty Research is concerned with occurrences of ‘housing’ that precede our questions, the functional specialty Interpretation is concerned with specifying just what this ‘housing’ is. This functional specialty raises the question of defining just what the object of our research is.

But how do we answer a what-is-it-question? Melchin (1999:62), drawing upon a phenomenology of inquiry (one which each of us can – indeed, must – verify for ourselves), outlines this transition as follows:

The investigator can name the object. But initially the name has no meaning, no familiarity, no intelligibility. The function of the name is heuristic. The name does not serve to classify the object but only to point to it as an object that can be experienced in some way or another but remains to be understood. “Let the object be named a,” where a can be any set of marks, squiggles, letters, or characters as long as it is not presupposed that we know what a “means.” The next step is a little more complicated. The investigator must turn his or her attention to the empirical occurrences of a and to whatever experiential evidence can be gathered about a…

In turning their attention to empirical occurrences of ‘housing’, the researcher is turning to data in which housing is associated in time and place with a range of other events. Within this manifold of diverse data, the researcher is reaching for an answer to the question: what is housing? In doing so, they ask a range of other related questions … that will give clues to the appropriate context or perspective in which a is to be understood. Is a an operation or the result of an operation? Is it a unity or a manifold? Does it have a structure? Where does it begin and
where does it end?… Is a to be understood in relation to b or in relation to c?… By shifting context and perspective, trying to bring one or another set of questions to bear on a, listing the data, juggling it around, rejecting one perspective in favour of another, performing endless operations in controlled settings to test possible sets of questions and answers, the investigator moves more or less slowly towards a discovery. (pp.62-63)¹

This discovery is an insight which “grasps a relation or set of relations that define a in terms of its appropriate context of other elements” (p.63). Through insight an understanding of the significance of the other elements in relation to a is reached.

This what-is-it-question leads to a discovery whereby we define the object of our research. It serves as an initial distinction between this functional specialty Interpretation and other functional specialties. Before we move to a more precise understanding of an answer to this what-is-it-question, I want to look at how this question of definition is dealt with in research on Australian social housing.

4.2 Defining what is being researched in Australian social housing

A what-is-it-question precedes other questions in research and it is this question that is the concern of the functional specialty Interpretation. This what-is-it-question can be distinguished from other types of questions: how-often-questions, change-questions, is-it-worthwhile-questions and what-to-do-questions. As I will show later, these are the concern of other functional specialties. But it is also important to note the difficulty I face, here, in reviewing the research on Australian social housing. The distinctions between these different types of questions are often not made within one book or article but are conflated or run together and assumed without rigorously distinguishing between them. So articles/books will discuss how housing (or the language of housing) is used to aggrandise some particular person or group and how it is made to serve their interests without clearly defining what housing is, or will discuss bringing about a new state of affairs within housing (or some new housing policy) without considering what it is and whether it is worthwhile promoting or creating.

The research on Australian social housing deals with the definitional question in three principal ways: by defining terms either formally or informally, by outlining a ‘conceptual framework’ or an ‘analytical framework’ that will inform the research, or by raising

¹. In his discussion of empirical method, Melchin recognises the distinction between research and working towards a discovery. However, his text at this point does intertwine these two types of activities and I have removed those questions from this quote that relate to the gathering of data.
questions about how something is commonly understood. These three genres of research on Australian social housing are discussed below.²

(1) Defining terms
The question of defining terms arises in different settings. For instance, within their discussion of housing assistance, the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare define social housing as “all rental housing owned or managed by the government or a not-for-profit community organisation and let to eligible households. It includes public rental housing, state owned and managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH), community housing, Indigenous community housing and crisis accommodation” (AIHW 2009:242). This definition is also used by the Council of Australian Governments Reform Council (COAG Reform Council 2010a:135)

Another setting is when gathering statistical data in which terms are defined through the use of data dictionaries. For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006b) produced a Census Dictionary for the 2006 Census in which terms are defined and the categories within variables are listed. This includes variables such as dwelling (and sub-categories such as private and non-private, dwelling type and dwelling structure), household, landlord, tenure, rent etc.

A more complex example is the way in which the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2010a, 2010b, 2010c) and SCRGSP (2009, 2011) define a range of performance indicators for social housing by outlining how different data is ‘put together’ to form a particular performance indicator. For instance, the AIHW (2010a:24) define the performance indicator, affordability, in terms of (i) the average weekly rental subsidy per rebated household and (ii) the proportion of rebated households spending not more than 30% of their income in rent. In turn these components are defined as combinations of further components.

(2) Conceptual frameworks
Conceptual or analytical frameworks seek to bring together the different aspects of the object under inquiry. They highlight and connect together key terms associated with the object under inquiry in a way which gives coherence to a discussion of it. Below five conceptual frameworks are discussed regarding allocations systems, rental systems, housing provision (two frameworks) and the structure of a house.

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² This section discusses definition for a range of objects of inquiry. They relate to social housing in different ways, at different levels: as elements of social housing, as housing provision, as design and as the meaning of home. One issue that arises is the relationship between these different objects of inquiry. I will come back to this in Section 4.4(4).
(i) Allocations systems

In their AHURI report on allocations systems in social housing, Kath Hulse and Terry Burke (2005) provide a national overview; examine the pressures on these systems, the responses of providers and emerging concerns; explore the variations in practices as well as the perspectives of housing workers; review initiatives in Australia and overseas; and develop a framework to facilitate learning and decision-making. Prior to this, they provide ‘a framework for considering allocations… to enable policy makers and others to conceptualise allocations systems and their linkages with other aspects of social housing operations” (p.3).

Hulse and Burke note that “allocations systems determine access by households to social housing based primarily on administrative criteria and processes” (p.4). In developing this conceptual framework, they explore four aspects of social housing allocations.

First, they compare the similarities and differences between private rental and social housing. At first view their allocations systems appear very different, but a more considered view shows that these differences are more a matter of emphasis. For instance, at first view, private rental provides individual household choice while social housing is dominated by administrative criteria and process. But a more considered view shows that both to varying degrees incorporate trade-offs and household choice as well as administrative criteria. In private rental the primary factor is ‘ability to pay market prices’ while in social housing the primary factor is ‘housing need’. Both models incorporate specific factors such as choice of provider, information, application, eligibility assessment, household choice, order of access to housing, matching households and properties, and consideration of neighbourhood impact. But for each factor, each model has different characteristics (pp.4-5).

Second, they explore social housing allocations as administrative rationing and define the system as a ‘multi-layered process’ in which there are three layers: a strategic planning process which determines the agency’s broad role in social housing; primary rationing which defines which groups of households are eligible; and secondary rationing which matches individual households with individual properties (pp.6-7).

Third, they distinguish between the (i) formal rationing process incorporated in documents and (ii) the information rationing process, the discretionary interpretation of policies and guidelines made by housing workers.

Finally, they note the linkages between allocations and other aspects of social housing, in particular, how allocations influence and are influenced by rent-setting and by
tenancy and property management. In doing so, they relate each layer of the allocation process to these other two aspects of social housing.

Now we can note some characteristics of this conceptual framework for social housing allocations. Firstly, this framework is something new within housing research which is still in its early days of developing such frameworks. Secondly, the framework defines the elements that are considered in the remainder of the report, thus providing a particular focus for this research. For instance, Chapter 5 is developed around the three layers: strategic planning, primary rationing and secondary rationing. Thirdly, the framework comes at the beginning of the report and as such gives the impression that it precedes their research rather than being the result of research. Fourthly, the framework does not work to integrate access in private rental and access in social housing, preferring to describe the characteristics of social housing allocations. Finally, while a number of characteristics are outlined, they are not systematically related. Rather, the characteristics of the conceptual framework separately describe the allocation process in both private rental and social housing without moving to an understanding of what is systematically core to both forms of tenure.

(ii) Rental systems

McNelis and Burke (2004) and McNelis (2006) in two related AHURI papers develop a framework for understanding social housing rent-setting in Australia. In the first paper, McNelis and Burke describe how rents are set in different social housing systems in Australia and overseas and the problems emerging within Australia. In the second paper, McNelis outlines a framework for understanding the two basic types of rental systems and variations within them. The first basic type is property rental systems such as a cost-rent system, a market-rent system and a market-derived-rent system. The second basic type is household rental systems such as an income-related rental system, a subsidy rental system and a flat-rent rental system. He describes the principles that underlie and distinguish the various rental systems. But this description of the differing processes for setting rents raises a series of questions as to the appropriateness of particular rental systems for social housing:

The discussion about various rental systems and their underlying principles and processes raises a further question. Which rental system is more appropriate for social housing and the achievement of its objective? This raises a question about the relationship between rental systems and the objective of social housing. (McNelis 2006:41)

McNelis goes on to locate these different rental systems within a variety of social housing finance systems and four objectives of social housing often associated with
rental policy – affordability, equity, workforce incentives and the autonomy of State Housing Authorities.

Again, these papers introduce something new about rent-setting processes into housing research. The development of the framework is somewhat dispersed through the papers, being interspersed with discussions of issues and options. While the papers describe these processes for setting rents in a variety of situations, like the work of allocations policy, they do not establish what is systematically core to all forms of rent-setting in all countries, whether in the social housing sector or the private sector.

(iii) Structures of housing provision

Drawing on the work of Ball and Harloe (Ball 1986; Ball, Harloe & Martens 1988; Ball & Harloe 1992; Ball 1998), Chris Paris (Paris, Beer & Sanders 1993) and Terry Burke (1993; Burke & Hulse 2010) have analysed housing in Australia using the ‘structures of housing provision’ thesis. Ball, Harloe and Martens (1988:5) describe this as follows:

A structure of housing provision encompasses the inter-relations between all the agencies involved in the production, exchange, finance and consumption of housing in a particular way.

In the second chapter of *Housing Australia* (Paris, Beer & Sanders 1993), Paris explores various theoretical frameworks for housing studies. While the structures of housing provision (SHP) approach is preferred by Paris, in the remainder of the book, he “incorporates aspects of… different approaches… the market emphasis on commodity relations and transaction; the housing system focus on actors and relationships; and the structures of provision focus on how housing is produced” (p.37).

As a result, the book loosely ranges across many aspects of housing in Australia, describing housing provision and housing policy: housing policy and the politics of housing; the impact of changing demographics; the history of the design of Australian housing; the industries involved in housing (land production, housing construction, building materials, marketing); home ownership; rental housing; homelessness; and Indigenous housing. He concludes with some proposals for future directions.

A much more focused study compares Australia’s housing system with those overseas. In *International Low Income Housing Systems* (1993), Burke uses the ‘structures of housing provision’ thesis to propose a framework of analysis consisting of four sub-systems and a systems context as a way of understanding and comparing housing systems in a range of countries including Australia.

The four sub-systems are those of *production* concerned with the nature and techniques of land ownership, land assembly and housing production, of *consumption* concerned with the forms and methods by which people and households consume housing, of *exchange* concerned with the practices and institutions which facilitate the exchange of housing, ie,
finance, and management, that is the practices by which the housing stock is managed including planning.

The ‘systems context’ refers to the economic, demographic, administrative, legal, and political processes which shape the form, timing and direction of housing policy relating to each of the four sub-systems. (Burke 1993:14)

Rather than beginning with the structures of housing provision, Burke begins by developing a typology of contexts within which housing systems operate. He recognises the importance of this context for the way in which the four sub-systems of housing provision are structured. It is through this overall context that different countries manage the diverse range of economic, social and environmental demands. In his typology of contexts, Burke identifies three broad approaches to societal management: market liberal/economic rationalist, welfare corporatist and liberal corporatist (a mixture of the other two). He is then able to compare the housing implications of each approach by focusing his description and analysis on the four sub-systems of production, consumption, exchange and management. For Burke, an understanding of housing provision is defined in terms of these four sub-systems.

(iv) Housing provision as necessary and contingent relations

In her book Critical Realism and Housing Research, Julie Lawson (2006) seeks to explain why the housing solutions in The Netherlands and Australia have diverged as they evolved since the late 19th century up to the end of the 20th century: “Whilst the Australian city has been dominated by sprawling home ownership, The Netherlands provides a contrastive case where social housing has played a significant role in the development of compact towns and cities” (p.3).

In presenting her explanation, Lawson moulds together four different questions regarding (i) her starting point in critical realism, (ii) the subject that she is researching, viz. housing provision, (iii) the emergence of particular housing solutions or forms of housing provision in Australia and The Netherlands and (iv) an explanation for divergent housing solutions or different forms of housing provision in the two countries.

In my view, these are questions for different functional specialties. The third question concerning the emergence of particular housing solutions (addressed in Chapters 6 and 7) would be considered in the functional specialty History, whereas the first question on her methodological starting point (addressed in Chapters 2 and 3) and the fourth question which compares housing solutions in Australia and The Netherlands (addressed in Chapter 8) would be considered in the functional specialty Dialectics. My interest here is with the second question: how Lawson defines the subject of her research, what it is she is seeking to explain. This is largely outlined in Chapter 5.
Lawson is seeking to explain divergent housing solutions. Consistent with the critical realist perspective, each solution emerges from a cluster of causal mechanisms, the necessary and contingent relations. These two sets of relations operate together to produce an outcome:

Necessary relations are not fixed behavioural laws or predictors of events. They do not exist as isolated atoms in a laboratory. There are no standard definitions of necessary relations applicable to all time and space... Necessary relations are actualised in the context of other sets of interacting contingent relations. For this reason, concrete historical case study research is an integral part of the explanatory process. (Lawson 2006:28)

Lawson defines housing provision in terms of three necessary relations between agents: property relations, investment and savings relations, and labour and welfare relations. But these cannot be defined universally but rather are defined within the context of contingent relations. These contingent relations change how the necessary relations are actualised in a particular situation. In Chapter 5 she explores three of these contingent relations: risk, trust and state:

The term housing solution refers to the coherent fit between social relations underpinning a housing system and the practical solutions and outcomes produced. It is contended that housing solutions in Australia and The Netherlands have emerged from the fundamentally different packaging of property, investment and savings, and labour and welfare relations, which have promoted distinctive housing choices and living environments. Most Australian households aspire to home ownership and reside in large, low-density cities. In The Netherlands, until recent years, social rental housing has been the dominant tenure in relatively numerous compact towns and cities. (p.24)

So, in the following Chapters 6 and 7 Lawson explores how this cluster of causal mechanisms diverges between Australia and The Netherlands producing diverging solutions and outcomes.

By defining housing provision in terms of the necessary relations of property relations, investment and savings relations, and labour and welfare relations within the context of the contingent relations of risk, trust and state, Lawson can investigate the actual emergence of divergent housing solutions in Australia and The Netherlands.

(v) The structure of a house

One element of housing provision is its design. Kim Dovey (1992:177) “explores the meaning of the house through an interpretation of model house advertisements and display houses in Australia over the past 20 years”. His interest is in the way in which house plans have changed over time and reflect changing relationships within the house (children and parents, and gender) and the changing relationship between the house and the world outside (status and identity).
To do this, Dovey defines the structure of the house (or, in his terms, uses ‘a technique’) as “composed of a range of ‘places’ or centres of meaning which are structured in a certain set of relationships. These ‘places’ are meaningful segments of domestic space which may or may not be enclosed. The plan signifies a set of categories and their structural relationships” (p.178). This definition allows him to focus on these ‘meaningful segments of domestic space’, showing how their size, function and relative location have changed and interpreting the meaning of these changes in terms of internal and external relationships.

(3) Participant descriptions: the meaning of home
Housing is not just about the physical structure of houses and housing provision, nor is it simply about tenure or housing policy. It is also about homes: “sites of emotional, cultural and social significance” (Dowling & Mee 2007:161); “a spatial imaginary: a set of intersecting and variable ideas and feelings, which are related to context, and which construct places, extend across spaces and scales, and connect places” (Blunt & Dowling 2006:2).

The Australian research around the meaning of home highlights the varying definitions (Kemeny 1983; Johnson 1996; Corrigan 1997:Ch 7; Easthope 2004; Lloyd & Johnson 2004; Mallett 2004; Blunt & Dowling 2006; Dowling & Mee 2007). The difficulty of defining home is such that most authors recognise that home is a ‘multidimensional concept’ and the research provides understandings of home as expressed through popular magazines (for example, Lloyd & Johnson 2004), life stories (diaries, memoirs, autobiographies, interviews, focus group discussions etc.), novels, magazines and household guides, images (art and film) and designs (for example, Blunt & Dowling 2006). These varying sources provide understandings from a very broad range of people: residents, owners, researchers, designers, philosophers etc.

After critically reviewing a range of understandings of home including understandings from research and understandings developed by researchers, Shelley Mallett (2004:84) concludes with three pertinent questions:

How then is home understood? How should home be understood? Or, how could home be understood?

She continues:

Clearly the term home functions as a repository for complex, inter-related and at times contradictory socio-cultural ideas about people’s relationship with one another, especially family, and with places, spaces, and things. It can be a dwelling place or a lived space of interaction between people, places, things; or perhaps both. The boundaries of home can be permeable and/or impermeable. Home can be singular and/or plural, alienable and/or inalienable, fixed and stable and/or mobile and changing. It can be
associated with feelings of comfort, ease intimacy, relaxation and security
and/or oppression, tyranny and persecution. It can or can not be associated
with family. Home can be an expression of one’s (possibly fluid) identity
and sense of self and/or one’s body might be home to the self. It can
constitute belonging and/or create a sense of marginalisation and
estrangement. Home can be given and/or made, familiar and/or strange, an
atmosphere and/or an activity, a relevant and/or irrelevant concept. It can
be fundamental and/or extraneous to existence. Home can be an
ideological construct and/or an experience of being in the world. It can be a
crucial site for examining relations of production and consumption,
globalisation and nationalism, citizenship and human rights, and the role of
government and governmentality. Equally it can provide a context for
analysing ideas and practices about intimacy, family, kinship, gender,
etnicity, class, age and sexuality. Such ideas can be inflected in domestic
architecture and interior and urban design. (Mallett 2004:84)

Rather than working towards some sort of definition of home, herself, Mallett prefers to
maintain the multidimensional view of home and refers to Hollander who argues that
“both the meaning and study of home ‘all depends’”. She concludes: “how home is and
has been defined at any given time depends upon ‘specification of locus and extent’
and the broader historical and social context” (p.84).

4.3 What are these researchers doing?
The primary focus of these three genres of research on Australian social housing is on
defining an area of research: the first focuses upon defining the way particular terms
are used, their scope and their limits; the second, the conceptual framework, is a more
complex definition that guides research in a particular area; and the third points to
participant descriptions that raise questions about the commonly held view or
understanding of some term.

So what are these researchers doing when they are defining an area of research?

First, in the previous chapter on the functional specialty Research I noted that “the
starting point of social science is to be found in ordinary social life’ (Schutz 1972:141).
This ordinary social life is a world of meaningful events that occur at particular times
and in particular places. In developing their definitions, these researchers are paying
attention to these meaningful events. For example, in defining the structure of the
house, Dovey points to ‘places’ or ‘centres of meaning which are structured in a certain
set of relationships’.

Second, these researchers are defining social housing (or some aspect of it) in terms
of other events with which it is regularly associated. These events are associated in
time and place and regularly occur at the same time and/or precede or follow on in
some pattern. The definition hinges upon an understanding that grasps the meaning of
apparently disparate meaningful events in a single perspective and thus stand in
relationship of the higher to the lower where the higher is the single perspective and
the lower are the individual meaningful events. For example, Lawson defines housing
provision in terms of property relations, investment and savings relations, and labour
and welfare relations. An understanding of ‘housing provision’ grasps these three
relations in a single perspective.

A third aspect of definition is illustrated in Burke’s use of the structures of housing
provision. Burke superimposes upon SHP what he calls a ‘systems context’. He uses
SHP but is aware that it operates in a larger context of “economic, demographic,
administrative, legal, and political processes” (1993:14; see also Burke & Hulse 2010).
This context shapes the form of SHP in each country and it is this higher perspective
that allows the researcher to understand and compare housing systems in different
countries. The higher perspective does not change the sub-systems of housing
provision but it does change the way in which they are deployed. So, here we have a
series of contexts which have a relationship of higher to lower: SHP to the four sub-
systems; and the systems context to SHP.3

Fourth, the definition these researchers arrive at is itself an expression of meaning,
usually in words. It is an expression of an understanding or interpretation of other
expressions of meaning. It links together expressions of meaning whatever form they
may take – external events (states or actions) and internal events (states, actions,
experiences etc.) and transforms them into another form of expression.4 So, Hulse and
Burke define, in words, a social housing allocations systems with its three layers of
activities: a strategic planning process, a primary rationing process and a secondary
rationing process.

Fifth, when defining, these researchers are selecting elements that they regard as
relevant to what they are investigating. So, for instance, the ABS Census dictionary
defines a dwelling as follows:

In general terms, a dwelling is a structure which is intended to have people
live in it, and which is habitable on Census Night. Some examples of
dwellings are houses, motels, flats, caravans, prisons, tents, humpies and
houseboats. (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006b)

This definition selects particular characteristics: it is a ‘structure’; its purpose is for
‘people [to] live in’; and it is ‘habitable’. The definition ignores its colour, its size, its
design, the number of rooms, the different types of rooms and the materials it is made

3. Further, I would note that, in the research on Australian social housing, different definitions emerged
with different perspectives: the dwelling itself, housing provision, design and the meaning of home. It
raises a question as to how these different definitions are related to one another.
4. See Chapter 3, introduction and Section 3.3.
Similarly, when Hulse and Burke (2005) develop their analytical framework for social housing allocations, they select those elements that are relevant to allocations and ignore others, such as the life-cycle of the dwelling or the interests and hobbies of the applicant.

Sixth, the definitions proposed by these researchers are used in various ways. At the outset of a paper, researchers will define their terms and use these definitions as a way of controlling the research: to focus the research, to limit its scope and to specify what is relevant and what is not. So, a definition in a data dictionary will precede the collection of data and will determine what is collected. An outline of an analytical framework will precede the analysis of what is happening in a particular location or country. By defining the framework of analysis, it becomes possible to understand the characteristics of these elements and to compare them with other places and times. It also provides a framework for proposing future directions. In this way, a definition of housing has a heuristic role.

Seventh, these researchers have different approaches to defining housing.

(a) A data dictionary definition (as in the ABS Census Dictionary) is an interpretation of how a particular word or term is commonly used, and this common usage determines the range of its relevance and its limitations.

(b) Some definitions describe something such as social housing by using similar but more familiar terms. The AIHW define it as rental housing owned or managed by the government or a not-for-profit community organisation and then refer to different forms such as public rental housing, state owned and managed Indigenous housing, community housing, Indigenous community housing and crisis accommodation.

(c) Some researchers such as Mallett, Dowling and Mee, and Blunt and Dowling maintain a multidimensional definition of ‘home’ by referring to the understanding of home by many and varied participants.

(d) Some definitions describe a sequence of events. For example, McNelis and Burke initially describe public housing rent-setting and various forms of rent-setting in community housing in Australia in terms of the processes used by a particular SHA or SHO or group of SHAs or SHOs to determine a rent. Later they generalise these descriptions into different types of rent-setting systems but stop short of developing a definition of rent-setting that encompasses all forms of housing in different countries.

(e) Conceptual or analytical frameworks define social housing (or some aspect of it) by working out those elements that are common to social housing as it operates in different locations. The source of these descriptions may be some mixture of personal
experience, interviews, documents and accumulated knowledge, with each participant making a contribution which depends upon their involvement in only one or a limited number of the elements of the framework. The researcher develops the framework by generalising the common elements in a group of instances.

**4.4 Towards a more precise understanding of Interpretation**

This section seeks a more precise understanding of the functional specialty Interpretation. This more precise understanding will emerge gradually over the four sub-sections.

This section begins in sub-section 4.4(1)) with a discussion of the problem faced by the three types of definition used in research on Australian social housing (defining terms, conceptual frameworks and participant descriptions) and what an alternative understanding of definition should encompass. The remaining sub-sections work towards a more precise understanding of Interpretation and three of its key features by reflecting upon one of the more prominent theories of housing provision, the structures of housing provision thesis as proposed by Ball and Harloe (Ball 1983, 1986, 1998; Ball, Harloe & Martens 1988; Ball & Harloe 1992).

A first feature regards a theory of housing as an answer to the question: what is housing? Ball and Harloe do not refer to SHP as a ‘theory’. Indeed, they reject the view, preferring to refer to it as a methodological procedure. Sub-section 4.4(2) examines this reluctance. As a first step in a more precise understanding of Interpretation, this sub-section suggests a shift in understanding of SHP from methodological procedure to theory, where theory is understood as an answer to a what-is-it-question. It is this theoretical understanding of housing that becomes a heuristic, a guide for answering other questions.

A second feature regards this what-is-it-question and its anticipated answer. In Section 2.4, I noted how different types of questions anticipate different types of answers. Sub-section 4.4(3) explores the type of answer we anticipate when asking the question: what is housing? As a second step in a more precise understanding of Interpretation, it proposes that this answer anticipates a particular type of definition, the functional relations between elements that constitute housing or an explanatory definition of housing.

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A third feature regards an understanding of the particularity of an actual operating housing system, a particularity which varies from country to country. I have already referred to the way in Burke superimposes a ‘systems context’ on SHP. Ball and Harloe also note that SHP operates in two contexts that I will refer to as a social context and an academic context. A reference to context seeks to understand the particularities of housing, how the actual operating housing system in one country is different from that in another. By distinguishing between housing (which is understood as the answer to the question: what is housing?) and the role or function that housing plays in other things (which can be understood as answers to other what-is-it-questions, in which housing is one of the elements), sub-section 4.4(4) proposes that we can understand the particularities of an actual operating housing system as a complete set of ordered sets of related variable elements. Moreover, we can understand the contribution of participant descriptions to a theory of housing as well as the contribution of various disciplines to a theory of housing.

This is a long and difficult section, one which is central to grasping a more precise understanding of the other functional specialties. The shift to theory remains the central challenge for housing researchers. In my view, however, what such a shift entails is unclear to housing researchers. This section takes up the challenge posed by King, “a questioning of what we mean by theory; what its possibilities and limits are” (2009:51). At its core, the shift to theory requires housing researchers to distinguish between two related but different questions: what is housing?, and: what role does housing play, i.e. what is its purpose? This section seeks to make this distinction and work through the implications for housing research. Without this more precise understanding of theory, the remaining chapters will make little sense.

(1) The problem of definition

With these many approaches to definition – defining terms, conceptual frameworks and participant descriptions – the key question facing a scientific approach to housing is whether one or all of them is adequate and, if not, whether there is an alternative approach to defining an object of investigation.

In social science, the problem of definition is often framed in terms of whether researchers should uniquely privilege the descriptions of participants or social agents (a constructivist, ethnomethodologist or grounded theorist viewpoint) or ignore accounts of behaviour given by the agents themselves and present an objective definition (critical realist viewpoint) (Meynell 1975:65). In my view, a scientific approach to housing requires an objective definition, yet we cannot overlook or dismiss the
descriptions of participants or agents. It is through their activities that housing is constructed. However, the issue is what in these descriptive definitions is relevant and what is not relevant to a definition of housing. And it is here that we can begin to distinguish between definitions that pertain to the everyday taken-for-granted world of common sense, on the one hand, and definitions that pertain to the world of science.

In Section 2.4 I noted how, in our everyday taken-for-granted living, we are oriented towards immediate practicalities and do not clearly distinguish between the types of questions we ask; we are concerned with things insofar as they contribute (or not) to our living, to our concerns and interests. As a result we are interested in understanding things insofar as we need to use them and insofar as they affect us or others. Such understanding will vary according to our experience and our perspective, our social and cultural background etc. Above I quoted Mallett as follows: “the term home functions as a repository for complex, inter-related and at times contradictory socio-cultural ideas about people’s relationship with one another, especially family, and with places, spaces, and things. It can be a dwelling place or a lived space of interaction between people, places, things; or perhaps both.” She recognises that when we define home or express the significance of home we do so in terms of its value to us, its purpose in relation to us. What home is becomes inextricably linked with its role in our personal history (and that of our cultural group) and with habitual associations that have developed over a life time. The strength of this association makes it very difficult to distinguish the role or purpose of home from what home is, i.e. what it is that is serving that role or purpose. Indeed, because home does have a role in our lives, we assume we know what home is.

The data, such as that provided by Mallett, expresses this ambivalence between what home is and its associated role or purpose in our living. Any attempt at defining housing must take into account this ambivalence of many different human expressions of its meaning or significance. If we are to develop a definition of housing within a scientific context, our challenge is to sort through these varying perceptions and understandings of housing and work out a definition which critically distinguishes between what is relevant to what housing is and what its role or purpose is.

As a way of taking this discussion forward in the following sub-sections, I will draw on the structures of housing provision thesis. In my view, SHP offers a starting point for a more adequate and complete theory of housing, despite being the subject of extensive critical comment (Hayward 1986; Kemeny 1987; Oxley 1991; Lawson 2006; Dodson 2007). In reflecting upon SHP, I am not seeking to develop such an adequate and
complete theory of housing. Rather, I will propose three revisions to the structures of housing provision that will provide a starting point for the development of such a theory: a shift from methodological procedure to a theory; a shift from focusing on the inter-relations between social agents to grasping the functional relations that constitute housing; and a shift in general references to context to precise, defined and related contexts.

(2) Theory as an answer to a what-is-it-question

One of the difficulties that Ball and Harloe face in their defence of SHP is to specify what it is. In the face of their critics, they opt to refer to SHP as ‘research methodology’ or ‘methodological procedure’. In doing so, they are seeking some middle ground between the charge that SHP is empiricist and that it is a general theory of housing.

While the SHP in each country is empirically derived, Ball and Harloe (1992) go on to argue that the procedure is not empiricist because “it explicitly recognises the interaction between observation, theory and individual judgement” (p.5). But they explicitly reject the view that SHP is a theory of housing; rather, it is “a metatheoretical concept or analytical framework which, together with other theories, may be of use in the examination of particular aspects of housing development” (p.3). Later they explain their reluctance to view SHP as a theory of housing.

In that sense [as a methodological procedure] it is a theory but it is not a general theory of housing whose postulates can explain most housing-related problems. Moreover it is wrong to think that such a general theory can exist. ‘Housing’ involves many diverse social processes whose explanation cannot be encompassed within one grand theory… (p.6)

Their difficulty derives from their understanding of theory. For them, “a theory of housing… produces from postulates a set of results claimed to have universal empirical generality” (p.4). In other words, from a theory we should be able to deduce what is empirically observable not only in one country but in all countries. It is in this way that the theory is verified.

This discussion reflects a tension or ambivalence within SHP – a tension between an inductive methodology with an empiricist priority for what can be observed, and a deductive methodology with an (idealist) priority for the preceding analytical or conceptual framework that a researcher brings.7 What is clear, however, is that SHP is a ‘methodological procedure’:

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6. This is beyond the scope of this thesis; indeed, it could be the subject of a thesis in itself.
7. It would seem to me that Ball and Harloe’s understanding of theory is informed by the (mainly British) tradition of induction and deduction as procedures in science. The adequacy of this tradition is a question for the fourth functional specialty Dialectic. A phenomenology of research reveals that...
SHP… is meant to provide a productive framework within which housing-related issues can be examined. It enables empirical material to be ordered and inter-related in a particular way and by doing so closes off certain lines of explanation. The form of the ordering of empirical material enables consideration of the dynamic context of housing-related issues as it gives priority to the inter-relations between the institutions involved in a SHP. The closure aspect is important as it provides a basis for criticising a number of widely prevalent approaches including consumption-orientated and/or liberal-interventionist explanations of housing problems… (p.6)

In many ways this ‘methodological procedure’ resembles the role of theory as a heuristic, an anticipation of the structure of an answer to a question: SHP anticipates that the inter-relations between the social agents involved in housing provision (in production, exchange and consumption) is decisive for the form of housing provision in a particular country.

This, it seems to me, raises two questions: first, on what basis is SHP proposed as the relevant conceptual or analytical framework for housing provision?; second, is SHP fixed or can it develop as a framework? I would contend that SHP can only function as a methodological procedure if it is some answer to a what-is-it-question. Further, that the debates about the priority of consumption or production and about provision have a common context – housing – and they can only be resolved by recognising that the debate is about answering a what-is-it-question.

Ball seems to indicate this when in an earlier article introducing SHP as an alternative theorising of housing provision, he asks: “To put the matter as a naive question: what is studied in the study of housing?” (Ball 1986). Could not this question be framed more simply as: what is housing? An answer to this question is what is studied in the study of housing. Ball and Harloe, for reasons that require further exploration, seem reluctant to identify SHP as an answer to a what-is-it-question. Some of this reluctance may stem from collapsing four questions into one rather than distinguishing them: (i) the empirical question: what events are occurring and to what extent are these events associated?, a question for the functional specialty Research; (ii) the theoretical question: what is housing?, a question for the functional specialty Interpretation; (iii) the historical question: what is the actual dynamic of housing provision as it evolves in each country?, a question for the functional specialty History; and (iv) the critical/evaluative theoretical understanding is not just a logical process of induction or deduction. It also includes non-logical processes of inquiry, observation, discovery through insight and affirmation. “[M]odern science derives its distinctive character from this grouping together of logical and non-logical operations. The logical tend to consolidate what has been achieved. The non-logical keep all achievement open to further advance. The conjunction of the two results in an open, ongoing, progressive and cumulative process” (Lonergan [1972]1990:6). See also Meynell (1998).
question: what are the limitations of this dynamic due to the interests of particular groups of social agents?, a question for the functional specialty Dialectic.

The term ‘theory’ may be used in any number of ways. But I would suggest that it can be given a more precise meaning if it is understood as an answer to a what-is-it-question. It is by answering this question that a researcher develops some control of the process of research. By defining more precisely what is being researched we can go on to understand how this ‘what’ changes, how it is used, its limitations and how we can improve it.

(3) Theory as functional relations

Ball describes a structure of housing provision as “an historically given process of providing and reproducing the physical entity, housing; focusing on the social agents essential to that process and the relations between them” (1986:158). These social agents are the institutions involved in the production, exchange and consumption of housing. It is the inter-relations between them that create and sustain the particular structures of housing provision in each country (Ball & Harloe 1992:3). Within actual structures of housing provision “there are likely to be varying relations of power and of domination and subordination” (Ball 1986:158).

In our everyday taken-for-granted living, anticipating the actions, responses, attitudes and motivations of social agents (whether individuals or institutions) are particularly important as we work out how to negotiate this world, how to get what we need or want to achieve, how we develop solutions to immediate practical concerns. An understanding of the “varying relations of power and of domination and subordination” among the social agents involved in housing provision helps us work out with whom to align to bring about some change in policy direction and/or some benefit to ourselves and the groups to which we belong. This understanding, however, is not an understanding of housing per se but rather an understanding of the social agents involved in housing provision and how they are using housing (and exercising their power) to achieve something else that is in their own interests.

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8. Now it could be objected, on epistemological grounds, that we cannot answer a what-is-it-question. All we are doing here is ‘extending’ the approach of researchers such as Mallett who note the differing views of participants on the meaning of home and seek to maintain a multidimensional view. In doing so, they are also answering a what-is-it-question: what does ‘home’ mean for this or that participant. We are proceeding by inquiring into this same data to reach for an understanding of ‘home’ that is presupposed in data such that Mallett can report on these views under the umbrella of ‘home’. If we can understand the meaning of home for each participant, then it must also be possible to grasp what ‘home’ is.

9. While attitudes, feelings and motivations do not play in housing provision per se, I will show later in Section 4.4(4) that they do have play a role in ordering the particularities of housing provision.
As a prelude to a discussion of the question: what is housing?, I would recall the discussion in Section 2.4. Within a scientific context, our orientation is towards asking and answering questions. The researcher not only prolongs the questioning process with more searching and more critical questions. It is a context within which we distinguish between different types of questions, each of which anticipates a different type of answer.

So, what is housing? What type of answer does this type of question anticipate? We can begin by noting some curious features about asking this question. First, our question: what is housing?, names what to us at the outset is something that, in one sense, is already known (for how can we ask a question about something that is completely unknown) but, in another sense, is an unknown that we seek to understand (that is why we are asking a question). Confusingly, such naming is the beginning of our research, not the end – just because we can name something, regularly use a word or even describe it does not mean that we understand it. But this naming does serve a heuristic function. By naming what we are inquiring about, we are pointing to something beyond our current understanding. The naming, in some sense, enables us to hold "housing" while we inquire into it (Melchin 1999:62).10

A what-is-it-question presupposes occurrences of what we name 'housing'. Our understanding of housing may be one of the types of definition outlined above (a definition of terms, a conceptual framework that identifies and links particular aspects of housing and/or various participant descriptions (including our own)) or, as outlined below, a current explanatory definition or theory of housing. Our current understanding of housing serves as a heuristic which guides our research. We seek some better understanding because we are puzzled by something, something doesn’t make sense, our current definition doesn’t include all the relevant and significant elements or contains some element that is not relevant. To reach some better understanding, a better answer to the question: what is housing?, we turn to what we currently understand as occurrences of ‘housing’, we turn to and gather data on occurrences of housing. We come with a series of questions that are guided by our originating question: what is housing?, What is associated with housing?, What other things, events, processes could be associated with housing?, What are the relevant and significant elements of housing? We explore and mess with the data that we are trying

Further, as discussed in Chapter 6 on the functional specialty Dialectic, the interests of social agents and the decisions they make about what is worthwhile can promote the development of housing or it can promote the self-aggrandisement of an individual or group.

10. See also Richard Feynman’s (1969:316ff) distinction between being able to name something and knowing it.
to make sense of: we distinguish events and activities; we highlight some as relevant and others as not; we notice that some are associated with each other in time, in place or in both time and place; we distinguish sets of events and activities (elements), we categorise them into different sets and then recategorise the events and activities into different sets; we make suppositions and test them; we propose hypotheses about the relevant sets of activities and their relationships, rejecting some as inadequate, considering new possibilities etc. All the time we are looking for clues as to the appropriate context within which to understand these events and activities, all the while we are stretching ourselves, reaching for some insight into the data, reaching for a discovery that will answer our question and make sense of the data. We are reaching for one of those ‘aha’ moments, a ‘eureka’ moment when suddenly all the pieces come together, when all the significant and relevant data to answer our question is included and all the misleading and irrelevant data is excluded and when we understand just how certain sets of activities relate to one another (just as the detective suddenly puts all the relevant significant clues together, excluding those which have been misleading and irrelevant).

A what-is-it-question anticipates that some intelligibility will emerge from the manifold of events and activities in our experience. Understanding or insight is that creative moment when I grasp a relation or set of relations between the essential, relevant and significant elements such that I grasp a possible answer to my question: what is housing? The relation or set of relations is not simply one of time/place association but rather a correlation where the regular occurrence of housing is systematically related to the regular occurrence of other events in a certain pattern. It is a correlation in which the occurrence of a complete set of related events constitutes housing. The insight unifies these events/activities/processes/elements – it implicitly defines their meaning in their relationship to one another. It grasps a viewpoint that integrates them in such a way that it answers my question: what is housing? I am reaching for this higher viewpoint on these elements, a viewpoint that is reached through an insight that grasps the internal structure of this complete set of related elements that constitute housing. In other words, the occurrence of housing is conditional upon the occurrence of this complete set of relations between elements.

But we are not just interested in what might be, in possibilities. There emerges, then, a new question, an is-it-question: is this housing? Does this formulated hypothesis account for all essential, relevant and significant data, and only the data that is essential, relevant and significant? Is it actually so? The hypothesis has its conditions: whether enough attention has been paid to the data; whether the data is sufficient;
whether all the relevant questions concerning the data have been asked. This is-it-question weighs up whether these conditions have or haven’t been met and makes a judgement about the hypothesis’ certainty – it is so, it is likely to be so, it may be so, it isn’t so. Is-it-questions move us beyond just any understanding of the data to our best understanding. The criteria by which we make our judgement are whether we are satisfied that we have met the conditions for correctly answering the what-is-it-question. Insofar as we have not met these conditions, we raise new questions (we may raise them or others may raise them) which seek new data and new insights and push us to new hypotheses.

So an insight that answers the question: what is housing? will be a viewpoint that grasps a complete set of related activities (elements) whose occurrence are the conditions for the occurrence of housing. Thus, we are seeking an insight into the elements that bring about or constitute housing. This insight or discovery systematically relates the occurrence of elements with the occurrence of housing. These elements are the conditions for the occurrence of housing (Melchin 1991, 1994, 1998, 1999, 2003).

Let me return now to the structures of housing provision thesis proposed by Ball and Harloe. What is relevant or significant to a theory of housing provision is the set of related elements which constitute housing provision. In doing so, the elements are related in that they play a role or purpose or function. The motivations, attitudes and interests of social agents are not relevant or significant. What is relevant and significant for constituting housing provision is that certain activities/processes/elements occur and that they occur in a certain relationship to one another. This set of elements is internally related to one another.

A theory of housing will have certain characteristics. First, it is a complete set of related elements that constitute housing. As such it explains the occurrence of housing – it is an explanatory definition. A theory of housing distinguishes housing from other things.

Second, a theory of housing is abstract, where abstract has a particular meaning. From the vast and diverse range of manifold events and activities that can be associated in time and place with housing, a theory of housing selects that set of related elements which is relevant and significant to the occurrence of housing. It abstracts from or overlooks many events and activities which are neither important nor relevant nor significant to actually constituting housing. Insight creatively leaps from associations 11. These overlooked events/activities may, however, provide the conditions for the elements that constitute housing or they may provide the conditions for other things in which housing plays a role. In this sense, they are external to housing.
in time and place between data to a grasp of a systematic correlation between the occurrence of a set of related elements and the occurrence of housing.\textsuperscript{12}

What is being proposed here is not something ideal or utopian but rather the actually occurring processes that constitute the occurrence of housing. In my discussion of the functional specialty Research, I noted how it associates events in time and place. The insight that grasps an answer to the question: what is housing? moves beyond these associations in time and place to correlations that grasp the complete set of related elements that constitute housing. An association in only time and place is not significant and relevant to understanding. But by selecting what is relevant and significant, insight ‘enhances’ the data.

Third, a theory of housing is universal, invariant and normative. Unlike analytic and conceptual frameworks, this theory is not distilling what is common among various instances of housing. Many things may be commonly associated with housing but they may not be essential, relevant and significant. A theory of housing heads towards that complete set of related elements that constitute all occurrences of housing at whatever time and place. In asking ‘what is housing’, we are seeking that set of related elements that are relevant and significant to constituting housing and that distinguish housing from everything else regardless of its time and place. While our understanding of housing is ever incomplete and affirmed as more or less probable, while the expression of housing may vary from person to person and from culture to culture, the goal is always to grasp the set of related elements that constitute housing in whatever time or place it occurs. In this way, a theory of housing is universal, invariant and normative.

Fourth, as universal, invariant and normative, a theory of housing can function as a heuristic. It can guide the functional specialty Research as it turns to and gathers data. It can guide the functional specialty History as it seeks to grasp the dynamic of change in actual operating housing systems. It can guide the functional specialty Dialectic as it

\textsuperscript{12} Two further examples may clarify this notion of abstraction. We cannot imagine a circle without imagining one with lines and of certain dimensions (maybe large, maybe small). Through insight we grasp a theory of circles that has neither lines nor is of a certain dimension. What is significant and relevant is a set of relationships between elements (centre and radii). This theory does not specify the length of the radii nor the location of the centre. These are irrelevant and insignificant. The theory grasps the relationship between the radii – they are equivalent – and the relationship of the radii to a centre.

A further example pertains to a dwelling. In some countries, the material used to construct a dwelling may only be timber or ice and this may have a very long history. So, in these countries, timber and ice are associated with dwellings. A theory of dwelling articulates the set of relationships between elements that constitute a dwelling. These elements include the materiality of a structure but abstract from the particular associations of timber and ice. We cannot imagine a house without such materiality whether it be timber, ice, brick, stone, concrete, steel or some mixture. But these particularities are not relevant or significant to a theory of a dwelling. Insight leaps to a certain type of materiality (one which can form a structure that is capable of providing shelter) as one of the elements of a dwelling that is relevant and significant.
understands the ways in which individuals and groups promote their own interests and aggrandise themselves. It can guide the implementation functional specialties: Foundations, Policies, Systematics and Communications.

(4) Theory within related contexts

Ball and Harloe (1992:5) “recognise the context-bound nature of housing provision” and that “differences between SHPs are influenced by historical, geographical and physical features”. Moreover, “each social science has its own theories to explain particular social processes” (Ball 1986:150). In this context, SHP “can exist only with other types of theory as part of the set of analytical tools used to investigate empirical questions. The set would also include amongst other things theories of social and economic processes and theories of data analysis and evaluation” (Ball & Harloe 1992:13).

Thus, as noted in both Sections 4.2(2)(iii) and 4.3, Burke superimposes a ‘systems context’ on SHP in order to understand the structures of housing provision in Australia. As Burke and Hulse (2010:825) note, these are “embedded in a broader institutional, context made up of the particular economic, social, demographic, administrative, legal, environmental and political processes which define Australia and shape the form, timing and direction of housing policy and problems. This institutional context also embodies the dominant norms and values of society”.

An understanding of the context is important for a more complete understanding of housing provision, where ‘complete’ means an understanding not just of housing provision as ‘a general theory’ but also an understanding of SHP as it operates in each country. Context, then, is a way of understanding the particularities of SHP. In my view, however, the understanding of context within SHP suffers from two weaknesses. First, it is largely based on associations between a particular type of context and a particular type of SHP. For example, Joris Hoekstra (2010) and Kath Hulse (2003) have both sought to relate housing and politics by applying Esping-Andersen’s (1990) typology of welfare state regimes to housing. Second, it relates SHP to context in a piecemeal way. It does not seek a more comprehensive understanding of context, one which incorporates (i) the various participant definitions of housing, such as the multi-dimensional view of home outlined in the work of Mallett (referred to above) and (ii) the various disciplinary approaches. By relating and incorporating these perspectives into a theory of housing, we would have a more adequate and complete theory, one which will provide a more adequate and complete heuristic for understanding an actual operating housing system with all its particularities. A more adequate and complete heuristic of housing becomes critical when seeking answers to other types of
questions: the empirical question, the historical question, the critical/evaluative question, the transformative question, the policy question, the strategic question and the practical question.

It is this question of relationship between contexts that is not well explored by Ball and Harloe. Further, as noted above, they are reluctant to call SHP a theory because they are unable to deduce from it what is empirically observable.

(i) The context of housing

In answering the question: what is housing? I proposed a particular type of answer, an answer which is grasped through an insight which distinguishes housing from other things by discovering the systematic relations between selected empirical data. By selecting certain data as relevant and significant, insight ‘passes over’ other data as irrelevant and insignificant. I further noted that this answer is abstract. As a consequence, a theory of housing is universal, invariant and normative.

