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Housing the Homeless:

housing crisis and caravan parks – a Bourdieusian perspective.

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PhD Thesis

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This dissertation is the sole work of the author.

Abstract

This thesis considers the social role of housing and consequences of dwelling inadequacy. Following the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu (1986), the home is presented as a foundational site of society; where social positioning is socialised over generations and household members develop an internalised system of preferences, which guides agency. This system is referred to by Bourdieu as the 'habitus'. Bourdieu maintains that the socialisation which takes place in the home informs the habitus, and that this process is permeated by outside influences from governance, that objectify subjectivities (Bourdieu 2005). In a neoliberal nation, such as Australia, welfare retraction and individualisation are promoted by governments and in turn, largely accepted by society. This has supported the increased commodification of housing and the transformation of dwellings from a basic social requirement, to a significant means of capitalist gain. Ramifications of this transformation are presented here, in terms of narrowing housing access, tenure insecurity and dwelling marginality, the symptoms of housing crisis. Using constructionist grounded theory, empirical evidence of those bearing the brunt of this crisis is gleaned, from caravan park dwellers living in North Queensland, Australia. Caravan parks are presented as an example of marginal housing; inadequate and insecure dwellings, with residents who are at the interface of being housed and living on the streets (Chamberlain 2014). Analysis emphasises the roles of structure and agency in the realm of marginality and introduces the theory of 'housing habitus', which is defined here as the embodiment of internalised expectations of housing tenure, that influence dwelling perceptions and outcomes. Research findings expose symptoms of Australian housing system crisis and highlight the metamorphosing role of property tenure in relation to it. Informed by theoretical and empirical enquiry, this thesis culminates in recommendations for Australian housing reforms and strategies to improve dwelling access, security and adequacy.

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Chapter One – Introduction: Housing the Homeless

> Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control (Article 25, Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations, 1948).

Australian housing, the mainstay of society, is in crisis and unprecedented levels of homeless conditions (Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006, 2011, 2016), signal the need for urgent combative measures. In response, this thesis exposes the social repercussions of dwelling inaccessibility and instability and, via theoretical and empirical investigation, identifies strategies of defence against housing crisis. The research examines the material and ideological position of housing and the interplay between structure and agency in this domain. Housing is presented as the foundation of society and as a significant influencer and indicator of social life. These themes are explored broadly, in relation to established social theories, particularly those of Pierre Bourdieu (1986), and narrowly, in an Australian context and individual accounts of marginal housing experience, in North Queensland caravan parks.

1.1 Theoretical Perspective

The material and ideological significance of property is well established in social theory and tenure is recognised as a defining feature, because it determines the right of use within a hierarchy of dwelling control (Marx 1844; Weber 1904). The perceptions and provisions of housing have changed over time and have been variously regarded as a civic matter, a public duty (Writh 1946; Merton 1957) and, more recently, as an individualised responsibility (Ruming 2015; Crawford and McKee 2017). The dynamic between structure and agency in relation to life circumstance is enduringly debated, and it has long been considered that the State is by no means an impartial observer of the housing arena, but instead, is a manipulative force and the gatekeeper of housing provision and access (Bourdieu 2005). Housing as a basic human right and societal imperative has been slow to gain purchase (Morris 2011; Pattillo 2013), in contrast, these are overarching themes of this thesis.

This work employs a framework of housing tenure and the theory of 'habitus', as defined by French social theorist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), is used to examine housing

outcomes. Bourdieusian theory recognises the power of material structures and extends structuralist interpretations of the social, by incorporating the influence of ideology in relation to individual agency (Bourdieu 2005). From a Bourdieusian perspective, the home is a site of 'social origin': it is where 'social reproduction' takes place and society is produced, sustained and duplicated (Bourdieu 1986). Guided by our primary care givers, the home is where we learn our place in society and what is, and what is not, 'for the likes of us'. Being at the heart of society, that which goes on inside the home is also influenced by the outside world. Bourdieu suggests that the dominant rhetoric, which is delivered by many routes of actual and virtual communication, includes narratives from 'the State', which justify a phenomenon, such as disadvantage, this rhetoric he refers to as 'sociodicy' (1986). According to Bourdieu, dominant ideals are assimilated and internalised within the home, forming the basis of social norms and what we consider to be fair and reasonable, or otherwise. Accepted norms culminate in the formation of the 'habitus'. Habitus is defined by Bourdieu, as an ingrained system of 'dispositions or preferences' which guides social action (1986). In Bourdieu's seminal text *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1986), he explains the social construction of 'taste' and suggests that "cultural needs... are the product of upbringing and education", because the inclinations which are learnt within sites of "social origin", such as the home, largely define the way in which we perceive the world (Bourdieu 1986:1). Habitus is significant because it influences outcomes by covertly guiding the aspirations and expectations associated with all things.