There is one further consequence. While the complete set of related elements that constitute housing is fixed, the particularity of the elements themselves is not. For example, if we consider the set of related elements that constitute a dwelling, it would include elements such as materials and design in certain relations. The particular materials that, in part, constitute a dwelling may, however, vary. They could be one or a combination of timber, stone, bricks, concrete, glass, plastic, steel, aluminium, ice, brush, thatch etc. The particular designs that, in part, constitute a dwelling may include any number of rooms in different configurations with differing purposes according to social, cultural and personal preferences. The range of these materials or designs is not unlimited; rather, there is a range possibilities such that the particularity of the dwelling may vary.\(^\text{13}\)

A theory of housing, then, will admit a range of possibilities. In this way, the particularity of housing will vary. It is this particularity of the related elements that we seek to explain by appealing to the context within which housing is operating. Let me expand on this further.

We have proposed that a theory of housing is a complete set of related elements. The occurrence of housing is conditional upon the occurrence of this complete set. For Ball and Harloe, these elements are production, exchange and consumption.\(^\text{14}\) The

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\(^\text{13}\) In a similar way, a theory of a circle admits of a range of possibilities. By varying the length of the radii we still get circles, but of varying sizes.

\(^\text{14}\) For the purposes of illustration, I am assuming here that production, exchange and consumption are the significant and relevant elements that constitute housing. Whether they form an adequate theory of housing is matter for further investigation.
occurrence of each of these also has its conditions. So, we can ask about the conditions for the occurrence of each element and these conditions will be understood as answers to such questions as: What is production? What is exchange? What is consumption? In answering questions such as these, we turn to the data seeking to discover the systematic relations between selected empirical data (the relevant and significant data) that will constitute production, exchange or consumption.

The relevant and significant data will not be the same data for each. The complete set of related elements that constitute production, exchange and consumption will be different – each set will distinguish one element from the other.  

There is a further point to note. Just as the answer to the question: what is housing? is abstract, universal, invariant and normative, the answers to the questions: what is production?, what is exchange? and what is consumption? are answers that are abstract, universal, invariant and normative. They pertain to any instance of production, exchange and consumption at any time or place. Together they play a role or function in constituting housing. However, housing is one particular good which is produced, exchanged or consumed, and to constitute housing these elements are particularised – adapted and moulded – in such a way that they constitute housing and not something else, they are particularised in view of the demands of housing (rather than any other good or any other mode of property development whether commercial, retail, wholesale etc.). At the same time, because production, exchange and consumption themselves are conditional, the extent to which they can be particularised, adapted and moulded is limited. In this way they limit the range of possibilities for housing. Production, exchange and consumption are particularised in such a way that together they will achieve a particular purpose—constituting housing. Production, exchange and consumption as constitutive of housing are related to housing as lower purpose to higher purpose.

15. Burke and Hulse (2010:827ff), for instance, proposes that the relevant elements for production are land ownership, land development and house building; the relevant elements for exchange are the finance industry and the real estate industry; the relevant elements for consumption are the market for owner-occupied housing and private rental, non-market housing (social housing), type of housing stock and geographical concentration. Whether the relationship between these ‘sub-elements’ is essential, relevant and significant in constituting production, exchange and consumption are matters for further investigation.

16. I will use the term ‘purpose’ (and sometimes ‘role’) rather than the more technical term ‘function’. However, it should be noted that by describing something according to its purpose, I am not attributing some teleological sense to it and implying that it is designed or created for this purpose. Rather, because of the way it is designed and created, it can be used, adapted and moulded for some higher purpose, in the constitution of something else.

In Chapter 6, I will suggest that we exercise power by insisting that housing has a use (a purpose or role) that accords with our understanding and interests. Indeed, conflicts around housing have their grounds not in what housing is but rather in the differing uses to which it can be put. It is around these uses that a dominant ideology is formed.
Further, just as housing is a higher purpose in relation to the elements (production, exchange and consumption) that constitute it, so too housing itself can play a role in an even higher purpose – it can be one of a number of conditions or elements for the achievement of that higher purpose. So, for instance, by asking: What is an economy?, What is a society?, What is a culture?, What is home?, we find that housing plays some sort of role either directly or indirectly in creating a standard of living, effective agreement between individuals and groups, a common way of life and a place to belong.

There is, then, an ordered set of relationships, a type of hierarchy of relations between: the sets of related elements that are the conditions for the occurrence of production, exchange and consumption; the set of related elements (production, exchange and consumption) that are the conditions for housing; the set of related elements (which include housing) that are the conditions for a standard of living; the set of related elements (which include a standard of living, of which housing is a condition) that are the conditions for effective agreement between individuals and groups; the set of related elements (which include effective agreement between individuals and groups) that are the conditions for a common way of life; and the set of related elements (which include a common way of life) that are the conditions for a place to belong, a home, etc.

As the particularity of each of the elements within this ordered set of relationships can vary within a range of possibilities, it would seem that we could develop a series of related theories which form an ordered set of theories within a particular type of hierarchy where:

(i) a level is a purpose which systematises lower level elements (and higher and lower reference this conditional relationship);

(ii) the higher level and the lower level are related but not related systematically, because:

(iii) the higher level depends upon the lower level, i.e. the occurrence of a higher level purpose depends upon the occurrence of lower level purposes which themselves depend upon the occurrence of even lower level purposes. However, the occurrence of these lower level purposes does not depend upon the occurrence of higher level purposes;

(iv) the higher levels select or particularise the lower levels in order to achieve their particular purpose, i.e. the lower level has a role or purpose in the occurrence of a higher level purpose but this role is particularised from a range of possibilities.
This ordered set of theories is a particular type of hierarchy, one not based on dominance but on mutual interaction. In speaking of context, I am distinguishing between two types of questions: what-is-it-questions and purpose-questions. The first type is concerned with what housing is, the second with how housing is used for some purpose or other. The social agents involved in the production, exchange and consumption of housing are motivated by some purpose or other, and use housing to achieve it. This purpose is not housing but rather something else in which housing plays some role or purpose. The purpose-question, then, is not a different type of question. Rather, it is a different what-is-it-question. The ‘what’ here is one in which housing is one of the set of related elements.

One of the difficulties in developing a theory of housing is that of distinguishing between what is essential, significant and relevant to answering the question: what is housing?, and what is essential, significant and relevant to answering other what-is-it-questions in which housing plays a role, but not the only role, in constituting something else. The development of a theory of housing requires that some precise distinctions are made and that sets of related elements are precisely understood. A more developed theory will not only grasp the set of related elements that constitute housing but also grasp the way in which its particularities (or properties or characteristics) are determined by the role that housing plays in constituting a standard of living, an economy and a society etc.

In summary. On an initial view, a theory of housing is the complete set of related elements that constitute housing at any time or place. As a complete set, all the essential, significant and relevant related elements are included and the non-essential, insignificant and irrelevant elements are excluded. On a more developed view, a theory

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Section 4.5 on an indicative theory of rent-setting seeks to illustrate how we can understand the particularity of rental systems in different countries as an ordered set of relationships.

18. This reference to context is an attempt to understand the particularities of an actual operating housing system: “modern science uses universals as tools in its unrelenting efforts to approximate to concrete process” (Lonergan [1968]1974:104). An example used by Lonergan (1974:271-272) that I found useful is to approximate the movement of the planets through a series of theories, as follows:

Newton’s planetary theory had a first approximation in the first law of motion: bodies move in a straight line with constant velocity unless some force intervenes. There was a second approximation when the addition of the law of gravity between the sun and the planet yielded an elliptical orbit for the planet. A third approximation was reached when the influence of the gravity of the planets on one another is taken into account to reveal the perturbed ellipses in which the planets actually move. The point to this model is, of course, that in the intellectual construction of reality it is not any of the earlier stages of the construction but only the final product that actually exists. Planets do not move in straight lines nor in properly elliptical orbits; but these conceptions are needed to arrive at the perturbed ellipses in which they actually do move.
of housing is the complete set of related variable elements. As variable, the related elements admit of ranges of possibilities. Finally, a complete theory of housing can be understood as a complete ordered set of sets of related variable elements where the particularity of the complete set of related variable elements that constitute housing are ordered by sets of related variable elements that constitute other ‘whats’ in which housing plays some role. This ordering ensures that these ‘whats’ are achieved.

(ii) The complete context of housing

If we are to understand the context within which an actual housing system operates, then we need to understand the various purposes of housing as a series of ‘whats’ within which housing functions as one of the set of related elements. We can group these ‘whats’ into different types. In doing this, I want to bring together two different things. First, there is the range of differing views of participants on housing. This is illustrated by the work of Mallett who sought to maintain a multi-dimensional view of home where the meaning of home depends upon the historical, cultural and personal context of each person. Her focus is on consumers. Above I noted how definitions of home within the everyday taken-for-granted world of common sense do not distinguish between what home is and its role in achieving some other purpose. Home has a significance or meaning because it has some role in participants’ lives. The question, then, is how these participant descriptions fit this hierarchy of ‘whats’: how do they order the particularities of housing in such a way that these ‘whats’ will be achieved?

Second, these participant descriptions from consumers of housing (as outlined in the work of Mallett) can be incorporated into a broader range of participant descriptions that are ‘picked up’ by various disciplines. At the beginning of this chapter, I included a quote from Kemeny in which he argues that the social science disciplines (sociology, economics, psychology, politics, geography and history) dimension out aspects of social structures. Housing research highlights the diversity of viewpoints on housing and the lack of an integrated view of housing.

One of the initial challenges, then, is to develop a theory of housing that will hold together these diverse views of housing, that will take account of this diversity and that will in some comprehensive and integrated way relate the diversity of viewpoints across different disciplines. Such a theory would be a more adequate theory of housing (but also more complex) and would provide a more adequate heuristic for the further study of housing in later functional specialties.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to develop such a theory. My primary interest here is a more precise understanding of the functional specialty Interpretation. So here I
simply want to point to a way in which such diverse viewpoints could be integrated into one theory which seeks to embrace ‘housing’ in a single view.\(^{19}\)

The current approach of many social science disciplines to theory complicates the question of interdisciplinarity because most social sciences, particularly economics, are notable for their attempts to seek explanations by relating the occurrence of events to human motivations and attitudes such as self-interest, an approach rejected by the notion of theory outlined above. This notion of theory differentiates different levels of a hierarchy of relationships according to their purpose. The difficult question, then, is whether social sciences such as economics and politics can be recast in terms of disciplines with different purposes that can be related to one another.

The challenge is to develop an integrated and comprehensive theory of housing. Thus to bring together in some way: the material meanings of housing as developed, for example, by Gabriel and Jacobs (2008); the economic meanings of housing as developed, for example, by Gibb (2009) and Ball and Harloe’s structures of housing provision (Ball 1986; Ball & Harloe 1992; Ball 1998); the political meanings of housing as developed, for example, by Kemeny (1992), Bengtsson (2009) and Dodson (2007); the cultural meanings of housing as dwelling and as home as developed by, for example, King (2004, 2005, 2008) and Blunt and Dowling (2006) respectively; and the personal meanings of housing (or home) as pointed to, for example, by Clapham (2002, 2005), King (2004, 2005, 2008) and Mallett (2004).\(^{20}\)

A theory of housing is not just a complete set of related variable elements but a complete ordered set of sets of related variable elements where different levels are differentiated and then related according to their purpose. Answers to a series of what-is-it-questions anticipate that a complete theory of housing will relate many different purposes. I would suggest that it is around these purposes that we can envisage the development of distinctive disciplines.\(^{21}\) The notion of theory proposed here suggests that a more radical recasting of the social sciences is needed, one which differentiates and then relates them according to their purpose.\(^{22}\) In this way a theory of the economy

\(^{19}\) To paraphrase Lonergan’s view of theoretical understanding as seeking “to solve problems, to erect syntheses, to embrace the universe in a single view” [1957]1992:442).

\(^{20}\) Most of these examples not only elaborate on a particular discipline but also go a step further and critique what is currently happening by revealing situations of oppression, sexism, racism, classism and imperialism (resulting in inequity, injustice, non-participation, disrespect and lack of compassion) as particular groups seek to maintain and promote their interests.

\(^{21}\) Michael Oxley (2001), for instance, distinguishes different types of research according to their purpose. See also Section 2.3(2) above.

\(^{22}\) As long as these disciplines seek to ‘explain’ economic or political or cultural or social events in terms of motivations and attitudes, they will be frustrated because these events are not systematically related to personal attributes. By defining disciplines according to a particular purpose, it restricts the
and a theory of politics could be applied to housing in order to create a more comprehensive and integrated theory of housing.

I would suggest that a more adequate theory of housing would begin by recognising that social and cultural constructions are responses to: (i) our recurring need to produce goods and services out of which emerges a standard of living, (ii) our recurring need to reach effective agreement on how we co-operatively work together to produce this standard of living, (iii) our recurring need to discover, express and develop meaning and value in our living and (iv) our ever-present desire to transcend our current identity and to live in a larger and better world.23

The first point relates to an economy as “the totality of activities bridging the gap between the potentialities of nature, whether physical, chemical, vegetable, animal, or human nature, and, on the other hand, the actuality of a standard of living” (Lonergan [1942-1944]1998:232). Technology is the processes whereby society develops the know-how to transform the potentialities of nature into goods and services. The second relates to a polity which, in an ever changing environment, concretely reaches effective agreements as to who does what with what benefits or costs. It encompasses decisions reached by individuals, by organisations, by businesses and by governments. These decisions are institutionalised in the taken-for-granted ways of doing things between people, in the policies and practices of organisations and businesses and in the laws and regulations of governments. The third relates to culture, the inherited but ever changing set of meanings and values that inform a common way of life. These are institutionalised in customs and mores, in arts and literature, in artefacts and materials, in aesthetics and architecture etc.24 The fourth relates to personal meanings and values, and the development of personal identity.

These four are related in that they form a hierarchy in which the higher purpose depends upon lower purposes and the higher purpose systematises the lower purposes such that not only are the lower purposes achieved but the higher purpose is also achieved. So, technology evokes (that is, provides the conditions for) and is systematised by the economy, the economy evokes and is systematised by the polity,

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23. These needs and desires need to be affirmed on the basis of a fuller phenomenology of human deciding and acting.
24. I am using the term ‘culture’ in a technical sense as what informs a way of living. Most prominently, a culture varies between national, ethnographic and religious groups. But within any society it also varies from group to group, and the culture of one group may complement or conflict with that of another. So, the culture within working groups – different professions, managers, workers – will vary as does the culture between children, young people, adults and older persons, between urban and rural groups.
the polity evokes and is systematised by culture, and culture evokes and is
systematised by persons who, in the measure that they have critically appropriated
their tradition, can enlarge their own lives and that of others and become the source of
new technological meanings, new economic meanings, new political meanings and
new cultural meanings for future generations.

Each purpose, whether technology, economics, politics, cultural studies or personal
development, has a particular focus and explains a particular aspect of the whole. Each
has a particular interest in the actual operating processes through which each
particular society achieves an actual standard of living or actual agreements as to how
things are done or actual meaning and values that inform a common way of life or,
actual personal identities. It is only by integrating these purposes that the whole can be
grasped. What is actually operating and being achieved, no doubt, has its limitations,
indeed, may be abusive of individuals. The integration of all these purposes explains
what is being achieved. It is then that we can begin to assess the limitations of this
achievement.

Diagram 4.1 is a speculation on the set of related variable elements that might
constitute different levels of understanding within an interdisciplinary approach to
housing.25 Vertically (as noted in the first or left-hand column), the diagram
distinguishes five disciplines: technology, economy, politics, culture and personal
identity.26 The corresponding purpose of each discipline is outlined in the second
column. A speculation on a possible set of related variable elements that constitutes
this purpose is outlined in the third column. Each discipline contributes to a theory of
housing and, thus, a more adequate heuristic.

As illustrated in the diagram, housing as a component of a standard of living and as a
product of an economy is embedded within the economy. For Ball and Harloe, its
related variable elements are production, exchange and consumption. The task for an
Interpreter is to work out the levels and their relations within the hierarchy as ordering
or systematising the particularities of the set of related variable elements that constitute
housing as one component of a standard of living: the range of possibilities in the set of
related elements that constitute a technology sets certain limits for each of the

25. The variables within each level are speculative. The purpose of the diagram is illustrative.
26. These are broad disciplinary categories, each of which is developed around a specific purpose. It
should be noted, however, that internal to each discipline are many different purposes that relate to
one another. For example, internal to economics is the purpose of money, the purpose of the basic
circuit of production, the purpose of the surplus circuit of production and the purpose of redistribution;
internal to culture are various meanings, each of which has a purpose in relation to the purpose of
culture.
elements of production, exchange and consumption; the achievement of housing plays a role in a standard of living and an economy orders or systematises the range of possibilities among the elements that constitute housing in such a way that a standard of living is achieved; the achievement of an economy plays a role in the functioning of politics (and within this economy, housing has its role), and politics orders or systematises the range of possibilities among the elements that constitute an economy in such a way that individuals and groups reach agreement on who benefits and who loses; the achievement of a politics plays a role in the functioning of a culture (and within the economy and politics, housing may play some role), and a culture orders or systematises the range of possibilities among the elements that constitute a politics in such a way that a common way of life is maintained; the achievement of a common way of life plays a role in the development of a personal identity (and within the economy, politics and culture, housing may play some role), and each person orders or systematises the range of possibilities among the elements that constitute a culture in such a way that the life of each person is meaningful.

What is being proposed here is a larger and more adequate heuristic for understanding housing at particular times and places. As a heuristic, this theory allows us to understand any particular actual housing situation or actual operating housing system. The goal of an adequate theory of housing is develop a complete ordered set of sets of related variable elements that will constitute housing and its particularities. An actual operating housing system will be an ordered set of sets of related actual elements, i.e. the elements and their relationships as they actually occur.

By recasting various disciplines according to their purpose, it seems to me that it becomes possible to integrate them within a larger framework and in this way we can develop a much more adequate theory of housing. It is towards this goal of a complete integrated framework that incorporates and relates all aspects of housing that the functional specialty Interpretation is oriented.

27. For an example of empirical work relating housing and politics, see the application of Esping-Andersen’s (1990) typology of welfare state regimes to housing by Joris Hoekstra (2010) and Kath Hulse (2003).
Diagram 4.1: An interdisciplinary approach to housing: disciplines, their corresponding purpose and a speculation on a possible set of related variable elements that constitute a purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Possible set of related variable elements that constitute a purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal identity</td>
<td>Personal meanings and values</td>
<td>Deciding, Affirming, Understanding, Experiencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Common way of life</td>
<td>Common values/goals/policies, Common/complementary affirmations, Common/complementary understandings, Common experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>Effective agreement</td>
<td>Institutions, Authority, Liberty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>Standard of living</td>
<td>Basic circuit of production, Surplus circuit of production, Redistribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Know-how</td>
<td>Operations/co-operations, Human capacities, Nature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5 Illustration: Towards an indicative theory of social housing rent

The following is an indicative illustration of a theory of social housing rent. It is indicative because it still requires much work. Despite this, it does illustrate the notion of theory outlined above. It highlights the structure of theory as a complete ordered set of sets of related variable elements. It shows how the differing purposes of rent can be systematised into a set of theories within a particular type of hierarchy that can explain actual operating rental systems.

Social housing rent serves a number of purposes. We advert to these purposes when we talk about increasing rents to maintain the financial viability of an organisation; setting rents which are affordable; comparing rents on dwellings so that they are equitable; increasing or reducing rents on dwellings to encourage tenants to make different decisions about the dwellings they want; or comparing the housing costs of social housing tenants to owner-occupiers or private renters so these costs are equitable.

Now each of these purposes is achieved by some method, some series of activities and processes – a yet to be determined set of related elements. The initial question is: what is social housing rent? This can be followed by series of further questions regarding the role of social housing rent within the achievement of other purposes. Each of these other purposes is constituted by a set of related elements in which rent is directly or indirectly one of the elements that constitute this purpose.

Within a theory of social housing rent, each purpose forms a context and the ordered set of theories is a series of related contexts. The following outlines a theory of social housing rent within five contexts: social housing rent, finance, social housing, standard of living and economy. These are outlined schematically in Diagram 4.2 (and should be read from the bottom upwards) with the lower context as one element in a higher context.

(1) A first context: what is rent?

Our initial question is: What is rent? What is the set of related elements that constitute a rent?

Rent is constituted by a set of three related elements (each with their own specific purpose) whose endpoint is a rent for each tenancy:

- gathering specified sets of data. Examples of datasets include: the prices at which dwellings with determined characteristics are sold and/or rented; the costs
of acquiring and managing dwellings; types of tenant incomes and their purposes; and tenant characteristics (for example, income and household type);

- specific operations are carried out upon these specified sets of data resulting in a set of criteria for determining rent for each tenant. These operations include collating, averaging, weighing, comparing etc. according to specific characteristics;

- application of the criteria to a specific tenancy.

**Diagram 4.2: A theory of social housing rent**

These three processes are serially related and dependent upon one another with each achieving something that is essential to social housing rent. Together they determine a tenant’s rent. But what is also important to note is the range of possibilities within each of the stages: a range of possible sets of data; a range of possible combinations of operations, a range of possible criteria for determining the rent of each tenant. The range of possibilities points to the flexibility in determining a specific rental system according to the environment within which it operates. As a result, we have a variety of possible rental systems including: property rental systems (cost-rent, market rent,
market-related rent) and household rental systems (income-related, subsidy-related and flat) (see Appendix B, Table B1 and also McNelis (2006:34ff)).

This theory of rent outlines a structure which relates three key elements such that together they constitute a rent. Within that structure are a range of possibilities.

(2) A second context: the role of rent within the social housing finance system

The rental system determines an individual rent but it can do so in a range of possible ways with a range of results. So on what basis are the possibilities arranged in a particular way such that a particular result (in addition to the determination of a tenant’s rent) is achieved?

To ask this question is to shift to a different context or to a higher viewpoint. From this viewpoint, the rental system achieves not just a particular purpose – the determination of a tenant’s rent – but contributes to another higher purpose. The question is about the role or function of the rental system within a larger context. We can begin by considering the immediate context of the social housing finance system.

In this context, what is important is not the individual rent but rather the aggregate of the rent that results from the particular operative rental system. In this new context, a tenant’s rent is determined in such a way that aggregate rent is sufficient to cover the ongoing costs of social housing. The purpose of aggregate rent, as distinct from the purpose of the rental system, is to meet the ongoing costs of social housing.

But two further aspects of the overall social housing finance system complicate this relationship: the way in which social housing finances its acquisition of properties (capital finance) and the way in which subsidies are delivered into social housing. It is these four elements – rent, ongoing costs, capital and subsidies – and their relationships which together constitute the social housing finance system and bring about social housing financial viability (McNelis 2006).

The purpose of the social housing finance system (and the recurrent processes that constitute it) is to maintain the financial viability of social housing. But again, just as the rental system is open to a range of possibilities, so too the financial system is open to a range of possibilities: the level and type of ongoing costs can vary; the types of capital finance arrangements and the conditions under which they are provided (and their subsequent impact on ongoing costs) can vary; the level and type of subsidies provided to social housing can vary. These ranges of possibilities also point to the flexibility in determining a specific financial system according to the environment in
which it operates. Again, we have a variety of possible social housing financial systems within and between countries (see Appendix B, Table B2 and also McNelis 2006:42ff).

(3) A third context: the role of rent within social housing

The finance system operates as one system within the larger context of the systems that constitute social housing. Possible systems that might constitute social housing are: finance, production/acquisition, maintenance/redevelopment, management/eligibility/allocations and consumption/tenancy. It is these systems (with sets of related elements) that together constitute social housing.

While the specific purpose of the social housing finance system is to ensure the financial viability of social housing, each of the other systems also has a specific purpose, and the rental system may or may not play some sort of role in each of these systems achieving their specific purpose. For example, the eligibility/allocations system may determine the income of tenants and thus their capacity to pay rent. Housing acquisition, tenancy and maintenance/redevelopment systems may determine costs which must be covered by rent payments.

Moreover, the totality of these systems that together constitute social housing is a new context or higher viewpoint, and the rental system may play some role in the constitution of this totality of systems (over and above its role within the systems that constitute social housing).

(4) A fourth context: the role of social housing rent within a standard of living

Social housing is one form of housing among others that ensures that households are housed as one element that constitutes a standard of living. Its role or purpose is determined within this context and there are a range of possible roles which social housing can play. It can provide adequate and appropriate housing or provide affordable housing or provide housing to a range of income groups or only to those with high needs or provide particular types of housing etc.2

Within this context, the rental system may have a number of possible roles. It may be a mechanism for achieving affordability such as in Australia, Ireland, Canada, USA and

1. These elements are loosely drawn from the structures of housing provision proposed by Ball and Harloe (Ball 1986; Ball & Harloe 1992; Ball 1998).

2. In speaking about the role of social housing, I am only indicating the possible roles it can play. What role it actually plays and how this came about, whether this actual role has been successful and whether this role should change to something else are further issues that still require investigation in the functional specialties History and Dialectic. A theory of rent provides a heuristic for these further investigations.
New Zealand where household rental systems operate (see Appendix B, Table B3 and also McNelis (2006:Section 6.2)). By relating housing costs to income it may determine the relationship between housing and a range of other elements that constitute a standard of living.

(5) A fifth context: the role of social housing rent within an economy
Social housing and its constituent systems operate within the broader context of systems external to social housing. For example, the acquisition of social housing operates with the larger systems of the building construction industry and the real estate industry; asset management operates within the larger systems of building and repair; eligibility and allocation operate within the larger systems of the distribution of housing; finance operates within the larger systems of capital finance, operating finance and subsidies. Thus the systems that constitute social housing are not isolated entities but rather cycle internally and externally (Melchin 2003).

These larger systems of acquisition, maintenance/redevelopment, eligibility/allocations, capital finance and operating finance operate within a broader economy. An economy is constituted by a basic circuit of production, a surplus circuit of production and a redistribution circuit from which emerges a standard of living.\(^3\)

(6) Two comments on this indicative theory of rent
Two comments may clarify some aspects of this indicative theory of rent.

First, this is an ongoing attempt at developing an adequate theory of social housing rent. It is still incomplete and open to further development. Other possible contexts include: technological (the technology required to implement a rental system), political (how we make decisions about a rental system), cultural (reflections on the common meanings of rental systems) and personal (reflections on personal meanings of rental systems).

Second, the theory of rent shifts away from descriptions of the various activities of particular people and away from the motivations, interests and perspectives of the players towards sets of related activities or processes. It also differentiates the purposes of rent and the systems that constitute these purposes and, as such, shows how these purposes are related to one another. Further, it illustrates how a theory systematises sets of relations and possibilities with higher purposes dependent upon

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the lower, but the higher making demands on the lower so that the higher purposes are also achieved. This is possible because there are a range of possibilities for rental systems, a range of possibilities for finance systems, a range of possibilities for social housing etc. As a result, the lower level rental system systematises those elements that constitute rent and explains how the rent of a specific tenant is determined. However, the rental system does not explain the level of the rent, why the rent changes, what form of rent the tenant is subject to and whether the rent is equitable or affordable. In relation to the rental system, these elements are not related systematically. If we are to explain these elements, we have to turn to other purposes within which the rental system is one among a number of elements. These other purposes can utilise the rental system to achieve their purposes because the elements of the rental system are not set. Rather, there are a range of possibilities. As a result, the rental system has a flexibility that allows it to achieve other purposes. If we are to understand the coincidental particularities of the rental system, then we need a higher viewpoint, a new context which systematises further aspects of the data. The demands of these higher viewpoints determine specific elements of the rental system. So, the finance system determines that the aggregation of individual rent payments will ensure the financial viability of social housing and that rents are regularly reviewed as the aggregate level within other elements adjusts (due to external changes); the role of social housing within a standard of living will determine the type of rent and the extent of this type, i.e. whether a tenant is subject to a property rent, a household rent or combination thereof; the economic system will determine the cost at which adequate and appropriate housing will be provided and thus the overall level of rents.

Third, through a series of approximations, the theory of rent, outlined above, can explain any particular rental system. As a first approximation, rent is constituted by three elements (datasets; combinations of operations on the datasets; criteria for determining the rent of each tenant) and their relationships. Each element admits of a range of possibilities and, as such, they do not of themselves explain a particular rent. As a second approximation, then, the range of possibilities within each of the elements is further limited by the role that rent plays in the financial viability of social housing. As a third approximation, the range of possibilities within each of the elements is further limited by the role that rent plays in relation to the constitution of social housing (and the other elements that constitute social housing). As a fourth approximation, the range of possibilities is even further limited by the role that rent plays in relation to a standard of living (and the role it plays in providing affordable housing). And further approximations can be made and the range of possibilities further limited by
considering the role that rent plays, if any, in relation to other possible values such as tenure neutrality, equity etc. In this way, the theory of rent will explain a particular rental system.

4.6 Concluding summary and implications for housing research

This chapter has sought to give a more precise meaning to the functional specialty Interpretation. It began by distinguishing, through a phenomenology of inquiry, between data and an understanding or interpretation of the meaning or significance of that data. By asking a what-is-it-question, a question of definition, we are seeking to understand some data, to grasp its meaning or significance.

Three genres of research on Australian social housing – defining terms, conceptual frameworks and participant descriptions – are primarily concerned with defining social housing. The starting point for definitions is ordinary social life. Definitions grasp the meaning of apparently disparate meaningful events; they operate in contexts which are related to one another; they are a new expression of other expressions of meaning; they are selective; they are used for different purposes – to control or focus our research, to limit its scope and to specify what is and is not relevant. Researchers have different approaches to defining housing: by defining how words are used with similar but more familiar terms; by working out those elements that are common to housing as it operates in different locations; and by participants defining the meaning of housing.

In our view these types of definitions are inadequate because they are understandings that operate within the horizon of the everyday taken-for-granted world of common sense where housing is defined in terms of its value or usefulness to us. Descriptive definitions ‘run together’ housing and other things that have become associated with it and do not distinguish between what is relevant to a definition of housing and the values or purposes associated with housing. A scientific approach to defining housing is a particular type of answer to a what-is-it-question. A what-is-it-question anticipates an answer as the complete set of related variable elements that constitute housing. This answer is an explanatory definition of housing or, to use the traditional term, a theory of housing. It is a definition which distinguishes the uniqueness of housing from everything else.

A theory of housing has seven notable characteristics. First, a theory of housing distinguishes housing from other things. Second, theory is abstract. It shifts from associations between events/activities/processes in time and place to correlations that grasp what is systematic, a complete set of related variable elements, regardless of time and place. Third, a theory of housing is universal, invariant and normative.
grasps that the complete set of related variable elements that constitute housing are the conditions for the actual occurrence of housing at any place or time. Fourth, while a theory of housing is universal, invariant and normative, the particularity of its elements can vary. Thus, a theory of housing consists of a set of variables which admits of a range of possibilities. It is this characteristic that gives it its fifth noticeable characteristic and allows it to play a role as a heuristic, as an anticipation of the structure of what will be understood at the completion of an inquiry. Sixth, a theory of housing distinguishes between what housing is and the role it plays as one of a complete set of related elements. These roles form a series of contexts as a particular type of hierarchy. Each level of this hierarchy is distinguished by a particular purpose. Each level systematises lower level elements yet depends upon the occurrence of these lower level elements. But each level also contributes to some higher purpose. This series of contexts allows for the full range of purposes of housing including various participant descriptions. Finally, a theory of housing presented here opens up the possibility of an interdisciplinary theory. This, however, requires a recasting of disciplines – technology, economics, politics, culture etc. – according to a particular purpose: economics, our recurrent need for goods and services to maintain a standard of living; politics, our recurrent need for effective agreement; culture, our recurrent need for meaning and value in our living; and personal development, our ever-present desire to transcend our current identity and to live in a larger and better world. These purposes form a hierarchy whereby a higher level purpose systematises the elements of a lower level purpose, and the elements of a lower level purpose contribute to the achievement of a higher level purpose. By relating these purposes to one another it becomes possible to develop a more adequate theory of housing, one which is more comprehensive, integrated and interdisciplinary. This theory is adequate insofar as it accounts for all these possible roles that housing can play in the larger framework of living for this provides the empirical data that needs to be understood.

Theory is not something remote from practice, from empirical evidence. Rather, it is the way in which we get to what is most significant and relevant. The development of theory is not some cold, rational process of deduction but rather a passionate commitment to discovery. It isn’t an optional extra. It is a commitment to understanding that requires all our faculties of wonder, desire, puzzling, sensibility, feeling, attention to detail, imagination, insight, creativity, fantasy, formulation, deliberation and action.

The functional specialty Interpretation is ecstatic for the researcher moves from their original understanding of ‘housing’ to a new understanding of ‘housing’. It is selective for out of all the available data the researcher selects only some of the data. It is critical
for the researcher selects the data that is essential, significant and relevant to what is under consideration, excludes the data that is not essential, insignificant and irrelevant and may locate it within a different context. It is constructive for it integrates the data and provides a higher viewpoint on the data – what previously was only grasped as disparate and unrelated events, through a theory of housing is held together in one perspective. Our originating question: what is housing? presupposes some grasp of housing. At the very least it can be pointed to in some way either materially or symbolically or both. In this way our question is a heuristic which through further research and the discovery of an answer gives way to a new heuristic for future research.\footnote{This is a paraphrase of the following quote from Lonergan ([1972]1990:188-189):

...the single process of developing understanding [has] a whole series of different functions. It is heuristic, for it brings to light the relevant data. It is ecstatic, for it leads the inquirer out of his original perspectives and into the perspectives proper to his object. It is selective, for out of a totality of data it selects those relevant to the understanding achieved. It is critical, for it removes from one use or context to another the data that might otherwise be thought relevant to present tasks. It is constructive, for the data that are selected are knotted together by the vast and intricate web of interconnecting links that cumulatively came to light as one’s understanding progressed.}

The introduction to this chapter outlined a dispute between those who propose that the role of housing research is to apply social theory to a housing issue and those who propose that its role is to create a housing theory. As a way of untangling some of these messy debates, I want to suggest here that theory plays both roles. This chapter has outlined the characteristics of a more adequate theory of housing as a complete ordered set of sets of related variable elements. This theory is created in the functional specialty Interpretation as an answer to the question: what is housing? It is a theory which anticipates the particularities of any actual operating housing system. All housing research begins with some understanding of housing. We can fail to be explicit about our understanding. We can use an inadequate theory. We do not begin our research with a blank slate or tabula rasa. The goal of the functional specialty Interpretation is to develop a more adequate and complete theory of housing. It is this theory that will provide the best way for further research. It is this theory that can be applied as a heuristic for grasping any actual operating housing system regardless of time and place. As a heuristic, it orients and guides the functional specialty Research in its search for events/processes/purposes which are not incorporated into the current theory of housing and in its aim to upset the current theory. As a heuristic, it orients and guides the functional specialty History as it seeks to grasp the dynamic of a series of actual operating housing systems. As a heuristic, it guides and orients the functional specialty Dialectic as it seeks to work out the best of the past and reveals the limitations of dynamics that promote the interests and aggrandise individuals and
groups. As a heuristic, it guides and orients the implementation functional specialties: Foundations, Policies, Systematics and Communications.

The functional specialty Interpretation proposes a shift in the way housing is defined from descriptive definitions reached within a common-sense framework to answering a theoretical question: what is housing? The answer to this theoretical question is an explanatory definition, a complete ordered set of sets of related variable elements that constitutes housing. This explanatory definition distinguishes between those elements that are essential, significant and relevant to the constitution of housing from those which are unessential, insignificant and irrelevant to the constitution of housing.

Housing is used for differing purposes by different groups. It is these roles or functions which are associated with housing and which order the particularity of the set of related variable elements that constitute housing as an actual operating housing system.
Chapter 5.
History as a functional specialty

The history of any particular discipline is in fact the history of its development. But this development, which would be the theme of a history, is not something simple and straightforward but something which occurred in a long series of various steps, errors, detours, and corrections. Now, as one studies this movement one learns about this developmental process and so now possesses within oneself an instance of that development which took place perhaps over several centuries. This can happen only if the person understands both his subject and the way he learned about it. Only then will he understand which elements in the historical developmental process had to be understood before the others, which ones made for progress in understanding and which held it back, which elements really belong to the particular science and which do not, and which elements contain errors. Only then will he be able to tell at what point in the history of his subject there emerged new visions of the whole…

- Bernard Lonergan in *Understanding and Method*  
(quoted in McShane 2010b:4)
In his article on “Historical Perspectives and Methodologies: Their Relevance for Housing Studies?”, Keith Jacobs (2001:127-128) notes how housing research has begun to explore social science methodologies but has largely ignored “historical research and its associated methodologies”. He also notes that “most housing academics make reference to some history in their research. This often takes the form of a short discussion at the start in the form of an introduction to the main study. The purpose of these historical introductions is usually to set out the context for the research and provide a chronology but little else”. He goes on to ask: What then can the housing specialist learn from the perspectives and methods of the historian?

So, what is the role of history in housing research? Is it about setting the context for some piece of research? Is it simply something of interest that bears no relevance to present day concerns? Is it simply a morality tale from which we can learn what to do or what not to do, through which a society passes on lessons to future generations?

Or, is the understanding of history essential to meeting the current challenges facing housing? In this chapter, as I work towards a more precise understanding of History as a functional specialty, I will affirm that history is essential and the way in which it is essential. I will argue that history is more than a narrative of events.

The chapter begins with an initial view of History as a vector of change (Section 5.1). This will be followed by a brief review of history as a genre of research on Australian social housing (Section 5.2), a reflection on what these ‘historians’ are doing (Section 5.3), a more precise understanding of History as a functional specialty (Section 5.4) and some illustrations of History (Section 5.5). From the perspective of this more precise understanding, the chapter concludes by proposing a paradigm shift in our understanding of History within a scientific approach to housing (Section 5.6).

5.1 The vector of change: an initial view of History

In the previous two chapters, I have noted that in asking questions housing researchers distinguish between data that they turn to in finding an answer to their questions, and an answer which is the meaning or significance of these data. But I would also note that over time these questions change: they may change as a research project develops; they may change as a researcher shifts from one project to another. While a single topic may remain an issue over a long period of time, the questions asked about that topic and the answers given to those questions may continually change. Indeed, the answers to a single question form a sequence, an ongoing series of answers. A researcher could ask why this sequence of answers changes. Is there some vector or
pattern or trend in the sequence? What is the vector that shifts the researcher from one answer to another answer?

Each researcher has their own history, but so also does the topic they are investigating have its history.

Social housing is ever-changing. What was regarded as social housing in Australia in the 1940s and 1950s is very different from what is regarded as social housing in 2012. Moreover, the form of social housing in each country in 2012 is the product of its particular history. Between one time and place and another, there is the sometimes slow and sometimes quick change whereby what was the form of social housing in one country in the 1950s becomes another form of social housing in the same country in 2012. As a result of this series of particular ongoing changes, social housing in one place will differ from that in another. Each country has its own history, its own sequence of particular forms of social housing.

So in relation to housing researchers, the question arises as to whether a sequence of questions within a researcher is ad hoc and random or whether there is a vector, a pattern or trend in the changes. Similarly in relation to social housing, the question arises as to whether a sequence of forms in social housing is ad hoc and random or whether there is a vector, a pattern or trend in the changes.

On an initial view, then, the functional specialty History seeks to understand this vector of change within a sequence of events whereby the housing researcher and the forms of social housing change over time.

5.2 History within research on Australian social housing

Within the corpus of research on Australian social housing is a genre that is concerned with change over time. This genre looks back at events in the near or distant past and traces the changes and developments that have occurred. Within this genre we can distinguish between three types of histories: histories on social housing produced by ‘professional’ historians; more popular histories of social housing; and histories that, as Jacobs notes above, provide a context for further research on social housing.

In Australia, professional historians have produced few works which relate to social housing, and most of these focus on the history of a public housing organisation. Susan Marsden’s (1986) history of the South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT), *Business, Charity and Sentiment*, recounts the development of the Trust from its origins in 1936 through to 1986. This history was commissioned to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Trust. It describes various aspects of the Trust’s operations as they
changed over time as well as its personnel, in particular, the activities of the General Managers and the Board. The history encompassed “not only the growth and functions of the Trust itself but also social, political and economic developments at State and national level as they affected or were affected by public housing” (p.vi). It describes the initiatives of the Trust, the range of its activities (as a development authority (passim) and as a migration agent (p.235ff), among others) and the changes that made the SAHT what it became in the 1980s.

Mark Peel (1995) in Good Times, Hard Times: The Past and the Future in Elizabeth picks up on one development initiated by SAHT. He traces the history of Elizabeth, a small town on the outskirts of Adelaide, from its foundation through to the difficult times of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Peel, who grew up there, intersperses a history of Elizabeth as a planners’ vision to create a new town drawing upon the English tradition of the garden cities with personal reminiscences of a good place and a good community. SAHT sought to develop a community in Elizabeth, in part by mixing public housing and owner-occupied housing. It was, however, a town which came to rely upon its industrial links to the automotive industry; with the downturn in that industry, the good times turned into hard times and, particularly in the view of outsiders, the vision of Elizabeth faded.

Renate Howe (1998a) brings together a mixture of professional historians, academics and practitioners in her edited book on fifty years of public housing in Victoria. In the first half of the book, professional historians trace early attempts at housing reform in Melbourne (Harris 1988), the establishment of the Housing Commission Victoria (HCV) in 1938 (Howe 1988b), the early years in the context of post-war planning in Australia (Howe 1988c), the ethos of the post-war years, “We Only Build Houses” (Eather 1988) and the experiment in slum clearance and high-rise flats that dramatically changed public housing in Melbourne for decades (Tibbits 1988). Later chapters by academics and practitioners reflect upon changes from a policy perspective: the demise of the dual tenure policy (Berry 1988); the scandal of land deals in the 1970s (Kilmartin 1988); an organisational history that points to the limited horizons and ethos of HCV (Dalton 1988); and developments in late 1970s and 1980s in the face of widespread criticism (Burke 1988; Carter 1988).

In an MA thesis on the origins of the Housing Commission Victoria, Robert Phillips (1981) also explores the issues, tensions and politics behind its establishment. Bruce Wright (2000) takes a more popular approach to the history of public housing in the Australian Capital Territory, as does Housing NSW on its website (New South Wales. Housing NSW 2011).
Most history of Australian social housing is written from a policy perspective. Jones (1972), Pugh (1976), Kemeny (1981, 1983), Berry (1988), Troy (1992), Hayward (1996) and Jacobs et al. (2010a) are housing researchers whose primary historical interest is in the development of housing policy. Their work focuses on the development of government housing policy, in particular, the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement (CSHA). For example, Jones (1972) recounts the history of public housing policies from the establishment of State Housing Authorities in late 1930s and early 1940s through to the late 1960s. He focuses on particular elements such as means testing, socio-economic and demographic characteristics of those housed, the role in slum clearance and residential development, promotion of owner-occupied housing, rent policy and the social effect of public housing. Jones, however, is not interested in a history of public housing policies per se. Rather, his primary interest is in “the attempts by governments to alleviate poverty” (p.vii). So, the history of public housing policies is outlined within this larger framework. His historical analysis reveals a number of ‘real’ problems: “Most of the problems associated with bad housing… are not problems of housing in itself but of money; they are symptoms of low incomes” (pp.vii-viii); the vagueness of the aims of public housing; and “not lack of funds but inefficient use of existing resources” (p.vii). Jones concludes by proposing some alternatives to public housing before suggesting some areas for reform.

Hayward (1996) briefly outlines the history of public housing in Australia. He notes that the CSHA is the starting point for most such histories (p.5), but seeks to cast a wider historical net. Rather than beginning with the first CSHA in 1945, he goes back to early attempts by Commonwealth and State governments to respond to housing problems from 1900. For Hayward, this earlier history reveals a preference for owner-occupied housing, explains why it took governments so long (and very reluctantly) to turn to public housing as a solution to these problems, and contradicts the view put by Kemeny (1983) that the first CSHA “coincides with the golden era in the history of public housing” (Hayward 1996:5). Hayward breaks the history of public housing into four phases, each initially characterised by the ‘economic, political and housing context’ followed by the policy response of governments, the changes in public housing policy (targeting, allocations and rent-setting) and the changes in the wider role of public housing in industrial, political and social development. Where Hayward sought to understand the broad sweep of public housing policy through the CSHA, Carter (1980a, 1980b) focused on developments in policy through the CSHA in two periods, the 1970s and 1980s respectively.

All these various histories are relevant to understanding the development of social housing in Australia. They trace how some aspect of social housing has changed over time.

5.3 What are these historians doing?

History as a genre of research on Australian social housing is relatively small with little work being undertaken by specialist historians. As mentioned it is limited to Marsden (1986), Peel (1995) and some of the chapters within Howe’s edited book (1988a). Most historical research is undertaken by those with an interest in a particular policy issue. Their primary focus is to recount an aspect of social housing history as a narrative of what happened over a period of time. The narrative concerns an area or topic that is being investigated, whether CSHA, an organisation or some social housing policy. As a narrative, these histories are concerned with the particularities of time and place and with individuals who initiated some change.

Second, this historical research arranges events in a sequence and traces the transition from some past state of affairs to some later state of affairs. For example, Hayward (1996) arranges events at different moments in time (his four phases), notes the differences at different times and traces the transition in public housing policies from the early 1940s to the early 1990s. Similarly, Marsden (1986) arranges a sequence of events in the emergence of the SAHT and traces its development from early beginnings to what it became in the early 1980s.

Third, these historians select certain events (decisions, activities and writings of particular people or particular groups or particular organisations) at particular times and places. In general, they are selected because they are relevant to the area or topic under investigation and their significance lies in their relationship with this area or topic.

Fourth, these historians select certain events in view of some overarching theme that provides a perspective on the events. Jones (1972) selects events related to State Housing Authorities that are relevant to his overall themes: the attempts by governments to alleviate poverty and the ‘real’ problems of poverty. It is within such
overarching themes that these historians trace changes over time and understand why they occurred or how we came to the current situation. This overarching view can be explicit or implicit. It can reflect a current rather than a contemporary viewpoint. It can reflect the biases and prejudices of a particular interest group.

Fifth, this historical research, particularly that by specialist historians, appeals to contemporary sources (such as autobiographies, newspaper reports, descriptions of witnesses, parliamentary inquiries and reports, Hansard and research reports) as evidence that certain events occurred. Each point in the narrative is supported by evidence that this event occurred in this time and place.

Sixth, particularly for those whose primary concern is a contemporary policy issue, the tracing of this issue over time sets a context for a current discussion of the issue. For policy-makers, a discussion of past directions gives clues as to what might or might not work in the future, as to why something worked and something else didn’t work, as to the difficulties that a particular policy might encounter.

5.4 Towards a more precise understanding of History

(1) Is history scientific?

History as a discipline has been subject to some criticism, even within housing studies. For instance, in their discussion of the role of historical research in housing studies, Harloe (1995), Malpass (2000) and Jacobs (2001) raise a number of issues: the tendency to view the past through the lens of the now; the tendency to produce accounts which inevitably lead to the current solution; the danger of over-simplifying the relationship between a problem and its solution; gauging the accuracy and reliability of sources; the role of subjectivity in historical research; and the use of current conceptual frameworks to understand the past.

These are complex issues and the extent to which these criticisms are applicable to the histories mentioned above is, no doubt, a matter of some debate. My interest here is moving towards a more precise understanding of History, so I briefly discuss them in the context of a key question about history: do the techniques and achievements of history (as exemplified in the housing research in Section 5.2) qualify it as a scientific approach? I suggest that they do not. Indeed, it is precisely because historians (or their critics) have not made the radical shift to a scientific approach that viewing the past

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through the lens of now, the accuracy and reliability of sources, subjectivity, teleological accounts and conceptual frameworks become issues. The primary difficulty lies in the horizon of the historian, that of the taken-for-granted world of common sense, albeit with a more rigorous approach supported by evidence which has been assessed for its reliability and its validity.

As is common for housing researchers operating within the taken-for-granted world of common sense, historians (as historical researchers) do not distinguish between different questions: they do not distinguish between association-questions, what-is-it-questions, purpose-questions, change-questions, is-it-worthwhile-questions, what-to-do-questions etc. So their historical narratives move uncritically across these various questions. As a result, they operate across different functional specialties.

In the first place, they operate as historical researchers seeking to determine whether particular events occurred at some time and place and whether these events are associated across time. They are operating within the functional specialty Research. While techniques for researching the distant past and the current time may vary, both use similar methods. Granted, the task of historical research is much more difficult because (i) the data is more remote in time, (ii) the availability and extent of the relevant data is limited to already existing human expressions rather than what may be created through current interviews and discussions and (iii) the human expressions may be that of a culture quite remote from that of the historian. A housing researcher, whether investigating a particular topic today in various places or investigating the same topic in the near or far distant past, still faces the same set of issues. As discussed in Chapter 3, both the historical researcher and a housing researcher must deal with viewing the past (and the present) through the lens of now (out of their current culture), the tendency to produce accounts that accord with the views of their group whether social, cultural or religious, gauging the accuracy and reliability of sources and the role of their subjectivity in their research.

In the second place, a historian does not come with a blank mind, as the renowned British historian AJP Taylor notes:

> History is not just a catalogue of events put in the right order like a railway timetable. History is a version of events. Between the events and the historian there is a constant interplay... No historian starts with a blank mind as a jury is supposed to do. He does not go to documents or archives with a childlike innocence of mind and wait patently until they dictates conclusions to him. Quite the contrary. (Quoted in Jacobs 2001:129)

For most part, the ‘historians’ mentioned above do not have an explicit heuristic. For instance, the histories of social housing organisations ((Phillips 1981; Marsden 1986;
Howe 1988a; Wright 2000) have neither a heuristic of organisation nor a heuristic of housing; histories of social housing (Pugh 1976; Carter 1980a, 1980b; Jacobs, Atkinson, Spinney et al. 2010a) do not have an explicit heuristic of housing. For the most part, their heuristics are implicit. Their research presupposes some understanding of what these things are and develops as their research progresses. In this way, they are operating with the functional specialty Interpretation, developing an appropriate framework or heuristic within which to approach their historical research and within which to ‘hold together’ a viewpoint on this research. As discussed in the preceding chapter, a theory provides such a framework by defining what is being investigated. Developing an adequate heuristic is the work of the functional specialty Interpretation. It is not the work of the functional specialty History.

If the work of the functional specialty History is neither (i) the work of the functional specialty Research determining the accuracy and reliability of sources in order to determine whether particular events occurred and in association with other events, nor (ii) the work of the functional specialty Interpretation developing an overarching framework (or conceptual framework) within which these events make sense, then what is the work of the functional specialty History. We are now left with a puzzling question. What is the distinguishing feature of History, what is its function?

**2) History as a functional specialty**

Jacobs (2001:128), in answer to his own rhetorical question about what the housing specialist can learn from the perspectives and methods of the historian, replies: “an historical approach provides us with the possibility of establishing trajectories or patterns within what might superficially appear as a disparate set of events”. The reference to ‘trajectory’, it seems to me, gets us some way towards understanding the role of historians.

But this ‘trajectory’ has to be understood in relation to a what-is-it-question that has already been discussed in the previous chapter. We concluded by noting that a theory of housing is a set of related variable elements (according to Ball and Harloe these are production, exchange and consumption) whose range of possibilities is ordered by a range of higher purposes (what I have referred to more broadly as technology, economics, politics, culture and personal identity), each of which also admits of a range of possibilities. Thus, a theory is a complete ordered set of sets of related variable elements which will explain the particularities of any housing system in any time and any place.
If History is to have control over its research it requires an adequate theory of housing. To operate within History, housing researchers must shift into the world of theory where a theory of housing operates as a heuristic and anticipates the complete ordered set of sets of related variable elements that are relevant and significant to housing at any time or place.

What History pays attention to, however, is the actual operating housing system, a complete ordered set of sets of related actual elements. Indeed, History notes that there is a sequence of actual operating housing systems, and that these are continually on the move, with a new housing system emerging from the previous one. The question for History is: what is the dynamic operative within the actual operating housing system that is moving it forward, the dynamic whereby a new system emerges from the previous one?

In a rather static fashion, Diagram 5.1 illustrates a sequence of actual operating housing systems at points in time, Time 1 (T1), Time 2 (T2) and Time 3 (T3).

At a particular time in history T1, the actual operating housing system is constituted by the actual set of relations between its elements (production (P), exchange (E) and consumption (C)). The particularity of these elements is ordered by actual operating systems of know-how (technology), a standard of living (economy), a means of reaching effective agreement (politics), a common way of life (culture) and personal meanings and values (personal identity). By time T2, the actual operating housing system is constituted by a different actual set of relations between its elements (P2, E2 and C2) in which the particularity of these elements is ordered by a different set of actual operating systems of technology, a standard of living, a means of reaching effective agreement, a common way of life and personal meanings and values. And by time T3, the actual operating housing system is constituted by another different actual set of related elements (P3, E3 and C3) in which the particularity of these elements is ordered by other different sets of actual operating systems of technology, a standard of living, a means of reaching effective agreement, a common way of life and personal meanings and values.

At each point in time, T1, T2 and T3, the actual operating housing system can be explained in terms of the theory of housing as proposed in the previous chapter. As a heuristic, this theory identifies what is essential, relevant and significant; it distinguishes and relates various purposes to the ordering or systematising of the particularity of the set of related elements that constitute housing.
Diagram 5.1: A sequence of actual operating housing systems

Note: The shadow on each box indicates the complete ordered set of sets of actual related elements that constitute the actual operating system for each purpose at a point in time (see Diagram 4.1). The actual operating system for each purpose will change from one point in time to another.

The discovery and documentation of each actual operating housing system is a task for a housing researcher operating within Research. Their investigation of different actual operating housing systems at different times and places provides data for better answering the what-is-it-question in Interpretation. The focus of History is on sequencing these actual operating systems in order to discover what brought about the shift from one to the next or, more precisely, what brought about the continuum of...
changes\(^2\) (both small and large) such that an actual operating housing system at one point time “morphs” into another at another point in time.\(^3\) The task is neither one of describing or tracing the changes over a period of time, nor of comparing an actual operating system at two different times. Rather, the task is to discover the operative dynamic, the vector or principle that brings about the change in the actual operating housing system.

The goal of Interpretation is to develop a complete ordered set of sets of related variable elements that can explain all actual operating housing systems. Each purpose within the hierarchy of purposes is constituted by some set of related variable elements. Each purpose is realised through a set of related actual elements. Each orders or systematises the particularities of one or more of the related variable elements that constitute housing. So, a change in an actual operating housing system is the result of some change in the set of related actual elements that constitutes one of the purposes in the hierarchy. Where a change in the set of related actual elements is not simply a once-off but rather ongoing, it will make demands upon the particularities of lower level purposes (including housing). A change, then, in the actual operating housing system may result from introducing something new into: personal meanings and values (personal identify); a common way of life (culture); the means of reaching effective agreement (politics); a standard of living (economy); or know-how (technology).\(^4\)

2. ‘Change’ here is used in a neutral sense – it may result in development and progress or in stagnation, recession or decline.

3. An analogy may give some sense of the difficulty faced by the Historian. We might compare their task with that of the botanist seeking to understand the dynamic or vector that transforms an acorn into an oak, or to that of the biologist seeking to understand the dynamic or vector that transforms a dog fetus into a fully grown adult dog. Just as there is an actual operating housing system changing over time, so too a dog is an actual operating system of integrated and inter-related biological systems (anatomical system, reproductive system, circulatory system, nutritional system, immunology system etc.) changing over time (a system on the move) from conception to life as a puppy, to life as an adult dog, to life as an old dog.

4. These sets of related elements that constitute a purpose are sets of meaningful activities and processes. A change in these meaningful activities will have their origins within a particular person (whom the Historian may or may not be able to identify) and/or within a particular group. More significantly, as a group gives priority to achieving one purpose we could anticipate that this vector will become operative within their culture – it becomes a taken-for-granted way of operating within a culture. As such, it may clash with or complement other cultures, it may be common across a range of groups, it may become so deeply embedded in a culture that it becomes a presupposition for further decisions and actions and it becomes ‘unnoticeable’.

A change in the actual operating housing system is predicated on some combination of the following (i) the discovery of new understandings of the set of related elements that constitute a purpose, (ii) the discovery that the current actual operating system (through which that purpose is realised) has its limitations, (iii) a drive to better realise that purpose, (iv) a decision by a group in co-operation with other groups that this realisation is worthwhile (and which changes the relative priority of this purpose) and (v) a decision by a group in co-operation with other groups to act upon these discoveries and to change some aspect of the actual operating system that realise this purpose.
By considering not just one actual operating housing system at a particular time, but rather the sequence of actual operating systems, History is seeking to discover the vector of change, the operative dynamic that initiates the change from one system to another. It is an operative dynamic which, in some form, is likely to be still operative in the current actual operating housing system.

The theory of housing operates as a heuristic for understanding actual operating housing systems at different moments in time, for identifying the changes in these systems and for sequencing a series of systems. The theory of housing as a heuristic not only has these roles, however; it has a further role in the discovery of the dynamic operative in the sequence, the vector of change. Any change in an actual operating housing system will derive from any one of the purposes in which housing plays a role. The change cannot come from outside this set of purposes because the theory seeks to be all inclusive, it seeks to be a complete integrated viewpoint on housing.

The focus of the Historian is on this vector of change. This vector may be beneficial and lead to progress and development in the actual operating housing system. On the other hand, it may be detrimental and lead to stagnation and a decline in the actual operating housing system as it begins to operate in the interests of a particular group. But such evaluations are not addressed within the functional specialty History. Rather, they are addressed in the functional specialty Dialectics, which is discussed in the following chapter.

To recap, the role of History is not simply to describe or trace the changes in a sequence of actual operating housing systems nor is it to compare the characteristics of actual operating housing systems within the sequence. Rather, its role is to grasp the dynamic that initiates the change in the sequence of actual operating housing systems, a dynamic that continues to operate over time and is likely to be still operative within the current actual housing system. An adequate theory of housing plays a heuristic role in two senses: the heuristic anticipates the complete ordered set of related variable elements that constitute housing at any time and any place; the heuristic also provides clues as to what may initiate the shift from one actual operating housing system to another and thence to another etc. by outlining all the roles that housing can play in the actual operating systems of other purposes.

A change, then, in an actual housing system may result from the discovery and implementation of: new personal meanings and values (personal identity) such as privacy and personal expression; a new common way of life (culture) such as the interdependence of people or respect for the environment; new means of reaching effective agreement (politics) such as consultation, participative democracy or tenancy legislation; a new standard of living (economy) such as aesthetically better dwellings; or new know-how (technology) such as better building materials, better construction techniques or payment facilities.
5.5 Two indicative illustrations of History

In the previous section, I introduced a more precise meaning of History. This section presents some indicative illustrations of this more precise meaning from rental systems in Victoria as well as a personal reflection of this researcher’s developing understanding of rental systems.

(1) Rental systems in Victoria

Appendix C briefly outlines a sequence of actual social housing rental systems operating in Victoria since 1945. During this time, the sequence of systems is quite defined as they changed at particular moments in history. The heuristic for this sequence is the indicative theory of social housing rent outlined in Section 4.5. There, social housing rent is constituted by three processes: gathering specified sets of data; specific operations carried out upon these specified sets of data resulting in a set of criteria for determining rent for each tenant; and the application of criteria to a specific tenancy. The theory also sets out the roles that the social housing rent system plays: its role in the financial viability of social housing; its role in constituting the set related elements that constitute social housing; its role in providing adequate housing that is affordable as one component of a standard of living; and its role in the economy.

In 1945 (Time point T_1), Housing Commission Victoria (HCV) (the State Housing Authority) adopted a dual rental system: a property rental system whereby the rent on a property is determined; and a household rental system whereby the rent for a household is determined according to their income. Appendix C outlines the respective datasets, operations and criteria that constitute this social housing rental system. The property rental system, which can be described as a historic cost-rent system, used a dataset of the estimated historical costs of a dwelling or a project (a group of dwellings built at the same time); operated on this dataset by summing these estimated historical costs and divided the costs among all dwellings in a project; and applied the estimated costs per dwelling to a particular dwelling. The household rental system which can be described as an income-related rent system used two datasets: tenant incomes and basic wage; operated on these datasets with a rental formula; and applied the formula to the family income of a household. A household paid a household rent up to a maximum which was determined by the property rent.

In 1963 (Time period T_2), 1978 (Time period T_3), 1984 (Time period T_4) and 1992 (Time period T_5), HCV changed one or both the property rental system and/or the household rental system. These changes, outlined in Appendix C, involved some combination of changes in the databases they used, the operations on these databases and the
criteria used to determine the actual rent for a household. At each point in time, a range of purposes were operative in ordering the particularities of each rental system. The tension between two purposes can be highlighted: the financial viability of public housing in Victoria and its affordability for tenants. At the same time, the standard of living (in particular, the housing component) was changing; the individual and aggregated incomes of tenants were changing as broader economic conditions changed; and the Commonwealth and State governments were adamant about the level and type of their commitment to public housing, as summed up in David Hayward’s (1996) phrase ‘reluctant landlords’.

While the above arranges the sequence of social housing systems in Victoria since 1945, the question that remains to be answered is: what is the operative dynamic that shifted the social housing rental system from one actual operating rental system to another? Elsewhere, McNelis (2000) has argued that these changes stem from an ongoing instability in the social housing financial system as new tenants on lower incomes threatened the financial viability of HCV. In the face of the consistent refusal by the Commonwealth and State governments “to provide operational subsidies to SHAs to compensate for rental rebates provided to low-income tenants, and; the necessity that HCV (and other SHAs) maintain their financial viability” (p.116), HCV regularly entered a financial crisis and changed the rental system to increase revenue, usually to the detriment of tenants. The operative dynamic here is the financial viability of HCV and this consistently had priority over public housing as a component of a standard of living (public housing standards reduced and housing affordability compromised).

(2) A developing understanding of social housing rental systems

The previous illustration focused on particular changes in Australian social housing rental systems. One way of getting a sense of history, however, is by reflecting upon changes in oneself. The following is a personal reflection upon one part of my work as a researcher which has changed markedly over many years.

Housing research is constituted by series of processes that include asking questions about data, getting insights into this data or making discoveries, and affirming these discoveries. But the questions asked about data, the insights sought and the discoveries affirmed can change over time. And this is what happened to me as I sought to understand social housing rental systems. At three different times, I have expressed three different understanding of rental systems: in 2000 in a master’s thesis, *Ideology and Public Housing Rental Systems: A Case Study of Public Housing in*
Victoria (McNelis 2000); in 2006 in an AHURI report, *Rental Systems in Australia and Overseas* (see also McNelis 2005; McNelis 2006); and in 2009-10 as indicatively outlined in a paper delivered to the International Sociological Association International Housing Conference (McNelis 2009b) and in Section 4.5.

This work began in a context where others had sought to understand social housing rental systems. Its concerns were threefold: (i) the implementation and administration of rental systems (Victoria. Ministry of Housing 1984; Ali 1985; Kleinman & Whitehead 1991; Yates c. 1994), (ii) the resolution of issues raised by existing rental systems (Grey, Hepworth & Odling-Smee 1981; Hills 1988) and (iii) understanding the context within which rental systems operated (Malpass 1990; Bramley 1991). My work built on this previous work.

The master's thesis began with a definition of a public housing rental system:

A public housing rental system consists of three parts: a specified group of dwellings managed by an organisation; a unifying rental principle which incorporates the values, goals and objectives of the organisation; and a rental structure which relates the rent on one dwelling to other dwellings. (McNelis 2000:4)

It then went on to describe various types of rental systems. It located them within a financial context and within some key principles of social housing (affordability, alleviation of poverty and equity), outlined the history of public housing rental systems in Victoria and concluded by evaluating Kemeny's (1995) theory of (rental) policy constructivism as an explanation for the way in which housing is structured in Australia.

In the 2006 AHURI report, the range of operating rental systems is widened to include many different systems in Australia and overseas. The report makes some changes in the types of rental systems. It more strongly locates the rental system within a social housing system, making some shift from understanding social housing and rents from differing points of view to understanding rent as it relates to (i) operating costs, (ii) the social housing finance system and (iii) the objectives of social housing (housing affordability, equity, workforce incentives and the autonomy of State Housing Authorities). Where the 2000 master's thesis noted these relationships, the 2006 report indicates more clearly how rental systems are related.

The 2009 paper distinguishes between two questions: what is rent?, and: what purposes does rent play in the achievement of other purposes such as financial viability, affordability, social housing etc.? It proposes a type of hierarchical relationship between the rental system and its purposes whereby: the possible elements and their relationships were particularised in such a way that rent played a role in achieving
these higher purposes; the limits of this particularisation were the constitution of rent as a set of related elements.

These three are a sequence of expressions of understanding social housing rental systems. We can note the changes in the sequence: the 2000 master's thesis is largely descriptive of rental systems; the 2006 AHURI report shifts towards an explanatory understanding of rental systems; the 2009 paper and its fuller expression in Section 4.5 above is a more sophisticated explanatory understanding of rental systems as expounded in terms of a hierarchy of variables.

The key question for History is: what brought about the shift from one understanding to another? What is the dynamic of change operating here? What is the principle of change?

The Historian can note the differences in questions asked as well as the differences in understandings of rental systems at each time and place. He/she can note a new or developing understanding of theory, the differentiation of theory from common sense and the differentiation of theory from Research and from History (and so distinguishing theory as a hierarchy of variables from its role as a heuristic in understanding the actual operative process of history). However, it is not simply the desire to understand theory that is the dynamic that pushes forward changes. Rather, it is the decision to act on this new understanding, to realise theory as something worthwhile within research. It is the attempt to realise theory which initiates and pushes forward a new understanding of social housing rental systems.

The identification of theory as the dynamic operative through a sequence of understandings of social housing rental systems is an answer to the question: what is the operative dynamic that brings about a change? This can be distinguished from the question: has this operative dynamic brought about a development in understanding social housing rental systems? (a question for the functional specialty Dialectics) and from the question: what do I do? (a question for the implementation functional specialties).

5.6 Concluding summary and implications for housing research
This chapter has sought to develop a more precise understanding of the functional specialty History. It began with a review of a particular genre of research on Australian social housing. To some extent this historical research proposes some dynamic of change. For example, Hayward (1996:32) concludes his article on the history of public housing as follows:
The twentieth century will end in much the same way as it began, with Australian Governments continuing to be reluctant, rather than willing, landlords.

Whether these dynamics are adequate explanations may be the subject of some debate. But in one respect, at least, they are inadequate. Previously in the chapter on Interpretation we noted an important shift in our understanding of theory, a shift from the inter-relations between social agents to functional relations. The dynamics noted above are attributed to the motivations, feelings, attitudes etc. of social agents. Yet, as previously discussed, these are but associations of time and place rather than systematic correlations.

The primary difficulty with current historical research lies in historians not grasping their primary function. Rather, much of their work lies within the functional specialties of Research and Interpretation. Through historical research, historians have significantly developed the techniques of Research. However, their research lacks an adequate heuristic through which they can control their investigation. Furthermore, they tend to overlook the importance of the vector of history as history moves forward.

Diagram 5.1 illustrated a sequence of actual operating housing systems as a hierarchy of purposes in which the particularities of the set of related elements that constitute an actual operative housing system is arranged in such a way that higher level purposes achieve their goal. Within this hierarchy of purposes, History identifies those purposes that have shifted an actual operative housing system at one moment in time to a different one at another moment in time.

In this chapter I have distinguished between the theoretical question (what-is-it) and the historical question (what-is-moving-forward), a distinction between a constant and a variable. It is in history that different forms of the constant are created:

A contemporary ontology would distinguish two components in concrete human reality: on the one hand, a constant, human nature; on the other hand, a variable, human historicity. Nature is given man at birth. Historicity is what man makes of man…

to understand men and their institutions we have to study their history. For it is in history that man’s making of man occurs, that it progresses and regresses… (Lonergan [1977]1985:170,171)

It is in history that different forms of housing are created. If we are to move forward in history and create a better housing system, we must not only understand what is essential, significant and relevant to constituting housing at any time and place, but we must also understand the dynamics of actual operating housing systems in the past, understand the dynamics which have led to the development of current forms of housing (tenure, design, type etc.).
There are many types of historical research. If, however, historians are not simply concerned with the events of the past but rather with historical process, with the future of humanity or, to use an old fashioned phrase in its more generic sense, with ‘man’s making of man’, then it is vitally important that we grasp the vector or dynamic of our current history.

In conclusion, I would suggest that the functional specialty History marks a paradigm shift in history as practised within housing research: the functional specialty History asks a historical question, a what-is-going-forward-question, i.e. what is the operative dynamic as an actual operating housing system changes into other subsequent systems? The functional specialty History proposes a shift in history as currently practised in housing research from documenting and recounting a series of events in some remote or near past to using a theory of housing as a heuristic to grasp a sequence of actual operating housing systems and to identify the dynamic of change operative within this sequence, a dynamic which, in some form, is likely to be still operative in the current actual operating housing system.
Chapter 6.
Dialectic as a functional specialty

... in the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value, objectivity is simply the consequence of authentic subjectivity, of genuine attention, genuine intelligence, genuine reasonableness, genuine responsibility.
Peter King begins his book *In Dwelling: Implacability, Exclusion and Acceptance* with a reflection (with reference to Derrida) on retracing our steps as a ‘form of housekeeping’, as coming to terms with what we have done and have achieved and as a way of understanding our journey:

No longer to like retracing our steps is to be against going home, rethinking or being prepared to start again. We are so convinced of where we are going that we take no precautions, we neither look back nor consider doubt worthy of us. We eschew the well-worn path that leads us back home. Whilst we might celebrate adventurousness and a positive attitude – to move forward – to retrace our steps actually demonstrates a preparedness to look back and to question where we are and how we got there; it is where we admit our mistakes, face the fact that we might have gone wrong – we are up a blind alley – and so we have not done all we could, not achieved what we thought we would, not found what we thought was there. But, of course, when we do retrace our steps we also face the prospect of unearthing what we have tried to hide, where we are so honest and open with ourselves that we have to accept we have failed, that we are lost, and so we might unsettle ourselves and perhaps others who depend upon us… We might see it is as a form of housekeeping…It is where we come to terms with what we have done and are therefore able to assess what we have achieved. Perhaps we should suggest that it is only by retreating to our base that we can fully understand the nature of our journey; that we can see it in all its consequentiality. (King 2008:vii-viii)

The ‘we’ can be understood as ourselves personally or it can be understood as a group or society or culture. This chapter is about ‘in dwelling’, about ourselves personally and collectively as subjects in the world. It argues that by retracing our steps we can better grasp the dynamic of personal and collective development; we can retrieve and recycle the lessons of our personal and collective history. But such retracing is not just a personal quest. It also needs to be a quest of our society and our culture. By reflecting upon this history, by retrieving and recycling what is worthwhile in our society and culture, we can create a history worth inheriting.

It is to such reflections that we now turn in this chapter on the functional specialty Dialectic. This chapter follows the pattern of previous chapters. It begins with an initial view of Dialectic (Section 6.1), then reviews four genres of research on Australian social housing (Section 6.2) and asks what these authors are doing (Section 6.3). Section 6.4 presents a more precise understanding of the functional specialty Dialectic, while Section 6.5 briefly points to some instances of Dialectic and Section 6.6 concludes with some implications for housing research.

### 6.1 Retracing our steps: an initial view of Dialectic

In the last three chapters, I have used a phenomenology of research to distinguish initially each functional specialty. To date, this phenomenology of research has focused
upon understanding. Now we need to advert to this understanding as an activity, as a human expression which proceeds from a decision of the researcher to pursue an answer to a question.

The pursuit of an answer to a question is one among many answers to many questions that a housing researcher could pursue. Its pursuit stems from a decision that this question is worthwhile, that it has priority over others. Indeed, research itself is but one among a vast range of possible activities that a person could undertake. For this person as a researcher, it is an activity that they have decided is worthwhile. It is, thus, an activity which takes some precedence or priority over other activities. Moreover, their decision to research some particular field or topic is a decision which provides the context for many subsequent decisions taken in pursuing this particular field or topic. These subsequent decisions presuppose this original decision.

On an initial view, Dialectic is concerned with past decisions and what motivated them. Dialectic is concerned with whether these past decisions are worthwhile or not. Dialectic reviews, assesses or evaluates past decisions as a priority over other possible decisions. Dialectic is concerned with reaching back to the more basic and fundamental decisions that provide the context for other decisions, that are presupposed in these other decisions. Dialectic may take the form of a researcher reassessing their own past activities or assessing the activities of others.

### 6.2 Retracing steps in research on Australian social housing

The sociologist Loïc Wacquant¹ notes “two senses of the notion of critique: a sense one could call Kantian… which refers to the evaluative examination of categories and forms of knowledge in order to determine their cognitive validity and value; and a Marxian sense, which trains the weapons of reason at socio-historical reality and sets itself the task of bringing to light the hidden forms of domination and exploitation which shape it so as to reveal by contrast the alternatives they thwart and exclude… “ (2004:97).

These two senses of ‘critique’ distinguish two genres of research on Australian social housing that are largely oriented towards retracing our steps and considering past decisions. The first I will refer to as methodological critique; the second as socio-historical critique. Two other genres of the research are also included: evaluation studies and comparative studies. They, like methodological critiques and socio-historical critiques, are similar in that they involve some sort of assessment or

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¹. See <http://sociology.berkeley.edu/faculty/wacquant/>.
evaluation of what is currently happening and look forward to something better. They differ in that evaluation studies are predominantly focused on specific housing projects, policies and programs; socio-historical critiques are focused on housing policies and practices as an expression of some dominant culture that discriminates against or excludes, in some way, persons or households with specific characteristics (and give rise to various forms of ideology); comparative studies are predominantly focused on housing systems in different countries; and methodological critiques focus on the presuppositions of researchers.

(1) Evaluation studies

Evaluation studies include such work as:

- evaluations of affordable housing projects (KPMG 2005; Milligan, Phibbs, Gurran et al. 2007: Chapters 4 and 5);

Milligan et al. (2007:2) propose “a model for implementing a proactive, systematic and achievable program of evaluation”. They begin with a discussion of ‘what is evaluation?’, an overview of evaluation practice in housing, a short history of social evaluations and a description of the elements of the preferred evaluation model (the realist approach with its three elements of Context, Mechanisms and Outcomes (C-M-O), supplemented by additional elements taken from other evaluation traditions. In the absence of a national affordable housing strategy (with its formulated objectives), Milligan et al. draw on various initiatives to define affordable housing, consider the context within which such a strategy would operate (including the prospective Framework for National Action on Affordable Housing), propose a primary objective and a set of supportive objectives, and outline the possible mechanisms by which these objectives could be achieved. This preliminary work provides the groundwork for an example which demonstrates the application of an evaluation using the realist C-M-O model and for a review of the evaluations of three housing projects.

Finally Milligan et al. make some recommendations for a way forward, proposing (i) a multi-layered approach whereby evaluation of the affordable housing program occurs
at Commonwealth, State, project, component levels, as well as longitudinal and periodic, (ii) processes and infrastructure for an evaluation strategy including commitment, leadership and management, funding and capacity building and (iii) the development of a national core data set for affordable housing.

Milligan et al. (2007:8) (referring to Scriven 1991) define professional evaluation as “the systematic determination of the quality or value of something. In the context of public policy assessment, evaluation is a form of research that systematically investigates how well a policy, program or project is meeting its objectives”. They distinguish evaluation from program monitoring and note that “in most respects evaluation is similar to other research processes. Thus, to achieve good practice in evaluation research requires the same principles of enquiry, conceptual clarity, methodological rigour, verification techniques and codes of conduct followed for all forms of research … The distinguishing feature of evaluation research is its timing. The research process is usually conducted after the policy or program has been implemented”.

Milligan et al. (8-10) expand on the key elements of evaluation and, in this way, distinguish it from everyday evaluation or ‘critical-eye’ that a manager exercises over what things are done and how they are done. Evaluation is a profession: it requires the development of a particular set of skills which are brought to the process; it is conducted by independent external evaluators. It is a form of research: it has “a clear framework of enquiry”, “draws upon a wide range of data and evidentiary sources”, “uses specialised analytical tools” and is transparent. It is systematic: while the material under evaluation changes, evaluators go through a set process to reach their conclusions. It is concerned with policies, programs or projects after they have been implemented: the scope of the evaluation is defined by the policy, program or project. It is concerned with the objectives and indicators as defined by the policy, program or project. It is not simply concerned with quantitative data but also establishes “the causal connections between the program and its outputs”: how the policy, program or project relates to outcomes. It is not only critical but also appreciates the impacts of a policy, program or project in “a real life context”. It is not only concerned with outcomes but also with processes.

(2) Socio-historical critiques

Socio-historical critiques are concerned with retracing the steps of more general movements, with classism, sexism, imperialism, bureaucratism etc., as they operate to distort human expressions and maintain the dominant power and position of certain groups within society. Nearly all research on Australian social housing exhibits some
form of this type of critique. A critical stance is taken for granted within much of these writings, whether it is being critical of government action or inaction, of housing policies, practices and projects, of how housing is understood, of political parties and ideologies, of different groups and their interests, of the terms used within housing research, of how research is being undertaken, of housing researchers etc. For the most part, the products of this critical stance are scattered throughout housing research.

Here, however, I want to highlight particular forms of socio-historical critique rather the incidental criticisms that arise randomly within housing research. One form of socio-historical critique is of particular policies and practices. For example, in the 1970s and 1980s, the strongest social housing debates raged around the proposed introduction of market rents into public housing. Michael Jones (1972), the Henderson Poverty Inquiry (Australia. Commission of Inquiry into Poverty 1975) and the Priorities Review Staff (Australia. Priorities Review Staff 1975) had all recommended market rents in public housing. However, this was strongly criticised by Jim Kemeny (1979) and by Chris Paris (Paris 1979; Paris, Stimson & Williams 1984a; Paris, Williams & Stimson 1984b), among others, because it significantly changed the role of public housing, realigning it with private rental rather than owner-occupied housing and making it inequitable as relatively low-income tenants supported those on very low incomes (rather than the Australian public through the taxation system). The conflict that ensued here was between two different understandings of public housing and two different views on its future role.

Another form of socio-historical critique is the way in which a dominant culture structures housing policy and housing provision in its own interests, excluding the interests of other parties. So, Jacobs et al. (2010a:2) argue that the history of public housing and public housing policy in Australia “cannot be understood without an understanding of the cultural basis of an ideology that sees private housing and owner occupation in particular, as a more desirable option”. As a result, public housing has developed ‘a small but locally significant sector’, one which is socially residualised and now placing more households at considerable ‘risk of substantial affordability problems’.

Greg Marston (2000:371) uses Critical Discourse Analysis (following Fairclough 1989, 1993, 1995) to examine changes in discourse between public housing managers and public housing tenants in Queensland as “one site where ideological contestation and power are played out and legitimated”. In another article (Marston 2004) he explores the power relations within the Queensland State Housing Authority as senior managers
sought to introduce a new managerialist approach. He notes the changes in discourse, the varying interpretations of managers and staff as they recognised the need for public housing reform (but not the excesses of managerialism), and the resistance of some staff as demonstrating that “power relations may not be as fixed or unchangeable as they first appear” (p.18).

Jago Dodson (2007) examines the discourses on government housing policy to show “the capacity of government to constitute and articulate the order of housing policy” (p.252). It is a critique that seeks to shows the interests of governments and their bureaucracies in the formulation and implementation of housing policy.

Sophie Watson (1988a) in Accommodating Inequality: Gender and Housing critiques Australian housing policy for its exclusion of women’s perspectives on housing. She examines how “[h]ousing in Australia… acts to both create and reproduce traditional family structures and the dependence of women” (p.viii). She begins with a historical perspective on housing women. In this history Watson takes the key events within the history of housing in 20th century Australia and points to the assumptions regarding the place of women within these. She discusses how the Commonwealth Housing Commission (1944) and subsequent CSHAs implicitly understood the role of women within the family (pp.2-5). She shows how home ownership acted to exclude women and reinforce their dependence on their male partners and how their income and employment position, as well as discriminatory lending policies, made home ownership unlikely for women (pp.5-12): “Woman… is constructed as dependent, as ‘housewife’, as ‘homemaker’… Houses that are owned are perceived as providing the possibility for women to be creative, to blossom and to enhance the domestic ideal” (p.7). Even public housing did not meet the needs of women: public housing shortages impacted on female-headed households, and public housing excluded single non-pensioner women (pp.12-16). Watson then goes on to note how the resurgence of the feminist movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s put women’s housing needs on the political agenda (pp.16-18). Finally she notes that while women spend most of their time in the home, houses are not designed by them and are not designed to meet their needs (pp.18-20). In the chapters that follow, Watson shows that housing policy and housing provision in Australia assume and promote the ‘patriarchal family form’; home ownership excludes women; women in the private rental sector are on the margins of society; divorce and old age have detrimental housing implications for women; and a feminist analysis of housing has implications for urban theory.

The use of particular terms in social housing research is also subject to critique. For example, Arthurson and Jacobs (2004) point to the ambivalence of ‘social exclusion’ in
Australian social housing policy, arguing that it has limited utility as an academic explanatory concept and that it has been deployed as a useful rhetorical device by different political parties as a way of labelling symptoms rather than pointing to the causes of inequality and as a way of accommodating competing discourses about housing and disadvantage (p.36).

(3) Comparative studies
There is a long tradition of comparing Australian social housing with that in other countries, for example:

- Canada (McNelis & Burke 2004; Hulse & Burke 2005; McNelis 2006; Gurrnan, Milligan, Baker et al. 2007, 2008; Hulse, Phillips & Burke 2007; Dalton 2009);
- United States of America (McNelis & Burke 2004; McNelis 2006; Gurrnan, Milligan, Baker et al. 2007, 2008);
- New Zealand (McNelis & Burke 2004; Dodson 2006, 2007; McNelis 2006; Gurrnan, Milligan, Baker et al. 2007, 2008);
- United Kingdom (Berry, Whitehead, Williams et al. 2004; McNelis & Burke 2004; Hulse & Burke 2005; Dodson 2006; McNelis 2006, 2007; Hulse, Phillips & Burke 2007; Jacobs, Atkinson, Spinney et al. 2010a);
- The Netherlands (Milligan 2003; McNelis & Burke 2004; Hulse & Burke 2005; Dodson 2006, 2007; Lawson 2006; McNelis 2006; Gurrnan, Milligan, Baker et al. 2007, 2008);
- Sweden (McNelis & Burke 2004; McNelis 2006);
- Germany (McNelis & Burke 2004);
- Ireland (Gurrnan, Milligan, Baker et al. 2007, 2008).

Tony Dalton (2009), for instance, notes that housing policy retrenchment has occurred at the same time as accepted measures show increased housing need and asks why this has occurred. In seeking an answer, he examines this trend in both Australia and Canada, “based on the idea that comparative analyses can deepen explanations of complex social and economic processes” (p.63). He chooses these two countries because they are similar. He begins by comparing housing provision, describing selected key features: urbanisation and suburbanisation, the emergence of home ownership as the dominant tenure, social housing (in particular, supply), the private rental market and the recent decline in housing affordability. Dalton argues that the usual explanation for housing policy retrenchment, the shift to neo-liberalism, is
inadequate. He then goes on to discuss three causes of housing policy retrenchment. First, Keynesian economists were primarily interested in housing production and not its distribution. While social liberals sought to extend this framing of the housing problem, their "extended analysis stood in contrast to the more apparently simple and coherent neo-liberal analysis" (p.77). Second, state agencies responsible for housing had limited capacity and interest in policy-making and were marginalised by first minister and central co-ordinating agencies (p.85-86). And third, civil society processes have, through mobilisation and alliances, transmitted ideas and policies to government. While the support of civil society organisations for those experiencing housing market disadvantage was blunted by other interests within them, on some notable occasions, coalitions of these organisations 'mobilised' to secure some change in housing policy. In Australia they had some variable success while in Canada they marked two important expansions in social housing, first in public housing and then in non-profit and co-operative housing (pp.83-85).

In Section 4.2(2)(iv), I introduced Julie Lawson's book *Critical Realism and Housing Research* and how she defines her research. In Chapter 6 on Australia and Chapter 7 on The Netherlands, Lawson outlines the emergence (or history) of the particular housing solution in each country. Then in Chapter 8 she seeks to explain the divergence in solutions by outlining how each emerged in the concrete circumstances in each country. She does so by elaborating on the necessary relations of housing provision within a changing environment, i.e. how these necessary relations of housing provision were actualised within contingent relations.

(4) Methodological critiques

Methodological critiques are the fourth genre of research on Australian social housing that ‘retrace steps’. This genre looks not to social housing policies or programs but rather to housing researchers themselves. It raises questions about the adequacy of their approach to research, about the methods they employ, about what their investigations focus on, about what is deemed important and what is deemed irrelevant and thus, to the conclusions they reach. Ultimately, these critiques are concerned with the housing researcher themselves.

The social constructionist and the critical realist are highly critical of the positivist tradition which pervades housing research in Australia (and more generally). The social constructionist takes the perspectives and views of participants seriously, arguing that all meanings are social constructions (see, for example, Saugeres 1999; Jacobs & Manzi 2000; Jacobs, Kemeny & Manzi 2004). The critical realist argues for a reality
beyond the constructions of participants. For instance, Julie Lawson (2001, 2002, 2006) makes her critical realist starting point very explicit. She rejects positivism because it “perceives the world as all that is observable” (2006:14) and so housing reality “exists in terms of observable, measurable events” (p.15). She rejects interpretivism which “maintains that reality is defined by the meaning given by its inhabitants, rather than any objective, independent researcher” (p.15). She takes a stand with a critical realist epistemology and ontology which “challenges the researcher’s view that only that which is observable is what exists. It promotes active acknowledgement of the structured, open and dynamic nature of the object or phenomenon for explanation – important causal dimensions that may or may not be directly observed or recorded… Reality comprises events (and non-events) or ‘actuality’ that may or may not be experienced or recorded, and further, is influenced by emergent possibly unobservable relations with a tendency to produce certain outcomes under certain contingent conditions” (p.19). Lawson anticipates that through ‘abductive and retrodictive methodology’ her explanation will abstract the causal mechanisms which in some way produce events and states of affairs of interest (pp.30-31). These mechanisms are formed from the necessary relations between agents which are ‘actualised in the context of other sets of interacting contingent relations’ (p.28). Against this background, in Chapter 4, Lawson goes on to describe a continuum of ‘ontological alternatives’ for housing provision and for changes in forms of housing provision ranging from individual agency to structural explanations.

Jago Dodson (2007:8) in his second chapter comments that “there is no unified mode of inquiry that is specific to studies of housing policy problems, questions or issues” and that housing researchers “tend to apply a variety of methodologies and theories”. He notes and critiques seven different methodologies: Marxist (o Berry 1979, 1983, 1986), ‘attenuated’ Marxist (Ball 1983, 1986), the ideology of owner-occupation as developed by Kemeny (1981, 1983), libertarian (King 1996, 1998, 2003), feminist (Watson 1986; Watson and Austerberry 1986; 1988b), social constructionist and discourse analysis (Kemeny 1988; Jacobs & Manzi 1996; Clapham 1997; Batten 1999; Saugeré 1999, among others) and realist (Somerville & Bengtsson 2002). Dodson assesses each of these in terms of “the extent to which they can address the problem of how to comprehend the connection between the construction of knowledge and empirical objects of housing, the determination of the character of the subjects of housing policy, and the means of deployment of knowledge of objects and subjects into empirical practices of housing policy” (2007:23). He concludes that each of these
methodological approaches is not adequate to the task and goes on in Chapter 3 to outline his own approach to housing policy, philosophical pragmatism.

Greg Marston (2002) argues for a new approach to housing research, critical discourse analysis. He reviews current approaches, including evidence-based approaches and social constructionist approaches. He illustrates critical discourse analysis, discusses its limitations but proposes that it is “a valuable adjunct to the dominant positivist tradition” (p.83), one that “can provide a valuable contribution to culturally and linguistically sensitive housing research” (p.92). In a wide-ranging assessment he concludes that housing research (along with other areas of social science) “lacks reflexivity, creativity and originality” (p.189). He picks up Aristotle’s distinction between techne (technical rationality) and phronesis (value rationality) (as developed by Flyvbjerg 2001) and argues that housing research, particularly institutionally funded housing research in Australia, is dominated by technical rationality. He goes on to propose some principles for the renewal of housing research that ‘places questions of power and value at its core’. He concludes:

Without entirely throwing the rational evidence model of social research out, we need to pay more attention to those ethical and emotional means with which we may reframe political and housing policy debate. (p.189)

Rowan Atkinson and Keith Jacobs (2009) take a different tack is their critique of housing research in Australia, finding that it has become increasingly contract-based with a focus on solving short-term problems around a more conservative housing agenda. One consequence of this is that funders are defining a housing problem as it concerns them and in this way are controlling the housing agenda.

6.3 What are these authors doing?
The previous section outlined four genres of research on Australian social housing that are concerned with ‘retracing our steps’. Each genre – evaluation studies, socio-historical critiques, comparative studies and methodological critiques – deals with social housing in different ways: evaluation studies are primarily concerned with particular projects, programs or policies; socio-historical critiques are concerned with the presuppositions of dominating power (or their opposites, powerlessness or exploitation) demonstrated by various players – governments, managers, tenants, academics, policy-makers, practitioners etc. – through their actions and their discourses; comparative studies highlight the different trajectories of social housing systems and their different emphases and preferences; and methodological critiques are concerned with the presuppositions of housing researchers.
All authors are gathering data. Depending upon the genre that they are operating in, the data they gather focuses on different aspects of social housing: data relevant to particular housing projects, programs or policies; data relevant to the power relations between players in social housing; data on the elements of social housing systems; the writings of housing researchers. All authors are selecting and understanding the significance of this data within a particular interpretative framework. So, all are engaged in what we have previously referred to as Research and Interpretation.

The authors in these four genres look back at what has been produced: housing projects, policies and programs, dominant ideologies and discrimination against minority groups, housing policies and housing systems within different countries and the methodological presuppositions of housing researchers. In their different ways, they are all concerned with some state of affairs that has been produced as the result of past decisions and activities. This may originate from the decisions and actions of an individual, from a group or from a long history of a society or culture. Their primary interest is in coming to some judgement as to whether this state of affairs is good or bad. It is this view of science as emancipatory by an assessment or evaluation of a state of affairs that is common to all four genres. In evaluating the worth or value of this state of affairs, they are bringing an ethical dimension into housing research. It is not enough just to know what is happening – it is also important to evaluate it critically, to reach some assessment as to whether it is good or bad (Flyvbjerg 2001; Marston 2008).

In evaluating this state of affairs, these genres implicitly sense that it can be better than what it is. For some of this research, such as Watson (1988a), Marston (2000, 2004), Kemeny (1979, 1981, 1983) and Jacobs et al. (2010a), their goal is to show that the current state of affairs is detrimental to a particular group and propose that a new alternative state of affairs should exist. By showing the way in which a state of affairs is constructed, socio-historical critiques of (taken-for-granted) dominant ideologies look to radical changes in the relations between dominant groups and those who are discriminated against. Methodological critiques highlight the strong divisions between different methodological approaches, and the inadequacies of alternative approaches in understanding what is happening and in developing policies and courses of action to address this.

For others such as Milligan et al. (207), the goal is more to show the limitations of what is happening and to propose ways in which it might be improved. Evaluation studies look to improving housing projects, policies and programs by systematically (through C-M-O) considering the context within which they occur, the mechanisms or processes
that bring them about and the outcomes or objectives they are meant to achieve. By drawing on comparisons with other countries, Australian housing researchers look for insights and new directions that will deal with current issues.

In comparative studies, the researcher presupposes a framework which goes beyond a single country and encompasses all countries being compared. On one level, the comparison could be simply descriptive. A more thorough comparison would recognise that these descriptive differences are the result of different decisions in each country, decisions which give priority to different aspects of social housing such as financial viability rather than housing affordability or grants rather than loans for capital purposes and decisions to give priority to owner-occupied housing rather than public ownership.\(^2\)

In their critique of current housing research in Australia, Atkinson and Jacobs presuppose some larger view of housing research beyond solving short-term problems and the agenda of funders. While methodological critiques are often portrayed as philosophical disputes remote from the practicalities of undertaking research, differing positions on ontological, epistemological and cognitional issues operate to provide different and conflicting results.

Within these four different genres, authors are evaluating different types of frameworks: evaluation studies are evaluating the practical frameworks that implement and produce a certain state of affairs; socio-historical critiques are evaluating the frameworks that are operative within different groups; comparative studies are evaluating the frameworks that operative within a whole society; and methodological critiques are evaluating the frameworks that are operative within different types of housing research.