Previous housing related research has engaged a Bourdieusian perspective, however the topic of marginality, particularly in relation to caravan park dwelling, has commanded little alignment with Bourdieusian theory. Researchers have applied the concepts of Bourdieu to examine many areas, for example, research by Mosselson (2020) delves into spatial context in the realm of property developers. Hoolachan and McKee (2019) use habitus to explain inter-generational incongruence in housing narratives. and Angas, Kontos, Dyck, McKeever and Poland (2005) consider changing circumstance in the realm of home care. In contrast, this thesis brings dwelling adequacy to the fore. Following Bourdieu, the interplay between structure and agency commands significant focus, and this dynamic is specifically related to housing marginality.

1.2 Sociological Significance

The social benefit of adequate housing, has been aligned by social researchers with physical and emotional stability (Bevan 2010), recognised as a site of social connectivity (Newton 2008), and posited as an essential base for everyday eventualities (Freilich, Levine, Travia and Webb 2014). The foundation of housing has been observed to be the mainstay of ontological security, or world view, which is derived from a sense of place in the social world, and instrumental in establishing and maintaining societal engagement (Petersen, Parsell, Phillips and White, 2014). When adequate housing cannot be accessed, a trajectory of homeless conditions is the likely outcome. In Bevan's view (2010), housing inadequacy is readily associated with inequity, instability and biographical disruption. Johnson, Gronda and Coutts (2008), refer to social stigma and negative identity formation, while Nelson and Minnery (2008), identify community displacement in relation to dwelling adversity. The ramifications of housing inadequacy have the capacity to degrade quality of life and undermine the mainstay of society, these features are presented here as symptoms relating to narrowing housing access and diminishing tenure security.

Australia now faces a crisis in housing access and security, and this problem is not new. In 2007, the United Nations document *Australia and the Right to Adequate Housing,* expressed "grave concerns about the human rights violations experienced by people who are homeless or insecurely housed in Australia" (National Association of Community Legal Centre Incorporated 2007:2). This report exposed the instability of Australian dwellings and reiterated a basic premise that adequate housing is a fundamental human right, which should be available to all. In 2013, The Australian National Housing Supply Council confirmed an enduring problem, by warning of a shortage of dwellings and the reprocusions of inadequacy, homelessness and marginality (National Housing Supply Council 2013). Notwithstanding, increasing levels of homelessness in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2006, 2011, 2016) repeatedly confirm The United Nation fears that without effective governmental action the result is widespread housing crisis.

There are already challenges across all traditional tenure groups. The broad-scale retrenchment of public housing in the 2000s has resulted in an increased pressure on overall supply (Council of Australian Governments 2009; Australian Housing and Urban Research 2010; Ruming 2015). The minimisation of public housing provision reinforces the

individualistic view, which is widely advocated by the dominant rhetoric and largely adopted by society, that housing insecurity and homelessness are individual problems (Johnson 2010, 2012). In this way, the withdrawal of public provision has been presented as a justifiable course of action, despite having the impact of reducing housing access, particularly for those on low income. At the opposite end of the housing spectrum is homeownership, which remains the preferred Australian housing option, however owners are a diminishing resident majority and are at the lowest percentage level since the 1950s (National Housing Supply Council 2013; ABS 2016). The increased benefits to individuals and to society which are traditionally aligned with owner-occupation, those of status, security and autonomy, are threatened by affordability issues which compromise homeownership accessibility and retention (Worthington 2012). Ownership is beyond the reach of increasing numbers of the population, despite apparent governmental support for owner-occupation (Beer, Baker, Wood and Raftery 2011; Johnson and Baker 2015). Homeownership barriers affect an increasingly expanding Australian demographic and are now instrumental in creating generational exclusion from owning a home (Martin, Pawson and van den Nouwelant 2016). The narrowing of public housing and homeownership access, places increased reliance on the private sector to act as rental-housing providers (Milligan and Pinnegan 2010). This confers the duty of housing accessibility, and its many social implications, substantially upon private enterprise. Supported by government, the provision of rental housing is evolving; from State and small-scale providers, to the engagement of broad-scale corporate investors (House of Representatives 2016; Martin, Pawson and van den Nouwelant 2016). Private and public housing partnerships are evolving, however, social theorists credibly observe that this is a difficult course of action, because the objectives of commercial enterprise are fundamentally at odds to those of social benefit (Pattillo 2013; Jacobs 2019). Indeed, social researcher and theorist Keith Jacobs observes that:

> Any action that might actually increase the supply of affordable housing will ultimately be resisted by businesses who would stand to lose. Whether it be an estate agency, developer or commercial landlord, profits are accrued when house prices rise in value and rents increase. We need to recognise this fundamental tension (Jacobs 2019:116).