Moreover, to effect their evaluation, each of the authors presupposes some framework of their own which differs from the framework of those whose decisions and activities produced these products. It is a framework which provides a different perspective on the decisions and activities of others. It is a framework which selects or highlights certain events as significant and relevant, which selects a particular heuristic for understanding a situation, and which selects particular methods for going about research. While largely presupposed, this framework may to some extent be articulated. For instance, the evaluative framework for evaluation studies is usually the original stated aims and objectives of the project, policy or program under consideration. It is against these that the mechanisms and outcomes of evaluation are assessed to determine whether they have or have not been achieved. But even here

\(^2\) On different types of comparative housing studies see Oxley (1991).
the adoption of these stated aims and objectives presupposes a perspective on how projects, policies and programs are implemented.3

6.4 Towards a more precise understanding of Dialectic4

(1) The problem of evaluation and critique

While the primary interest of these genres of research on Australian social housing is with an evaluation of some state of affairs, they also include components of gathering data (Research), interpreting its significance (Interpretation) and placing that significance within a short- or long-term history (History). This thesis is arguing that the differing questions that underpin Research, Interpretation, History, and evaluation and critique need to be separated as the methods used for answering each question are different. My focus in this section is on these studies specifically in relation to evaluation and critique as I work towards a more precise understanding of the functional specialty Dialectic.5

An article by Chris Allen (2009) in *Housing, Theory and Society* illustrates the problem of evaluation and critique within housing research. Allen questions whether knowledge acquired through formal research is a superior form of knowledge to that of ordinary people, to ‘that which exists in the heads of people that live in houses’. He bases his challenge to housing studies on epistemological grounds but his primary concern is that housing researchers are increasingly being used to justify government policies (p.53). The issue here is whether the understandings of housing researchers are any better than those of ordinary people. If they are not, then why engage in housing research at all?

Allen attacks the superiority of housing research to gather empirical data and to present conceptual frameworks that explain this data. He then goes on to raise the question of world-views and concludes that “social sciences have no right to posit their own ‘world views’ as superior and that, furthermore, the construction of a world view

3. In his call for greater reflexivity among housing researchers, Kemeny (1992) asks them to become aware of the implicit framework (episteme) they are using to understand housing. This can be extended to include the implicit frameworks of housing practitioners and of those evaluating or critiquing the frameworks of housing researchers and practitioners.


5. The research in this genre is running together separate questions, indicating that it is operating within a common-sense framework. But this immediately suggests an alternative framework within which my evaluation of it is being made, and a conflict between myself and the original researchers in this genre. As I retrace my own steps, this also includes a conflict within myself as I consider my own past research.
actually ‘falls outside the range’ of the task of the social sciences” (p.70). With reference to a number of existential phenomenologists, he argues against the idea of a social science world-view. He quotes Heidegger (1988:6) to the effect that a world-view “always arises out of the particular factical existence of the human being” (p.71). He argues that for housing researchers, as for everyone else, their world-view and their understandings are a consequence of their facticity as beings, their being-in-the-world, their lived experiences and understandings. Thus, “it makes no philosophical sense… to make a distinction between social science and local knowledge” (p.55).

In the course of his argument, Allen notes that housing researchers have not taken Jim Kemeny’s work sufficiently seriously, in particular, quoting Kemeny (1992:20): “fundamental prior questions concerning the grounds of knowledge of housing studies: questions which have rarely, if ever, been addressed by housing researchers” (p.54). He is critical of housing researchers because they “seem to have become increasingly reflexive about the phenomena they are concerned with. However, there is little evidence that housing researchers have become more reflexive about the grounds of their own practices of knowledge gathering and production” (p.54; emphasis is in the original). He goes on to argue that “the notion of a ‘Housing Studies’ is an epistemological fallacy, that is to say, that the idea of ‘Housing Studies’, as it is understood by ‘housing researchers’, is untenable in philosophical and epistemological terms”.

In the introductory editorial to the same issue of Housing, Theory and Society, David Clapham (2009) rejects Allen’s position because it would mean the end of housing studies, indeed, of all social science. However, he does not reject it outright: “Allen’s critique is relevant to some forms of housing research but not all”. He argues that it is not relevant to the “form of research which builds the conceptual understanding from the common sense worlds of ordinary people” (pp.6-7). He also notes that Allen is concerned with the viewpoint of but one group of players: current residents. Clapham rejects the role of housing researchers as the “neutral arbiter of facts” because “there are no neutral social facts”.

Clapham then goes on to propose a role for housing researchers and in doing so he shifts to a new context, that of the “decision making process and the role of research and academics within it” (p.7). He views this process “as a power game between competing groups with different ‘world views’ or realities pursuing their own aims and interests” (p.8).
In this way, Clapham maintains some role, albeit limited, for housing studies. He proposes that one role is "for research to describe the views of the different participants and to compare them using an analytical framework" (p.8). What Clapham seems to be doing is absolving the housing researcher from taking any position with regard to these differing world-views. Rather, their role is simply to present positions by describing and comparing them. Moreover, in so doing it is possible for housing research “to be emancipatory in highlighting perceptions and views that otherwise may be hidden”.

Clapham’s analytic framework, however, presupposes some position or world-view in which priority is implicitly given to some rather than other characteristics that are compared and in the arrangement of those characteristics. It seems to me, then, that his solution doesn’t really deal with the problem posed by Allen. Neither Clapham’s analytic framework nor this suggested role for housing researchers (as the ‘neutral arbiter of world-views’) are neutral.

Both Allen and Clapham reject the empiricist world-view of objectivity and neutrality. They recognise that housing researchers cannot escape their own world-view and that it will continually inform their understandings, their decisions and their actions. Both are critical of some group: Allen is critical of those housing researchers who regard their world-view as superior to current residents; Clapham is critical of all housing researchers as he proposes an emancipatory role for them.

However, both these critiques imply that there is some legitimate framework for housing researchers, for individuals and groups. Some may argue that there is no legitimate framework and that critique is merely arbitrary, simply a matter of our inheritance, of the family, group and culture into which we were born. But if this is so, how are we to address the issues of dominating power and self-aggrandisement? In the wake of the masters of suspicion⁶ – Freud, Marx and Nietzsche – we can no longer assume that we are but innocent bystanders. That in most situations there is some exercise of dominating power and self-aggrandisement seems to me to be incontestable – indeed, it is to be expected. That many sociological studies are devoted to revealing the exercise of dominating power between people and between groups in very many differing situations does not take us far in our understanding of what is happening. Dominating power and self-aggrandisement are to varying extents exercised through all forms of human expression, whether practices, language, bodily movement, drama, social systems, culture etc. The core problem is grasping the way in which these varying forms have been distorted in the interests of a particular person,

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It is only in this way that we can propose policies that change a form of expression, or change the actual activities that constitute housing. If the issue is simply the exercise of dominating power and self-aggrandisement, the only solution is a counter-exercise of dominating power and self-aggrandisement by another person, group, culture or religion. Ultimately it is a matter of eliminating persons, groups, cultures and religions. Thus, the core problem for housing is one of grasping how activities that constitute housing are distorted by dominating power and self-aggrandisement as a prelude to proposing new directions for constituting housing. The first issue, then, is one of the appropriate framework that will inform the decisions and actions of individuals and groups (and get us beyond the distortions of dominating power and self-aggrandisement).

Allen is not simply critical of some group – he is critical of housing researchers. For him, the root of the problem lies in their understanding (and practice). Their approach to research, as much as it is dressed up in methodical rigour and analytic frameworks, does not differ substantially from that of ordinary people. Housing researchers may or may not share interests in common with particular groups such as local residents. Insofar as they do not share such interests, conflicts arises between researchers and particular interest groups, and between researchers in the conclusions they reach. Allen clearly recognises the limitations of current housing research and seems unable to envisage an alternative framework for conducting such research. The second issue, then, is one of the appropriate framework that will inform the decisions and actions of housing researchers.

But there is a third issue here. Allen and those housing researchers undertaking evaluation, socio-historical critique, comparative studies and methodological critique themselves presuppose a prior framework within which they operate. Further, those researchers undertaking an evaluation of those researchers undertaking evaluation, socio-historical critique, comparative studies and methodological critique also presuppose a prior framework as do those evaluating these researchers. And so on. Housing researchers not only face the issue of the best framework within which to critique dominating power and self-aggrandisement and the issue of the best framework within which to conduct their research, but also the issue of the best framework for critiquing housing researchers. Without a discussion of this issue, how can we move beyond the often bitter and prolonged conflicts between positivists, social constructionists and critical realists? How are we to come to a view as to the best way forward for housing research?
If we are to address these three issues, we need some method (which here is called Dialectic) to reflect on the past, search out the best of the past to come to a view as to which position produces progress; indeed, to come to a view as to what is progress. Dialectic evaluates the past. It seeks to acknowledge the achievements of the past, to critique its inadequacies (whether in everyday living or of housing researchers or those evaluating housing researchers) and to resolve past conflicts by reaching for an integrated view that will consolidate the worthwhile achievements of the past. Only then can we move on to realise something better.

This introductory sub-section has outlined a threefold problem for evaluation and critique. The previous paragraph has also proposed a goal and program for the functional specialty Dialectic. The following three sub-sections seek to deal with these complex issues. As a preliminary to a more precise understanding of Dialectic, Section 6.4(2) asks the question: what is theory?, and then relates theory to values. Section 6.4(3) discusses the notion of horizon and distinguishes three types: horizons of common sense, horizons of theory and the horizon of subject as subject. Section 6.4(4) then discusses Dialectic as a method for searching out the best of the past.

(2) Theory, an expansion

In Section 4.4(3) I outlined some of the characteristics of theory: it is abstract, universal, invariant and normative; it can function as a heuristic in other functional specialties. Further, in proposing a theory of housing, I presupposed a particular understanding of theory. This is one understanding among many.

Before we move on to a more precise understanding of the evaluative question, I need to expand further this understanding of theory. I do so under two headings: what is theory?, and theory and value. The significance of this expansion will become clearer in sub-sections (3) and (4).

(i) What is theory?\(^7\)

In Chapter 4, I proposed a theory of housing as the complete ordered set of sets of related variable elements that constitute housing and its particularities. Each set specifies the conditions for the achievement of a purpose within which housing plays a role. At the same time, each purpose orders and systematises some aspect of the set of related elements that constitute housing.

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7. This section expands on the phenomenology of research outlined in Sections 3.1, 4.1, 5.1 and 6.1. In particular, it parallels the discussion of a theory of housing outlined in Section 4.4.
In answering the question: what is theory?, we face a similar problem to that in Chapter 4. Within a scientific context, our orientation is towards asking and answering questions. It is a context within which we distinguish different types of questions and the answers they anticipate. Both questions: what is housing? and what is theory?, anticipate the same type of answer. ‘Theory’ names something that, in some sense, we already know and the word ‘theory’ operates as a heuristic. The question: what is theory? presupposes occurrences of what we name ‘theory’. We understand something of theory but, in our puzzlement, we are seeking a better understanding.

We could answer the question by examining the work of social and housing researchers and the theories they are developing under such generic titles as functionalism (Parsons [1951]1991), grounded theory (Browne & Courtney 2005), rational choice theory (Bengtsson 1998), social constructionist theory (Jacobs, Kemeny & Manzi 2004) and critical realism (Lawson 2001, 2002, 2006). Or, we could answer it by examining the work of metatheorists, those who examine, compare and critically assess various social theories (for example, Sayer 1992; Ritzer 2003, 2005; 2010). From this menu, we could adopt one or other approach, even vary it according to circumstances.8

On what basis would a researcher adopt one or other approach to theory? On what basis would they be prepared to accept what someone says about theory – this is theory and that is not theory? A rigorous scientific approach would demand that a researcher at least sort through the different and sometimes conflicting activities of social scientists which they and others regard as theorising; that they sort through the various and sometimes conflicting positions on theory, the disagreements and arguments about what it is; that they bridge the gap between what a social scientist is doing when they are theorising and their understanding and articulation of this. This is the empirical data in which possible occurrences of theory are associated in time and place with other events/processes. It is somehow within this manifold of diverse and apparently ambivalent data that a researcher can reach some understanding of what theory is and make a discovery as to what it is. It is upon this understanding that a researcher can make their own judgement that this is theory and that is not theory.9

8. By opting for one or other theorist and applying this version of theory to housing research, the researcher is making a leap of faith. This could fit with our ideological preferences or with the fashion of the moment. In doing so, it is doubtful whether the researcher has come to some understanding of what theory is.

9. On this basis, a researcher can then make a further judgement as to whether theorising has occurred and whether it is worthwhile, and a decision as to whether theory will inform their research.
A key word here is ‘somehow’. It is only in coming to terms with this ‘somehow’ that we have a sound basis for reaching a judgement that this is theory and that is not theory.

In the discussion of the theory of housing, I previously distinguished between a descriptive definition and an explanatory definition. A descriptive definition of theory will not adequately distinguish between what theory is and the purposes that have become associated with theory. Our challenge is to develop an explanatory definition of theory, one that critically distinguishes between what is relevant to answering the question and what is merely associated (in time and place).

When I sought to develop a theory of housing I brought a heuristic (a current understanding of housing), I turned to a manifold of external events, I sought to grasp the set of relations between elements that were essential, relevant and significant to the constitution of housing and I affirmed that this was my best understanding. Through insight, the theory of housing grasped the systematic correlations\textsuperscript{10} between elements, the complete set of related elements that constituted housing.

In seeking an answer to the question: what is theory?, we follow a similar process. The relevant data, however, are not external; rather, they are internal to a researcher. They are reached by a researcher turning inwards to the processes going on within themselves as they ask and seek an answer to a what-is-it-question.\textsuperscript{11}

The data here are the activities of seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, smelling, thinking, considering, supposing, defining, judging, deciding, weighing up, imagining, formulating, deliberating, inquiring, asking questions, speaking, writing etc. Within this array, we are seeking an insight into the complete set of related elements that constitute theory.

I would suggest that theory is constituted by the relations between three elements: (i) asking a specific question, a what-is-it-question, about some data or events associated with one another in time and place, (ii) grasping, through an insight, the systematic

\textsuperscript{10} On the difference between associations (in time and place) and correlations, see footnote 7 in Chapter 3.

\textsuperscript{11} The question: what is theory? is an invitation to increased reflexivity (Kemeny 1992:xvii & Chapter 2), an invitation to each of us to undertake a personal experiment by asking the question: what I am doing when I am theorising? and paying attention to what is going on when we theorise. The primary source of data about theory is within ourselves as we theorise. It is these data which will ground our understanding and stance on theory. It is an empirical approach in that it appeals to data. This data is internal rather than external to the researcher. It is attended to and affirmed only through a personal experiment. Thus, the discussion below has few references to academic literature. It points to aspects of research and theory. Support for these pointers lies not in what other people say but rather in a personal verification as to whether these processes are occurring. The discussion is introductory and skates over some very difficult issues. For a more extended and technical discussion, see Lonergan (1967, [1957]1992, [1972]1990), Melchin (1999; 2003) or, more popularly, McShane (1974) and Benton, Drage and McShane (2005).
correlation between a set of related elements whose occurrence conditions the occurrence of the ‘what’ and (iii) verifying or affirming this insight as the best possible. Theory, then, is constituted by “an integrated set of insights (more or less probably verified) and questions” (Melchin 1999:11). This set of related elements is an explanatory definition of theory, a theory of theory. Such a definition is unusual because, unlike others which highlight the material basis of theory, it grasps the related elements operative within a researcher.\footnote{I would suggest that this is something which a researcher will have to verify in their own experience. It will require three affirmations. First of all, it require a researcher to identify and affirm various occurrences of events within themselves: that they have experiences, that they ask questions about these experiences, that they have insights into these experiences and, that, to varying extents, they affirm and reject these insights. Secondly, it will require a researcher to affirm a set of insights that these experiences are what happens when they theorise; that the occurrence of these events within themselves are the significant and relevant elements that are related to one another in particular ways and that together they constitute theorising; and, that other events that occur within themselves are not significant and not relevant to theorising. Thirdly, it will require a researcher to affirm that this is the best account of theorising because they have attended to their experience and have asked all the relevant questions.}

This theory of theory is universal, invariant and normative – it grasps the complete set of related elements (a what-is-it-question about data, a set of insights that grasp a systematic correlation between elements that constitute this ‘what’, and an affirmation) that constitute theory in whatever time or place it occurs.

The introduction to Chapter 4 outlined a dispute between those who proposed that the role of housing research is to apply social theory to a housing issue and those who proposed that its role is to create a housing theory. As a way of untangling some of these messy debates, in the conclusion to Chapter 4 I argued that theory plays both roles. A theory of theory relates a what-is-it-question about data, a set of insights that grasp systematic correlations between a set of elements and an affirmation. As a heuristic, we take a theory of theory and apply it to some particular research. As such it is a heuristic, a guide to creating a theory of housing, a guide to answering any what-is-it-question. So, an answer to the questions: What is housing?, What is research? will be a set of insights that grasp systematic correlations between the set of elements that constitute housing and research. As a heuristic, it applies a theory of theory in order to create a theory of housing and a theory of research.\footnote{A theory of theory provides us with a heuristic structure for developing all theories. A social theory such as a theory of sociality will have this general structure, but is relevant within a more defined range, viz. theories concerned with social relations. The core problem of sociality, our intersubjectivity, is explored by Gibson Winter (1966). He begins with the ‘I’ and ‘me’ problem as formulated by George Herbert Mead (1938) and draws on the work of Alfred Schutz (1972).}

Further, as discussed in Section 4.4(4), theory occurs within a context. Its occurrence is conditional upon the occurrence of a set of related elements; the occurrence of this set of related elements is also conditional. So, we can ask about the conditions for the
occurrence of each of these elements and these conditions will be understood as answers to such questions as: What is data? What is insight? What is affirmation? So, data depend upon our capacity to see, hear, feel, imagine. They also depend upon our consciousness of ourselves as operating subjects. Insights depend upon our capacity and our willingness to ask and to follow through the relevant questions. Judgements depend upon our capacity and willingness to seek what is really happening and not just some possibility. But my topic here is not to elaborate further on a phenomenology of inquiry and the conditions for data, insights and affirmations. I do, however, want to note that theory occurs where its conditions are fulfilled and that these conditions themselves occur where their conditions are fulfilled.

Asking questions, making discoveries and affirming discoveries is not restricted to theory. Rather, it is common to all forms of thinking and evident in all facets of living, in the everyday taken-for-granted world of common sense, in the world of aesthetics, in the world of mathematics etc. Our explanatory definition of theory of theory distinguishes theory from other forms of thinking. Just as a theory of theory is a higher viewpoint which systematically relates a what-is-it-question about data, insights and affirmations, so too a theory of data is a higher viewpoint which systematically relates seeing, hearing, feeling and imagining. Further, just as a theory of theory is a higher viewpoint which systematically relates a what-is question about data, insights and affirmations, so too theory itself can play a role and become one of a number of conditions for a higher viewpoint that we have called ‘science’ which in turn can play a role and become one of a number of conditions for a higher viewpoint that we might call ‘human living’. Just as within the theory of housing we proposed an expanding series of contexts, so to there is an expanding series of contexts in regard to a theory of theory.

(ii) Theory and value

This theory of housing is developed retrospectively as a reflection upon what has occurred. We can however, think of it prospectively. Housing will be created when the set of related elements occur. Prospectively, we create or construct housing because it is something worthwhile, it is something of value. Indeed, through each of the set of

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14 This understanding of ‘value’ differs from the usual understanding where housing researchers refer to ‘their values’ or politicians and community leaders refer to ‘family values’ or ‘organisational values’. Meaningful activities have their origins in the decisions of individuals and groups. These decisions presuppose a consideration or deliberation as to whether it is worthwhile constructing or creating something. When we deliberate about a course of action we are intending something more than what merely satisfies or pleases us, something more than what is apparently good – we are intending what is worthwhile, we are intending value. So, when we decide to bring about housing, we are constructing something that we have decided is worthwhile. A theory of housing, then, grasps the
related elements, we are creating or constructing something worthwhile, something of value, whether a standard of living, effective agreement, a common way of life, personal meanings and identity (as proposed in Section 4.4(4)). As Kenneth Melchin notes in an article in which he explores the relationship between economic and social structures and ethics: “the economic explanations themselves articulate forms of human co-operation toward goals and it is this dynamic relationship between co-operative structure and goal which is the essential meaning of ‘value’ in the social sense. The explanandum of economics is ‘value.’ To achieve their objectives, economists need to recognize this fact and continually search out heuristic and explanatory tools which are appropriate to understanding co-operative social schemes” (1994:25).  

While a theory of housing grasps the set of related elements for a value to occur, the ordered set of theories grasps the role that housing plays in constituting other values and so locates it within a hierarchy of values. As I noted previously, a particular type of hierarchy is operating here, not one where the higher dominates the lower, but rather one of mutual dependence in which: each value has its own autonomy in that its occurrence depends upon the occurrence of a set of related variable elements; a higher value depends upon the occurrence of a lower value and is limited by the range of possibilities within the set of relations in the lower value; the higher value orders or systematises the elements in the lower value in such a way that the particularities of the lower value facilitate the occurrence of the higher value. The theory of housing, then, outlines a hierarchy of values, but it also outlines the mutual dependencies between housing and those other values in which it plays a role.

But there is a further point to note here. While housing is a value intended and the theory of housing grasps that it is constituted through a set of related variable elements, housing is actually realised/created/constructed through an actually occurring set of related elements. While housing is a value intended, the outcome realised through an actually occurring set of related elements may be limited or inadequate in some way. As a value intended, housing becomes the criteria for criticising the actual outcome and for criticising the actually occurring set of related conditions required for the occurrence of housing as something worthwhile, something of value (Lonergan [1972]1990:Chapter 1 & Chapter 2).

15. Such an understanding of theory would overcome the apparent dichotomy between fact and value that has plagued the history of the social sciences. See James Sauer (1995) for a lengthy discussion of this dichotomy. Sauer notes that Robert Heilbroner and Joan Robinson “argue that every economic theory implies an understanding of the nature of the economic actor (homo sapiens). The value element enters with assumptions about behaviour and without these assumptions no conclusions can be drawn from social facts” (1995:44). (Sauer is referring to Heilbroner (1973) and Robinson (1962).)
elements that produced this outcome – both the outcome and the processes could be better than what they are. We can therefore distinguish between the particular good that is realised, the actually occurring set of related elements that realised this good, and the value whose realisation we are seeking. It is the attempt to better realise this value that motivates changes in the actually occurring set of related elements.

(3) Horizons

Housing research is characterised by ongoing conflicts. Such conflicts can arise as a result of differences in the data that is attended to. These can be overcome by gathering further data. Conflicts can also arise as a result of differences from asking different questions, from incomplete understandings and from starting at different places and times. They result in different perspectives that point to the complexity of our world (Lonergan [1972]1990:214ff, 235). Some differences, however, are more fundamental. They regard the fundamental frameworks that inform our way of life and our work as researchers. Conflicts in fundamental frameworks are much more difficult to resolve.

For each of us, a background framework is the set of pervading presuppositions that inform all our decisions. These are implicit within the culture of any group, whether it is an informal group, a small organisation, an ethnic group, a religious group, a linguistic group etc. Each business group, industry group, bureaucracy, social institution, artistic group, academic discipline, research group operates with some implicit presuppositions. It is what holds the group together. They have developed over time in response to particular situations. They change slowly.

Every inquiry has its presuppositions whether researchers know it or not, whether they explicitly acknowledged their presuppositions or not, whether the researcher is operating within any of the functional specialties (Lonergan [1972]1990:247). These presuppositions of living and inquiry are referred to as a ‘horizon’.16

Horizon is the line that separates the earth from the sky. But here it is used in an analogous sense of what separates the totality of each person’s concerns from what is outside those concerns: “Within one’s horizon, one’s ready-made world, one is organized, one has determinate modes of living, feeling, thinking, judging, desiring, fearing, willing, deliberating, choosing” (Lonergan [1959]1993:90). Horizons are “the

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16. ‘Horizon’ is a term commonly used by hermeneutic and phenomenologist philosophers such as Dilthey, Husserl, Gadamer, Jaspers, Marcel and Sartre (Bunnin & Yu 2007:311). It has various meanings, and the following paragraphs spell out its particular meaning here.
sweep of our interests and of our knowledge; they are the fertile source of further knowledge and care” (Lonergan [1972]1990:237).

Our horizon defines our world, what we attend to and what we are interested in and care about. It orients us in our world. Horizons develop slowly as we live, as we learn: the scope of what we understand and can understand advances; the range of our skills develop and the potential for expansion develops further; the range of situations (technical, social, political and cultural) we can deal with, first with difficulty and then easily, expands. 17

(i) Horizons of everyday living

Everyday living is oriented towards solving the many and various immediate problems that can arise as we live our lives (among others see Goffman 1961; Garfinkel 1962, 1967; Goffman 1969; Schutz 1972; see also Lonergan [1957]1992:Chapter 7). Through our socialisation or acculturation, we learn the ways in which people in the past have dealt with these many problems. It is this learning from the millennia of human experience that we carry within us as we work out how to deal with the situations that confront us. This learning is formed by the ongoing cycle of particular problems and particular solutions. It is this history of particular problems and solutions that gives rise to different cultures, different mores and different economic, political, educational, legal and other institutions.

Within this horizon of everyday living, our orientation is decidedly towards what is immediately required. Our understanding is oriented towards understanding things as they relate to us (or the group we belong to). So while we feel the demand to do what is best, or feel the demand to improve what is happening, we find we do not want to or do not have the time to pursue our questions about what to do beyond the solution we need for our current problem. We cut off our pursuit of questions because our living demands immediate responses. Our learning is through trial and error, trying things out and discovering what works and what doesn’t. It is this immediate orientation that puts in place and continually adjusts the vast structures of economy and society, health and

17. Another way of understanding our horizon is in terms of the questions we can ask. At any moment in time, we can distinguish between three fields, between “the questions we raise and answer, the questions we raise but cannot answer, and the questions that we neither raise nor answer” (Lonergan [1957]2001b:283; see also Lonergan [1957]2001c:298-99). Within these three fields, the former is what we have come to understand, what we have taken an interest in and followed through; the latter is what we cannot even ask questions about, what lies completely beyond our awareness, what we are completely ignorant of; in between is what we have yet to understand, what is of some interest, what we know we could investigate, what we know is part of the common fund of knowledge. As researchers, our horizons are the boundary between the questions we raise but cannot answer and the questions we neither raise nor answer, nor have any awareness of. It is the latter, our complete ignorance of vast areas of our lives, that can wreak the most havoc in research (Melchin 1998:29-30). It is the former that orients us towards future areas of research.
education, housing and urban living, knowledge and technology, history and culture, literature and the arts etc.

But this cutting off of questions limits the extent to which we, operating within the world of common sense, can understand our social situation. The limits of our horizon come to the fore in our encounters with other people: those we are intimate with; families and friends; the groups in which we live, work, learn and recreate; and people from other similar or alien cultures. Here we find that other people understand things differently, and have different and sometimes unsettling interests and concerns – what we regard as vital and important they may regard as secondary, irrelevant and inappropriate. They may screen out altogether what we regard as important, and vice versa. Indeed, a decision to notice, to understand, to talk about differences is a decision to shift out of our own narrow horizon to a larger one that encompasses the other person; that is willing to see things from their point of view; and that is willing to recognise that other horizons of everyday living are legitimate (Melchin 1998).  

But we may decide otherwise. We may be incapable or unwilling to understand things from another point of view or we may reject that point of view. So conflict arises between individuals, between groups, between cultures, between religions:  

Insofar as all our thinking… is under the limitation of a horizon, then, first of all, the suggestions and motivations that arise from the situation are given a twist by the limited mentality of that horizon. People will see what they want to see, what can fit within their horizon, and they will omit the rest, or at least they will omit the significance of the rest. Insofar as thinking, reflecting, deciding and policy-making are under the limitation of a horizon, there is the recurrence of overemphasis and oversight in the consequent situation. The succession of situations, then, will reveal the cumulative effects of the limitations of this horizon… The result is that the situation progressively deteriorates. (Lonergan [1957]2001c:304)

Each person and each economic, social, political, ethnic, national, cultural and religious group has their own horizon within which they operate, understand the world, solve the

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18. Besides the gradual – at times slow, at other times quick – development of a horizon, there can be the dramatic and radical transformations of a horizon. The classical examples are: falling in love and the discovery of being loved where what was previously regarded as important no longer is and what was previously ignored or ridiculed becomes vitally important; or the transformation of Helen Keller as she discovered that the movements in her hand by her teacher, Anne Sullivan, meant 'water'; or the discovery of a life-long passion, whether an artistic pursuit, a social or political pursuit or an intellectual pursuit.

19. It is these conflicts that have become the 'grist for the mill' of social scientists: studies of classism (such as Marx's Das Kapital) document the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the workers and build an understanding of an economy and society on this basis; studies of cultures (such as Nietzsche's 'will to power') document the motivation and justification for one group (with their particular horizon) to dominate another (with their particular horizon); studies of imperialism document attempts by one country to dominate another; studies of racism document attempts by one race to dominate another; studies of sexism document the dominance of patriarchy; studies of militarism document attempts by military means to dominate a country, ethnic group or civil group etc.
problems that confront them etc. So it is that the products of each group, whether
avtivities, language, social structures or practices, policies, mores, art, music etc., will
express this horizon. The history of these products will be a history of both the
achievement of a society and a culture as well as a history of their distortion and
(mis)use by the dominant group. Economic, social and political structures and their
associated policies and practices will be some mix of achievement and distortion.

Within the horizon of everyday living, conflicts come and go, dormant at times but
fiercely contested at others. Sometimes a group can maintain its position by force or
the exertion of dominating power.\textsuperscript{20} The diversity of horizons in everyday living,
however, is an ongoing source of conflicts between groups, and we continually face the
problem of working through these conflicts as we work out how to live together.

But there is a further problem that allows conflicts between groups to continue even as
the source of the conflict changes: everyday living demands immediate solutions; it
ignores the long-term consequences of these solutions; it is incapable of doing the hard
work of understanding the problem and its complexities. By operating within the horizon
of everyday living, our horizon is restricted:

\begin{quote}
The simple fact about human life… is that the problems encountered most
regularly throughout human life demand a general level of developed
capacities and skills in excess of that which is commonly operative. This
fact is true not only of aggregates of persons, but also of the course of any
one person’s life… (Melchin 1999:233)\textsuperscript{21}
\end{quote}

The scope of understanding within the horizon of everyday living is limited. It is
incapable of analysing itself and recognising that it is a specialised area of knowledge,
one that is concerned with particular situations now (Lonergan [1957]1992:251).

In summary, housing researchers operating within the horizon of everyday living face
two particular problems. First, their understanding of housing depends upon their
particular horizon of everyday living. This horizon is one among many. It directs
attention to some events rather than others. It regards some events as more important
than others. It incorporates the interests of one group rather than another. Rather than

\textsuperscript{20} So a landlord can lobby for legislation that supports their position or impose new policies and
practices on tenants. Sometimes a group can, in their own interests, accommodate another group, so
a landlord forms coalitions with the housing construction industry or a political party. Sometimes a
new group forms in opposition to the dominant group and can eventually replace that group over
decades or centuries, so social housing, as a response to housing poverty and the failure of the
private rental market, eventually becomes an accepted housing tenure, albeit in a limited way. But
resolutions such as these are short-term and cyclical as one dominant group replaces another, as
one blind spot replaces another, as one management style replaces another, as one policy priority
replaces another.

\textsuperscript{21} See also Lonergan’s discussion of the ‘general bias’ of common sense ([1957]1992: Chapter 7,
Section 8, 250ff).
contributing to a resolution of conflicts, housing researchers are themselves involved on one or other side of the conflict. Second, in common with all groups, housing researchers are unable to distinguish between housing and its use by different groups for their self-aggrandisement i.e. how it is used to preserve and expand their interests. It is this inability – indeed, resistance – to distinguish housing from its uses that prolongs conflicts as dominant groups shift over long periods of time.

Although housing researchers may in some way recognise that there is a problem of ongoing and unresolved conflicts, their limited horizons prevent them from finding ways in which to resolve them. If we are to distinguish the practices that are constitutive of housing from the associated practices of the dominant group, we need to turn to a different way of understanding the situation. In short, we need a higher viewpoint on these conflicting horizons, one whose ultimate purpose will provide a better insight into what is happening by distinguishing various elements such as housing and its associated uses. I would suggest that this higher viewpoint is the horizon of theory.22

(ii) Horizons of theory

If housing researchers are to grasp more fully the situation that confronts us in our everyday living and if they are to intervene effectively in that situation, they need a higher viewpoint; they need a viewpoint which reaches beyond the horizons of particular economic, social, political, cultural and religious groups and which reaches beyond the restricted horizon that elevates the immediate solutions above long-term solutions that meet the complexity of the situation.

I would suggest that this higher viewpoint is brought about by the pursuit of understanding through asking and answering questions. In this pursuit our orientation shifts. We are no longer satisfied with descriptions that get us through our everyday living. How things relate to us becomes secondary; it becomes a platform for further and prolonged questioning. Our orientation here is towards adequate understanding. It is an orientation in which we prolong the questioning process until we are satisfied that we understand what it is that we are investigating. We make distinctions between one thing and another, not on the basis of how they appear to us, but rather on the basis on their relationship to other things. Our orientation is towards an understanding that relates things to one another, so, for example, we distinguish rent-setting from the attributes and characteristics of those who pay or receive rents, from how the level of

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22. It was in response to this problem of competing understandings of what people assumed they knew that shifted Socrates (who asked the Athenians, ‘what is courage?’) and Aristotle towards theoria. See also John Dewey’s (1938) distinction between common sense and science in Chapter 4 of Logic: The Theory of Inquiry.
rent is determined, from its role in achieving affordability, from its role in distributing benefits equitably among tenants or households, from its role in relation to the production of other goods, and then we can proceed to relate rent-setting to a finance system, to social housing, to an economy. Within this orientation, we can understand the relationships between rent-setting and other aspects of a society. Thus, we can move towards solving more complex problems by providing long-term solutions.

Through the pursuit of questions we reach an understanding of what housing is, a grasp of what constitutes housing, what distinguishes it from other things. It is a grasp which goes beyond the various understandings and perspectives of those operating within the horizon of everyday living.

This orientation towards pursuing and answering questions is a shift in horizons, a shift from the world of everyday living to the world of theory. But such a shift is not easy. This shift in fundamental horizon demands a new way of thinking, a new way of asking questions, a new way of operating. The primary difficulty is the long-held and stubborn assumptions that inhibit asking questions and prevent new insights. These are the assumptions of a culture, both the culture of the society in which the scientist operates and also the culture that is particular to each science. The world of theory challenges (and overturns) long-held assumptions about how things work.23

While the achievements of the natural sciences have revolutionised our understanding and our living, the achievements of the human sciences have been much more limited. While the natural sciences have been able to resolve conflicts (at least provisionally) and move on from crises, the human sciences have been less able to do so. In the human sciences, it has been much more difficult to reveal the assumptions and presuppositions of researchers.

Within the social sciences, conflicts abound as different understandings of society develop. So different theories develop: some in overt support of different dominant

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23 In part, the history of modern science can be understood as a history of discovery due to more sophisticated measuring techniques and devices, but it is also a history of discovery as long-held assumptions and presuppositions are slowly overturned and revealed in a revolutionary shift in thinking. Herbert Butterfield (1957), for instance, documented the revolution that overturned the long-held Aristotelian physics and biology as well as Ptolemaic astronomy. Thomas Kuhn (1970) documented the scientific revolutions brought about by Copernicus, Lavoisier, Galileo, Newton and Einstein. Each revolution in thinking brings with it a crisis and a shift in scientific horizon as Lonergan ([1959]1993:92-93) notes:

The scientific horizon recedes, expands, where there occurs a crisis in existing methods, procedures, theories, assumptions which are seen to fail. They cannot handle known results, known observations or data, known conclusions. The crisis arises from a fundamental conflict between basic assumptions or methods or presuppositions and, on the other hand, something that within that order of investigation has to be accepted, something of the order of fact or inevitable conclusions. Upon this crisis there follows a radical revision of basic concepts, postulates, axioms, methods, and a consequent new mathematical or scientific structure.
groups (market economics, capitalism, militarism, sexism, central government etc.); some in overt support of oppressed groups (marxism, feminism, co-operative economics, democracy etc.); and others supporting understandings of society such as functionalist, behaviourist, social constructionist and voluntarist. Different philosophies develop with differing positions on the status of our knowledge, on what we can aspire to: empiricist, logical positivist, idealist, critical realist, naive realist, phenomenologist, existentialist, scholastic. Within these differing philosophical positions is the conflict between the goal of objectivity and the inability to exclude subjectivity. Different disciplines develop different perspectives on persons in society and utilise different methods and heuristics. Theoretical achievements are not once and for all. One line of understanding develops and consolidates its position, only to be supplanted by another. Just as our everyday living continually changes, so too does our understanding of that living and of the things we seek to understand. Any achievement is provisional because it is always subject to further development. Throughout all these differences, there is the ongoing tension between, on the one hand, theory with its demand for a more adequate understanding and, on the other hand, everyday living with its demand for immediate practical solutions to current problems.

If we, as researchers, are to reach some integral position on these different, ever changing and provisional theories, then we need a higher viewpoint, one from which these conflicts within the social sciences can be resolved.

But what would such a higher viewpoint be?

**(iii) Horizon of the subject as subject**

In Section 6.4(2)(i) I asked the question: what is theory? For a researcher to answer this question, they need to turn to the data within themselves and pay attention to what is going on when they are theorising. This viewpoint on theory is developed within the horizon of the subject as subject.

Within the horizon of everyday living, we focus on the immediate practicalities of everyday living, on what we intend to do whether solving everyday problems or creating something new. Within the horizon of theory, we focus on understanding, on what we intend to research. Within the horizon of subject as subject, however, we focus on the intending of the subject by which such doing and understanding come to fruition. The horizon of the subject as subject is not concerned with the values of the researcher, nor their identity, nor their knowledge or their heuristics, nor with housing researchers articulating the values and beliefs they bring to the research. These are the products of their activities, the products of the society and culture within which they
live. Rather, the horizon of the subject as subject is concerned with what is prior to these values, identity and knowledge; it is concerned with the dynamics of the subject that makes these products possible. The horizon of subject as subject marks a shift away from the products of everyday living (technology, economy, society, politics, culture and religion) and the products of theory (the expression of a theory of housing etc.). It shifts away from these human expressions towards a heightened awareness of the subject in action. The subject as subject is the

... prior ontic24 reality in which one is going to find the norms and invariants that are common to all horizons, that recur in all subjects, the reality that provides the real norms on the basis of which one can select the true horizon... It lies in the subject that does the talking, and not in the subject he talks about... The philosophers will differ in their accounts of knowledge, in what they say of themselves in their account of the subject as object, but that will not prevent them from being the same type of being, where the word ‘being’ is used not ontologically but ontically, in the sense of the reality you know in some fashion, in some, within quotes, sense of the word ‘know’ prior to conceiving it and affirming it. (Lonergan [1957]2001c:314-15)

For example, when I do research, there is present to me not only my research (what I am researching) and my researching (my activities) but also myself as researcher (the I who am researching). Similarly when I see marks on a page, there is present to me, the seen (the marks on a page), the act of seeing and the seer (the I who am seeing). All three – the object, the activity and the subject – occur together simultaneously. The horizon of subject as subject is the I who am researching or seeing, it is the concretely operating subject.

We can come to an understanding of ourselves by researching others or ourselves. Then we come to an understanding of the subject as object. An understanding of the subject as subject, however, is reached not through research as it commonly understood, but through a personal process of heightening our awareness of ourselves as subject as we undertake activities – it is a matter of ‘catching ourselves in the act’. So, for example, in the process of doing research we heighten our awareness of ourselves as subject in this doing. By heightening our awareness of ourselves as subject, we can go on to explicate the dynamics or desires operative within the subject, dynamics which reveal the subject as subject. Such dynamics would include the desire to understand which underpins all our learning, researching, discovering and knowing; the dynamic of creating something worthwhile which underpins the expression of ourselves in the development of symbol and language, arts, technology, economy, society and culture; the dynamic of sociality which underpins our living together and

24. "Ontology, a logos of being, occurs when you start talking about being, but the ontic is the being that is prior to your talking about it" (Lonergan [1957]2001c:311).
which binds together families, communities and societies; the dynamic of being in love which underpins our identity and the world we live in.\textsuperscript{25}

These operative dynamics constitute different aspects of each person. Each brings about something of value. Moreover, each operates within a context, with each dynamic related to others, each playing a role in the unfolding of each person. Thus, it would seem that if we are to understand the dynamics that constitute a social agent, a person, a subject, then we can develop an ordered set of theories in which lower level dynamics have the own autonomy and provide the conditions for the emergence of a higher level dynamic, and higher level dynamics order the particularities of low level dynamics. As noted previously, this ordered set of theories is a particular type of hierarchy, one not based on dominance but on mutual interaction.\textsuperscript{26} Each person, the subject as subject, is seeking to integrate these dynamics.

\textbf{(4) Dialectic as a method for searching out the best of the past}

In Section 6.4(1) I noted three issues in relation to evaluation and critique: the need for a framework that will inform the decisions and actions of individuals and groups (and get us beyond the distorted practices of dominating power and the self-aggrandisement of individuals and groups); the need for a framework that will inform the decisions and actions of housing researchers (and get beyond the conflicting understandings between individuals and groups); and the need for a framework for those researchers undertaking evaluation, comparison and critique, whether of individuals and groups, housing researchers, or housing researchers undertaking evaluation, comparison and critique.

If we retrace our steps, we discover that most of our decisions presuppose some prior decisions. I have referred to these prior decisions as a framework or horizon within which decisions are made. This horizon intrudes upon and orients our current decisions. So, for housing researchers, this horizon not only intrudes upon decisions about what to investigate, decisions about method and decisions about heuristic, it also intrudes upon their findings.

In Section 6.4(2) I proposed a view of theory which is grounded in the horizon of the subject as subject. In addition, I noted that the explanandum of theory is a value,

\textsuperscript{25} By heightening our awareness of these operative dynamics we are asking and answering the question: who am I? And, in so doing, we are asking and answering the questions: who am I as a housing researcher? and: who are we as collaborating housing researchers?

\textsuperscript{26} See the discussion of contexts in a theory of housing (Section 4.4(4)(i)) and in a theory of theory (Section 6.4(2)(i)).
something that is worthwhile. Further, that a theory of housing locates housing within a hierarchy of values.

In Section 6.4(3) I distinguished three horizons: the horizons of everyday living, the horizons of theory and the horizon of the subject as subject. Each of these operates in the background, orienting our lives and decisions. But the horizons of everyday living and the horizons of theory are also a source of fundamental conflicts between individuals, between groups, between housing researchers.

The conflicts that ensue from our horizon are very difficult to bring to light because that horizon largely remains hidden. The role of Dialectic is to deal with these fundamental conflicts, to bring to light the horizon within which subsequent decisions are made and to provide a method that objectifies the operative horizon and promotes personal transformation (Lonergan [1972]1990:235).

What I am proposing here it that the objectification of the third horizon – the subject as subject – provides a critical framework for (i) individuals and groups operating within the horizon of everyday living, (ii) housing researchers operating within the horizon of theory and (iii) housing researchers undertaking evaluation, comparison and critique of individuals and groups, of housing researchers and of themselves.

Further, that the goal of Dialectic is the resolution of these fundamental conflicts by integrating opposing positions into a higher viewpoint. This method, however, is not simple. Nor is it simply a matter of developing a new position and refuting others: “If Descartes has imposed upon subsequent philosophers a requirement of rigorous method, Hegel has obliged them not only to account for their own views but also to explain the existence of contrary convictions and opinions” (Lonergan [1957]1992:553). Morelli, in reflecting upon this comment, notes that the “Hegelian requirement is a demand for a radically heightened philosophic reflexivity, for philosophers henceforth to do more than produce positions, acknowledge other opposed or different positions, and then attempt to refute those other positions without regard either for their genesis or for the methodological limitations of such a controversialist mode of argumentation” (1995:379). No longer can housing researchers just develop and argue for a position and refute alternative positions. So, Dialectic proceeds by way of two movements, a movement of appreciation which recognises the achievements of each position and a movement of critique which recognises their limitations. It is through this process of Dialectic that the best of the

past is discovered, rediscovered and retained and that progress is achieved and consolidated.

The following expounds on this proposal. It considers the frameworks of housing researchers, housing practitioners and those researchers evaluating and critiquing researchers and practitioners.

**(i) Dialectic and housing researchers**

Housing researchers deliberate about and make decisions to undertake research. They then pursue answers to questions. Underpinning this pursuit is a dynamic within the subject, the dynamic of the desire to understand. An investigation of this dynamic – an investigation which each has to do for himself or herself – reveals that the desire to understand is constituted by a set of related operations or activities (Lonergan 1967, [1957]1992:Chapter 1, [1972]1990). It is this dynamic of the desire to understand that gives rise to the horizon of theory in which things are understood not in terms of how they relate to us but in terms of how they relate to one another. 28

This dynamic is common to all the methods within both the natural and the social sciences (Lonergan 1967, [1957]1992; [1972]1990:Chapter 1). It underpins the development of all the different skills, techniques and methods of our researching that lead us to new discoveries. It underpins the range of methods in the many and varied sciences, that adapts old methods and develops new ones for undertaking research.

This dynamic of the desire to understand continually moves our understanding beyond where we are now to some better understanding. It is not content with just experiencing the world; it wants to understand it. It is not content with just understanding what is

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28. Kemeny urges housing researchers to take conscious control of the research agenda and “acknowledge, and take a stand on, the inevitability of their involvement in the social construction of housing issues” (1992:32). Here, in this thesis, I am suggesting that we also take conscious control of the processes of research and implementation by distinguishing within ourselves the complete set of eight inter-related questions that constitute a science of housing.

What I am proposing here is that if we want to improve our chances of developing good research, then it will help to understand what goes on when we are researching. Once we understand what goes on, then we can take some deliberate control over how we proceed and over the varied but related activities that constitute research (to paraphrase Shute & Zanardi 2006:31).

For the researcher asking and answering questions, becoming self-luminous about the dynamics of this desire to understand (which produces knowledge) is a long process of being attentive to oneself. While verification of the operations of researching lie within each housing researcher in the form of a personal experiment, it has its public expression in words. This explication of what we are doing is its objectification, its expression is in words and, in this way, is communicated to others. This communication, this human expression is interpreted (understood), critically reviewed, revised, affirmed and acted upon by others. Its successful acceptance by others depends not only on whether the dynamic of the subject as subject is adequately grasped but also on an apt choice of expressions within a particular cultural context. As a human expression it is both an expression of something and a social construction dependent upon the preceding development of language and the individual’s level of skill in using this language. Thus, any explication of this dynamic is limited. It has its origin and source in the subject as a subject. While the explication of this dynamic is expressed in theoretical terms, it is grounded in the subject as subject.
possibly happening; it wants to understand what is actually happening. It is not content with partial understanding; it wants to understand all that can be understood. It is not content with ambiguities or contradictions or unanswered questions or conflicting views; it wants to resolve them. It is not content with understanding this and understanding that; it wants to understand this in relation to that (for example, housing in relation to the economy and society).

The desire to understand seeks an integral view in which all aspects of housing can be understood in relation to one another. But such a view is not reached immediately or even in a short time. It is reached after an extended period of asking and answering questions about data, gaining insights into the data, correcting previous oversights, relating one insight to another and one set of insights to other sets of insights, and affirming not just one insight but sets of related insights. So an integral view is something yet to be attained, and progress towards it is a step by step process which builds upon previous achievements and undoes the deceptions, unwarranted presuppositions and oversights of the past. The pursuit of a question brings with it a higher viewpoint on the data, and progress occurs in accordance with the dynamic of the subject.

So, for example, we have first of all the development of different methods that are used in housing studies and corresponding genres within the corpus of research on Australian social housing. These methods emerge spontaneously from the subject. Questions then arise as to: which method is used in which circumstance; the type of question each method is seeking to answer; how these methods relate to one another; whether an integrated view of all these methods can be reached. By grasping the dynamic of the desire to understand we can distinguish different types of questions and anticipate the type of answers that each intends. In this way, we can appreciate the primary question that each method is oriented around but also criticise them for shifting from question to question. In doing so, we can relate these apparently disparate methods to one another around their primary question.29

In the different genres of research I have noted how different housing researchers undertake particular types of research and to varying extents regard their type of research as pre-eminent. So, for instance, housing research is caught up in ongoing methodological and philosophical disputes such as those between positivists who give pre-eminence to quantitative data; social constructionists who give pre-eminence to the

29. In Section 6.4(3)(ii) I referred to the work of Butterfield (1957) and Kuhn (1970) who showed how the inability of a current theory to explain new evidence brought about a crisis within a science which was only resolved by a new paradigm which integrated both the old and the new.
constructed perspectives of participants and to the constructions of theorists; and critical realists who give pre-eminence to the underlying causal mechanisms of necessary and contingent relations. They each presuppose some position on housing research. They each presuppose a decision by housing researchers to act in accord with this position and to do their research in a particular way. In my view, however, each of these types of research is but one that operates within a complete set of eight methods reflecting eight different questions.

So, how are we to reach some integrated understanding of these different genres of research that not only accounts for the view put forward in this thesis, but also ‘explains the existence of contrary convictions and opinions’?

An understanding of the range of dynamics operative within the subject as subject provides a heuristic for such an explanation. As I noted above, the dynamic of the desire to understand is not the only dynamic operative within the subject. Others include the desire to create something worthwhile, sociality and being-in-love. To these we could add the dynamic of the psyche, of the subject as a living organism, of the subject as chemical and physical processes. An integral view of the subject is one where we can reach an understanding not just of each dynamic but also of their relations to one another. In Section 4.4(4) with reference to a theory of housing and again in sub-section 6.4(2) with reference to a theory of theory, I proposed that theory is a mutual hierarchy between sets of related elements that constitute values. So too an integral view of the subject is a hierarchy of dynamics. So, the dynamic of the desire to understand has a role in the dynamic of creating something worthwhile, the dynamic of creating something worthwhile has a role in the dynamic of sociality, the dynamic of sociality has a role in being-in-love. But being-in-love orders (or systematises) the particularity of the elements that constitute the dynamic of sociality, the dynamic of sociality orders the particularity of the elements that constitute the dynamic of creating something worthwhile, the dynamic of creating something worthwhile orders the particularity of the elements that constitute the dynamic of the desire to understand, the dynamic of desire to understand orders the particularity of the elements that constitute the dynamic of the psyche etc.

As a consequence, it is the deliberation and decision of the researcher to answer one question (as creating something worthwhile) rather than another that precedes their

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30. Here I have largely focused upon the dynamic of the desire to understand as this is of principal concern to researchers. But other dynamics also need to be explored for a fuller understanding of this dynamic of the desire to understand – biological, aesthetic, artistic, dramatic, immediately practical, mystical etc. (Morelli 1995; Lonergan [1957]1992:204ff, 410-11).
pursuit of answers to the question. This decision has its grounds in an affirmation or
discovery that understanding creates something worthwhile. The decision to operate in
accord with the dynamic of the desire to understand gives effect to this discovery and,
once a decision is made to answer a question, the dynamic of the desire to know
become operative. Yet, the researcher can decide to change their question; they can
call a halt to research and shift into another dynamic of the subject, such as the
demand for an immediate practical response.

This capacity to shift from one dynamic to another introduces the possibility of conflicts
as the subject seeks to integrate the range of dynamics within a single entity, the
subject. Further, where the set of related operations or activities for one dynamic is not
distinguished from another, it introduces the possibility that one dynamic can interfere
with another. So, a researcher may select a particular heuristic that will guide their
research (a technological heuristic or an economic heuristic or a political heuristic etc.)
without recognising its limitations, or may cut short their pursuit of answers to a set of
questions because they sense that the answers will place them at odds with colleagues, because they are contrary to long-held views, because they threaten his or
her position, because they are at odds with the views of the dominant group etc. 31

A decision to operate in accord with the demands of the subject as subject requires a
radical transformation of the researcher. A researcher can live and develop quite
remarkably within the horizon of everyday living. But the shift from the horizon of
everyday living to the horizon of theory and the shift from the horizon of theory to
horizon of subject as subject are radical transformations, indeed, displacements from
one world into another. 32 This decision marks a basic conflict – the conflict between
operating in accord with one dynamic and its interference by other dynamics. For the
researcher, this conflict emerges as the conflict between the dynamic of the desire to
know and the demands of other dynamics – the dynamic of being-in-love, the dynamic
of sociality, the dynamic of creating something worthwhile, the dynamic of biological
sustenance etc.

31. On how other dynamics can interfere with the dynamic of the desire to understand, see Lonergan
((1957)1992) and his discussion of dramatic bias (the interference of the dynamic of the psyche)
(pp.214ff), of individual bias (the interference of the dynamic of spontaneity) (pp.244ff), of group bias
(or the interference of the dynamic of sociality) (pp.247ff) and of common sense (the interference of
the dynamic of immediate practicality) (pp.250ff).

32. An image that may help to grasp the radical transformation in the shift to the horizon of theory and to
the horizon of the subject as subject is the metamorphosis of the caterpillar into the butterfly or the
tadpole into the frog. Both the caterpillar and the tadpole ‘contain’ the capacity for transformation into
something very different.
So, the decision of a housing researcher to operate in accord with the dynamic of the desire to understand and to shift to the horizon of theory is not an easy one, nor is it easy to put into practice. It demands a high level of being self-luminous about what we are doing within the dynamic of the desire to understand, and how other dynamics can interfere with this dynamic. Moreover, our living is constituted by a range of dynamics and we move from one to the other rapidly. So, a researcher continually moves from one horizon to another. So, at any time, we need to be self-luminous, self-conscious of the horizon within which we are operating.

The difficulty in the displacement into the world of theory is illustrated by the acknowledgement of the need for theory, the ongoing debates about theory, the lack of clarity about theory and the difficulty researchers have in distinguishing the world of theory from the world of everyday living (amid the obfuscation of jargon).

Again, the difficulty in the displacement into the world of the subject as subject is illustrated in the slow process of understanding the dynamics of the human person: the dynamic of understanding, of creating something worthwhile, of sociality and of being-in-love. The displacement into the world of the subject as subject demands a shift in attention from the products of human expression to the I who am doing the expressing.33

While these radical transformations are the achievement of each person, they are achievements which are cultivated by and sustained by the group or scientific community (Kuhn 1970). It is the community that extends the invitation and the challenge to explore new horizons. It is within the community that the fruits of these radical transformations are realised.

Just as the dynamic of the desire to understand puts demands on researchers, so too does the dynamic of creating something worthwhile. It is a demand that continually moves researchers beyond where they are now to something better. It is not content with current achievements. It is not satisfied with what pleases or feels good; it is not satisfied with what is apparently good or what family, friends, communities, societies or cultures uphold as good. It heads beyond this to what is worthwhile. But as I noted above, a researcher pursuing an answer to a question creates something worthwhile, but what is more worthwhile is the decision to act upon the basis of this discovery.

33. Testament to this is their long, slow and difficult emergence, with each emergence marking a major shift in human history (Lonergan [1972]1990:85-99, 257-262; McShane 1984; Drage 2003; see also Jaspers 1953).
For housing researchers (as researchers) a fundamental decision is whether they will act in accordance with the dynamic of the desire to understand, the dynamic operative within them. It is a dynamic that calls for the ongoing pursuit of answers to questions, the resolution of conflicting answers and the development of an integral view. Insofar as they act in accordance with the dynamic of the desire to understand, they are competent researchers or, to use the existentialists' term, they are acting authentically. As a consequence, their results are sound. Insofar as they allow other dynamics of the subject to interfere with the dynamic of the desire to understand, they are not acting as competent researchers and their results will be unsound.

Further, insofar as their decisions are grounded in their discoveries, researchers are competent in creating something worthwhile, viz. an understanding of housing.

In this way, the horizon of subject as subject becomes the criteria for evaluating the horizons of housing researchers.

(ii) Dialectic and housing practitioners

In my review of research on social housing, I noted that these authors critique some state of affairs. In doing so, they are seeking something better. The critique encompasses both the outcome that is created and the practices whereby it is created.

The problem with these critiques, however, relates to the framework used. It usually juxtaposes the framework of those who created this state of affairs against the framework of the housing researcher. It presupposes that the researcher's framework is superior in some way: it may purport to be a neutral framework or it may support the interests of another group (whether a dominant group or discriminated group). In short, the problem is finding an alternative framework which is not arbitrary.

In Chapter 4 on Interpretation, I distinguished between what housing is and the purpose or role it plays in constituting other values. I then proposed an understanding of theory in its simple form as a set of related elements that constitute some value. So, housing is the set of related elements that constitute it. The elements within this set are variables. If we want to explain all the particular characteristics of housing, then a theory of housing will incorporate not just the set of related elements that constitute it, but also the whole range of purposes that order the particularities of housing. In this way, we can understand theory as a complete ordered set of sets of related variable elements that constitutes values in which the lower values are the conditions for the emergence of higher values and higher values are achieved by ordering or systematising the particularities of the lower values. So, a heuristic of housing seeks to identify the whole range of purposes that order the characteristics of housing. We can
explain housing in any particular time and place in terms of this heuristic as a completed ordered hierarchical set of sets of related actual elements, in short, an actual operating housing system.

In Chapter 5 on History, I outlined an understanding of history as grasping the vector that motivates the shift from one actual operating housing system to another. Further, I noted that the vector that motivates the shift is one of the values within the set and that this vector itself may change over time. This vector not only re-orders or re-systematises the particularity of the elements that constitute this vector but it also re-orders the particularity of the elements that constitute the lower values and also provides a set of new conditions for the achievement of higher values.

The question for Dialectics is whether this vector of change is a development or a distortion of housing as a whole, whether it promotes the totality of housing purposes. The vector of change brings about a re-ordering of the particularity of the elements that constitute housing. What is subject to evaluation and critique here is not so much the value *per se* but its realisation in the particularity of the elements that constitute it. Insofar as this particularity contributes to the whole, to the totality of housing purposes, it is a development or improvement and is worthwhile. Insofar as it undermines the whole by giving priority to the realisation of one value, it is not a development.

Within the horizon of theory, we can understand the exercise of dominating power and aggrandisement of self or group as linked with giving priority or exclusiveness to one value within the hierarchy of values rather than to the achievement of the whole. For this individual or group, the primary purpose or role of other values with the hierarchy of values is the achievement of one particular value. It is the priority afforded the achievement of this one value that creates an ideology. In seeking its own self-aggrandisement and interests, a group will promote one of the values within the hierarchy of values (within the theory of housing). In this way, it seems to me that we can link the interests of a particular group with the priority accorded to the realisation of one of these values in this ordered set of values. In doing so, they seek to determine the particularities of housing in accord with their own interests in this value. Conflict ensues as different groups align with different values in this ordered set and seek to determine the particularities of housing in accord with their own interests. Each value has a legitimate role within the whole. It is this very legitimacy that makes this ideology so difficult to grasp as the exercise of dominating power and aggrandisement of an individual or group. It is this legitimacy that makes the ideology so stubborn to shift and to reverse. The difficulty lies in grasping that it does have a legitimate role but a
legitimacy within a large whole. It is within this larger whole that we can come to understanding that its particularities are detrimental to the progress of the whole.

This view of ideology begins to make sense of the ongoing conflicts in Australia between social housing tenants seeking housing affordability and social housing providers seeking financial viability. If we go back to the theory of rent-setting outlined in Section 4.5, in particular, Diagram 4.1, I noted that financial viability and housing affordability are values within a hierarchy of values in which rent-setting plays a role. Further, that the set of related elements that constitute rent (specified sets of data, the specific operations carried out upon these specified sets of data, and the application of the results of these operations to a specific tenancy) are particularised in such a way that both these values (along with others) will be achieved. An evaluation of the history of rent-setting in Australia reveals that the particularisation of the elements of rent-setting has given priority to financial viability (in the interests of governments and social housing providers). On the other hand, it also reveals that housing tenants have given priority to housing affordability without due recognition that rent-setting must also achieve the financial viability of social housing.

While financial viability is a legitimate value to be achieved, it becomes an ideology when the particularities of rent-setting are ordered in such a way that financial viability is given priority over the whole set of purposes for rent-setting. In this way it serves the interests of or aggrandises certain individuals or groups.

The issue here is not the value per se but its realisation in a particular set of related elements within a total set of sets of related elements. Evaluation seeks to determine whether and to what extent the realisation of housing in history has given priority to a lower value over a higher value in the ordered hierarchy of values or has given priority to a higher value but in the course of doing so has ignored the exigencies of the lower value.

Within the horizon of theory where we distinguish between what housing is and its role in constituting other values, we can understand this use as a particular role which housing plays in the achievement of some other value. History reveals the vector that is the motivation for shifting from one form of housing to another form of housing. It is this vector which Dialectic is seeking to evaluate – does this vector promote progress, a development which integrates the whole range of values in which housing plays a role? The dynamics of the subject as subject place a demand upon the particularisation of the related elements that constitute housing, viz. that what is created is worthwhile, better than the previous particularisation. It will only be better where the change brings
about a development which integrates the whole range of values in which housing plays a role. It is the intelligent and responsible course of action, one which is the best that we can come up with at the time.

In this way, the horizon of subject as subject becomes the criteria for evaluating the horizon of everyday living within which various players (governments, organisations and individuals) make their decisions and act. Dialectic is concerned with decisions insofar as they point to a prior decision, a prior decision about who I am.

(iii) Dialectic and the grounds for critique and evaluation

A decision to take a stand within one or other group, one or other discipline, one or other philosophy, one or other developing view of living and one or other horizon of everyday living or theory has implications for our understanding of housing, implications for what new policies and practices we might implement to make housing better. Our problem is not simply one of philosophy and philosophical positions. Rather, our problem is a personal one. It is a problem of deciding how I am going to concretely operate as a researcher.

For a researcher, the fundamental conflict inherent within social science is a conflict between who I am as a person in society and who I think I am:

The conflict lies… between, on the one hand, what man is and is to be and, on the other hand, what man thinks he is and is to be. The conflict is not between two schools of thought but between human reality and human thought about human reality. It is human thought about human reality that produces the technical, social, and cultural situation. It is the limitations in human thought about human reality that produce the evils in the technical, social, and cultural situation. And it is the revolt of human reality (as distinct from human thought about human reality) against those evils in the situation that provides the lever for correcting the defects in the human thinking about man. (Lonergan [1957]2001c:308)

Any new discovery not only has implications for what is being investigated, it also has personal implications for the housing researcher. It challenges their understanding of themselves, of who they are. Consequently, it invites them to live in a new way that is concomitant with their new understanding of themselves. It is an invitation to further development. But it is also an invitation that can be refused and in that refusal there lies a closing off of asking further questions and seeking further answers.

Our horizon is an achievement of past decisions whereby we have learned to organise our world, whereby we have learned to operate more or less successfully within the larger world in which we live, whereby we have spontaneously, even unconsciously, made ourselves who we are. This spontaneous development can become more or less deliberate as we consider who we are. We can make decisions as to what interests us,
what is important to us, what we care about. Insofar as we do this, our horizon shifts. A housing researcher can make a decision as to the horizon within which they will operate: the horizon of everyday living, the horizon of theory or the horizon of the subject as subject.

Moreover, once we advert to the connection between our researching and our horizon, we can raise a question for deliberation: whether we want to make a change or not?, whether we want to take full responsibility for who we are or not, who we will become or not?, whether we will become active agents, self-constituting subjects? (Lonergan [1957]2001b:293-294)

But change in any significant way is not easy. It demands a reorganisation of the subject, a re-orientation in living, thinking, feeling; a change in what we do and how we do it; a change in the groups with which we share our researching.34

What is required of housing researchers is that they search out and retain the best of the past (that which is the product of the pursuit of answers to questions) and discard what is shown to be inadequate, irrelevant and destructive (that which is the product of the interference of the dynamic of the desire to know with other dynamics). There are, however, no a priori answers as to what is best. In the great experiment of history we have to work this out ourselves. It is by ‘retracing our steps’, by reflecting upon, understanding and evaluating our historical experience, that we learn what promotes progress. Progress is not a logical process nor is it fixed for all time. It is ever on the move as the future builds upon the discoveries of the past.

While the horizon of the subject as subject does not provide a priori answers as to what is best, it does provide a heuristic of progress as that which is in accord with the dynamic of the subject. At any time, the future is forged from the best we can come up with about the past. So, to promote progress we need to live in view of the best of the past.

History reveals the flow of changes in this past and what drives this flow of change. However, History does not distinguish between what is progress or development and what is decline or degeneration in this past. As a pointer to future directions, housing researchers need to work this out. To do so, they need a method that investigates whether they have operated in accord with the dynamics of the subject as subject.

34. “Against such reorganization of the patterns of the subject, there comes into play all the conservative forces that give our lives their continuity and their coherence. The subject’s fundamental anxiety, his deepest dread, is the collapse of himself and his world. Tampering with the organization of himself, reorganizing himself, gives rise to such a dread” (Lonergan [1959]1993:90).
An explication of the dynamic of the desire to understand as the related set of operations or activities that constitute knowing distinguishes this related set of operations or activities from other operations or activities often associated with knowing but which are not constitutive of knowing.\textsuperscript{35}

The thematisation of the subject as subject provides us with criteria to work this out – the dynamic of the desire to understand, the dynamic of the desire to create something worthwhile etc. But in themselves these dynamics are open, they do not point to any particular understanding or product as progress.\textsuperscript{36}

Housing researchers operating within the functional specialty Dialectic critique and evaluate the historical movements within everyday living and within housing research. They indicate how the materials produced by Researchers, Interpreters and Historians might be viewed if they proceeded from a radical transformation of their horizon. In doing so, they reveal their own grounds for progress.\textsuperscript{37} So, the results produced by one housing researcher within the functional specialty Dialectic become materials to be worked on by other researchers within the functional specialty Dialectic.\textsuperscript{38}

Dialectic is concerned with the decisions we make: as housing researchers, the decision we make as to the horizon within which we will operate – from this decision, others proceed. The horizon of the subject as subject opens up a horizon for deliberating about the multiple horizons of everyday living and the multiple horizons of theory. Dialectic places a demand on housing researchers to be explicit about the horizon within which they operate.

The Hegelian requirement “to explain the existence of contrary convictions and opinions” can only be satisfied in the context of a personal encounter wherein a housing researcher grasps that the dynamic of the desire to understand (which finds expression in the pursuit of answering questions) is interfered with by other dynamics.

\textsuperscript{35} So for instance, we cannot reduce knowing to experience (to what is seen, heard, touched, felt or imagined) as empiricists do; we cannot reduce knowing to creative insights, as idealists and social constructionists do; we cannot reduce knowing to affirmations, as fideists do. Rather, knowing is constituted by integrating all three – experiencing, understanding and affirmation.

\textsuperscript{36} Even the development and articulation of the three horizons outlined above are products of a long history of reflection on thinking. Footnote 11 in Chapter 7 points to this as the shift from metaphysics to epistemology and from epistemology to the dynamic of the subject as subject.

\textsuperscript{37} This revealing of my own grounds for progress is essential to the ongoing process of coming up with the best of the past: “So, [I] have to come up with those very revealing last chapters: Chapter Y: this is what I think is progress, and Chapter Z: these are the grounds upon which I would fantasize the future” (McShane 2004c:6.3, p.7).

\textsuperscript{38} This complex process of the method of dialectic is discussed summarily by Lonergan ([1972]1990:249-250). McShane (2004a) has sought to explicate this page in his Sofdaware series.
6.5 Some illustrations of Dialectic

Illustrations of Dialectic are hard to come by. Previous sections of this thesis have undertaken a very minimalist version of Dialectic. In Section 6.4(4)(i) I drew upon the thesis, itself, as one illustration as it attempts to integrate a range of disparate and often conflicting methods within the social sciences. It seeks to affirm the core elements of these methods through a phenomenology of research while (implicitly) critiquing other elements. Within the larger framework for collaborative creativity, Cyclic Functional Collaboration, it seeks to define and relate these core elements of differing methods. In Section 6.4(4)(ii) I drew upon the indicative theory of rent-setting outlined in Chapter 4 to illustrate the differing horizons of housing practitioners, indicating how these horizons picked up different aspects of housing and how they could be integrated into a larger whole. In Section 4.4(4)(ii) I sought to develop a more adequate heuristic for a theory of housing, one which integrated the findings of various disciplines: technology, economics, cultural studies, design etc. This illustration again seeks to affirm the core elements of each of these disciplines (the best of the past) and implicitly critiques other elements. It then integrates them into a more adequate theory of housing.

Gibson Winter (1966) in his *Elements for a Social Ethic: Scientific Perspectives on Social Process* provides another illustration of dealing with conflicts within social science by shifting to the horizon of subject as subject (in this instance, the dynamic of sociality). Winter assembles four conflicting social theories of the 1950s and early 1960s: behaviourist, functionalist (Talcott Parsons), voluntarist (C Wright Mills) and intentionalist. He begins by exploring the core problem of social reality, our intersubjectivity. This was first formulated as the 'I' and 'me' problem by George Herbert Mead (1938). He then draws on the work of Alfred Schutz (1972) and explicates what we are doing as we relate to one another. In is within this framework that he analyses these four conflicting social theories, goes to the root of their difference and recognises their limitations but also their strengths. His explication of the process or method of sociality allows him to relate and ultimately integrate these four conflicting social theories within a higher viewpoint.39

At a more sophisticated level, Lonergan also offers a variety of illustrations of Dialectic: his integration of various forms of philosophy (Hume’s empiricism, Kant’s critical idealism, Hegel’s absolute idealism) (Lonergan [1957]1992); the integration of classical, statistical, genetic and dialectic methods (Lonergan [1957]1992); Freud’s

39. See also Raymaker (1977) for a critical review of Winter’s book.
unconscious and censorship (Lonergan [1957]1992: Chapter 6, Section 2.7); and

6.6 Concluding summary and implications for housing research
Dialectic is a method whereby we ‘retrace our steps’, we encounter the people who
have made the past and we search out what is the best of that past. In doing so, it
deals with the conflicts in that past and seeks to resolve them by integrating what is
worthwhile into a larger perspective.

I began this chapter (Section 6.1) by noting how the decisions we make lead to a
further series of decisions whereby the original decision is implemented. So, when a
housing researcher makes a decision to investigate a particular area of interest or to
pursue an answer to a particular question, this leads to a whole series of decisions as
to how to proceed.

Section 6.2 identified four genres of research on Australian social housing that are
concerned with the decisions made by housing practitioners and housing researchers:
evaluation studies of policies, projects and programs; socio-historical critiques of social
housing which reveal the interests of various groups; comparative studies between
nations, societies and cultures; and methodological critiques of housing researchers.
These evaluations, critiques and comparisons are all looking for something better.
They presuppose that housing practitioners and housing researchers could produce
something better than what they have done. They presuppose some normative
framework within which housing practitioners and housing researchers could operate
but, to the extent of their critique, do not. They presuppose an emancipatory science,
one which will promote a better society and better research.

Implicit within each researcher within these genres is an alternative framework or
horizon which is juxtaposed against the original framework that created these policies,
projects, programs, social housing systems and methodological approaches. To
varying extents these alternative horizons are implicit, presupposed and
unacknowledged. It is from differences in these frameworks that there ensue
fundamental conflicts between practitioners, between housing researchers and
between practitioners and housing researchers.

A scientific approach to evaluation, critique and comparison demands more than a
horizon which is implicit, presupposed and unacknowledged. I reject the view that a
horizon is merely arbitrary, simply a matter of our inheritance, of the family, group and
culture into which we were born. I reject the view that it is enough for evaluators to
make explicit their beliefs and their values as if that provided an adequate framework for evaluation. A scientific approach to evaluation demands more.

These evaluations, critiques and comparisons presuppose science as emancipatory. But the possibility of an emancipatory science depends upon whether we can explicate a normative framework for housing practitioners, a normative framework for housing researchers and a normative framework for those evaluating housing practitioners, housing researchers and themselves as evaluators.

Section 6.4(3) distinguishes three horizons: the horizons of everyday living, the horizons of theory, and the horizon of the subject as subject. The horizons of everyday living are focused on the immediate issues of living, on things as they relate to us. They vary from culture to culture, from group to group, from housing practitioner to housing practitioner, from individual to individual. Within the horizons of everyday living our understanding of housing is in terms of its purpose for achieving something else: a standard of living, status, political kudos etc. Thus as housing is used for different purposes within different horizons, it is understood differently. Thus, conflicts ensue between groups as they each seek to use housing for their purpose rather than another. If we are to resolve these conflicts we need to move to a horizon of theory. Horizons of theory are focused on asking and answering questions which relate things to one another. They vary according to the scholarly tradition within which a housing researcher operates. Within the horizons of theory our understanding of housing distinguishes between what housing is and its various purposes. But scholarly traditions vary and conflicts ensue as to how housing is to be understood. If we are to resolve these conflicts we need to move to a horizon of the subject as subject. This horizon shifts away from the products of the horizons of everyday living and the products of the horizons of theory, towards a heightened awareness of the subject in action. It focuses on what is prior to these products, with the intending subject, with the operative dynamics within the subject – the dynamic of the desire to understand, the dynamic of the desire to create something worthwhile, the dynamic of sociality etc. These dynamics underpin our learning, our researching, our doing, our living together. Each is constituted by a set of related elements which must occur for the dynamic to reach its term. In this way, an explication of these dynamics provides norms for understanding, for creating something worthwhile and for sociality. It also provides the grounds for meeting the Hegelian requirement of not only accounting for my views, but also accounting for contrary views.

The horizon of the subject as subject provides a normative framework for housing practitioners, for housing researchers and for evaluators. It provides a framework for
evaluating housing practitioners, for evaluating housing researchers and for evaluating evaluators.

Dialectic is a method for resolving fundamental conflicts. It is an ongoing process of evaluation which recycles the past, which reaches for the best in the past by integrating that best in a larger framework and which searches out the best of the past as a pointer to the future. Dialectic is an encounter in which a housing researcher allows themselves to be challenged by the achievements of the past. It is a challenge because it reveals something about the human spirit and so something about themselves. It challenges the researcher to integrate this new revelation into their lives. It is a way of “allowing one’s living to be challenged at its very roots by their words and by their deeds… [E]ncounter is the one way in which self-understanding and horizon can be put to the test” (Lonergan [1972]1990:247).

Dialectic has two movements. In the first movement, the researcher appreciates what has been achieved through the movement forward of history. It appreciates what has been achieved in housing and in housing research, and seeks their further development – something better. In the second movement, the researcher critiques what has been achieved by grasping its limitations. It is within this second movement that the researcher notes the gap between what was particularised in history and other possibilities that were better particularisations. The researcher can note how what was particularised served the interests of particular persons or groups or, more profoundly, the operative cultural presuppositions. It identifies those practices that are ideologies which aggrandise certain individuals and groups and consequently alienate other individuals and groups, and seeks to repair the damage – the suffering and oppression of alienated individuals and groups, and the alienation of dominant individuals and groups.

Dialectic proposes a shift in evaluation studies, socio-historical critique, comparative studies and methodological critique: from an implicit, presupposed, unchallenged and unacknowledged alternative horizon to the self-luminous horizon of subject as subject; from a generalised critique of persons or groups to an understanding of why this person or group expressed themselves in a particular way in terms of the dynamics of the subject as subject. On the one hand, this understanding affirms what is worthwhile in what they are doing; on the other hand, it reveals the inadequacies of what they are doing due to the interference of one dynamic of the subject with another.

The functional specialty Dialectic proposes a shift in evaluation/critique from simply pointing to the limitations of some state of affairs (whether that be an existing policy,
program or project, or the exercise of dominating power by individuals and groups acting in their own interest as they aggrandise themselves by alienating others), to resolving the conflicts of the past by answering in an integral way the evaluative/critical question: ‘what is the best of the past?’, what has been the most worthwhile direction in the history of housing and the history of housing research? Where evaluation and critique currently operate within the horizon of common sense, Dialectic presupposes not just a displacement to the horizon of theory but also a displacement to the horizon of the subject as subject. Dialectic is an encounter with persons that challenges and invites us to integrate new understandings and new ways of living.
... let us suppose that a writer proposes to communicate some insight A to a reader. Then by an insight B the writer will grasp the reader’s habitual accumulation of insights C; by a further insight D he will grasp the deficiencies in insight E that must be made up before the reader can grasp the insight A; finally, the writer must reach a practical set of insights F that will govern his verbal flow, the shaping of his sentences, their combination into paragraphs, the sequence of paragraphs in chapters and of chapters in books. Clearly, this practical insight F differs notably from the insight A to be communicated. It is determined by the insight A as its principal objective. But it is also determined by the insight B, which settles both what the writer need not explain and, no less, the resources of language on which he can rely to secure effective communication. Further, it is determined by the insight D, which fixes a subsidiary goal that has to be attained if the principal goal is to be reached. Finally, the expression will be a failure in the measure that insights B and D miscalculate the habitual development C and the relevant deficiencies E of the anticipated reader.

“How can I tell what I think till I see what I say?” So exclaimed the old lady to her nieces who accused her of being illogical. This brief anecdote, originally by Andre Gide but referred to by EM Forster in one of his reflective lectures on English literature ([1927]1974:71), is one of the difficult issues we face in this chapter. A creative act, one which produces something new, is not simply a logical process. Yes, there is something we grasp that guides the creative process but it is only in the saying and doing that this something takes shape. Indeed, it is only through its expression (whether an inner expression or an outer expression) that we can then ask: is this what I think, is this what I want?

The previous four chapters discussed the research functional specialties – Research, Interpretation, History and Dialectic. Their function is to understand the past. This chapter will discuss the implementation functional specialties – Foundations, Policies, Systematics and Communications. Their function is to implement something new in history.

This chapter shifts from questions of research to questions of implementation. Even before the days when Marx sought to shift philosophers from interpreting history to directing history, men and women had not only been appalled by poverty, by injustice and by the abuse of authority and had sought to right these wrongs, they also aspired to something more for themselves, for their children and for future generations and sought to develop solutions to current problems.

The growth of the social sciences in the 20th century brought with it not only analysis of social problems and proposed solutions but a strong focus on implementation, with new fields of study opening up such as policy analysis, social administration, urban studies, strategic studies, future studies and implementation studies (Hill 2002). New techniques such as forecasting, scenario analysis, foresight (Tegart 2003; Voros 2003; Burke, Slaughter & Voros 2004; Burke & Zakharov 2005), transition management ((Loorbach & Rotmans 2010), phronesis (Flyvbjerg 2001; Schram & Caterino 2006; Marston 2008) and evidence-based policy (Davies, Nutley & Smith 2000; Pawson 2002; Young, Ashby, Boaz et al. 2002; Productivity Commission 2010a, 2010b) have become more commonplace.

The pattern of this chapter is similar to that of previous chapters in Part B. Section 7.1 presents an initial view of implementation through a phenomenology of research. Section 7.2 reviews the research on Australian social housing and presents five genres which reflect the initial view of implementation presented in Section 7.1. Section 7.3 is an extended analysis of some work undertaken by Andrew Jones and Tim Seelig on
the linkages between research and policy. This work illustrates both the structure of implementation (and its division into four functional specialties) and some of the weaknesses of current understandings of research-policy or research-implementation linkages. Section 7.4 seeks to present a more precise understanding of each of the implementation functional specialties. Section 7.5 returns to the genres of research on Australian social housing and critically reviews them in the light of the discussion in Section 7.4.

7.1 An initial view of implementation

Housing research is about discovering something new, some new meaning or significance that we had not previously known. It may also lead to some new discovery about ourselves, about doing research, about our sociality, about the world around us and about our society and culture. Attendant upon any discovery, particularly a major discovery, is a question for the housing researcher: what do I do about what I have discovered?

A discovery, particularly a major discovery, invites a decision to act in some way. Do I decide to ignore what I have discovered? Do I decide to reject it because I will have to act in a different way? Do I decide to embrace it and live differently or act differently or write differently?

Some discoveries may fit with our current understanding and demand very little response. On the other hand, housing researchers, in response to other discoveries, might (i) further investigate some housing issue or research issue that confronts them or puzzles them or (ii) communicate their discovery to others or (iii) propose a solution to some housing issue or research issue or (iv) change their approach to housing research. Each situation invites us to do something different from what we had previously done – investigate a different issue or problem, write different things or do different things. In all these different situations, the question for the researcher is: What do I do? What do I do to understand this housing issue or problem? What do I do to communicate the results of my housing research or my discoveries about research? What do I do to bring about a solution to a housing problem or to a research problem?

As researchers in these four situations we are pivoting between what we have discovered and what we are going to do in response to this discovery. Just as there is a structure to researching – asking and answering an empirical question, asking and answering a theoretical question, asking and answering a historical question, asking and answering an evaluative question – so too there is a parallel structure to implementation.
First, I have not only made a discovery but have decided to act on this discovery. So, I begin with a decision to integrate this new discovery into myself. My discovery and my decision changes who I am, changes my living in the world, my interests, concerns, history, skills, understanding, desires etc. The discovery may be one about myself, about myself as a researcher, about myself in relation to others, about the world around me, about my society and culture, about housing. It may result in a small change or in a radical change. This new sense of who I am forms the background or horizon for further decisions.¹

Second, all five situations described above involve some affirmation: Yes! This discovery is really worthwhile doing something about, it is really worthwhile creating something new here. In creating something worthwhile, we are creating some value. So, it is worthwhile creating a better understanding of some housing issue or problem, either for myself or in someone else, it is worthwhile creating better housing; it is worthwhile creating a better understanding of research, either for myself or in someone else.

Third, they involve a consideration of various strategies – investigating, communicating or bringing about – through which I could do something, create something new of value. These strategies are processes through which something new is created. Investigating, communicating or bringing about involve adapting commonly accepted or taken-for-granted routines in ways which will create or realise a value. These routines form the context within which my discovery will be implemented – we take these routines, whether of language or process, and adapt them so that they better accord with what we have discovered is worthwhile.

Fourth, they involve selecting one of these possible strategies and working out the particular details that actually create or realise this value. It is not until we reach this point that what we have discovered is realised.

So, to come back to the old lady’s problem noted at the beginning of this chapter: “How can I tell what I think till I see what I say?” As Charles Hefling (2000:148) notes in his reflection on the process of writing a book, implementation is “a long drawn-out process of knowing what I think by seeing what I say. All the various activities that make up the craft of authorship, everything from outlining chapters to weighing the relative merits of

¹. Recall that in Chapter 6 on the functional specialty Dialectic, I outlined the radical transformation of horizon as we shift from the horizon of everyday living to the horizon of theory and from the horizon of theory to the horizon of subject as subject. In addition to these radical transformations, there is the gradual expansion of each of these horizons with each new discovery.
words that are nearly synonymous, are aspects of the slow metamorphosis through which an idea turns into a book”.

On an initial view, then, the implementation functional specialties (Foundations, Policies, Systematics and Communications) are concerned with aspects of what-to-do-questions: Who am I? (or: Who do I want to become?) What is really worthwhile creating? How do I implement that worthwhile value? What are the relevant materials that have to be assembled to bring about this value? The context for the what-to-do-question is the discovery of something about the past which invites some expression by putting in place something new or different from our current expressions or practices.

7.2 Implementation in research on Australian social housing

Social housing emerged in the late 1930s and early 1940s as a response to the failure of the private housing market to provide adequate housing for many thousands of Australians. Its emergence introduced something new in Australian society. It began with the discovery that adequate housing was a problem for many thousands of households (see, for example, Barnett 1933). A solution – public housing – was envisaged by, among others, Oswald Barnett (Victoria. Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board 1937; Barnett & Burt 1942; Barnett, Burt & Heath 1944). Both the Commonwealth and State governments devised and implemented a strategy, passing acts of Parliament to establish organisations and funding mechanisms, appointing commissions/boards and staff, purchasing land, constructing dwellings, housing tenants etc.

Throughout the history of social housing, governments, managers, practitioners, policymakers, advocates, tenants etc. have continually confronted problems. Some are ongoing, some are new. These different groups perceive these problems differently. For some they are a problem to be resolved. For others they are not a problem. Yet when confronted with a problem, each group envisages some solution and works towards its implementation. It is through this ongoing process of problem-solution that social housing has changed and developed to meet a wide variety of situations.

This section explores five genres of research on Australian social housing that are concerned with implementation: research methods; aspirations or visions for social housing; policy analysis and development; social housing strategies and plans; and applications. These roughly correspond with the four key questions outlined in the previous section: the first two genres – research methods and aspirations/visions for social housing – with Foundations: who am I?; policy analysis and development with
(1) Research methods

In Chapter 3 I discussed research methods in relation to how we go about primary research. The genre of research with which I am concerned here, however, relates to the basic positions of researchers, what they understand themselves to be doing as they do their research. Within research on Australian social housing, this genre is quite limited.

Most research is undertaken within the horizon of everyday living where questions of foundations rarely arise. Where they do arise, they tend to be dismissed as not practical. The problem is reduced to getting government to act and solve an immediate problem. This is reflected in common refrains or recommendations such as “build more social housing” or “increase rent assistance” or “provide grants to first time owner-purchasers”. These refrains tend to overlook the complexity of doing just that. For those operating within the horizon of everyday living (and its attendant politics), questions and critique can be ways of undermining the alternative position rather than understanding the grounds on which the problem is formulated or a solution proposed. This taken-for-granted view of the world underpins the positivist approach to social housing.

In the previous chapter on Dialectic, mention was made of a genre of research on Australian social housing concerned with a methodological critique of housing researchers. This research is concerned not only with a critique of the basic positions of researchers but also with thematising the grounds for further research, with authors outlining their own stance for doing research.

So, the social construction research (Kemeny 1992; Jacobs & Manzi 2000; Jacobs, Kemeny & Manzi 2004) and its variants, the housing pathways research (Clapham 2002, 2004) and the critical discourse research (Marston 2000, 2002), argue that housing researchers adopt a social construction viewpoint:

A constructionist epistemology purports that an individual’s experience is an active process of interpretation rather than a passive material apprehension of an external physical world. A major claim advanced by those adopting a social constructionist epistemology is that actors do not merely provide descriptions of events, but are themselves constitutive of wider policy discourses and conflicts. Viewing society and social policy as malleable and subject to power struggles, constructionists do not accept social facts as permanently “accomplished”. This emphasis on contestation is important in offsetting any tendency by actors to objectify social
phenomena or reify abstractions into material realities. (Jacobs & Manzi 2000:36)

This viewpoint highlights the active role that social agents have in the construction of social housing. Social constructionists anticipate that social housing will be understood when the interests and motivations of the participants are understood. Their questions are about how the participants are using social housing in their own interests. They understand the current construction of social housing as the result of conflicts and power in which the powerful tend to reify it in their own interests. If social housing is socially constructed, it is not fixed and permanent. Rather, its current form can be contested and it can be reconstructed in a new form. Implicit within this position is a view of the researcher as a recipient of a world already constructed by the powerful. Their role is to reveal these interests or deconstruct this world and reconstruct a new one.

As a critical realist, however, Julie Lawson in *Critical Realism and Housing Research* (see also 2001, 2002, 2006) anticipates that she will be able to explain the divergence of housing solutions between Australia and The Netherlands as causal mechanisms formed from the necessary relations between agents which are ‘actualised in the context of other sets of interacting contingent relations’ (2006:28). She anticipates that these mechanisms will be understood through abductive and retroductive methods.

Dodson presents another basic methodological stance. In Chapter 3 of *Government Discourse and Housing* (2007) he proposes a ‘pragmatic discursive methodology’ for ‘comprehending the production of housing policy discourse’. Within this methodological stance, “the concern of philosophical pragmatists to avoid absolute conceptions of truth and to emphasise the empirical constitution of social knowledge forms a highly fruitful basis for the investigation of the discursive production of housing assistance policy” (2007:55).

(2) **Aspirations or visions for social housing**

In the research, sometimes implicit, are expressions of the aspirations and visions for social housing.

Some examples include: Oswald Barnett’s vision of new housing to replace the slums of inner Melbourne (Barnett & Burt 1942; Barnett, Burt & Heath 1944); the 1943 Commonwealth Housing Commission’s vision of social housing as a broad based tenure (Australia. Commonwealth Housing Commission 1943, 1944); Jim Kemeny’s vision of a dominant cost-rent social housing sector (Kemeny 1981, 1983); the Industry Commission’s vision of a more efficient public housing system targeted at those most...
in need ((Industry Commission 1993a); and the vision of Ecumenical Housing, the
Australian Council of Social Service and National Shelter for an expanded, diverse
social housing sector (Bisset & Victorian Council of Churches. Ecumenical Housing
Unit 1991; ACOSS & National Shelter 1994; Ecumenical Housing 1997; National

These differing visions for the future express the basic stances of organisations and
researchers towards social housing. Each incorporates not only some understanding of
housing within the broader context of its role in society, its role in the development of
persons, its role in the economy, but also of its possibilities for providing better living
conditions for people and better relations between people. It is within the context of
these visions that future policies and directions are formulated and implemented.

(3) Policy analysis and development

Policy analysis and policy development are strong themes within research on
Australian social housing. Governments, housing policy-makers and housing managers
have demanded that housing research is policy relevant. It is this direct link between
research and policy that characterises much research on Australian social housing
(Davison & Fincher 1998; Winter & Seelig 2001). Policy analysis and development
covers every aspect of social housing from its initial development through the key
periods of its transformation. Interest in social housing policy has waxed and waned as
the problems confronting social housing in Australia have surfaced in national and
State/Territory politics.

In the 1930s and early 1940s due to the housing shortage in the wake of the
Depression, advocates and governments proposed the development of public housing
and the formation of SHAs.

In the 1970s, reports by the Australian Commission of Inquiry into Poverty (1975), the
Australian Priorities Review Staff (1975) and the Australian Institute of Urban Studies
(1975) reviewed the basic directions of social housing policy. They were highly critical
of these directions and proposed new policy directions such as changes in the eligibility
for public housing, the development of housing co-operatives, the separation of
tenancy management and asset management and, a market rent policy.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s governments worked through the implications of
economic rationalism for social housing. The national government initiated a series of
reviews in order to work out new policy directions: the National Housing Policy Review
Flood 1989) proposed Commonwealth funding for social housing through grants rather
than loans; the National Housing Strategy (1992)\(^2\) proposed an expansion of social housing; the Industry Commission public enquiry into public housing (Industry Commission 1993a, 1993b) proposed a separation of the tenancy management and asset management, market rents and a new housing subsidy to replace rental rebates.

As input into these government reviews, parliamentary inquiries and Commonwealth and State budget processes, community organisations such as National Shelter, Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) and Ecumenical Housing\(^3\) advocated for increased Commonwealth and State funding for social housing and for a diverse social housing sector.

As well as policy proposals which sought to improve the broad framework within which social housing operated, proposals to improve particular aspects have also been subject to ongoing debate. Mike Berry and Jon Hall made proposals on financing social housing (Berry, Hall & Allen Consulting Group 2001; Berry (with assistance of Hall) 2002) and on reversing the trend towards increasing deficits in public housing (Hall & Berry 2004) and community housing (Hall & Berry 2009). Kath Hulse and Terry Burke made proposals on improving access to social housing (Hulse, Phillips & Burke 2007) and improving the way it is allocated to tenants (Hulse & Burke 2005). Sean McNelis made proposals to improve the rental system (McNelis 2006), to improve high-rise housing (McNelis & Reynolds 2001) and to improve the quality of life for older persons (McNelis, Neske, Jones et al. 2008). Keith Jacobs and Kathy Arthurson (2003) proposed changes to allocations, to tenancy conditions, to communication between tenants and housing providers, and to working relationships with external agencies in order to intervene more effectively in anti-social behaviour on public housing estates. Vivienne Milligan and others made proposals to improve the provision of affordable housing by not-for-profit organisations by providing adequate capital funds, by developing a more comprehensive policy and regulation regime, by being more proactive in planning reform and land supply processes, and by building capacity within not-for-profit housing associations through training and evaluation (Milligan, Gurran, Lawson et al. 2009).

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\(^2\) This is the final report of the National Housing Strategy. Leading up to this final report seven issues papers, fifteen background papers, three discussion papers, twelve monographs and nine consultation reports were published (National Housing Strategy 1992:145-148).


Publications by Ecumenical Housing include Bisset & Victorian Council of Churches. Ecumenical Housing Unit (1991) and Ecumenical Housing (1997).
These are but a sample of policy proposals for social housing. The key element within them is envisioning and proposing a new direction for social housing. These new directions set a context for proposing new practices within social housing.

(4) Social housing strategies and plans

Beside the formulation of policies, there is the issue of the context within which a policy will be implemented. This issue of context has resulted in a genre of research on Australian social housing that is concerned with strategies and plans. Such strategies and plans are developed at all three levels of government (Commonwealth, State/Territory and local) as well as at the organisational level and for particular forms of social housing.

At the national level, after extensive investigations and consultations, the National Housing Strategy (NHS) (1992:18) outlined a strategy for achieving two broad objectives: affordable housing and appropriate housing. These were set within the broader context of four imperatives for reform: demographic and related social trends; social justice; sustainable economic achievements; and the integration of housing and urban issues with environmental considerations (pp.7-14). It was in this context that the NHS set out three strategic objectives as well as a number of strategies for achieving each of these objectives, and a set of policies and required actions related to each strategy (pp.43-106). This agenda for action “represents, in the view of the NHS, the future work required for concerted housing and urban reform. It provides an integrated mechanism for the introduction of effective and sustainable reform across a wide front. Pursued with commitment and vigour, which will be essential for success, its implementation will contribute to: housing outcomes… and the future viability of Australia’s towns and cities” (pp.29-30).

At the State level, Housing Departments have developed strategies for the implementation of social housing (Victoria. Housing and Community Building 2004; South Australia. Building South Australia 2005; New South Wales. Housing NSW 2007, 2008). In Planning for the Future: New Directions for Community Housing in New South Wales, 2007/08-2012/13 (New South Wales. Housing NSW 2007), for instance, Housing NSW outlines a five-year plan for community housing. This plan is located within the context of a vision which “places people at its centre” and “offers housing for more people, tailored to their needs, in a way that strengthens local and regional communities” (p.5). Further, it locates the plan within the broader context of: the high and complex needs of tenants; the impacts of demographic change and increased targeting on revenue; creating sustainable communities; increased demand for
affordable housing options; and accessing additional funds (p.10). It is in relation to this context that Housing NSW outlines its objectives and related actions for achieving them (pp.13-23).