This tension is already clearly evident. Australian private rental accommodation is increasingly unaffordable and is overburdened, due, in part, to pressure from additional interest groups, such as, eligible public housing tenants for whom there are no homes and aspiring homeowners who cannot afford to buy.

Housing the Homeless

The levels of homelessness reported by the Australian National Bureau of Statistics (2006, 2011, 2016), currently in the region of 116,000 people, are suggested to vastly underestimate the problem in this country (Chamberlain 2014; Chamberlain and Johnson 2020). Statistical measures are reported by researchers to be inaccurate and incomplete, and homelessness to be narrowly defined to support a governmental ethos of non-intervention (Chamberlain 2014; Atkinson and Jacobs 2016; Crawford and McKee 2017). For example, the statistical mainstay of estimation, the national *Census*, includes variously categorised forms of homelessness, including street living, temporary accommodation and overcrowding, but those people who are deemed to be 'marginally housed' are counted separately and, significantly, the national statistics for homelessness do not include individuals living in caravan parks (Chamberlain 2006; Chamberlain and Mackenzie 2013; ABS 2016). Where adequate housing cannot be secured, the alternative of marginal housing is increasingly sought. These homes are so inadequate that they are commonly referred to as the 'housing of last resort' (Reed and Greenhalgh 2004; Newton 2008; Eastgate 2011). Marginal housing typically presents in rural Australia as caravan park living and this is illustrated here, by qualitative research conducted in North Queensland parks.

Australian caravan park usage has evolved in recent decades, from providing only temporary accommodation to now also offering long-term housing. Following changes in regulation in the 1980s, these sites have transitioned from being regulated as purely holiday destinations, to an acceptance of 'mixed-use' to incorporate provision of permanent homes (Newton 2008). However, the regulation of park conditions has been slow to follow this change in operations. Caravan park occupation is enduringly regarded as being only 'temporary' and therefore, operations are only obliged to meet marginal standards (Caldicott and Scherrer 2013; Eastgate 2018). In consequence, parks offer living conditions and tenancy terms well below those culturally regarded as adequate for permanent occupancy, that comprise of simple construction dwellings, shared basic facilities and little or no security of tenure (Bunce 2010; Newton 2014). Notwithstanding the operational and regulatory failings of caravan parks, they are found to be an enticing dwelling option and to be particularly valued for the benefits of an on-site community (Office of Regulative Bodies 2010; Bosman 2016). Furthermore, in the context of narrowing housing access, parks now represent an important source of relatively accessible, albeit marginal, homes (Bunce 2010; Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) 2012; Homelessness Australia 2016; Eastgate 2018). A hitherto neglect of

caravan park housing contexts and an increasing reliance on access to park homes, signal this field as vital area of social enquiry.

1.3 Methods

Within a wider context of the sociology of housing, the focus here is marginality. This thesis illustrates the social impact of housing inadequacy and insecurity, by a theoretical alignment of empirical data drawn from dwelling experience in caravan parks. The research examines marginality in parks, with the use of a constructionist grounded theory approach, a method in which the research direction is informed by the enquiry process and participant views are championed. The social position of caravan park dwelling is considered, and this is presented as an illustration of the non-linearity of twenty-first-century housing, where dwelling circumstance is unpredictable and the path to housing adequacy and security, particularly later in life, can be alarmingly uncertain.

Qualitative research was conducted on the Atherton Tablelands, in North Queensland, Australia. The Tablelands is a rural area, which is characterised by an expansive natural environment and spatially disconnected country towns and villages. Many of these small centres have caravan parks and these parks are an important source of low-cost housing in the area. Researcher Rhonda Phillips identified in 2011, that access to affordable housing in this region had reached a critically low level and the research undertaken here suggests that this problem persists.

Access was gained to four Tableland caravan parks, via newspaper advertisements and local council referrals: two parks are under private ownership and two are publicly owned, so they represent both public and private caravan park housing provision. All researched parks are mixed-use, which means that they accommodate transient and permanent residents, and in all cases the delineation between the residents' areas is only mildly defined. By the use of initial, focused sampling and subsequent personal referrals, twenty-two participants were interviewed. eighteen park permanent residents and four operatives. The residents are proportionately rental tenants and homeowners, and the majority household composition is individuals over retirement age, who live alone. The participants are proportionately female and male, and all are non-Indigenous, Australian citizens. This sample is representative of the wider demographic in these particular parks. In the minority are two families; one single

mother who rents an overcrowded van with her two pre-school aged children and ageing mother, and their neighbours, a family of three. Only four of the resident participant cohort receive wage income and the rest fund their lives exclusively from welfare payments. All researched residents have lived in their current caravan park home for several years. The four park operators involved in the research are two married couples. One partnership recently entered the caravan park industry and operate a public park, which they lease from the local authority. The second couple are owner/operators, who have lived and worked in their caravan park for over a decade. Neither of these partnerships have received formal training for their chosen profession and both consider their main area of work to be tourism related, although they are also clearly providers of permanent housing. The representation of residents and operators within this participant sample, allows the expression of both tenant and landlord perspectives.