In a similar vein, some local governments have developed social housing strategies (McNelis, Kliger, Burke et al. 2005b; McNelis, Kliger, Nankervis et al. 2005c; City of Melbourne 2006; City of Boroondara 2007; City of Sydney 2009; City of Knox 2010; City of Melbourne c. 2001). The relationship between local affordable housing policies and the context within which they are achieved is highlighted diagrammatically in the Shire of Yarra Ranges Housing Strategy Issues Paper (McNelis, Kliger, Nankervis et al. 2005c:4-8).

What makes this brief selection from the research on Australian social housing unique is the way in which it is primarily concerned not with a social housing policy per se, i.e. its future direction, but rather with locating this policy within a broader context, in particular, as we have emphasised here, within the broader goals of government. A strategy takes this broader context into account in how this policy will be implemented.

(5) Applications
The primary concern of strategies and plans is the contexts within which a policy is to be implemented. Some of the research on social housing, however, also specifies the actions that an organisation (whether government or social housing organisation) need to take to implement a particular strategy. The level of specification varies. For instance, the National Housing Strategy specifies the actions to be taken by the Commonwealth government, State/Territory governments and others as well as some timelines but generally does not specify the details of who is responsible, what skills they would need, what processes etc. would need to be established; whereas the City of Sydney Draft Affordable Rental Housing Strategy not only specifies actions to be taken but also who is responsible, what resources are required, the time-frame and the external partners who will be involved.

As a way of keeping policy-makers informed of current research, the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute regularly produces Research and Policy Bulletins (for example, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute 2004, 2006, 2011) which outline the key findings of research and their policy implications.

Social housing organisations articulate the commonly accepted ways of doing things within their organisation through operational documents or policies and procedures. Some operate without such documents and to some extent most operate against a background of informal rules, spontaneous agreement or informal learning on how
things are done. When differences or conflicts arise and an organisation wants consistency, however, it will document these processes.

In Victoria, for instance, the public housing authority, through a series of manuals, has (working) policies and procedures in relation to rental rebates and the calculation of household rents (Victoria. Office of Housing 2009), rental arrears (Victoria. Office of Housing 2006-2010), acquisition of properties (Victoria. Office of Housing 2008-2010b), eligibility for public housing (Victoria. Office of Housing 2010) and allocations policy (Victoria. Office of Housing 2010). These manuals briefly outline the current policy and then work through how it will be applied in particular circumstances.

7.3 The implementation functional specialties in research-policy linkages

As a starting point for developing a more precise understanding of the implementation functional specialties, I propose to review two related papers by Andrew Jones and Tim Seelig as part of an AHURI project on research-policy linkages in Australian housing: a Discussion Paper (Jones & Seelig 2004) and an Options Paper (Jones & Seelig 2005). These open up a central issue for housing research: the nexus between research, on the one hand, and its implementation in new practices, on the other.

The broad aims of the project were: “to develop a systematic framework for understanding the relationships between social science research and public policy, and to use this understanding to enhance the linkages between social science research and policy practice in the Australian housing system” (2004:1). In the Options Paper, these broad aims are outlined more specifically: “to propose for discussion a strategy, a set of broad approaches and a series of specific options to enhance linkages between research and policy in Australian housing, with particular reference to the role of the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI)” (2005:1).

These papers not only illustrate the implementation of new practices that will enhance research-policy linkages in Australian housing (see sub-section 7.3(3)), they also illustrate implementation in two other areas: the implementation of a project, in this instance, on research-policy linkages (see sub-section 7.3(1)); and the implementation of research-policy linkages over the past thirty years (see sub-section 7.3(2)). In the latter, the understandings of a variety of authors and commentators are developed into themes and a typology of research-policy linkages. We will briefly summarise each of these three sets of implementation.
(1) Implementing the project

Jones and Seelig envisage a project through which they aspire to understand research-policy linkages and propose changes to current practices. This aspiration is the first step in implementing a project which is followed by three further steps: deciding their aims; deciding which strategies they anticipate will achieve these aims; and deciding which particular activities to undertake.

Their specific aim is outlined in the introduction above.

In their project methodology (2005: Appendix 1) they specify three strategies to achieve these aims:

- A review of international literature on research-policy linkages: "a comprehensive listing and analysis of the academic and policy literature pertaining to research-policy linkages during the past three decades" (2005:44);
- Workshops: the first with housing policy researchers and a second with housing policy practitioners;
- Participant observations by members of the study team.

Prior to actually undertaking activities, the authors made decisions as to what in particular they were going to do, such as:

- where, how, how many and over what time period they would locate particular books, articles, papers etc. on research-policy linkages, and select and review those relevant to the project;
- where, how, who and how many etc. would participate in the workshops, how they would be organised, what questions would be asked;
- where, how and who would observe which group of people.

In reflecting upon their work, the authors note that the project operated on another level besides these external processes of formulating aims, formulating strategies, deciding upon particular activities and undertaking these activities. A distinctive aspect of the project is “its aspiration to utilise this literature as a stimulus for the process of reflection by housing researchers and policy makers on how they can best work together to achieve improved housing outcomes for Australians” (2004:1). They describe the research process as “explicitly action-oriented” and “designed in three stages: analysis, reflection and implementation” (2004:1). The ‘analysis’ stage involves a “critical, conceptual and applied analysis” of the international literature on research-policy linkages. The ‘reflective’ stage involves Australian housing policy-makers and housing
researchers reflecting upon the results of this international review. The implementation stage will involve actions which improve the research-policy interface in Australian housing policy.

(2) Implementing research-policy linkages: themes and typology

In the ‘analysis’ stage, the international literature review provided a framework for structuring a discussion about research-policy relations around four primary questions/themes:

- **Aspirations and expectations** to more effectively link research and policy: What are our aspirations and expectations concerning relations between research and policy in the context of Australian housing?

- **Theories and models** of research-policy relations: How should we conceptualise research-policy relations in Australian housing as a basis for the enhancement of these relations?

- **Structures and processes** to institutionalise research-policy links: How should we structure research-policy relations in Australian housing as a basis for enhancement of research-informed policy?

- **Practices** to achieve more effective engagement between researchers and policy-makers: What repertoire is best suited to enhancing research-informed policy in Australian housing?

These four inter-linked themes/questions “represent the central concerns of this literature” (2004:i). They move from an aspiration/expectation (a central principle or idea) outwards through models, structures and processes towards practices. The more central guides and directs the less central, so a decision as to aspirations and expectations guides and directs models which in turn guide and direct structures and processes which in turn guide practices. As the authors note, the debate about aspirations and expectations between ‘champions’, ‘sceptics’ and ‘reformers’ “sharpens consideration of what research-informed policy really means in practice”.

This move from a central principle or idea towards practices is a theme not only throughout the Discussion Paper, it is also a recurring theme within the literature. For instance, in the discussion of models of linkages between research and policy, the authors develop a typology of research-policy linkages. They identify three models –

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4. In sub-section 7.3(1) above I noted this theme – from central principle to practices – as the authors implemented their research-policy linkages project. In sub-section 7.3(3) I will note this theme in how the authors structure their thinking in the Options Paper.
the engineering model, the engagement model and the enlightenment model – which “present alternative conceptions both of how research actually links to policy and of how it should link” (2004:14).\(^5\)

In the *engineering* model, the researcher is a technician in the service of the policy-maker: the policy-maker defines the problem to be solved; the researcher solves these particular policy problems through applied research. In the engineering model, the result is practical solutions to problems.

In the *engagement* model, the researcher and the policy-maker are collaborators, together working out the best policies/directions within a messy and changing world: the researcher brings their “distinctive knowledge, skills and values of the social sciences”; the policy-maker brings their particular knowledge, skills and values of the particular situation. In the engagement model, the result is policies which propose to address the current political situation.

In the *enlightenment* model, the researcher and the policy-maker live in different worlds and relate to one another indirectly. The researcher operates independently of the policy-maker and is driven by the perspectives of their academic disciplines. The researcher is a detached, sceptical social critic who seeks to clarify issues and inform wider public debates. The policy-maker may or may not take up the challenge posed by the researcher, may or may not rethink their assumptions and frames of reference.

Jones and Seelig have highlighted the differences between these three models of research-policy linkages. From another perspective, however, they could be understood within a larger framework of movement from central principle or idea outwards to practice: the enlightenment model is largely concerned with new principles or ideas for policy; the engagement model is largely concerned with new structures or processes through which policy is achieved; the engineering model is largely concerned with new practices whereby policy is actually implemented.

(3) Implementing research-policy linkages in Australian housing
The results of this project are outlined in the final Options Paper. The authors proposed a particular strategic direction for AHURI in three parts: first, a strategy of engagement whereby AHURI operates as a ‘network organisation’; second, eight general approaches to enhance research-policy relations through a strategy of engagement;

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\(^5\) Jones and Seelig summarise the characteristics of each of the three models in Table 1 (2004:15).
third, twenty-four specific options (as specifications of the eight general approaches) which were required to put the strategy of engagement into practice (2005:1-2).\(^6\)

The endpoint of the project is a set of twenty-four specific options for AHURI. Our question here is: how did the authors come up with these practical options? What did they do? How did they justify their advocacy of these options?

At one level, the explanation lies in the methods used by the authors to reach these results. In the ‘analytical’ stage, the international literature review provided ideas. So the discussion of practices, structures and processes, theories and models in the Discussion Paper become “proposals” which were tested, refined, expanded and confirmed through the workshops and became the specific options, approaches and strategic direction in the final Options Paper. The four inter-linked themes/questions provided a structure for key questions (2004:Appendix 1) for the workshops which focused specifically on Australian housing.

The development in their thinking as a result of ‘the reflective stage’ is illustrated by the changes in the specific options from the Discussion Paper to the Options Paper: five “broad sets of prescriptions for enhancing research-policy relations” (2005:16) identified in the literature were expanded into “eight broad ‘approaches’ to closer and more effective engagement between the research and policy communities” as a result of discussions within the workshops.

In summary, then, the grounds on which the specific options for AHURI were put forward and justified are twofold: (i) the ideas derived from the literature review and (ii) the refinement, expansion and confirmation of these ideas as they were tested through the workshops and participant observations.

What is less obvious, however, is the role(s) each of these core activities played in the formulation of the overall strategy, general approaches and specific options. In exploring this role, it is easier to begin with the endpoint, the specific options.

(i) Specific options: towards new practices

The aim of these options is to improve the research-policy interface in Australian housing. The character, then, of these options is that they will “improve” the research-policy interface. So, something better than what was there previously. Whether these options will or will not improve the research-policy interface has been tested through the methods outlined above: the review of international literature; the workshops and

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\(^6\) See Table 4.1 on p.41ff for the relationship between the approaches and the specific options.
the participant observations. While these options may be the subject of some debate, their specific content is not the issue I wish to consider here.

Rather, I would note five things in relation to these specific options:

(1) The options are geared around the particularities of AHURI, in this time and place with certain opportunities and possibilities for change. Thus, the discussion of the specific options in the Options Paper (pp.17-37) is accompanied by an analysis of the situation in which the change will occur. This includes some history in relation to the particular issue they are intending to deal with. They are geared towards a ‘re-formation’ or ‘reintegration’ of current and possible activities in a new way.

(2) As noted by the authors, the implementation of these options will depend upon “the commitment and support from research centres, housing authorities, and individual researchers and policy practitioners, as well as from AHURI” (2005:39). In other words, these options are still conditional. Moreover, while very specific in nature, they have yet to be implemented in a way which will fit with and be acceptable to external agencies.

(3) The options are a series of new actions or practices. The motivations of the various actors, whether they be individuals or organisations, are not relevant.

(4) These options are numerous and cover a range of areas. But they are not discrete and unrelated actions or practices. In some way, they are related to one another. The question, then, is: what is it that relates them to one another?

(5) Finally, we can note that the authors group these options under eight different approaches.

**(ii) Approaches: structures and processes**

Eight approaches provide the context for the twenty-four options:

1. Adopt and promote engagement as a core model, principle and practice;
2. Engage around the research agenda and research funding;
3. Engage around the conduct of research;
4. Engage around research dissemination and utilisation;
5. Engage in wider policy processes;
6. Promote local level collaboration;
7. Focus on research synthesis;
8. Promote skills development in research-policy linkage.

Each specific option is related to one of these approaches, and the specific options are related to one another insofar as they are part of each approach. Three approaches
each incorporate two options, two approaches incorporate three options and three approaches incorporate four options. So, for instance, Approach 2 (Engage around the research and agenda and research funding) incorporates Option 5 (Establish a more engaging and participative approach to ongoing development of the AHURI research agenda), Option 6 (Develop a format for the research agenda that is more explicit concerning the diversity of research that will be supported) and Option 7 (Develop an explicit engagement process for the development of new Collaborative Research Ventures) (2005:22-23, 41).

Each option makes a contribution to the achievement of their respective approach, and together the options in each approach will achieve that approach.

But again, as with the specific options, we can note that these approaches are numerous and cover a range of areas, that they are not discrete and unrelated. Our question, then, is: what is it that relates these approaches to one another?

(iii) Models of research-policy linkages – the engagement strategy

As the authors note, “each approach represents one aspect of an overall engagement strategy, relating to particular organisational structures, stages of the research process, or problematic aspects of research-policy linkages” (2005:16). The central point here is that the approaches are related to one another as aspects of an engagement strategy for research-policy linkages. It is this strategy that brings them together. It guides the formulation and specification of the eight approaches and, in turn, the formulation and specification of the twenty-four specific options.

For the authors, “[o]ne of the principal findings of the research has been that engagement is fundamental to achieving closer research-policy relations” (2005:38). Engagement is the principle which determines different aspects or approaches. In turn, different aspects or approaches determined the specific options.

How then, did the authors conclude that “a strategy of ‘engagement’” was “the most promising approach to achieving effective research-policy linkages” (2005:4)?

Their review of the literature indicated various theories or models of research-policy relations and how research was utilised in the policy process. After reviewing these, the authors reduced the number of theories/models to three: the enlightenment model, the engagement model and the engineering model. These three models envisage different

7. Section 2.2 of the Discussion Paper (2004:14-18) describes in some detail the different characteristics of each of these three models.
research-policy linkages. The question confronting the authors is: through which model are research-policy linkages better incorporated?

Such a choice is not simply based upon what has previously happened, i.e. an analysis and understanding of each of the three models, and how policy utilises research in each model. Indeed, what is interesting is that the authors want to hold onto all three models. While they appear to opt for the engagement strategy, they understood it in a way which encompassed the other two models. The authors understood the “engagement” strategy as encompassing “both the highly specific research questions typical of the engineering model and the wider, more speculative research questions of the enlightenment model” (2005:15). In this way, the three models were conflated into one as the engagement model was understood as encompassing the other two in some way.

(iv) Aspirations and expectations for research-policy linkages

Prior to the discussion of the three models of research-policy linkages, the authors discuss the ongoing debate over aspirations and expectations for research-policy linkages. They note how these vary and, while recognising that this is an over-simplification, they highlight the differing positions of three broad groups: champions who contend “that policy should be based on the findings of social science research” and that this “is self-evident, requiring little if any justification”; sceptics who contend that “social science-based public policy is a mirage, based on unrealistic assumptions about social science, the policy process and the capacity of researchers and policy makers to work effectively together”; and reformers who neither dismiss nor accept unthinkingly the role of science in public policy but “suggest the need for new structures and practices if research-informed and research-enhanced policy is to be successfully progressed” (2004:8).

Most researchers and policy practitioners associated with AHURI adopt a reformist stance. It is the aspirations and expectations of this reformist stance that sets the framework for an engagement strategy, the approaches and the specific options. It is a stance which both appreciates what has been achieved yet critically recognises the limitations of these achievements. It is a stance whose intent is progress in research-policy linkages.

(v) Learning from the past

By focusing on aspirations and expectations, Jones and Seelig find a starting point for implementing new research-policy linkages through AHURI. It is a starting point which looks forward to what can be or what we want to be. But to get to this starting point

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they worked through the history of debates between champions, sceptics and reformers and made an evaluation of them.

Just as champions, sceptics and reformers ask: should we seek to realise better linkages between research and policy?, is it desirable?, is it possible?, so too Jones and Seelig ask themselves the same questions, for “the goal of research-informed policy… raises fundamental and recurring debates about the nature and purposes of both social science and public policy in democratic societies” (2004:4).

In seeking to work through these debates on research-policy linkages, Jones and Seelig propose three key sets of questions:

1) What is the history of the idea that social science research and public policy should be closely linked, and that policy should be research informed? Where does this idea come from and why is it so prominent on the policy agenda at the present time?

2) What are the broad parameters of the debate? What are the arguments and views of those who champion the idea of research-based policy, and of those who raise questions about this aspiration?

3) Specifically, what exactly are we aspiring to when we espouse more effective links between research and policy in Australian housing? (2004:4)

These three questions deal with different aspects of the research-policy linkages. The first deals with the historical experience or what has already happened in relation to these linkages. The second deals with the differing evaluations of this historical experience in view of future directions. The third raises the question as to what exactly are these linkages that we aspire to bring about.

In answering the first question, Jones and Seelig point to a whole range of instances where public policies have been based upon social science research and how confidence in such research as the basis for public policies has waxed and waned with perceptions of its effectiveness. The search for better ways to relate research and policy resulted in further reflection and literature on the issue. In particular, the paper reviewed the evidence-based policy movement as it developed in the United Kingdom and the criticisms of their practices. The authors note the pragmatic impulse in this movement, its claims to overcoming ideologically based positions and its compatibility with managerialism. They conclude by highlighting the long history in which research and policy sought to develop closer links, the increasing complexity of those links, the periods of close collaboration interspersed by periods of conflict and the possibilities inherent in the evidence-based policy movement (2004:4-8).

In answering the second question – the debate between the champions and the sceptics about the possibility of research-informed policy – Jones and Seelig outline
the arguments for and against research-informed policy. The champions’ aspiration for research-informed policy is particularly based on “a belief in the capacity of social science research to provide answers” (p.9). The sceptics, however, argue that the champions (i) misunderstand the nature of the policy process within politics by underestimating the role of interests, ideology and irrationality in policy and misunderstanding the nature of the knowledge needed for effective policy making, (ii) over-estimate the capacity of research, (iii) under-estimate the difficulties of developing partnerships between researchers and policy-makers, (iv) ignore the evidence of the limited influence of research and (v) endanger the role of the social sciences in a democratic society.

While the champions point to the positive aspects of research-informed policy, the sceptics point to its limitations and its negative aspects. The reformers’ position on research-informed policy seeks “a more nuanced understanding of the role of research in policy and of research-policy relations” (p.11). “These ‘reformers’ accept the basic propositions of the case for research-informed policy, while acknowledging the complexities and constraints of policy and research processes. The stance is one of cautious optimism” (p.12). The reformers take the basic stance of the champions’ position and adapt it by taking account of the arguments put forward by the sceptics’ position. This reformers position is much more circumspect with regard to the possible achievements of research-informed policy, while not abandoning the possibility or aspiration altogether (pp.8-12).

In answering the third question – what should our aspirations and expectations be? – Jones and Seelig shift to a particular context, viz. the current research-policy linkages within Australian housing, and put a series of questions to researchers and policy-makers (pp.12-14). Their answers to these questions provide the context for their aspirations for future research-policy linkages in Australian housing.

(4) Research-policy linkages and the implementation functional specialties

These two papers by Jones and Seelig illustrate the movement from current research-policy linkages within AHURI to a proposal for better research-policy linkages within AHURI. They begin by learning from the past – considering the history of debates about research-policy linkages and an evaluation of these debates. On this basis, they take a stance which aspires to better linkages; they decide on the best model for expressing this aspiration – the engagement strategy; they decide on a set of approaches for this engagement model; they propose a set of specific options that will put in place these approaches.
The two papers illustrate implementation in three areas: housing researchers implementing a project; the implementation of research-policy linkages in the past; and implementing research-policy linkages in Australian housing.

In what is a thorough review of research-policy linkages, there are two particular aspects to these two papers I want to discuss further: first, the role of theory in coming to some aspiration for research-policy linkages and in their implementation; second, the structure of implementation, whether in (i) implementing the project or (ii) the themes/typology that informs past research-policy linkages or (iii) implementing research-policy linkages in Australian housing.

It seems to me that a scientific approach to implementation – whether as a research project, as an understanding of implementation in the past or as implementing some new practices – demands not just research-policy linkages but theory-practice linkages. It also demands a sound basis for structuring that implementation. Our current understanding of the implementation or policy process is dominated by the horizon of everyday living. We need to make two shifts: first, into a horizon of theory that will give us control of what we are implementing; second, into a horizon of the subject as subject, distinguishing the different questions that emerge in the process.

(i) **Shifting implementation into a horizon of theory**

Jones and Seelig highlight the importance and difficulty in linking research and policy. But like most policy development within housing studies, the linking occurs within the horizon of everyday living where both research and policy are understood descriptively. This has the advantage of conveying directly to practitioners something of the importance of research and policy and how they link together. But as discussed in previous chapters, understanding within the horizon of everyday living makes assumptions about research-policy linkages that incorporate the interests of a person, a group or a culture by not distinguishing between what is being investigated and the role or purposes that it plays. Within this horizon, a researcher is unable to control what is being investigated and they view it from a particular perspective, most often a dominant perspective where it serves their particular purpose.

For Jones and Seelig, this horizon of everyday living has three implications. The first concerns their understanding of research-policy linkages. At no stage do they address the prior questions: What is research? and What is policy? The papers tend to assume

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8. This criticism is not specific to the work of Jones and Seelig. It is a criticism of most Australian social housing research and policy-making even my own policy work (McNelis 1992, 1993; McNelis & Reynolds 2001).
that everyone knows what research and policy are. Their problem is the relationship or linkages between them. But an explanatory understanding of research and of policy is essential to grasping the linkages between them. By operating within the horizon of everyday living, Jones and Seelig do not have an adequate heuristic for considering the varying historical understandings of research-policy linkages by the champions, the sceptics and the reformers and are unable to distinguish between those aspects of these understandings that concern research-policy linkages and those aspects that arise out of their own interests and biases. While they take a stance on research-policy linkages, they are unable to do so on a firm basis. Rather, they appeal to the aspirations of housing researchers in Australian housing. While they distinguish between different models of research-policy linkages – enlightenment, engagement and engineering – and opt for the engagement model, they want to include elements of both the enlightenment model and the engineering model.

The second implication relates to the implementation of better research-policy linkages within AHURI. Above, we noted how each of the twenty-four specific options for better linkages related to one of eight approaches which in turn related to an engagement strategy. The assumption underpinning this structuring of specific options, approaches and strategy is that, through the implementation of certain specific options, a certain approach would be achieved. So, for instance, by implementing specific option 15 (Experiment with research-policy workshops on topical issues targeted to specific groups of policy participants) and specific option 16 (Develop a pro-active media and research promotion strategy), approach 5 (Engage in wider policy processes) would be achieved. Further, through the combination of the eight approaches, an engagement strategy would be achieved (Jones & Seelig 2005:41f). It is only upon an understanding of the systematic relationships between certain specific options and a certain approach, and between all the approaches and the engagement strategy, that Jones and Seelig could make these proposals. In other words, they assume that the eight approaches would constitute an engagement strategy and that a group of specific options (whether two, three or four options) would constitute an approach.

As previously discussed in Chapter 4, it is towards an understanding of these systematic relationships that theory is directed. Theory is an answer to a what-is-it-question. A theory of housing, a theory of research, a theory of policy is a complete ordered set of sets of related variable elements that constitute housing, research or policy. While Jones and Seelig may be correct in the way they relate specific options, approaches and the engagement strategy, they may not have included all the significant elements, they may have included some which are irrelevant or insignificant,
and they may have included elements which relate to different purposes. Within a horizon of theory, a researcher is seeking to grasp those significant elements and their relationships which constitute research-policy linkages. It is upon this understanding and by grasping that variations in these significant elements and relationships are possible that better research-policy linkages can be achieved.

The third implication concerns their focus on persons, groups or institutions. Jones and Seelig speak about researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, government and AHURI, rather than about their activities which form a set of related variable elements that constitute research and policy. For Jones and Seelig, as for most policy-makers within Australian housing, the policy process takes as its starting point a particular group with their particular interests operating within a particular context. Policies, strategies and activities are developed in terms of these particularities.

As we have seen, with the shift to the horizon of theory, a housing researcher is concerned with the set of related variable elements that constitute housing. As we move from understanding the past – in which we differentiate between Research, Interpretation, History and Dialectic – to concern about the future, that same something, housing, is under consideration. Our understanding of the past has brought us to the point where we have gathered the relevant data on housing; we have grasped the set of related variable elements that constitute housing; we have grasped the dynamic that brought about a sequence of actual operating housing systems; and we have evaluated (appreciated and critiqued) this actual sequence (and discerned the extent to which the dynamic of change has served the interests of particular groups).

Our discovery of new meanings and new understandings of the past pose a challenge to us now: what do we do? It is a challenge to move forward, as best we can, on a new basis and in a new way to create a new form of housing. Our challenge is the challenge of implementation – to move from a theoretical grasp of what has happened, to envision something better, to grasp a new actual set of related elements and to assemble the particular materials that will bring about a new actual operating housing system. Rather than a policy process operating within the horizon of everyday living, what is called for is a policy process operating within the horizon of theory.

(ii) Shifting implementation into a horizon of the subject as subject

My discussion of the four types of implementation within the two papers by Jones and Seelig highlights a sequence of decisions, a structure, within implementation. So, the discussion of implementation of the research project pointed to an aspiration, aims, strategies and particular decisions; the discussion of implementing research-policy
linkages in the past pointed to aspirations/expectations, theories/models, structures/processes and practices, and then to three models operating at different levels: engineering, engagement and enlightenment; the discussion of implementing better research-policy linkages within Australian housing pointed to the strategic direction of engagement, eight approaches that enhance this strategy and twenty-four specific options through which these approaches and this strategy would be achieved.

Now different authors either explicitly or implicitly structure implementation (from determining a direction to new practices) as a sequence of decisions. For example, the final report of the National Housing Strategy (1992) speaks of national goals, objectives, strategies, policies and actions. Obviously, there are differences of terminology. Some authors propose three levels whereas others propose more. The determination of the terminology and the number of levels depends upon the situation, the audience and the complexity of implementation. So, the number of levels and the terms used for each level will vary according to practical demands of conveying some strategy simply and clearly.

Implementation within a scientific approach to housing, however, demands that we distinguish between the levels of the policy process. In the previous functional specialties, this scientific mode has been structured around key questions. I suggest that there is a certain parallel between the first four functional specialties and the four implementation functional specialties. Where the first four functional specialties are concerned with understanding what has already happened in the past, the four implementation functional specialties look forward to implementing something new. In doing so, there is a shift in orientation of the subject from understanding to doing, from understanding the past to looking to the future. We shift from puzzlement to aspiration, from being a researcher confronted with their lack of knowledge to being a researcher implementing a project, from being researchers to policy-makers.9

Just as we distinguished between four different questions that grounded the research functional specialties, so too we can distinguish four similar questions (but in a forward looking mode) that ground the implementation functional specialties. Where a research functional specialty asks an evaluative question, an implementation functional specialty asks the transformative question; where a research functional specialty asks the historical question, an implementation functional specialty asks the policy question;...
where a research functional specialty asks the theoretical question, an implementation functional specialty asks the systematic question; where a research functional specialty asks the empirical question, an implementation functional specialty asks the practical question.

The following section seeks to develop a more precise understanding of each of these implementation functional specialties and their key question.

7.4 Towards a more precise understanding of the implementation functional specialties

Implementation, the second phase of a scientific approach to housing, unfolds in a series of decisions which we have called Foundations, Policies, Systematics and Communications:

[The movement of the] second phase is from the unity of a grounding horizon, the foundations, through [policies] and systematic clarifications to communications with almost endlessly varied sensibilities, mentalities, interests, and tastes of mankind. Again, in the second phase the process is not deductive, from premises to conclusions. It is a movement through successive and more fully developed contexts: from the foundations, which is just the horizon, to the [policies], which give a shape within that horizon, to systematics, which clarify, make the shape meaningful, and finally to the communications, which transpose the message to all the different wavelengths. (Lonergan [1968]2010:462)

The following seeks an understanding of each of these contexts as we shift from Foundations in the subject as subject to its various expressions in Communications.

(1) Foundations as a functional specialty

Norman Blaikie begins his book, Approaches to Social Enquiry: Advancing Knowledge, by noting the theoretical and methodological controversies that plague the social sciences;

For the past fifty years, the social sciences have been plagued by theoretical and methodological controversies. The demise of structural functionalism in American social theory, and the emergence of new philosophies of science and social science, have been followed by a period of dispute between a variety of theoretical perspectives and approaches to social enquiry. The issues and dilemmas that have been exposed by these contemporary controversies are not new; their ingredients can be traced back to philosophical traditions that were established in the nineteenth century, traditions that have their roots in antiquity. What is new is that social scientists can no longer ignore these issues as being the pastime of philosophers. Social enquiry has lost its innocence. Social researchers must now face up to, and deal with, a range of choices and dilemmas that lead to the use of fundamentally different research strategies and have the possibility of producing different research outcomes. (Blaikie 2007:1)
Indeed, housing research as any social inquiry is no longer innocent and must deal with fundamental issues of how researchers approach their work. It is this difficult territory that is the concern of the functional specialty Foundations. In my view, it is not good enough to exclaim that “it is not possible to establish by empirical enquiry which of the ontological and epistemological claims is the most appropriate. The proponents adopt a position partly as an act of faith in a particular view of the world. All that can be done is to debate their respective strengths and weaknesses” (Blaikie 2007:25). In this view, a form of fideism, social science locates its foundations in some arbitrary axiom, self-evident truth, first principle or value stance from which it derives its theories and viewpoints. The future of social science, however, demands that we confront this view (that foundations are arbitrary) head-on.10

In the traditional view (as exemplified by Blaikie), foundations are found in first principles, in self-evident truths or beliefs, or in the arbitrary adoption of values. They provide a starting point from which other principles, other truths or beliefs and other values can be derived. However:

Foundations may be conceived in two quite different manners. The simple manner is to conceive foundations as a set of premisses, of logically first propositions. The complex manner is to conceive foundations as what is first in any ordered set. If the ordered set consists in propositions, then the first will be the logically first propositions. If the ordered set consists in an ongoing, developing reality, then the first is the immanent and operative set of norms that guides each forward step in the process.

10. It is the role of the functional specialty Dialectics to confront this issue. Here, I am pointing to a problem with the current view on Foundations. It is interesting to note that Blaikie, in his introduction, proposes three types of research questions: ‘what’ questions, ‘why’ questions and ‘how’ questions (2007:6). But this is not the basis upon which he proceeds to examine the research process – he does not explore the origins, differences between, relationships between and significance of such questions as they arise. Rather, he ignores these opening questions and goes on to describe a range of different approaches to social enquiry – positivism, critical rationalism, classical hermeneutics, interpretivism and constructionism, critical theory, ethnomethodology, social realism (or critical realism), contemporary hermeneutics and structuration theory. As a result, it seems to me, he never actually ‘pins them down’ nor grasps the significance of each (what each approach is), why they differ from one another and how they are related to one another. For to do that requires an adequate heuristic, a theory of method which not only proposes "the norms or invariants or evidence that recur in every subject independently of his [or her] horizon. It must also account for the fact that de facto people do have different horizons, despite the existence of these norms that recur in everyone. It must account, at least in principle, for the existence of the multiplicity of horizons, and it must have some capacity for explaining the varieties of philosophic opinion that have existed for thousands of years… While it must account for the horizons that occur, it must do so in such a way that it also discredits them. It accounts for them as violations of the norms, humanly intelligible violations of the norms, so that it is plausible – not only possible but plausible – that many philosophers should think in these erroneous ways” (Lonergan [1957/2001c:313]). An inquiry into this range of approaches to social enquiry are the data to be investigated (Research) which challenge the current theory of method and which may give rise to a new theory (Interpretation). This theory provides a heuristic for understanding the vector of the actual sequences of method (History) which is subject to a further question as to whether or not this vector has brought about a development of method or its decline (Dialectics). It is in Dialectics that we can confront the disparity between what proponents of each of these approaches say about social enquiry with their actual performance of social enquiry.
Now if one desires foundations to be conceived in the simple manner, then the only sufficient foundations will be some variation or other of the following style: One must believe and accept whatever the bible or the true church or both believe and accept. But X is the bible or the true church or both. Therefore, one must believe and accept whatever X believes and accepts. Moreover, X believes and accepts $a, b, c, d,\ldots$. Therefore, one must believe and accept $a, b, c, d,\ldots$

On the contrary, if one desires foundations for an ongoing, developing process, one has to move out of the static, deductivist style – which admits no conclusions that are not implicit in premisses – and into the methodical style – which aims at decreasing darkness and increasing light and keeps adding discovery to discovery. Then, what is paramount is control of the process. (Lonergan [1972]1990:269-270)

In the discussion of horizons in the previous chapter (Section 6.4(3)), I outlined three different horizons: the horizons of everyday living, the horizons of theory and the horizon of the subject as subject. I proposed that the horizon of the subject as subject provided a framework for evaluation and critique of the decisions and actions of individuals and groups (and the distorted practices of dominating power and the self-aggrandisement of individuals and groups); of the decisions and actions of housing researchers; and of the decisions and actions of researchers undertaking evaluation, comparison and critique, whether of individuals and groups, housing researchers, or housing researchers undertaking evaluation, comparison and critique. Through a heightened awareness of the subject in action, I proposed that we could thematise or articulate the dynamics of the subject as subject: the dynamic of the desire to understand, the dynamic of the desire to create something worthwhile, the dynamic of sociality and the dynamic of being-in-love.

Dialectics operates on the basis that we learn what is best from retracing our steps. We learn through the long hard-fought ongoing communal process of reflecting on the past and working out as best we can a basis for development and growth (technological development, economic development, political development, cultural development and personal development), a basis for living into the future. By retracing our steps we can make discoveries which invite a fundamental transformation of ourselves and our horizon.

Discovery and invitation is one thing. Deciding to live in a new way is another. It marks a shift in mode: from learning from the past to creating a new future that encompasses both ourselves as subject and our expression in words and actions. It is a decision which pivots between who I am now and who I want to be. It can be a decision not to change, a decision that closes off or restricts my future. Or, it can be a decision based on a discovery of what is best. The foundations of housing research, then, lie in the
conscious decision of the subject. It is a decision to implement something new within the subject. It is a decision which raises the transformative question: will I operate within the horizon of the subject as subject? Will I operate in accord with the dynamics of the subject?:

At its real root... foundations occurs... on the level of deliberation, evaluation, decision. It is a decision about whom and what you are for and, again, whom and what you are against. It is a decision illuminated by the manifold possibilities exhibited in dialectic. It is a fully conscious decision about one’s horizon, one’s outlook, one world-view. It deliberately selects the frameworks, in which [policies] have their meaning, in which systematics reconciles, in which communications are effective. (Lonergan [1972]1990:268)

Foundational reality is a decision about a fundamental orientation of ourselves as subject towards ongoing development, one which embraces future development and how this occurs. Foundations is a decision about our basic orientation or stance on living that will take us into the future. This future is not simply a repeat of the past but a leap into something new. Foundations is concerned with horizons as the framework within which we will make further decisions in the future. It is a leap which envisages a decision that not only results in a single development in ourselves but rather an ongoing development. So, a “deliberate decision about one’s horizon is high achievement. For the most part people merely drift into some contemporary horizon. They do not advert to the multiplicity of horizons. They do not exercise their vertical liberty by migrating from the one they have inherited to another they have discovered to be better” (Lonergan [1972]1990:269).

This transformative shift in horizon is not easy because it demands a reorganisation of ourselves as subject. It demands a reorientation in our interest and our living. It demands a change in what we do and how we do it. As housing researchers it demands a change in the data that we attend to, in the questions we ask, in differentiating the activities required to answer one sort of question from those required to answer a different sort of question etc. It demands a change in the groups we work with. Transformative shifts in horizons take time as we learn new skills.

The role of the functional specialty Foundations, then, is to articulate or to thematise how this development occurs. It raises the traditional, and seemingly remote, problems of philosophy, epistemology, metaphysics and ethics as a transformative question for a housing researcher: who am I? or, to put that same question in another way: who do I want to be? or: who am I as a researcher? Foundations transposes these traditional problems into a personal question for the researcher about the relationship between
themselves and their research, about their operations as they go about their research, about themselves as an operating subject.\textsuperscript{11}

Throughout history, science has always sought to work on the basis of the most developed Foundations for research.\textsuperscript{12} What was once an acceptable basis for science no longer is. Comte, Marx, Spencer, Nietzsche, Simmel, Durkheim, Weber, Dilthey, Mead, Merton, Wright Mills, Parsons, Popper, Habermas and Giddens, among many others, have each made their contribution to method in the human and social sciences. So, the ongoing question is: what is now an acceptable basis for a social science?

As noted in the previous chapter in the section on horizons and in footnote 11 of this chapter, Lonergan's \textit{Insight} shifts the discussion of the foundations of science towards the subject as subject. By thematising or objectifying the horizon of the subject as subject, Foundations articulates the dynamics of the desire to understand, the dynamics of the desire to create something worthwhile and the dynamics of sociality as

\textsuperscript{11} Up until the 17th century, the starting point for most philosophy was metaphysics – the study of the nature of the world, of being and reality. This philosophy took its cues from the great Greek philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, among others. The questions raised by Descartes, Hume and Kant, among others, shifted the starting point from metaphysics to epistemology, to questions about knowledge and its status, to questions about objectivity. For these philosophers, epistemology grounds metaphysics and thus, different epistemologies have grounded empiricist, positivist, realist and idealist metaphysics. In the early 20th century (in the wake of Kant's Copernican revolution, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud and unresolved questions about objectivity), phenomenologists, hermeneutists and existentialists such as Bergson, Kierkegaard, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Buber and Heidegger began exploring subjectivity. The writings of Bernard Lonergan can be understood as a thematisation of this work (Lonergan [1957]2001a:274ff). This thematisation shifted the focus of philosophy from epistemology to interiority or the subject as subject where philosophy takes as its starting point, self-appropriation or a grasp of what I am doing as I know, a grasp of the fundamental dynamics of human knowing and doing. Now, many of the activities that Lonergan refers to have been subject to widespread debate among philosophers of science such as Popper, Kuhn, Feyerabend and Lakatos and have been described in detail by phenomenologists and existentialists. But what is unique about Lonergan's account is that he issues "an invitation to a personal, decisive act... know oneself". The shift to interiority or to the subject as subject is a shift to grasping the sets of practices or activities that constitute knowing and, in doing so, distinguishing them from other activities that may interfere with these sets of activities. The key issue, then, becomes one of competent performance. It is the competent performance of knowing that grounds epistemology which in turn grounds metaphysics (Lonergan 1967, [1957]1992, [1972]1990). Nearly 30 years ago, Matthew Lamb (1985:76) summarised the current position of the philosophy of science as follows:

Within the extensive debates and disagreements among philosophers of science, there is an emerging consensus about the illusory character of this underlying presupposition of a logically pure objectivism in natural science... The question is no longer how to modify the scientific objectivism of positivism or logical empiricism, but what paradigms will eventually take their place...Nevertheless, there seem to be two generally accepted judgments on the direction of such developments: (1) rationality can no longer be defined solely with reference to the procedures of mathematics, logics, or the natural sciences; and (2) even in these domains – and a fortiori in others – attention is shifting from theories of theories to the heuristic performance or praxis of theorizing. The deductivist ideals of the coherent and complete criteria for rationality provided by theory qua theory are gone, even in mathematics. Theories as formally logical systems are, to paraphrase Kurt Godel, either incomplete and consistent or complete and inconsistent. Rationality cannot be identified with ideals appealing to non-existently and impossibly complete and consistent foundations in theory qua theory. There is a shift from scientific objectivism to the questioning procedures or praxis of communities of inquirers.

\textsuperscript{12} In the 16th century, Galileo, the father of modern science, developed new scientific procedures and Francis Bacon's \textit{Novum Organum} ([1620]2005) replaced Aristotle's \textit{Organum} as the standard for scientific method. In the 19th century, John Stuart Mill's \textit{A System of Logic} ([1882]2009) replaced Bacon as the standard.
the three grounds for ongoing development of housing research. An articulation of the
dynamics of the desire to understand distinguishes a complete ordered set of eight
inter-related questions. An articulation of the dynamics of the desire to create
something worthwhile distinguishes the grounds upon which decisions are made about
which research is the best to undertake (not that which is merely pleasing to the
researcher). An articulation of the dynamic of sociality reveals the grounds for
collaboration among housing researchers. Together these dynamics constitute the
grounds for the functional specialties and for Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a new
way of structuring science as a collaborative enterprise.

The functional specialty Foundations, then, seeks an answer to the transformative
question: who am I? or: who do I want to be? or, more specifically: who am I as a
housing researcher? The foundations for housing research will not be found in arbitrary
axioms, self-evident truths or first principles, they will be found in the dynamics of the
subject as subject. This thematisation of the subject as subject articulates the best
framework for undertaking housing research into the future, the best framework for the
ongoing development of housing research. It becomes a foundation for research when
a housing researcher decides to operate within this framework.

It is from the transformed viewpoint of Foundations that we can envision future
directions (Policies), envision their integration within possible ranges of technological,
economic, political and cultural systems that constitute human living (Systematics) and
envision their implementation within particular institutions, organisations and the roles
people play within them (Communications).

(2) Policies as a functional specialty

Foundations articulates the horizon within which implementation occurs. The functional
specialty Policies is concerned with giving shape to that horizon. It is what is intended
in a course of action: “policy is essentially a stance which, once articulated, contributes
to the context within which a succession of future decisions will be made” (Friend et al.
1974:40).

The meaning of any policy statement – a statement of directions – can only be
understood in the context of Foundations. So, the meaning of a policy will vary
according to whether it proceeds from a horizon of everyday living, a horizon of theory
or the horizon of subject as subject.

But like many policy analysts, Friend et al. operate within the horizon of everyday living
and understand policy as the stance of a state or government, an organisation or
network of organisations. It is a stance within which they will make a succession of
future decisions. So, it could be a stance on housing within which a government or organisation will make a succession of decisions about aspects such as taxation arrangements, housing assistance, interest rates, industry support, land supply and land use. Any such policy is, however, often in conflict with the policies of other organisations and is open to criticism because it promotes the interests of government or that organisation. As we have already seen, the reason it does so is because policy developed within the horizon of everyday living only reflects those purposes that are related to the interests of government or organisations. It overlooks what housing is and the multiple purposes it serves.

Here, then, is a fundamental problem with policy as it is discussed in housing research and wider policy research (for example, Hogwood & Gunn 1984; Parsons 1995; Hill 1997, 2002, 2003; Fischer, Miller & Sidney 2007). This research discusses policy and policy processes insofar as they are developed by government or a particular organisation. The scope of the discussion of policy is restricted to the interests of government or organisation.

If most policy operates within a horizon of everyday living – after all, policy is oriented towards practical change – what would policy look like from within the horizon of theory?

A theory of housing articulates the set of related variable elements and a series of contexts that constituted an actual operating housing system. This theory seeks to bring together both an explanatory definition of housing and the complete range of its possible purposes. It showed how the actual elements can be explained in terms of a series of approximations where each purpose contributes to the actual system. The discovery of new relevant data, a shift in our understanding of housing, a shift in our understanding of the vectors that motivate the shift from one actual operating housing system to another, a shift in our understanding of what constitutes progress, and our aspiration to make a better housing system raise a question about the future direction and the vector that will motivate the shift from the current system to a new one. I have suggested that an ideology is the focus on one or other purpose of housing that fails to grasp what housing is and the role it plays in achieving a range of purposes. The challenge of policy, then, is not the adoption of one particular vector, but rather a direction which will encompass the totality of its purposes.

In History we seek to grasp the vector or vectors that motivated or brought about a sequence of actual operating housing systems. This vector or vectors motivated a change in these systems. The function of Policies is to select, from among a range of
possible vectors, the one that will motivate an ongoing development in the housing system as a whole. Policies are concerned with directions into the future. Before we change our practices, before we strategise on how we can change these practices, we envisage some direction. Policies deliberate on possible directions and, from among a range of possibilities, select a direction for the future. Policies are what motivate this future development in practice. Policies are what we intend. They are a direction or guideline for the future. It is the affirmation of a vector which encompasses the totality of purposes that sets in train a series of further decisions that will emerge from Systematics and Communications.

The functional specialty Policies seeks to answer the policy question: what vector or direction will best promote future development? Policies shifts the current discussion of policy analysis and policy development away from a focus on what governments or organisations want or what others want from them – policy in the interests of a particular organisation or group. The focus of Policies is on new directions or vectors that bring about future development. It is a vector through which not only housing will be better realised but also the range of purposes in which housing plays a role. A theory of housing distinguishes between the set of related elements that constitute housing and the sets of related elements that constitute values in which housing plays a role. The functional specialty Policies posits a direction or vector in which there will be a better realisation or development for both housing and its related values.

(3) Systematics as a functional specialty

Henry Mintzberg, an “internationally renowned academic and author on business and management” focusing particularly on strategy within organisations, outlined eight ideal types of strategies along a continuum from strong central management to external imposition as follows:

- Planned strategies: originate in formal plans of central leadership;
- Entrepreneurial strategies: originate in a central vision of a single leader adapting to new opportunities;
- Ideological strategies: originate in shared beliefs and controlled through a collective vision;
- Umbrella strategies: originate in constraints with leadership only in partial control;

• Process strategies: originate where leadership controls process rather than content;
• Unconnected strategies: originate in enclaves loosely linked within the organisation;
• Consensus strategies: originate in consensus and implemented through mutual adjustment;
• Imposed strategies: originate in the external environment and imposed on an organisation (Mintzberg 2007:7-8).

Mintzberg produced these ideal types after studying a large number of organisations. They describe a certain ‘pattern in a stream of decisions’ within an organisation. In my view, like the work of Jones and Seelig discussed above, this analysis of strategies within organisations is inadequate for two reasons. First, Mintzberg takes organisations (and their particular interests) as the starting point for his research.14 His discussion of strategy is limited to this particular context and their interests in strategy. As a result, despite his occasional reference to ‘theory’, he remains locked within the horizon of everyday living.

Second, his research documents different types of strategies within organisations. However, it fails to distinguish between what a strategy is and how it is used by organisations. Mintzberg’s ideal types reflect the way in which strategy is used within an organisation and each use reflects some dominant interest within the organisation, whether the central leadership or a range of managers and workers. In short, what Mintzberg is documenting are strategies as distorted by ideology. The question that Mintzberg does not address is: what is a strategy? A theory of strategy would grasp the key significant elements and their relationships which constitute strategic planning. Mintzberg has little control over his investigation: his discussion of strategy variously includes policy as a stance, position or what is intended; it also includes application (or communication) in a particular time and place. A theory of strategy will distinguish strategic planning from both policy and application in a particular time and place.

14 Mintzberg may argue that this is what he is about, i.e. working out strategies for organisations, such as a social housing organisation. In one sense he is right as a SHO needs to work out strategies for achieving its goals. However, the point here is that the whole direction of Mintzberg’s writing is about working out strategies for implementing directions that are (solely) in the interest of an organisation rather than the totality of interests. These strategies do not have their origins in a theoretical understanding (which distinguishes what housing is from its purposes). Rather, he assumes one or more purposes to the exclusion of other purposes. In our view, strategic planning is about achieving development in housing as whole, and an organisational strategy is about working out the role which an organisation can play in the development of housing as a whole. For Mintzberg, strategic planning is working out changes in practices that serve the interests of one organisation.
In contrast to Mintzberg, what I am trying to envisage here is a new understanding of strategic planning within a theoretical context. The role of the functional specialty Policies is to work out the best direction for the future, the value or set of values that will become the vector for future development. Previously in Chapter 4 we proposed a theory of housing as a complete ordered set of sets of related variable elements. Each set of related elements achieves a particular value, the higher values depend upon the achievement of the lower values and the higher values order the particularity of the lower elements. Further, we proposed that the actual housing system in each country is an actual operative ordered set of sets of related actual elements.

This complex of systems, what we might call ‘an ecology of systems’, forms the context within which some new direction or vector of development is being proposed. What confronts the strategic planner is (i) an already existing ecology of systems, an ecology that has been found wanting, an ecology in which the current vector of its development has served the interests and self-aggrandisement of particular groups with consequent distortion of that ecology and (ii) a proposed shift in the vector of development envisaged in Policies. The task here for the functional specialty Systematics is to take this new direction or new vector of development and envisage a course of action for introducing new possibilities for this totality or ecology of systems, ones that will embody the shift in direction or vector of development.

Mintzberg, among others, proposes a view of strategic planning where a particular group – whether government, business, political party or community organisation – can get changes in their own interests when confronted by a situation in which a range of different players are seeking their own more or less competing interests. In contrast, the functional specialty Systematics is concerned with the integration of Policies into a larger systematic whole, one in which housing plays a role in an ongoing developing society. Once a new direction is discerned, a series of further decisions follows. The implementation of this new direction depends upon creative insights into the complete ordered set of sets of related actual elements that constitute housing. The current actual housing system expresses the interests or self-aggrandisement of particular groups. So, it is not only a matter of grasping a change within one or more sets of this ordered set but also of grasping how this change expresses the new vector development formulated in Policies.

The strategic question which Systematics seeks to answer is: what course of action will integrate a new vector or direction within the complex series of contexts that constitute an actual operative housing system? So, the functional specialty Systematics shifts away from a focus on how different groups relate to one another. Its focus is on how a
The proposed housing policy direction can be implemented within a range of contexts or systems (technological, economic, social, political and cultural) that constitute a society.

**4) Communications as a functional specialty**

In the mode of seeking an understanding of the past, the role of the functional specialty Research was to answer an empirical question and to provide the relevant material for answering a what-is-it-question. In the mode of implementing something new, the role of the functional specialty Communications is to identify or assemble together those events whose occurrence in this time and place will realise a course of action.

When speaking of Communications, I am not only referring to speaking and writing but to the whole range of expressions to which Research turned. As noted in Chapter 3, these encompass activities (both external and internal to each person), attitudes, beliefs, opinions, feelings, emotions, values, habits, expectations, motivations, skills, capacities, personal and social characteristics, material characteristics (of buildings, of habitats, of environments), language, clothes, decorations, art, music, sounds, dance, performance, video, film, symbols, signs, customs etc.

Like Research, Communications is concerned with the particular. However, it seeks to introduce some new particular expression. It is a return from theory to practice, from an ordered set of sets of related variable elements to an actual operative set of sets of related particular elements or particular practices that give effect to the course of action or strategy developed in Systematics. It points to the particular changes that a housing practitioner, a social housing organisation or other related organisations need to implement to realise a course of action within the context of a new direction or new vector of development. This course of action may require a change not just in one person or, indeed, one housing organisation but in a range of persons in a range of organisations. These are changes in practices that require new or adapted skills in individuals (for example, as they change their allocation processes or tenancy management processes or asset management processes or rent assessment processes), changes in the roles that social housing organisations play (for example, as one organisation takes up housing development while another specialises in housing management) or changes in the roles of other organisations (for example, as capital finance for social housing is sourced from financial institutions rather than banks). Communications works with persons and organisations to change their practices, as implementation depends upon their co-operation.
The functional specialty Communications seeks an answer to the question: what practices/activities in this time and place will achieve a strategic course of action? It shifts away from implementation as a top-down command process in which those in authority direct others to change their practices. Its focus is on recognising the complexity of activities and working with housing practitioners and others to make particular changes in their relations with others, in institutions, roles and practices.

7.5 Concluding summary and implications for housing research

A key characteristic of the corpus of research on Australian social housing is its twofold nature where research identifies, analyses and articulates a problem, and policy proposes solutions to these problems. It is these two broad genres that tend to dominate. It is the second of these that is explored in this section. Section 7.2 outlines the particular genres within policy that reflect the key questions outlined in Section 7.1 which presented an initial view of implementation.

It seems to me, however, that my subsequent discussion of implementation has revealed some particular weaknesses within these genres of research. The primary weakness stems from the horizon of these researchers – they operate within the horizon of common sense. This has three inter-related consequences.

The first consequence is the difficulty which housing researchers have in linking research and policy and thus drawing upon an adequate understanding of the area in which they are proposing policies. They have little idea of what theory is and its role as a heuristic within implementation.

The second consequence is that housing researchers shift immediately from ‘understanding’ a housing problem to proposing a solution. This understanding is an understanding of a particular purpose that housing has, rather than what housing is and its totality of purposes (as illustrated in Diagram 4.1). The solution assumes some group agreement about this purpose, an agreement which may be odds with the interests of another group. So policies do emerge as new directions, but as new directions that pit a previous purpose against a new one, and thus we continue the ongoing conflicts about housing as one group dominates another as it replaces one purpose with another. The horizon of everyday living limits the scope of policies to those which maintain or enhance the interests of a particular group.

By operating within the horizon of common sense, housing researchers are not developing policies founded on a (theoretical) understanding of housing. They do not distinguish between what housing is and what its purpose is. As a consequence, policy-makers envisage housing policies from the perspective of a particular
organisation (with its particular ideology linked to its interests in one particular purpose) rather than envisaging new directions for the totality of housing; strategic planners envisage strategic planning with its focus on contexts as a matter of working out how and to what extent this ideological stance can be imposed upon other groups; and practical implementation simply becomes the top-down application of policies. It is only when we can relate what housing is to its various purposes that we can envisage policies that integrate the totality of these various purposes, not just one isolated element.

The third consequence is their lack of precision regarding what they are doing. So questions of research methods become mixed up with the critique of other positions, questions of policy (looking forward) become mixed up with understanding the past; the differences between policy, strategic planning and communications are glossed over with some researchers focusing on some parts but adding in little bits of others.

A second weakness relates to those researchers who have some sense of foundations as a starting point for research. Each of the positions – social constructionist, critical realist or radical empiricist – outlined in this genre of research (see Section 7.2(1) above) take their stand on arbitrary axioms, self-evident truths or first principles. Each can be evaluated by comparing it with the actual performance of the researcher adopting that position. Within the horizon of subject as subject, this performance, whether the dynamic of the desire to understand (that gives rise to research and learning), the dynamic of the desire to create something worthwhile (that gives rise to implementation), the dynamic of sociality or of intersubjectivity (that gives rise to co-operation and collaboration in the achievement of goals) can be thematised. This thematisation reveals criteria for competently doing these things. Moreover, it grounds an ordered set of questions (here in this thesis articulated as the eight functional specialties) that can be differentiated and related, a set of questions which will form the foundations of scientific endeavours.

Where the functional specialty Dialectic asks the evaluative/critical question (within what horizon, within what dynamic of the subject did the manifold sequence of events operate?), Foundations asks the transformative question (within what horizon, within what dynamic of the subject will the future manifold sequence of events operate?). Where the functional specialty History asks the historical question (what is it that motivated our actual movement forward?), Policies asks the same question but in anticipation of the future, the visionary/policy question (what new direction will motivate our moving forward now?). Where the functional specialty Interpretation asks a theoretical question (what is it?) and anticipates a complete ordered set of related
variable elements in which the role of the ‘what’ is specified within a series of contexts (technological, economic, political, cultural and personal), Systematics asks the strategic question (what is the best course of action that integrates a new direction within a series of contexts (technological, economic, political, cultural and personal)?). Where the functional specialty Research asked the empirical question (what events are occurring and to what extent are these events associated in time and place?) and provides the material relevant to answering a what-question, Communications asks the practical question (what are the relevant materials or the particular activities that have to be assembled to bring about the strategic course of action?).

The implementation functional specialties, then, propose a more precise understanding of what researchers are doing when they are seeking to implement something new. Indeed, as with the research functional specialties, they propose a series of paradigm shifts.

The functional specialty Foundations seeks an answer to the transformative question: who will I be? or, more specifically: who will I be as a housing researcher? It proposes a shift in the foundations of research from a horizon based on arbitrary axioms, self-evident truths or first principles to the ongoing decision of the researcher to operate within the dynamic context of a differentiated and ordered set of questions, the functional specialties and the thematisation of the subject as subject.

The functional specialty Policies seeks an answer to the visionary/policy question: what vector or direction will best promote future development? It proposes a shift from a focus on government or organisational policy – policies whose range is limited to one or other purpose which serve the interests of that government or organisation – to policy as a direction in which the totality of housing purposes are better realised.

The functional specialty Systematics seeks an answer to the strategic question: what course of action will integrate a new vector or direction within the complex series of contexts that constitute an actual operative housing system? It proposes a shift from a focus on how a government or organisation will use housing to achieve its particular purposes in the context of other competing purposes to the integration of a proposed housing policy direction within its technological, economic, social, political and cultural contexts.

The functional specialty Communications seeks an answer to the practical question: what practices/activities in this time and place will achieve a strategic course of action? It proposes a shift from implementation as a top-down command process to working
with individuals and groups to make particular changes in their relations with others, in institutions, roles and practices.
PART C:

CYCLIC FUNCTIONAL COLLABORATION:

A FRAMEWORK FOR

COLLABORATIVE CREATIVITY
This thesis seeks to present Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing, one which divides up and relates different types of housing research and one which will present decision-makers with practical advice on future directions for housing.

As a scientific approach to housing, Cyclic Functional Collaboration proposes a complete ordered set of eight inter-related questions about housing: an empirical question, a theoretical question, a historical question, an evaluative/critical question, a transformative question, a visionary/policy question, a strategic question and a practical question.

Part B explored eight functional specialties, each of which is constituted by one of these eight questions and its anticipated answer. The purpose of Part B was to present a more precise understanding of each functional specialty.

My problem in Part B, as I noted in its introduction, is that to understand the parts (the functional specialties) requires an understanding of the whole (Cyclic Functional Collaboration), but to understand the whole requires an understanding of the parts. As discussed in Chapter 4, an insight grasps the set of relationships between elements. In doing so, it grasps the whole and the parts together. So, the presentation of the eight functional specialties in Part B presupposed a grasp of Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a whole. Indeed, as the reader may have noted, the presentation of each functional specialty was not without references to the other specialties.

My task now in Part C is to focus on the relationships between the functional specialties and Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a whole.
Chapter 8. From Functional Specialties to Cyclic Functional Collaboration

Now this reciprocal dependence of the four specialties of the first phase is most easily achieved when one man does all four specialties. And note, it’s a distinction not of specialists but of specialties. It’s different tasks. If one man can perform all the tasks, fine. What has to be kept separate are the tasks because they are performed differently. The distinctions are wanted so that the different tasks are performed each in its proper manner. However, the more the specialties develop, the more refined their techniques, the more numerous and delicate the operations they perform, the less possible it becomes for one man to do all four well, and then recourse has to be to teamwork. And you can have teamwork insofar, first of all, as the fact of reciprocal dependence is understood and appreciated.

In the first chapter of his book *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, the quantum physicist (and philosopher) David Bohm laments the fragmentation of individuals, society and the academy:

> fragmentation is now very widespread, not only throughout society, but also in each individual; and this is leading to a kind of general confusion of the mind, which creates an endless series of problems and interferes with our clarity of perception so seriously as to prevent us from being able to solve most of them.

Thus art, science, technology, and human work in general, are divided up into specialties, each considered to be separate in essence from the others. Becoming dissatisfied with this state of affairs, men have set up further interdisciplinary subjects, which were intended to unite these specialties, but these new subjects have ultimately served mainly to add further separate fragments. Then, society as a whole has developed in such a way that it is broken up into separate nations and different religious, political, economic, racial groups, etc. Man’s natural environment has correspondingly been seen as an aggregate of separately existent parts, to be exploited by different groups of people. Similarly, each individual human being has been fragmented into a large number of separate and conflicting compartments, according to his different desires, aims, ambitions, loyalties, psychological characteristics, etc., to such an extent that it is generally accepted that some degree of neurosis is inevitable, while many individuals going beyond the ‘normal’ limits of fragmentation are classified as paranoid, schizoid, psychotic, etc. (2002:1-2)

Bohm then goes on to discuss this problem of fragmentation and wholeness, its implications and the difficulties in finding a solution:

> The question of fragmentation and wholeness is a subtle and difficult one, more subtle and difficult than those which lead to fundamentally new discoveries in science. To ask how to end fragmentation and to expect an answer in a few minutes makes even less sense than to ask how to develop a theory as new as Einstein’s was when he was working on it, and to expect to be told what to do in terms of some programme, expressed in terms of formulae or recipes. (Bohm 2002:22-23)

The problem of fragmentation and complexity is echoed in a 2004 issue of *Futures* dedicated to transdisciplinarity. In the face of ever-pressing key questions about ‘the natural and human-made environment’ and about the economy and society, transdisciplinarity is understood as one way in which to bring together the resources of various disciplines to tackle these questions. In their introduction, Roderick Lawrence and Carole Després (2004:399) describe it as follows:

> Transdisciplinarity tackles complexity in science and it challenges knowledge fragmentation… It deals with research problems and organizations that are defined from complex and heterogeneous domains… Beyond complexity and heterogeneity, this mode of knowledge production is also characterised by its hybrid nature, non-linearity and reflexivity, transcending any academic disciplinary structure… Transdisciplinary research accepts local contexts and uncertainty; it is a context-specific negotiation of knowledge… Transdisciplinarity implies intercommunicative
action. Transdisciplinary knowledge is the result of intersubjectivity… It is a research process that includes the practical reasoning of individuals with the constraining and affording nature of social, organisational and material contexts… For this reason, transdisciplinary research and practice require close and continuous collaboration during all phases of a research project… [T]ransdisciplinary research is often action-oriented… entails making linkages not only across disciplinary boundaries but also between theoretical development and professional practice… Transdisciplinary contributions frequently deal with real-world topics and generate knowledge that not only address societal problems but also contribute to their solution… One of its aims is to understand the actual world… and to bridge the gap between knowledge derived from research and decision-making processes in society.

It is this fragmentation and complexity which Cyclic Functional Collaboration addresses. But rather than seeking common ground in the multiple frameworks of various disciplines, it seeks their common ground in the structure of questions and the answers they anticipate as they emerge from the subject as subject.

Part B explored each of the functional specialties separately; this part focuses on Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a whole. Section 8.1 outlines how the functional specialties relate to one another. Section 8.2 outlines how Cyclic Functional Collaboration can be understood as a scientific approach to housing. Section 8.3 discusses Cyclic Functional Collaboration as 'a framework for collaborative creativity'.

8.1 The relationship between the functional specialties

The starting point for Research is the events that have occurred or are occurring now, the events of everyday living. The function of Research is to ask the empirical question, time-place questions such as: how often has this occurred? How often is this occurrence associated with that occurrence? Who said what? Who felt what? In housing research, we are most interested in the expression of ourselves and of our sociality or inter-subjectivity through the construction of our social world. This inter-subjectivity, anything that pertains to the togetherness of human beings (Lonergan [1972]1990:359), is expressed through an ever changing manifold of external activities, internal activities, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, feelings, emotions, values, habits, expectations, motivations, skills, capacities, personal and social characteristics, material characteristics (of buildings, of habitats, of environments), languages, clothes, decorations, art, music, sounds, dance, performance, video, film, symbols, signs, customs etc. It is these expressions that become the data that is attended to by Research.

While Research attends to and gathers data, its orientation is towards making this data available to Interpretation. In Chapter 4, we noted that the higher value orders the
particularity of the lower value. Interpretation does this in two ways. First, it provides the heuristic which guides the work of Research. This heuristic is the most up-to-date theory. But unlike History which uses this theory as a heuristic or tool for understanding what is happening in a particular situation, in a particular time and place, the focus of Research is on questioning and testing the current theory. By being attentive to the data of everyday living they are alert to events not accounted for in the current theory, seeking out anomalies between the data and the theory. So, for instance, Research might discover data that suggests that one element in the theory does not belong here but belongs there, or does not sufficiently distinguish one aspect from another, or that the role of some higher value in ordering the particularity of a lower value is missing.

The view of Research as to what is anomalous between the current theory and the gathered data becomes most pointed in the way in which Research presents its data. A second way, then, in which Interpretation orders the particularity of Research is in the way data is presented to Interpretation. Research can make data available to Interpretation in any number of ways: as descriptions of events; as narratives; as a collation of quotes or as selected quotes from those interviewed; as selected audio or video recordings; as raw numbers or frequencies of answers to questionnaires; as tables containing numbers, frequencies, proportions, percentages, ratios, rates, regressions, standard deviations, maxima and minima etc; as different types of graphs (ranging from simple line, column, bar, pie, area, scattergram graphs to more complex ones); as different types of maps or three dimensional models etc.

In doing so, they are transforming one form of human expression into another. So, the materials of a population and their characteristics, the materials of the views, attitudes, feelings etc. of participants in interviews, the materials of a sequence of events, the materials of documents, recordings, performances, photos etc., all of which are expressions or products of human creativity, are gathered together in some way and transformed into another form of human expression, one which seeks to communicate some new and significant elements to Interpretation. This new form of expression becomes the materials upon which Interpretation operates. It can be provocative. It can be suggestive. Or, indeed, it can inhibit Interpretation. For example, “[i]t is easy enough to take the square root of 1764. It is another matter to take the square root of MDCCLXIV” (Lonergan [1957]1992:42; more generally Chapter 1).

In this way, Research has its specific function in the cyclical process of discovering new meanings in housing and creating new developments in housing.
Research focuses on the occurrence of events. But these are manifold and disparate. We are not satisfied with just gathering data. We want to understand it, understand its meaning and significance. The function of Interpretation, then, is to answer the theoretical question: what is housing? Interpretation faces the challenge of taking the anomalous data provided by Research and, in some way, incorporating it (by adjusting the current theory or by developing a new theory) and so seeking a better answer to this question, one which takes account of the anomalous data. This answer is an explanatory definition or theory which selects from the manifold of data what is relevant, significant and important to constituting housing, to its occurrence.

As a heuristic, a theory of housing developed in Interpretation plays a role in other functional specialties. By answering the question: what is housing?, it controls the scope of housing researchers’ inquiries, limiting this scope to the complete ordered set of sets of related variable elements that constitute housing and its particularities. The particularity of Interpretation is thus ordered by these other functional specialties. For instance, History requires a heuristic of housing that is universal, that can be used in any place and any time. It requires a heuristic that is global, that is not limited to any country, society or culture (or even to a number of countries, societies or cultures), whether in Europe, Asia, the Americas, Africa or the Pacific, whether current or in the recent past or in the remote past, and whatever the particularities of housing as they vary from country to country, from society to society and from culture to culture. It requires a heuristic that is transcultural. In addition, History requires an adequate heuristic, one which incorporates not just the set of related variable elements that constitute housing, but also a complete ordered set of sets of related variable elements that constitute the particularities of housing. History requires an omni-disciplinary heuristic, one which incorporates in a structured way the technological, economic, political and cultural aspects of housing. With such a heuristic, History can then identify sequences of actual operating housing systems.

We live not in a static world but an ever-changing dynamic world. Housing at one point in time is different than at another point in time. Our understanding of housing at one point in time is different from that at another point in time. Both housing and our understanding of it are continually changing. But what brings about such change? The function of History, then, is to answer the historical question: what is the vector that is changing housing? History takes as its data a theory of housing from Interpretation. This theory becomes a heuristic for identifying an actual operating housing system at different points in time. Theory provides us with a heuristic, a tool for understanding what is happening in any particular situation, in any particular time and place. While
this heuristic defines housing as an object of inquiry, the actual operative housing system will be particular to the situation and differ in time and in place. Thus, theory provides us with a set of questions for understanding what is happening. As Paul St Amour (2009:19), commenting on Lonergan’s theory of the economy, puts it:

Being able to think about the economy with the aid of such a theory complements tremendously the resources of common sense understanding, no matter how refined, prudential and morally informed those may be. It vastly broadens the horizon of discourse by making possible an array of questions which would not likely occur in the absence of the theoretic contribution.

These actual operative housing systems form a sequence, sometimes stable and changing slowly, sometimes unstable and changing rapidly, sometimes with only minor changes to one or other element of housing, sometimes with major changes in all elements. History seeks to grasp the vector within this sequence of actual operating housing systems, what it is that motivates the changes over time in the sequence of actual operating housing systems. The vector of change in housing can be any one or a combination of the values in which housing plays some role. It is these values which motivate the changes in the different elements of housing over time. Indeed, the vector of change becomes taken-for-granted within a society and, as a result, it changes slowly.

We are, however, not satisfied with simply grasping these vectors of change in housing. We also want to know whether they are worthwhile. The function of Dialectic, then, is to search out the best of the past. Dialectic asks the evaluative/critical question: what is the best of the past? It takes as its data the complex vectors of change grasped by History. These vectors are deeply embedded within the taken-for-granted everyday world of a particular culture. They operate not just within the field of housing but are vectors of change across many fields. The task of Dialectic is to evaluate this data, to work out whether the priority afforded the particularisation of this vector promotes the development of the whole of society or gives predominance to one or other value as a vector of development at the expense of other values within the whole, and so, ‘promotes’ the dominating power and self-aggrandisement of individuals and groups and their interests. The horizon within which Dialectic evaluates this vector of history is the horizon of the subject as subject. It is within this horizon that Dialectic grasps whether the particularisation of this value as a vector of development proceeds from the dynamic of the subject. The work of Dialectic results in an integral view of the current vector: an appreciation of what has been achieved through that vector; a critique of its limitations; and the location of the vector and its role within a larger whole.
Foundations thematises the subject as subject and so provides the grounds for evaluation. In this way, Foundations orders the particularity of Dialectic. As a result, the results of Dialectic are never definitive. The horizon of Dialectic is always on the move, seeking the best of the past. Foundations demands that Dialectic operates at ‘the level of our times’. So, it is no longer acceptable for housing researchers to operate within the horizon of everyday living; it is no longer acceptable for them to operate within some horizon of theory. By thematising the horizon of the subject as subject, Foundations provides a precise understanding of theory within the larger context of the process from understanding the current situation to implementing something new, it provides the grounds for ongoing development of the subject as subject, of technology, of economics, of politics and of culture.

Dialectic provides an evaluation of the complex vectors of the past, searching out the best of that past, the best that promotes development. It emerges with a discovery, a new sense of what promotes progress. It emerges with a new sense of priorities, a sense of changing directions and orientation. Dialectic does not altogether reject the previous vector of development. Rather, sensing its limitations, it locates this vector within a larger whole. It is within this sense that a new direction needs to be forged, one which requires a decision that will transform the future. It is a discovery which demands expression. Foundations seek to articulate the shift that this decision incorporates, a shift that will become the horizon for future development. For housing researchers, the discovery of Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing is one such discovery. It is within the horizon of Cyclic Functional Collaboration that housing researchers can progressively improve their capacity and skills to understand housing, offset the prejudices and biases of the dominant culture and provide practical advice to decision-makers.

So, a decision by housing researchers regarding Foundations provides the horizon for the ongoing development of housing. It provides the grounds for something new, a new direction. Policies articulate a new vector or new basis for future development. History grasped the vector of past change, and Dialectic evaluated whether this vector brought about ongoing development or whether it brought about stagnation and destruction. Many different vectors could be introduced, each of which is in the interests of a particular group. Policies, however, grasps that the implementation of a new vector will result in ongoing future development of the whole. It will promote housing within the totality of purposes it plays.

For this vector to be practical it must, however, operate within broader technological, economic, political and cultural contexts. Systematics considers how this new vector of
development can operate within the ecology of systems that constitute these contexts. Systematics is concerned with working out a strategic course of action among many possible ones through which this new vector could be implemented. It is not simply a matter of any course of action but the best course of action which integrates with and emerges from the possibilities inherent within the current context, the manifold of systems that constitute a society.

*Communications* takes this best possible course of action and works out the time-space details for implementing it. Communications provides practical advice to decision-makers, here and now, as to what new practices will realise this course of action: what changes in understanding will be required; what adaptations to current skills and what new skills individuals will need to develop for these new practices; and how institutions can be adapted to these new practices.

Communications provides practical advice to decision-makers. This advice may or may not be accepted. It may or may not be fully implemented. It may or may not be adequate to the task. Some new housing situation will emerge from what was implemented. This new situation provides the data for Research.

In this way, the functional specialties can not only be distinguished one from the other but they can be understood as inter-related: the results of one functional specialty become the data which the next functional specialty operates on. Each adds something to the results of the preceding functional specialty as we move forward from one housing situation to the next.

### 8.2 Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach

Cyclic Functional Collaboration envisages a scientific approach to housing. Science can be defined descriptively or it can be defined explanatorily. Cyclic Functional Collaboration envisages an explanatory definition of science, one founded in the subject as subject and the decision of the housing researcher to operate in accord with the dynamic of understanding.

**1) Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a theory of scientific method**

In my discussion of a theory of housing in Chapter 4, I concluded that theory is an answer to a what-is-it-question. The answer takes the form of a set of related variable elements. So, a theory of housing is the set of related variable elements that constitute housing. (Following Ball and Harloe’s structures of housing provision thesis, I have suggested that the constitutive elements are consumption, exchange and production.) Further, these variable elements are particularised by sets of higher values in which
housing plays a role: the lower value is a condition for the occurrence of the higher value, the higher values order the particularity of the lower values in order to achieve the higher value.

This thesis proposes that Cyclic Functional Collaboration is a scientific approach to housing. The question we have been seeking to answer throughout this thesis is: what is Cyclic Functional Collaboration? Rather than a descriptive definition of science in terms of its precision, objectivity and predictability (Lindberg 1992; Flyvbjerg 2001), it outlines an explanatory definition, a complete set of related variable elements that constitute Cyclic Functional Collaboration. These elements, as discussed in Part B, are the eight questions and their anticipated answers: an empirical question (Research), a theoretical question (Interpretation), a historical question (History), an evaluative/critical question (Dialectic), a transformative question (Foundations), a visionary/policy question (Policies), a strategic question (Systematics) and a practical question (Communications). The disparate genres of housing research (their methodological approaches) are the data to be understood. Throughout the thesis, I have been seeking an understanding of this data, an interpretation, a theory which distinguished what is the essential, relevant and significant in the data (the disparate genres of housing research) from what was not essential, irrelevant and insignificant. I noted how these genres ‘ran together’ different questions and that a more precise understanding of these methods would result in a paradigm shift in each. In Section 8.1 I sought to show how each of the functional specialties is related to one another; it is a relationship in which the data for each specialty depends upon the previous functional specialty and in which each functional specialty adds something to the process from what is currently happening (empirical data) to results (new practices). In this way we can understand Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a theory of science, as a complete ordered set of sets of related variable elements.

(2) Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a theory of Foundations

I began my discussion of the functional specialties with Research. But the real starting point for housing research is Foundations. As a housing researcher, I begin with who I am now – it is a beginning that brings with it my whole history – my skills, my values, my interests, my accumulated knowledge, my prejudices etc. It is a beginning that brings with it my understanding of who I am, who I have been and who I want to be; of what I have achieved and what I want to achieve.

As a subject, as a housing researcher I am poised in time between who am I am now and who I will be. Just as who am I now has slowly accumulated over time – the
learning of new skills, the accumulation of knowledge, the refinement of what I understand as worthwhile, decisions that have oriented my past development – so, too, new decisions will orient my future development, change what I regard as worthwhile, lead to new questions and the development of new skills. For a housing researcher, the functional specialties articulate the moment of poise between who I am now and who I will be. The first four functional specialties, Research, Interpretation, History and Dialectic, are concerned with understanding our past, with understanding what has already occurred, with what we have become and have inherited. Together they are asking: what can we learn from the past? However, they are not concerned with the past for its own sake. These research functional specialties operate in the context of looking to the future, in the context of the second four specialties. The implementation functional specialties (Foundations, Policies, Systematics and Communications) are concerned with doing, with creating something new. Together these functional specialties are asking: what can we do to create a better future? We do not create ourselves as housing researchers out of nothing. Rather, we create it out of the achievements of the past and the possibilities and the opportunities which this past throws up; we create it by envisioning a new future, orienting ourselves to that future and implementing it.

Further, in this poise in time between who I am (and who we are) and who I will be (and who we will be) as a housing researcher, I would also note the parallel structure between the first four and the second four functional specialties: both Research and Communications are concerned with expressions in time-space; both Interpretation and Systematics are concerned with systemic relationships; both History and Policies are concerned with the vectors of history; and both Dialectics and Foundations are concerned within the horizon within which we make our decisions. What distinguishes them is their time-orientation: the first four are concerned with those aspects as they have been in the past, and the second four are concerned with those aspects as they will be in the future.

Through understanding our past (and their various time-place expressions) we come to understand the structure of understanding and the structure of deciding and doing (by retrospectively considering them). However, such understanding is a reflection upon deciding and doing that has already occurred. The dynamics of the subject precede understanding, and it is in this dynamic forward movement of deciding and doing that the dynamics of the subject are revealed. So, it is because our deciding and doing of research (as looking forward to creating the future) has a certain structure that our understanding of the past has a parallel structure.
As a functional specialty, Foundations thematises these dynamics of the subject as subject. It is who I am and who I will be as a housing researcher. It finds expression in a theory of the subject, a basic nest of terms and relations, a dynamic structure of conscious operations – attending, inquiring, reflecting and deliberating. It is reached not by inquiring about the objects of these conscious operations but by heightening my consciousness of these operations as I attend to, inquire about, reflect on and deliberate about objects. The focus, then, is not on what I know, or what I believe or what I value or what I choose or what I do. Rather, the focus is on the dynamic processes whereby I come to know, believe, value, choose and do. This theory of the subject, like all theories, is not a once-off task but the result of ongoing attempts to grasp these dynamics more precisely. It is from Foundations that we can distinguish the different dynamics within the subject, the different manners in which they reach their goals, the different horizons of research (everyday living, theory and the subject as subject) and the different methods of science. It is Foundations that provides the ultimate criteria for evaluating the competency of my research. It is Foundations that grounds the different functional specialties, each with their particular question, anticipated answer to that question and method (Lonergan [1972]1990:285-288). I am self-luminous about the questions I ask, I distinguish different types of questions and the answers they anticipate, I distinguish the different types of methods through which I will find answers to these questions.

The starting point for housing research is a fundamental decision as to whether I will operate in accord with the dynamic of the desire to understand, the dynamic of the desire to create something worthwhile, the dynamic of sociality (or inter-subjectivity). As a result of this fundamental decision of the housing researcher, further decisions follow that express this scientific orientation. So, the functional specialty Policies formulates directions or guidelines which make demands on all housing researchers. It is an ongoing demand to be up-to-date. As Foundations develops it finds expression in new policies. So, now it is no longer acceptable for housing researchers to operate within the horizon of everyday living, because this horizon is oriented towards immediate solutions and does not distinguish between different types of questions and the answers they anticipate. If I am going to do housing research, Foundations finds expression in Policies such as: the best mode of understanding is theoretical understanding; reach for an integral understanding of housing rather than a specialised understanding that divides it up between disciplines (geography, technology, economics, politics, culture etc.) or activity areas (such as asset management, tenancy management, allocations and eligibility etc.); differentiate between different functions
from data to results; collaboration between housing researchers is far better than the ‘jack-of-all trades’ of yesteryear; know what you are doing; know that you can make some contribution to housing research; and know how it relates to the work of other housing researchers.

These Policies find expression in Systematics, in the methods that answer each question, in the relations between the methods and relation between each method and the whole, Cyclic Functional Collaboration.

Systematics finds expression in Communications in the actual division of labour, the formation of groups of housing researchers around questions and in the modes of communications between the functional specialties.

So, prior to any housing research are Foundations, Policies, Systematics and Communications that express how this research will be done and how it links with new policies and practices. This sets the scientific context for the research and whether it will proceed in one or more of the eight inter-related functional specialties.

8.3 Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a framework for collaborative creativity

Cyclic Functional Collaboration envisages not just a scientific approach to housing but one in which all housing researchers, wherever they are, collaborate in finding better housing solutions. It provides a ‘framework for collaborative creativity’ (Lonergan [1972]1990:xi).

As a researcher moves from data to results, from a past situation to bring about a new one, they work through a series of eight questions, each of which has some role or function in relation to the others and in relation to the process as a whole. A researcher can ask one of the questions in the series and seek to answer that question. They can develop a method by which to answer that question.

But significant research is never the result of the work of one housing researcher. It is more commonly the result of researchers working together. And even these researchers draw upon the work of others through literature reviews, conferences, institutions etc. The work of one housing researcher is part of a vast array of inter-linked and related activities involving many different researchers: “our actions are virtually always contributions to a wider communal or social project involving others. Action is seldom action in isolation. Most usually our acting is co-operating. Our initiatives are contributions to joint projects, tuned to fit in with the contributions of others, fashioned as links within wider chains of actions which bring societal projects from inception to implementation” (Melchin 1994:23).
The dynamic of the desire to understand is ordered by the dynamic of sociality. It is through the co-operation or collaboration of many researchers – each playing a particular role, each undertaking a set of activities – that the work of a single researcher can be vastly expanded and enhanced, tested and developed. As Adam Smith observes in the first chapter of his seminal book *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, a division of labour “in so far as it can be introduced, occasions, in every art, a proportionate increase in the productive power of labour” ([1776]2009:Book 1, Chapter 1, Locations 134-143).

We can envisage an individual researcher distinguishing the eight inter-related questions that constitute a scientific approach to housing. The productivity of housing research can be enhanced if a group of housing researchers distinguished these questions, with each specialising in one of the questions. The productivity can be enhanced even further if groups of housing researchers specialised in one of the questions and so made a contribution to the whole by passing on their results to the next group.

The collaboration envisaged by Cyclic Functional Collaboration is global in scope. It envisages all housing researchers operating within functional specialties, wherever they are. In this way, the work of all housing researchers can be related to one another. Cyclic Functional Collaboration envisages a division of labour where researchers operating on one question become adept at answering their particular question; they develop their methods and ways of working. There results a specialisation based upon this series of eight questions in the process from data to results (rather than the current form of specialisation based on a division of the data or a division of the results).\(^1\)

Section 8.1 outlined the relations between the elements of Cyclic Functional Collaboration. Each has a role or purpose or function in relation to other elements and to Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a whole. As ‘functional’, this collaboration defines one person’s work according to its role within a greater whole – the movement from data to results. Collaboration, therefore, does not depend upon personal or social relationships but rather upon how one type of work relates to another type of work. It is oriented to praxis. It links research, policy and implementation. It links theory and practice and cycles through them to produce ongoing results.

This functional division of labour has its conditions: it requires that, within themselves, researchers distinguish clearly between the functions; it requires a judgement on the part of researchers that this is a better way of dividing up the work; it requires sets of

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skills; it requires mutual dependence; it requires modes of communication. It is through collaboration that researchers can draw upon the work of one another and then build upon that. It is through collaboration that we can both confront the limitations (the prejudices and biases that support dominant cultures) and appreciate the strengths of our own society and culture. It is through such collaboration that scientific understanding can advance.

### 8.4 Summary and concluding remarks

This chapter proposes a particular solution to the ‘fragmentation’ that characterises science and society. This solution has its grounds in the subject as subject. The subject is a whole with many dynamic parts. The parts are related to each other and to the whole. It is a dynamic structure, self-assembling and self-constituting, where “[e]ach part is what it is in virtue of its functional relations to other parts, there is no part that is not determined by the exigences of other parts; and the whole possesses a certain inevitability in its unity, so that the removal of any part would destroy the whole, and the addition of any further part would be ludicrous” (Lonergan 1967:222).

Previous chapters in Part B sought a more precise understanding of each of the parts, the functional specialties, and how each involves a decisive shift in a genre of research and implementation. This chapter has focused on the whole, Cyclic Functional Collaboration. It is a transdisciplinary, transcultural solution to the emerging problems in science. Rather than seeking common ground in the multiple frameworks of various disciplines, Cyclic Functional Collaboration seeks their common ground in the questions that emerge spontaneously from the subject as subject. An investigation of the subject as subject reveals a complete set of inter-related questions and their anticipated answers. This set of inter-related questions addresses the complex issues raised by Lawrence and Després. To repeat parts of the quote from them at the beginning of this chapter: it accepts ‘local contexts and uncertainty’; it deals ‘with real-world topics’ and generates ‘knowledge that not only address societal problems but also contribute to their solution’; and it bridges ‘the gap between knowledge derived from research and decision-making processes in society’.

Cyclic Functional Collaboration addresses the problem of fragmentation and complexity posed at the beginning of this chapter. It differentiates tasks within the process of research and relates them to one another and to a whole, the development of housing within the context of the development of the subject as subject and the development of a culture and a society. The ‘subtle and difficult’ problem referred to by Bohm is grasping the dynamic of the subject, the principles of the human spirit in act, principles
which are generative, constitutive, and normative. It is from the dynamic of the desire to understand that a complete set of functionally inter-related questions emerge. It is from the dynamic of the desire to create something worthwhile that these questions become cyclic, seeking ‘cumulative and progressive results’. It is from the dynamic of sociality that a ‘framework for collaborative creativity’ can emerge as the best way in which to order these functionally inter-related questions and the desire for progress. It is upon these grounds that we can hope for a scientific approach to housing that is oriented to ongoing progress.
Chapter 9. Conclusion

As the labor of introspection proceeds, one stumbles on Hegel’s insight that the full objectification of the human spirit is the history of the human race. It is in the sum of the products of common sense and common nonsense, of the sciences and the philosophies, of moralities and religions, of social orders and cultural achievements, that there is mediated, set before us in a mirror in which we can behold, the originating principle of human aspiration and human attainment and failure. Still, if that vast panorama is to be explored methodologically, there is the prior need of method: if method is not to be a mere technique arrived at by trial and error, we must first know its grounds; and its grounds reside not in words or statements, not in concepts or judgements, not in experiences or acts of understanding, but in the principles, at once generative, constitutive, and normative of the human spirit in act...

- Bernard Lonergan
  (1965 (unpublished):14)
How can we create a housing system worth inheriting? How can we pass on to future generations a housing system which not only meets the minimal needs of households for shelter but one in which, in the words of Peter King (2008), we can ‘dwell’: where there is ‘privacy and security’, where there is ‘the possibility of intimacy’, where ‘intimacy can be protected’, where ‘we can be complacent – take what we are and what we have for granted – where we can ‘exercise some control’ and make choices, where we can express our self and where we share ‘a common interest based on the shared experience of housing itself’.

It is this question that permeates this thesis as it considers the role of housing research in the development of housing. It is this question which confronts authentic and conscientious decision-makers as they seek to grasp the possibilities of bringing about something new in history.

At the heart of research, whether in relation to technology, to the economy, to social or political institutions, to culture, there is an aspiration to transform the world in which we live, to make our world better, to improve our standard of living, to improve the quality of our lives. Within this aspiration lies the hope of a better future. But for this aspiration to flower it needs nurturing. In the disillusioned academic, in the mind-numbing routines of bureaucracies, in the failures of hopes and dreams, it can be destroyed and nullified. In the self-aggrandisement of individuals and groups, it can be perverted and narrowed. In lack of understanding and lack of strategy, it can be naively optimistic.

Most housing research in Australia is directed towards something better than the current situation. It may be directed at a small improvement in our understanding, a small improvement in one aspect of housing. It may envisage much grander transformations. It is this aspiration for something better that Jones and Seelig (2004) point to in their discussion of champions and reformers for improving research-policy linkages.

In the aspiration to transform housing, Chapter 1, through a reflection on the development of social housing, identified two sets of problems. The first set regards practical advice to decision-makers within the complexity of the totality of past and present events, processes and practices that make housing what it is today. This totality is continually changing, continually calling for decisions that meet the demands of the current situation. Moreover, decision-makers are faced with a disparate array of housing research. It operates across many disciplines. It is characterised by different epistemological and ontological approaches and a broad range of methods. Its purposes range from theoretical to strategic to practical. Each researcher presents a different perspective, has something significant to say and would hope to have some
impact on housing outcomes. Housing research is very fragmented. Housing researchers have very little sense of how different types of research relate to one another. Housing research has largely failed to provide practical and relevant advice to decision-makers considering the future. The second set of problems regards the limitations of the personal and communal horizon of both housing researchers and decision-makers. It is a horizon which is dominated by everyday immediate concerns. Whether deliberately or unconsciously, housing research and decisions about the future of housing are apt to support the interests and self-aggrandisement of dominant groups. As a result, the development of housing is skewed, narrowed and resisted. The aspirations and hopes of individuals and groups for something better remain unrealised.

As the thesis has developed, however, not two sets but eight sets of problems have been identified. They regard empirical evidence, the significance of housing, the vectors of history, evaluation/critique of both decision-makers and housing researchers, the foundations for moving forward, envisaging new directions, strategising these new directions and working out changes in practices.

If we are to move forward we need to address each set of problems. If we are to understand ‘the vast panorama’ of past housing events, processes and practices and look to the future, ‘there is the prior need of method’ (see the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter). If we are to find solutions to our pressing housing problems, we need a framework which will address each set of problems, hold the diversity of housing methods together and provide practical advice to decision-makers. The development of such an integrating framework is not easy, as Ortega y Gasset ([1946]1998:72) notes in his *Mission of the University*:

> The need to create sound syntheses and systematizations of knowledge, to be taught in the “Faculty of Culture”, will call out a kind of scientific genius which hitherto has existed only as an aberration: the genius for integration. Of necessity this means specialization, as all creative effort inevitably does; but this time, the man will be specialized in the construction of the whole.

One way of dealing with this set of problems is by dividing up the data. Another is to divide up the results according to disciplines. While both these divisions of labour or specialisations allow researchers to deal with limited areas of housing, they have two limitations. First, these specialisations selectively deal with only some aspect of housing, and so, they break up the unity of housing. Second, it is unclear how the work of one researcher dealing with one aspect relates to the work of another.

In the mid-1960s Bernard Lonergan proposed a third form of specialisation that I have called Cyclic Functional Collaboration. This divides up the work according to stages or
functions within the whole process from data to results. With this form of specialisation, researchers deal with housing as a totality, maintain the integrity of the data (deal with it as a whole), develop a more comprehensive or complete theory of housing (one which encompasses all the disciplines), grasp the dynamic operative within the history of housing as a whole, locate housing as whole within the broader context of a society, propose and implement policies that meet not only the demands of one area but rather housing as whole. The whole process from data to results is divided into distinct functions so that the work of one researcher is related to the work of others, with each drawing upon the work of researchers in one function and contributing to the work of those in another.

This thesis has sought to come to some understanding of this form of specialisation as a scientific approach to housing. The starting point for Cyclic Functional Collaboration is an already operating housing system, a system which we seek to improve, transform or, indeed, go beyond. The goal of Cyclic Functional Collaboration is to meet the sets of complex emerging problems head-on by expanding our understanding of these social constructions, bringing them under some control, and to increase the possibilities of transforming them for the better. By dividing up the process of housing research, we can discern a complete set of inter-related questions, each of which addresses one of the sets of problems. So, Cyclic Functional Collaboration begins with Research which asks the empirical question: what events, processes and practices are actually occurring? It ends in Communications which asks the practical question: what concrete practical proposals will transform housing?

The key challenge I faced, the one which is at the heart of Cyclic Functional Collaboration, is the 'subtle and difficult' (Bohm 2002:22) terrain of the subject as subject, a terrain which requires the long slow process of self-awareness, self-understanding, self-affirmation and self-appropriation of the operative dynamics of the subject as subject: the desire to understand, the desire to create something worthwhile, the desire for sociality (for relationships, for co-operation and for solidarity) and the desire to love and to be loved. It is the dynamic of the desire to understand which grounds the set of eight questions that constitute Cyclic Functional Collaboration, their functional relationships, their anticipated answers and their respective methods. It is the dynamic of the desire to create something worthwhile that makes these questions cyclic. It is the dynamic of the desire for sociality that shifts these cyclic inter-related questions from individual operations to a framework for collaborative creativity among all researchers.
The discussion of research on Australian social housing (at the beginning of each chapter in Part B) highlighted different genres of housing research. Each has a general orientation around a particular question though this remains undefined. Moreover, authors do not consistently operate within one orientation but continually shift orientation. These shifts point to the largely common-sense horizon of most housing research. It also revealed the extent of the problem I faced in presenting Cyclic Functional Collaboration. Housing researchers are socialised and acculturated within some culture before they become researchers. They learn the skills necessary for living: how to deal with any situation that arises; what is important and what is not; that some things are more important than others. In doing so, they learn what interests others and how to use those interests, they learn how to exert their power and influence etc. Housing researchers are formed by the same or by a similar culture that values and produces housing. As they move into research, they not only learn the skills for their particular profession, they also bring the skills, the values, the beliefs, the interests, the prejudices and biases of the culture in which they are immersed.

As different cultures express different values, beliefs, interests, prejudices and biases, so too do researchers understand housing differently and propose to transform it in different ways. Were it simply a matter of understanding housing, making proposals for its transformation and writing about it – simply a dialogue among professionals – such differences would be of little moment except to the protagonists. But more is at stake, for different understandings and different proposals have their differing results in housing practices, and these practices may be disastrous for some people while being beneficial to others, may destroy some lives while enhancing others. So not only do questions emerge about the totality of housing, they also emerge about researchers themselves, about how their skills, their values, their beliefs, their interests, their prejudices and their biases distort their understanding of housing and their proposals for its transformation. Some researchers can deliberately make choices that promote themselves in the eyes of others or promote a particular group or viewpoint etc. Such deliberate partisanship may be recognised as such, sometimes easily, sometimes with difficulty. Much more difficult to recognise are the skills, the values, the beliefs, the interests, the prejudices and the biases that are at the heart of a particular society and culture, that are fundamental to the way it operates. Indeed, they are assumed and supported by that society and culture. Theories emerge that support particular world-views.

The task that emerged through the thesis was to distinguish between different types of questions and their anticipated answers. As my starting point I undertook a
phenomenology of research in which I appealed to the experience of researchers. It is through this experience that a researcher begins not only to distinguish between different types of questions but also to order those questions. It is this that distinguishes the procedures of common sense or everyday living from science. Where in common-sense or everyday living we ask all sorts of questions in many different ways, in science we need to be much more precise about our questions and about the ordering of our questions.

A phenomenology of research asks the researcher to heighten their experience of doing research. It asks them: What are you doing when you are doing research? What is intended or achieved by each of these activities? How do the various activities relate together? What do combinations of these activities intend? In doing this, we have shifted away from one particular understanding of science as somehow independent of the mind of the researcher and squarely pointed to the researcher as the source of science. It is within the researcher and their understanding of what they are doing when doing research that many of the problems of science emerge:

One way of leading the scientist, or the common-sense person, to some appreciation of the existence and nature of this science of methodology is to indicate the various problems of method that are present in contemporary culture. The difficulty of such indications, however, is that they can be appreciated only by the person engaged in the relevant field. Thus, there are basic methodological problems in contemporary physics, particularly in quantum mechanics and relativity, but for any reader who is not actually engaged in these fields the existence of such problems will be a matter of belief… One may say that a problem of method is a problem of know-how or know-what-we’re-doing. Putting the problem this way helps to throw the stress where it should be: on the person doing the science and not on the science conceived of in some strange way as independent of mind. Now from this angle the problem in quantum theory would be expressed as “What-are-we-at in doing quantum mechanics?” (McShane 1974:4)

Or, ‘what-are-we-at’ in researching or theorising or understanding history or evaluating or creating housing? It is this phenomenology of research that grounds the distinctions between different types of questions and their ordering: before we answer what-to-do-questions, we need to answer is-it-worthwhile-questions; before we answer is-it-worthwhile-questions, we need to answer what-is-going-forward-questions; before we answer what-is-going-forward-questions, we need to answer a what-question. It is only insofar as a researcher has come to appropriate what they are doing when they are doing research that they will be able to distinguish these questions. Moreover, they will be able to identify the sequence of questions and their respective operations whereby they go from not understanding something to an expression of some new understanding; they will recognise that their understanding depends upon the
competence with which they perform certain activities; they will be able to identify the process whereby their understanding develops, their personality develops and their living develops; they will be able to grasp how to make progress as a researcher.

Cyclic Functional Collaboration seeks to meet the set of problems that confront housing research by dividing up the work according to differing questions and methods for answering them. It is these different types of questions that ground the distinctions between the functional specialties, their relationship to one another and the operations that constitute each of the functional specialties. Without understanding this, Cyclic Functional Collaboration is but a series of arbitrary though useful stages in a process.

At the outset of the thesis I proposed that Cyclic Functional Collaboration was a scientific approach to housing, that it was constituted by a complete set of eight inter-related questions. To envisage it as such a set required a re-orientation of the methods that characterise housing research. This re-orientation sought to select those elements of each method that were essential, significant and relevant to the method and thus constituted the method. At the same time, this re-orientation set aside associated unessential, insignificant and irrelevant elements. In this way, I came to characterise each of the methods as a paradigm shift. So:

- **Research** proposes a shift in current housing research from answering any type of question raised, to answering an empirical question: what events are occurring and to what extent are these events associated? It answers this question with a view to providing data or evidence for Interpretation to answer the theoretical question: what is housing? The empirical question anticipates the occurrence of events in time and place. It anticipates a frequency, participant descriptions of feelings, beliefs, attitudes etc., descriptions of sequences of events and the association of the occurrence of events or properties or characteristics.

- **Interpretation** proposes a shift in the way housing is defined from descriptive definitions to answering a theoretical question: what is housing? The answer is an explanatory definition, an ordered set of sets of related variable elements that constitutes housing. This explanatory definition distinguishes between those elements which are essential, significant and relevant to the constitution of housing and those which are unessential, insignificant and irrelevant to the constitution of housing. Housing is used for differing purposes by different groups. It is these roles or functions which are associated with housing and
which order the particularity of set of related variable elements that constitute housing.

- **History** proposes a shift in history from documenting and recounting a series of events in some remote or near past to answering a historical question: what is the vector that provokes ongoing change in housing? Within History, a theory of housing is a heuristic for grasping an actual operating housing system as a complete ordered set of sets of related variable elements that constitute housing. The role of this heuristic is to identify sequences of actual operating housing systems. The function of History is to identify the complex operative dynamic or vector that changes one actual operating housing system into another.

- **Dialectic** proposes a shift in evaluation from simply pointing to the limitations of some state of affairs (whether that be an existing policy, program or project, or the exercise of dominating power by individuals and groups acting in their own interest as they aggrandize themselves by alienating others) to answering an evaluative/critical question: what is the best of the past? Dialectic evaluates the vectors of the history of housing by understanding how this history came about, appreciating what was achieved and critiquing its limitations within the horizon of the subject as subject (and the dynamics of the subject).

- **Foundations** proposes a shift in the foundations of research from a horizon based on arbitrary axioms, self-evident truths or first principles to answering the transformative question: who will I be (as a housing researcher)? Foundations locates the foundations of research in the transformative decision of the researcher to operate in accord with the dynamics of the subject as subject, in particular, in the dynamics of the desire to understand. Foundations thematises the subject as subject and this transformative decision.

- **Policies** proposes a shift from a focus on government or organisational policy – policies whose range is limited to one or other purpose which serve the interests of that government or organisation – to answering the visionary/policy question: what vector or direction will best promote the future development of housing as whole? The answer to this question is a new direction which incorporates the totality of housing purposes rather than one or other purpose which continues the self-aggrandisement of individuals and groups.
• **Systematics** proposes a shift *from* a focus on how a government or an organisation will use housing to achieve its particular purposes in the context of other competing purposes *to* answering the strategic question: what course of action will integrate a new vector or direction within the complex series of contexts that constitute an actual operative housing system? The answer to this question will integrate a new housing policy direction within its technological, economic, social, political and cultural contexts.

• **Communications** proposes a shift *from* implementation as a top-down command process *to* asking the practical question: what practices/activities in this time and place will achieve a strategic course of action which will realise a new actual operative housing system? The answer to this question will identify particular activities/practices which will be institutionalised into the roles and practices of individuals and groups.

Cyclic Functional Collaboration gives a more precise meaning to the range of questions we need to ask and seek answers to before we can project our way forward. Indeed, it is a complete set of inter-related questions that constitute 'cumulative and progressive results'. It envisages an integration of the methods that constitute science: empirical, theoretical, historical, evaluative/critical, transformative, visionary/policy, strategic and practical.

Cyclic Functional Collaboration is global in scope. Each of the functional specialties can be undertaken by anyone anywhere: researchers can take the results of a prior functional specialty as a starting point, wherever it occurred, and pass on the results of their work to another functional specialty. Cyclic Functional Collaboration draws on the resources and experiences of all societies and cultures to find solutions to local problems. It reaches back into history to grasp the beginnings of new vectors of change. It respects the achievements of all societies and cultures (while it may also recognise their (even severe) limitations) and draws on this experience. Through the forward functional specialties, it reaches forward to transformations within each particular society and culture (in all their differences) through the enlightened co-operation of its people.

It takes some work to grasp what each of the functional specialties is about. And this is not simply the work of grasping the idea but rather of grasping the significance of Cyclic Functional Collaboration in the process of doing empirical work. So, this thesis has taken as a case study social housing and, in particular, social housing rent. For it is only through such ongoing empirical work that something of the significance of Cyclic
Functional Collaboration can be grasped. Flyvbjerg (2001:145) says of phronesis that “[t]he promise of this methodology is better understood through examining cases of its employment in their entirety, or, even better, by employing the methodology oneself in an actual study”. Something similar may be said of Cyclic Functional Collaboration. Until attempts are made to implement it, its promises remain unknown and its potential remains unfulfilled.

We live in a society where the study of housing is dominated by common-sense everyday thinking with its demand for immediate practical solutions (particularly those that can be initiated by governments) and where the division of labour and specialisation based on disciplines and on data areas is thoroughly embedded in the culture of academia. Housing research is beginning to recognise some of the problems with current research. Within the current environment, however, the implementation of Cyclic Functional Collaboration will not be easy. The thesis proposes a new beginning for housing research but the implementation of Cyclic Functional Collaboration is still a long way off. Before it can be implemented, Cyclic Functional Collaboration has to be considered worthwhile (something better than what we have now). Before it is considered worthwhile, it has to be understood. Before it can be understood, researchers have to recognise the problems with current housing research. It will require ‘fantasy and lateral thinking’ in which we have to imagine the academy of the future, a successful collaborative culture, the restructuring of research organisations such as universities. Cyclic Functional Collaboration proposes a new division of labour which involves a different way of thinking, a different way of relating to other researchers and decision-makers, a different way of organising the products of research (libraries, databases and journals), a different way of organising the academy, conferences, institutes etc., different styles of communication etc. Rather than being structured around disciplines and data areas, housing researchers would be structured around the functional specialties, “all structured by the common achieved or to-be-achieved meaning of its members” (Braio 2000:57). The internal dialogues between the functional specialties will be “remote from commonsense discourse. Yet it will be publicly engaging and effective in its images, its symbols and the affective, intersubjective responses they call forth. On the other hand, its initial remoteness from public discourse is, of course, one of the difficult and perhaps unacceptable challenges of the future... Still, the functionally specialized withdrawal from undifferentiated consciousness is not extrinsic to such a community’s effort. Rather, it is required if the return through the eighth functional specialty, communications, seriously is to shift and transform the cultures of the globe” (Braio 2000:57-58).
This thesis is a beginning. It simply asks current housing researchers to differentiate between the different types of questions they ask. The implementation of Cyclic Functional Collaboration is a vast enterprise. The thesis looks forward to a time when the reciprocal dependence of the functional specialties that constitute Cyclic Functional Collaboration are understood and appreciated. As the epigraph to this thesis notes: “Not only is that understanding required; one has to be familiar with what is called the acquis, what has been settled, what no one has any doubt about at the present time” (Lonergan [1968]2010:462). The challenge now is for housing researchers to grasp the dynamics of the subject as subject as the grounds for Cyclic Functional Collaboration as a scientific approach to housing, a scientific approach which could provide housing researchers with a framework for collaborative creativity that will relate and integrate disparate types of current research and will present decision-makers with practical advice on future directions for housing. Then, we can confront the problems that beset housing and look forward not just to random ad hoc development but rather to consistent, ongoing and cumulative development in housing.
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Appendix A: The Emergence of Cyclic Functional Collaboration

(1) *Theory of Literature* by Rene Wellek and Austin Warren

In their preface to the first edition of *Theory of Literature*, Rene Wellek and Austin Warren (1963:8) note how it differs from previous books on literature and describe it as follows:

> We have judged it of central use to ourselves and others to be international in our scholarship, to ask the right questions, to provide an *organon* of method.

In this ‘organon of method’, they are primarily concerned with understanding the past. In relation to functional specialties, what is significant about their book is not so much its content, but the way in which the headings of chapters (and some of the discussion) point to and seek to distinguish different types of work within literature studies.

Chapter 1 distinguishes between literature as a creative art and literary study as a species of knowledge. Wellek and Warren regard these as two distinct activities (p.15), thus, distinguishing between the world of common sense (literature as a creative art) and the world of science (literary study).

Chapter 6 discusses issues in relation to ‘the ordering and establishing of evidence’, what I refer to as Research: “One of the first tasks of scholarship is the assembly of its materials, the careful undoing of the effects of time, the examination as to authorship, authenticity, and date” (p.57). Or again: “Among these preliminary labours one has to distinguish two levels of operations: (1) the assembling and preparing of a text; and (2) the problems of chronology, authenticity, authorship, collaboration, revision…”.

Chapter 2 begins with some questions about the subject matter of literary scholarship: “What is literature? What is not literature? What is the nature of literature?” (p.20). This is a question of Interpretation, a question which requires answering before any particular piece of literary scholarship is interpreted.

Chapter 4 distinguishes theory, criticism and history: “Within our ‘proper study’, the distinctions between literary theory, criticism, and history are clearly the most important. There is, first, the distinction between a view of literature as a simultaneous order and a view of literature which sees it primarily as a series of works arranged in a chronological order and as integral parts of the historical process… Of course, ‘literary criticism’ is frequently used in such a way as to include all literary theory; but such usage ignores a useful distinction. Aristotle was a theorist; Sainte-Beuve, primarily a critic. Kenneth Burke is largely a literary theorist, while RP Blackmur is a literary critic” (p.39).¹

Wellek and Warren then go on to describe these distinctions between theory, history and criticism as “fairly obvious and rather widely accepted”. They continue: “less common is the realization that the methods so designated cannot be used in isolation, that they implicate each other so thoroughly as to make inconceivable literary theory

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without criticism or history, or criticism without theory and history, or history without theory and criticism”.

Wellek and Warren are seeking to bring some order to literary studies by distinguishing between ‘ordering and establishing evidence’, theory, criticism and history. This parallels the first four functional specialties of Cyclic Functional Collaboration: Research, Interpretation, History and Dialectic.

(2) Arne Næss on implementing deep ecology

Arne Næss (1912-2009) was one of Norway’s most eminent philosophers and founder of the ‘deep ecology’ movement. As part of a special double issue of the Ecologist devoted to “Rethinking Man and Nature: Towards an Ecological Worldview”, Næss (1988) discussed the ultimate premises of deep ecology.

Næss was interested in keeping together a movement which was concerned about a new future relationship between humanity and nature. His orientation was moving forward, looking to the future rather than understanding the past.

In this article, then, Næss argued for a broad platform for the deep ecology movement that would draw together supporters from disparate backgrounds – different religions and philosophies. In conjunction with George Sessions, he formulated an eight point platform for the deep ecology movement (p.130). He then proceeded to relate the eight points to (i) higher level or ultimate premises by asking “from which premises, if any, are the points derived?” and (ii) lower level views “which have one or more of the eight points as part of their set of premises” (pp.130-131) and also lower level practical decisions. A practical decision is “derived in part from details of a particular situation” and so “will always involve premises in addition to those of the upper levels” (p.131).

Næss argued that there may be “other and better proposals for a platform, but I expect that a distinction between the 4 levels will be of importance.” He goes on: “[e]ven moderately integrated people have reasons for their views – or, at least, they indirectly pretend to have reasons. What is unfamiliar, perhaps, is the relation between more philosophical or general views and the concrete, and also the demand for clear articulation of that relationship”.

He concluded the article by expressing the hope that it “shows how Deep Ecology views can manifest both plurality and unity”.

Arne Næss sought to bring some order into the implementation of a new relationship between humanity and nature. He identified four levels in the process from ultimate premises to practical decisions, but tended to envisage the movement from ultimate premises to practical decision as a logical process (though he did acknowledge “premises in addition to those of the upper levels” (p.131). This parallels the four implementation functional specialties of Cyclic Functional Collaboration: Foundations, Policies, Systematics and Communications.

(3) Alexandra Gillis-Drage on the third wave of feminism

Alexandra Gillis-Drage (Drage 2005; Gillis-Drage 2010) examined sixteen feminist journals² as well as another dozen journals that regularly include feminist content. As she was doing so, she was asking, as other feminists have done particularly in the third wave of feminism (Grosz 2000; Baumgardner & Richards 2003),³ “the number one

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3. See also other articles in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, Special Issue: “Feminisms at a Millennium”, Summer 2000.
question about feminism… feminism’s *raison d’etre*, its purpose, its reason for being* (Gillis-Drage 2010:7) or, to put it another way, “What can you and I do together, communally, to better understand and implement feminism’s future?” (Gillis-Drage 2010:7-8).

She notes the ferment within feminism as it seeks to come to terms with the shift from political action to reflective discourse (particularly within the academy) and also notes a distinct change in the second wave of feminism:

Where the first wave was a concentrated practical effort toward political change (especially toward attaining ‘the vote’), the second wave, though continuing the activist position, introduced the necessity of a new dimension in feminism: *reflection* on women, by women, to be expressed and communicated through books and newly established journals, and through the establishment of academic departments devoted to women’s studies. (Gillis-Drage 2010:10)

Gillis-Drage identifies this change as a shift in method as feminists seek their particular goal of progress for women. While this goal is common to all feminisms, there are particular differences as “different groups, races, cultures, ages, nationalities, religious beliefs, personal experiences, etc., of women around the world usher in differing sets of concerns and concrete circumstances” (Gillis-Drage 2010:11). She notes Barbara Smith’s widely inclusive definition, dating from the 1970s: “feminism is the political theory and practise to free all women: women of color, working-class women, poor women, physically challenged women, lesbians, old women, as well as white economically privileged heterosexual women. Anything less than this is not feminism, but mere female aggrandizement” (Gillis-Drage 2010:fn 16).

Gillis-Drage identifies the key problem as follows:

Feminism’s goal of progress for women is, by its very nature, both practical and theoretical. On the practical side, feminism’s concern is for women’s lives in their concrete functioning; for human living in all its concrete conditions, economic, ecological, cultural, religious, educational, political, and so on; and for effective practical change to those conditions. But in any situation, in any society, before practical change can occur, there is invariably the need for reflection. Preceding practical action, there is a need to understand the full situation: *What has gone on in the past? What is the present state of women’s living? What needs to change in the future? How does it need to change?* In other words, this general activity of understanding is a prior condition for practical change. (Gillis-Drage 2010:12)

What is missing is some unifying scheme which would ‘hold together’ the diversity of particular feminisms that were represented both in the journals and in political activities. It is at this point that she introduces Cyclic Functional Collaboration or, as she called it in her book, *Thinking Woman* (Drage 2005), “the Great Circle of Feminism”. She puts it forward as a way of resolving “questions about a growing opposition between theory and praxis” (p.153). She briefly indicates how the work of feminism could be divided up into those tasks which seek to “make sense of the past” (History, Interpretation and Research), those which seek to “make sense of the future” (Policies, Systematics and Communications), the task of making sense of the many differing positions on progress (Dialectic) and the task of making sense of the whole cycle of moving back into the past and forward into the future (Foundations) (Gillis-Drage 2010:14-17).


Gillis-Drage describes ‘the Great Circle of Feminism’ as “a functional, practical way – that can be globally implemented – to think theoretically about and to provide concretely for the needs of local individuals and groups” (Drage 2005:153). She concludes *Thinking Woman* as follows:

In examining feminism, we have found that there is an exceptional cultural diversity to be taken into account, along with a demand for concrete thinking that will meet that diversity. The diversity that exists in feminism is indeed a problem-in-need-of-a-solution. But amidst this diversity there is to be discovered the deeper and more profound thinking, the questing, searching Women who are striving to bring about progress for themselves and the human group. The discovery of this heuristic openness, then, is radically a discovery of method – our way of going forward in the feminist enterprise. (p.154)

(4) *Shaping the Future of Language Studies* by John Benton

In *Shaping the Future of Language Studies*, John Benton (2008) presents a methodological challenge to students and professionals struggling with the problem of linguistic universals and with the problem of integrating the broad field of language studies. He picks up the methodological effort of the Greenberg school of linguistics and looks forward to a methodological restructuring of language studies (p.1).

His starting point is the need for self attention among linguists, “a serious self-attentive puzzling over the symbol ‘?’” (pp.2, 78), through which is discovered the ‘core invariant patterns of quest’ that bubble up spontaneously in language users and ground language universals. These ‘core-attitudes’ (what-attitudes, why-attitudes, is-attitudes, what-to-do-attitudes and is-to-do-attitudes) “are elemental to the language user’s self knowledge” (p.22). Using examples from English literature (Shakespeare, Joyce and Donne), *The Bhagavad-Gita* from Vedic literature and the story of Helen Keller, he unfolds a ‘precise phenomenology of human consciousness’, empirically verifies these ‘core-attitudes’ as the grounds for and expression in language universals. He then proceeds to show how these language universals ‘ground generic linguistic performance’ across different branches of the linguistic tree: Indo-European (Ancient Sanskrit and Modern Hindi) (Chapter 5); Semitic (Arabic), African (Swahili), Asian (Cantonese), Nordic (Swedish) and Teutonic (German) (Chapter 6).

Benton identifies two root causes for the failure of contemporary linguistics to appreciate the significance of these ‘core-attitudes’ in reaching adequate explanations of language universals and linguistic performance, viz. conceptualism and common-sense eclecticism. In Chapter 7, he critically evaluates the work of some prominent linguists, noting ‘the culture of extra-scientific opinion’.7

In the final chapters he “introduces the essential features of the two principles necessary for successful restructuring in language studies: first, a focal shift in grammatology and secondly, a functional relating of sub-fields of language” (p.99). The first principle, generalized empirical method, “is the procedure of critical thinking that occurs when we are luminous, clear, about what we are doing when we are thinking” (p.100). This focal shift exposes “a regrettable and systematic oversight in the writing of a group of very influential thinkers who have sought to achieve progress in the search for language universals” (pp.4, 80). The second principle, functional specialisation, is a ‘way of organizing the entire enterprise of language studies’ (p.104).

After a brief outline of the eight functions that constitute functional specialisation as a methodological restructuring of language studies, Benton goes on to do a “focused survey of ten major journals representing the spectrum of scholarship in the field of

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7. He has in mind Ray Jackendoff, Noam Chomsky, Steven Pinker, Jerry Fodor, Bernard Comrie, Jacques Derrida and John A. Hawkes (fn 9, p.6)
language studies" (p.114), noting the diversity and fragmentation of work within the journals:8 “For all the richness and diversity of data within the medium, the stakeholders lack a practical mandate grounded by a strategy committed to addressing the need for an efficient globally collective procedure within which to structure that richness and diversity in a manner that would yield cumulative and progressive results” (p.117).

Benton then undertakes some exercises in methodological heuristics. Beginning with the June 2001 issue of the *Cambridge Quarterly*, he illustrates how “there emerge the ‘shadows’ of a number of functional specialties, randomly placed, not only within the journal listings, but also within various parts of the articles themselves” (p.119). In a second exercise, he carefully analyses three paragraphs from one article, ‘Englands of the Mind’ by David Gervais (2001), and shows the methodological shifting even within paragraphs. A third and fourth exercise analyse Wellek and Warren’s *Theory of Literature*9 (1963) and the Greenberg School as outlined in *Universals of Human Language* (Greenberg 1978). He shows how both literary studies and linguistic studies anticipate functional specialisation: “even though a principle of integration is absent, there is a spontaneous struggle for a structure of reflection that vaguely anticipates a principle of integration” (Benton 2008:4).

Benton concludes with some reflections on how generalised empirical method and functional specialisation would transform ‘the future possibilities for the humanities in education’. He thus looks forward to a transformation of linguistics and language studies. He regards his book as incomplete: “it should be noted that this work, though rounded off, is incomplete. It represents a firm halfway station to a full heuristics of basic linguistics and basic grammar” (Benton 2008:5).

(5) *Pastkeynes Pastmodern Economics: A Fresh Pragmatism* by Philip McShane


*Pastkeynes Pastmodern Economics: A Fresh Pragmatism* (McShane 2002) is a complex book that interweaves reflections and pointers on Lonergan’s later work on functional specialisation, his early work on economics (Lonergan [1942-1944]1998) and on current and past economics. What results is a devastating critique of current economics and economic education.

His aim, in relation to economics, is “to draw attention to the need for a new generalization in economics, a new theory, a new orientation” (2002:36). The division of labour (i.e. functional specialisation) within economics is “the key to the full, distant, transition to a democratic economics” (p.7). He regards Lonergan’s economics as:

a Copernican revolution in economic methodology. It is a double achievement: there is the discovery and precision of the significant variables; there is the sublation of Schumpeter’s view of theory’s dependence on the past in functional specialization... The former [the discovery of significant variables] strikes me not merely as a paradigm shift in a science but as a Galilean leap to science. The latter invention [functional specialisation] is a radical shift in the meaning of

8. The ten major journals were *Americanist, Essays in Criticism, Cambridge Quarterly, Forum for Modern Language Studies, Literary and Linguistic Computing, Literature and Theology, Notes and Queries, Review of English Studies, The Year’s Work in English Studies* and *Journal of Linguistics*.

9. Discussed in Appendix A(1) above.
implementation within a New Order of Die Wendung zur Idee\textsuperscript{10}… There are further aspects of this achievement that mesh with… a transformation that is not just Kondratiev-like but axial, a pastkeynesian theoretic not of employment but of leisure… (2002:37)

McShane asks us to undertake ‘a thought experiment’ to ‘find some order in the present spread of interests and printings’ in order to find a pattern within economic studies (pp.54ff). He suggests that this experiment will reveal two halves to economic studies: a focus on the past and a focus on the future. It will reveal a pattern of policy, planning and execution in some order: “without planning there can be no executive reflection; without policy, the plan is not grounded. But what grounds the policy?” (p.54). In seeking an answer to that question, he suggests first of all that policy is grounded in some history. Secondly he notes ‘the swing’ from history towards the future, a swing “represented by a vague collection of publications regarding critical assessment and selection” (p.55): “So I come to suggest A Foundation in a broad loose sense: we are using the data of economic life to generate economic history and our economic future” (p.57). The grounds of policy, planning and executive reflection “somehow lurk in the given of previous efforts”. They are the result of economic research, interpretation and history. Just as beyond policy there is an issue of grounds, so too beyond history there is a similar problem of grounds, “a problem of a plurality of both origins and goals”. It gives rise to the differences in economic theories and requires some sorting out. It is a zone of work that McShane calls ‘discernment’. He is at pains to point out that he is “not inventing distinctions; we are ordering distinctions invented by centuries of searching in economics, richly evident now in journal articles that collect and organize economic data, that seek to interpret this economist or that, that grapple with the problem of putting in sequence not only ideas of the past but the events of the past”.

\textit{Pastkeynes Pastmodern Economics} is an invitation to rethink current economics. It asks us to think about two different approaches to the IS–LM model\textsuperscript{11} as well as an issue of \textit{Economica}\textsuperscript{12} devoted to theories of economic growth. McShane challenges us to discern what is going on in different articles, to work out the functional specialties in which the author is operating and to notice the shift (often rapid) from one to another (p.67). In the Appendix, McShane seeks to transpose into a new context the quantity

\textsuperscript{10} A reference to the influential social theorist George Simmel who speaks about ‘turning to the idea’ or ‘displacement towards system’ “‘to denote the tendency and even the necessity of every large social, cultural, or religious movement, to reflect on itself, to define its goals, to scrutinize the means it employs or might employ, to keep in mind its origins, its past achievements, its failures. Now this shift to the idea is performed differently in different cultural settings. While a historical tradition can retain its identity though it passes from one culture to another, still it can live and function in those several cultures only if it thinks of itself, only if it effects its shift to the idea, in harmony with the style, the mode of forming concepts, the mentality, the horizon proper to each culture” (Lonergan [1969]1974:159). See also Simmel ([1918]2010:Chapter 2, pp.19-61).

\textsuperscript{11} McShane refers to three articles by King (1993), De Vroey (2000) and Romer (2000).

The IS–LM model is central to Keynesian economics. It refers to the relationship between two variables, interest rate and national income: IS (Investment/Savings) refers to national income and interest rate at which there is equilibrium in the market for goods and services; LM (Liquidity Preference/Money Supply) refers to national income and interest rates at which there is equilibrium in the money market. “The IS specification is typically portrayed as downward sloping, which results from assuming that savings is a positive function of income and investment is a negative function of the interest rate (as the cost of capital). The LM schedule is typically portrayed as upward sloping since money demand depends positively on real income (as a measure of the scale of transactions) and negatively on the nominal interest rate (as an opportunity cost of cash balances)” (King 1993:69). Thus, in Keynesian economics, the economy is in general equilibrium when these two graphs intersect (Black, Hashimzade and Myles 2009).

\textsuperscript{12} McShane refers to the seven articles in \textit{Economica} 67 (2000). He focuses particularly on “Anticipated Inflation in a Monetary Economy with Endogenous Growth” by Wen-Ya Chang and Ching-Chong Lai, pp.399-417.
theory of money which, according to Mark Blaug (1995), is the oldest surviving theory of economics. The central question (indeed, the central challenge of the new economics) is: What Is Money? (McShane 2002:137ff).

In a chapter concerned with Lonergan’s interlocutors in economics – Keynes, Marx, Marshall, Kalecki and Schumpeter, among others – McShane argues that “[j]ust as the eight hodic\textsuperscript{13} zones lifts scholarly work out of randomness, so pragmatic advertence to the possibilities of dialogue permits specialists to know precisely whom to turn to for relevant enlightenment, who they are turning to in dialogue” (p.71).

(6) Natural and formal sciences

McShane notes a range of other sciences in which the evident need for functional specialisation has emerged:

Even a swift perusal of Biological Abstracts would reveal not only the existence of the four types of tasks in the areas of zoology and botany, but also the existence of large problems of discernment and canon-development [Foundations] regarding issues of classification, evolution, ontogenetics. The science of chemistry, apparently so secure in its methods and identity as it emerged from the broad discoveries of Meyer & Mendeleev after the 1860s blossomed into a range of specializations, now stands in need of the suggested structure not only to give it collaborative unity but to make possible a discernment precisely of its identity in the face of the developments of physics.

Finally, there are the needs of physics itself. Even if one focuses only on the particular zone of particle physics, the twentieth century has thrown up a massive panoply of theoretical & practical problems, as well as problems of communication. The central issue in that field is the nature of real geometry, an issue which illuminates peculiarly the present cultural crisis (pp.60-61).

McShane then goes on to an analysis of The Origins of Geometry, an appendix to Husserl’s The Crisis of European Sciences. The task McShane set himself is “the problem of discerning, within the confines of a single article in any field, how much the author wanders around in the eight zones [of Cyclic Functional Collaboration]” (p.61).

\textsuperscript{13} McShane in this context refers to Cyclic Functional Collaboration as ‘Hodic Method’. ‘Hodic’ has various associations: the Indo-European hod refers to way; hod also has the meaning referred to in the line of the song Finnegans Wake: ‘And to rise in the world he carried a hod’ (McShane 2002:37); a hod is a builder’s V-shaped open trough on a pole, used for carrying bricks and other building materials (Oxford Dictionary).
# Appendix B:
Rental systems, finance systems and social housing in selected countries

## Table B1: Key characteristics of selected rental systems within selected countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/sector</th>
<th>Type of rental system</th>
<th>Datasets gathered</th>
<th>Operations (general)</th>
<th>Application to particular tenancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australia:</strong></td>
<td>Market-derived property rental system</td>
<td>Rents on private-sector dwellings by key characteristics: location, dwelling type, dwelling size, quality etc.</td>
<td>Dwelling rents sorted and then averaged by key characteristics</td>
<td>Rent administratively determined by reference to private dwellings with similar characteristics in local area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public housing</td>
<td>Income-related household rental system</td>
<td>Types of income received by households (according to source and/or purpose)</td>
<td>Inclusion/exclusion of income by source/purpose Determination of general rent to income ratio (ranges from 25% to 30% income) Specific determinations of ratio of income for different income types</td>
<td>Rent assessment formula (as outlined in rent manual) applied to particular income types received by household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Zealand:</strong></td>
<td>Market-derived property rental system</td>
<td>Rents on private-sector dwellings by key characteristics: location, dwelling type, dwelling size, quality etc.</td>
<td>Dwelling rents sorted by key characteristics Dwelling rents averaged by key characteristics</td>
<td>Rent administratively determined by reference to private dwellings with similar characteristics in local area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public housing</td>
<td>Income-related household rental system</td>
<td>Types of income received by households (according to source and/or purpose)</td>
<td>Inclusion/exclusion of income by source/purpose Determination of general rent to income ratio (25% income) Specific determinations of ratio of income for different income types</td>
<td>Rent assessment formula (as outlined in rent manual) applied to particular income types received by household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>United States of America:</strong></td>
<td>Income-related household rental system</td>
<td>Types of income received by households (according to source and/or purpose)</td>
<td>Inclusion/exclusion of income by source/purpose Determination of general rent to income ratio (30% adjusted monthly income) Specific determinations of ratio of income for different income types</td>
<td>Rent assessment formula (as outlined in rent manual) applied to income of household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country/sector</td>
<td>Type of rental system</td>
<td>Datasets gathered</td>
<td>Operations (general)</td>
<td>Application to particular tenancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Market-derived property rental system (discounted or ‘low end of market’)</td>
<td>Rents on private-sector dwellings by key characteristics: location, dwelling type, dwelling size, quality etc.</td>
<td>Dwelling rents aggregated by key characteristics&lt;br&gt;Discount applied or low-end determined according to key characteristics</td>
<td>A discounted market rent or ‘low end of market’ rent is administratively determined with reference to private dwellings with similar characteristics in local area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Income-related household rental system</td>
<td>Types of income received by households (according to source and/or purpose)</td>
<td>Determination of general rent to income ratio (rent geared to income (RGI) ratio is 30% of adjusted gross income)&lt;br&gt;Inclusion/exclusion of income by source/purpose&lt;br&gt;Specific determinations of ratio of income for different income types</td>
<td>Rent assessment formula (as outlined in rent manual) applied to income of household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Historic cost-rent property rental system (national pool)</td>
<td>Property values by region and size of dwelling&lt;br&gt;Earnings by region</td>
<td>Property rents are related to earnings in each region, property values and size of dwellings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Historic cost-rent property rental system</td>
<td>Total ongoing costs of dwellings within a rent pool</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>Historic cost-rent property rental system</td>
<td>Dwellings by their characteristics (used by the Housing Appraisal System)</td>
<td>Weighting allocated to characteristics&lt;br&gt;Distribution of total costs among characteristics</td>
<td>Determination of specific rent according to housing appraisal of particular dwelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Current cost-rent property rental system (nationally and locally negotiated)</td>
<td>Total ongoing costs of providing housing in the local area (as negotiated) over time</td>
<td>Proportionate increase from previous year&lt;br&gt;Variations according to property characteristics</td>
<td>Application of proportion increase to rent in previous year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Historic cost-rent property rental system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes:
1. This outline is indicative – further research is required to substantiate the rental system(s) operative in each country. In some countries, different sectors of social housing operate a different rental system. For further details, see McNelis and Burke (2004).
2. The “Type of rental system” column outlines the key group/sub-group of rental systems in the particular form of social housing in the country. Rental systems can be classified into two major groups: (i) Property rental systems where rents are determined with reference to the characteristics of the property. The four sub-groups of property rental systems are: current-cost rental system, historic-cost rental system, market rental system and market-derived rental system; (ii) Household rental systems where rents are determined with reference to the characteristics of households. The three sub-groups of household rental systems are: income-related rental system, subsidy-related rental system and flat rental system. For an elaboration on each of these different groups and sub-groups of rental systems, see McNelis (2006). In this table only the broad outlines of the system operative within each country are mentioned – there are many variations in the elements that constitute each sub-group.
3. The operations on the datasets outlined below are very general. Many rental systems involve multiple specific operations. For household rental systems these are usually specified in rent assessment manuals.
4. The rent charged is the lower of household rent or property rents. Thus, the property rent is the maximum rent charged.
5. For example, whether house (detached, semi-detached, terrace etc.), townhouse, unit, flat, apartment.
6. Number of bedrooms.
7. In practice, the process is simplified as (i) rents for similar types of dwellings are the same regardless of quality and (ii) rents are annually increased according to general or local average rent increases for private rental dwellings.
16. Primary sources on German rental system: Dorn (1997) and Ditch et al. (2001).
Table B2: Key characteristics of selected finance systems within selected countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/sector</th>
<th>Rent</th>
<th>Ongoing costs</th>
<th>Subsidies</th>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Financial viability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australia:</strong> Public housing6</td>
<td>Market-derived property rental system Income-related household rental system (25%)</td>
<td>Asset utilisation is funded through grants Cost of capital is low</td>
<td>Subsidy to operating costs Subsidy to the cost of capital</td>
<td>Free equity Debt finance (before mid-1980s)</td>
<td>Rental revenue, predominantly from household rents, is severely restricted because income support payments are low. Financial viability is achieved because (i) rental revenue is sufficient to cover the costs of administration, maintenance, rates and insurance and (ii) external funds from the Australian and State governments can be allocated as subsidies towards asset utilisation and the costs of capital. Any remaining external funds are available as capital in the form of free equity for the acquisition of new stock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Zealand:</strong> Public housing7</td>
<td>Market-derived property rental system Income-related household rental system (25%)</td>
<td>Dividend payable to NZ government is allocated to asset utilisation and to capital</td>
<td>Subsidy to rent payments: the difference between property rent and household rent</td>
<td>Free equity (dividend waiver) Debt finance (current)</td>
<td>Social housing is financially viable insofar as: external funds from the NZ Treasury in the form of a subsidy to rent payments meet the difference between market-derived rents and income-related rents; ongoing costs do not exceed market-derived rents; and whether and to what extent the government seeks a dividend. Ongoing costs involve a number of other inter-related conditions: whether the cost of capital increases (due to borrowings which are subject to variable interest rates, the extent to which new borrowings are undertaken and the extent to which interest rates rise) and whether increases in market-derived rents exceed or keep pace with ongoing costs. At present, Housing New Zealand Corporation not only maintains its financial viability but also has sufficient surplus funds for investment in additional stock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>United States of America:</strong> Public housing9</td>
<td>Income-related household rental system (30%)</td>
<td>Cost of capital is very low, if any</td>
<td>Subsidy to operating costs: the difference between rent revenue and a benchmark amount determined by HUD for some operating costs (administration, maintenance, rates and insurance) Subsidy to operating costs (for asset utilisation: major refurbishment)</td>
<td>Free equity</td>
<td>Social housing is financially viable insofar as: the benchmarks for operating costs as determined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are adequate and are sensitive to increases in these costs; public housing can operate within these cost parameters; and subsidies from HUD for asset utilisation (major refurbishments) are adequate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country/sector</td>
<td>Rent $^2$</td>
<td>Ongoing costs $^3$</td>
<td>Subsidies $^4$</td>
<td>Capital $^5$</td>
<td>Financial viability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada: Public housing $^9$</td>
<td>Market-derived property rental system (discounted or 'low end of market')</td>
<td>Cost of capital is manipulated to achieve the discounted or 'low end of market' rental revenue benchmark</td>
<td>Subsidy to rent payments</td>
<td>Free equity Debt finance (current)</td>
<td>Social housing is financially viable insofar as rent revenue from the discounted market, 'low end of market' or market property rental system is sufficient to cover ongoing costs (including the cost of capital and asset utilisation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom $^{10}$</td>
<td>Historic cost-rent property rental system (national pool)</td>
<td>Free equity Debt finance (LHAs: old debt) Debt finance (RSLs: recent debt)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The new rental system has changed the rents charged for each property. Each form of social housing will remain financially viable provided that rents under the new system are sufficient to meet their ongoing costs. Local Housing Authorities face an additional 'ongoing cost' in the form of the claw-back from central government as their rental revenue increases. Registered Social Landlords, on the other hand, generally must account for a decrease in rental revenue as rents are adjusted downwards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark $^{11}$</td>
<td>Historic cost-rent property rental system</td>
<td>Free equity (accumulated reserves) Debt finance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social housing maintains its financial viability insofar as its aggregate property rents are sufficient to cover its ongoing costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands $^{12}$</td>
<td>Historic cost-rent property rental system</td>
<td>Free equity (accumulated reserves) Debt finance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social housing maintains its financial viability insofar as its aggregate property rents are sufficient to cover its ongoing costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden $^{13}$</td>
<td>Current cost-rent property rental system (nationally and locally negotiated)</td>
<td>1% of rental revenue for negotiating rents between tenants, landlords and government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social housing maintains its financial viability insofar as its aggregate property rents are sufficient to cover its ongoing costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country/sector</td>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>Ongoing costs</td>
<td>Subsidies</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Financial viability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Historic cost-rent property rental system</td>
<td>Subsidy to ongoing costs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

1. This table is based on McNelis (2006:Chapter 5). Gaps in some columns may indicate a gap in the research. Thus, this summary is indicative rather than definitive – further research is required to substantiate the finance system(s) operative in each country. In some countries, different sectors of social housing operate a different finance system.

2. The “Rent” column outlines the key group/sub-groups of rental system in the particular form of social housing in the country. See Table B1 note 2 for details of rental systems operative within particular countries.

3. Ongoing costs of providing social housing are fairly standard between different forms of social housing in different countries. The “Ongoing costs” column outlines the unique elements of ongoing costs in the particular form of social housing in the country. Ongoing costs can be classified into six major groups according to their function in social housing finance: administration, maintenance (includes repairs and cyclical or programmed maintenance), rates and taxes, insurance, asset utilisation and cost of capital.

Note: (i) Asset utilisation is an annual provision which reflects the money value of the rate at which a dwelling is ‘used up’ annually. Over the long term, dwellings deteriorate. This includes both the physical deterioration that is not met through maintenance (day-to-day repairs or cyclical or programmed maintenance) and technological obsolescence where the dwelling over time will become below contemporary standards. Asset utilisation incorporates a notion which reflects differing expenses from country to country and sector to sector. In some countries, it may be referred to as depreciation. However, it should be noted that, strictly speaking, depreciation is an accounting term used to ascertain the financial position of a social housing organisation at a point in time. While this bears some relationship to the physical deterioration and technological obsolescence of dwellings, it may not reflect their current physical and technological state but rather the current market value of dwelling. In some countries, funds are borrowed to acquire dwellings and asset utilisation may reflect the principal repayment on the dwelling component (not the land component). In some countries, a provision is made for future major capital works or major refurbishment or major upgrade and these may reflect asset utilisation.

(ii) Cost of capital is the cost incurred as a result of the way in which capital is raised to acquire stock. It includes interest payments, dividends, opportunity costs of capital and rent on long-term leases of land and property.

4. The “Subsidies” column outlines the major groups of subsidies for the particular form of social housing in the country. These can be classified into four major groups according to their function within social housing finance: subsidy to income, subsidy to rent payments, subsidy to ongoing costs and subsidy to cost of capital.

5. The “Capital” column outlines the major groups of capital for the particular form of social housing in the country. These can be classified into three major groups according to their function in social housing finance: debt finance (includes borrowings, bonds and debentures); equity (government or private) which requires a return to an ‘external’ equity holder; and free equity, which does not require a financial return to an ‘external’ equity holder and so does not impact on the cost of capital (free equity includes grants, interest-free loans, reserves, land donations and long-term lease of land rent-free).

6. Primary sources on Australian finance system: Department of Families Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (various years) and Ecumenical Housing (1997).


Table B3: The role of social housing in relation to a standard of living within selected countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Mechanism for achieving housing affordability</th>
<th>Other roles²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia: public housing</td>
<td>Household rental system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia: community housing</td>
<td>Household rental system adjusted to maximise (or included entitlement to) rent assistance (i.e. rental allowance) to Centrelink (i.e. social assistance) recipients</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Household rental system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>Household rental system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Household rental system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Rental allowance to the value of the property rent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>Rental allowance varied according to household income, rent, household size, household type and rent band</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Rental allowance varied according to household type and size, rents and household income (with allowance for number of children)</td>
<td>Tenant participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Private rental stabilisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Rental allowance to the value of the property rent for social assistance recipients</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rental allowance varied according to tenant’s income, allowable deductions from income, age of the dwelling and level of rent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. This summary is indicative rather than definitive – further research is required to substantiate the actual role of social housing in each country.
2. All social housing has a role in relation to providing housing that is of good standard, appropriate to the needs of the household and with good amenity; some forms of social housing in some countries achieve this better than others.
## Appendix C: Rental systems in Victoria since 1945

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of rental system</th>
<th>Datasets</th>
<th>Operations</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1945-1963</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property rental system (historic cost dwelling rent)</td>
<td>Estimated historical costs of dwelling or project (including debt repayment, maintenance, rates and taxes, insurance, vacancies and administration)</td>
<td>Estimated historical costs summed With many dwellings in a project, costs were summed and divided equally between dwellings</td>
<td>Estimated costs applied to each dwelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household rental system</td>
<td>Tenant incomes Basic wage</td>
<td>Rental formula¹</td>
<td>Rental formula applied to family income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1963-1978</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property rental system (historic cost pool rents)</td>
<td>Historic costs of all dwellings Dwellings by type (house/flat) and size (number of bedrooms)</td>
<td>Historic costs summed Number of dwellings by type and size determined Relative weightings between type and size of dwellings determined Rents for each type and size of dwelling determined by dividing the total historic costs among all dwellings with weightings for type and size</td>
<td>Type and size of dwelling determined and rent applied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household rental system</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of rental system</td>
<td>Datasets</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1978-1984</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property rental system</td>
<td>Private rents by location, type and size of dwelling</td>
<td>Determine average private rent for location, type and size of dwelling</td>
<td>Location, type and size of dwelling determined and rent applied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Determine and apply discount</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household rental system</td>
<td>Minimum wage</td>
<td>Rental formula with (i) new rent-to-income ratio, (ii) new set of income included/excluded and (iii) different treatment of non-dependants</td>
<td>Rental formula applied to tenant/spouse income and non-dependants and summed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1984-1992</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property rental system (current cost-rent system)</td>
<td>Current costs of administration, maintenance, rates and insurance Current values of all stock Rates of return on investment</td>
<td>Calculations of opportunity cost of investment (current value by rate of return) Depreciation calculated over life of dwelling Current costs summed Number of dwellings by type and size determined Relative weightings between type and size of dwellings determined Rents for each type and size of dwelling determined by dividing the total current costs among all dwellings with weightings for type and size</td>
<td>Location, type and size of dwelling determined and rent applied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household rental system</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of rental system</th>
<th>Datasets</th>
<th>Operations</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property rental system</td>
<td>Private rents by key characteristics (location, type and size of dwelling)</td>
<td>Dwelling rents sorted by key characteristics &lt;br&gt;Dwelling rents averaged by key characteristics</td>
<td>Location, type and size of dwelling determined and rent criteria applied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household rental system</td>
<td>Types of income received by households (according to source and/or purpose)</td>
<td>Inclusion/exclusion of income by source/purpose &lt;br&gt;Determination of general rent to income ratio (ranges from 25% to 30% income) &lt;br&gt;Specific determinations of ratio of income for different income types</td>
<td>Rent assessment formula (as outlined in rent manual) applied to particular income types received by household</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
2. See Mc Nelis (2000:48-49) for the details of this rental formula.
List of publications related to the thesis