Semi-structured interviews were selected as the ideal research technique, to enable research participants freedom to tell their experiences of caravan park living and to identify aspects of particular relevance to them. The participants were supplied with an information sheet detailing the research and they all signed a consent form, prior to participation. Each interview started with this opening statement; “You are free to tell me anything you wish about your personal experience of living in a caravan park”. The interviews were each approximately one hour in duration and were recorded using a mobile phone. During the research, I became temporarily immersed in the private lives of the participants, in many cases I was invited to sit at their table, to drink their tea and even to view the inner sanctum of their personal living/sleeping area. They welcomed me into their homes and spoke candidly about their everyday lives. These interactions emphasised the close-proximity of the housing found in parks, the combination of public/private living as small homes spill out into make-shift awnings, which adjoin the enforced communality of shared space and facilities. Our exchanges were pleasantly informal and relaxed, and this allowed me, as researcher, to observe park life and the interplay between external and internal forces in the caravan park housing domain.

The approach to data management supports the ethos of qualitative research, as demonstrated by Charmaz (2014). Within which, the processes of data collection, collation and analysis operate concurrently and where the nuances of the research context are of primary interest. Manual coding and categorising of audio-recordings was carried out throughout the research period, and codes were linked to non-verbal forms of communication, field notes and

research memos. Initial coding was undertaken constantly throughout the data collection period and this led to the development of focused codes. Focused codes were used to identify emergent and recurrent themes, which were duly documented and considered. This research design ensured complete and accurate examination of the data and a thorough recognition of the social structures, patterns and processes at play in the research field.

1.4 Research Focus, Questions and Objectives

The empirical research focuses on the interface of being sheltered and being without a home: marginal housing. Marginal housing is defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as follows:

> housing which is not adequate - for reasons such as it has no security of tenure, or it may be overcrowded, or it does not meet 'minimum expectations' – that is, it does not have basic or adequate facilities… An example of people living in marginal housing is those who live in caravan parks (Australian Bureau of Statistics Position Paper 2011).

Sub-standard homes, typically termed 'marginal housing', have been further defined by theorist Chris Chamberlain, as abodes that accommodate the 'hidden homeless' of Australia (2005, 2014). The individuals who are exposed to conditions of homelessness, such as inadequate amenities and insecure tenures, yet are not considered homeless in statistical terms (ABS 2006, 2011, 2016). An example of the hidden homeless, are people who live in make-shift housing such as caravans. Park dwellings are precariously positioned, and the parity and security of the largely 'hidden' residents within, have commanded little attention (Eastgate 2018). This research aims to combat this neglect, by focusing on the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between housing, homelessness and caravan parks?
- How is caravan park dwelling experienced?
- What does this signal in terms of Australian housing reform?

The objectives of this research are, firstly, to acknowledge the crisis position of Australian housing and highlight the social imperative of adequate and secure dwellings. Secondly, to innovate social theory in connection to the housing realm, by the application and extension of Bourdieusian ideas. Thirdly, to expand the body of knowledge of marginal housing, by focusing on caravan park living conditions and illustrating the daily experiences

of participation. Finally, to devise strategies to address failings in the Australian system and provide knowledge which may guide housing reform. This research is exacted under the premise, that the achievement of these objectives can be reached by, a broader understanding of the social position of housing and an original application of Bourdieusian theory to dwelling outcomes. These are aligned with a well-considered analysis of qualitative evidence concerning caravan park living, situated in a wider context of Australian housing. The concluding section of this chapter provides a pre-emptive guide to this research.

1.5 Outline of Thesis Structure

Chapter Two contains a review of the sociological history of housing. It begins with the acknowledgment of the key interests of materialism and ideology within early social theory, and the development of the distinct discipline of a 'sociology of housing' in the mid twentieth century. It continues with an account of the subsequent evolution of the discipline and documents changes in focus from post-war public housing, to the championing of homeownership at the turn of the century. This chapter culminates with a discussion of, perhaps, some of the most pressing matters of current times; housing inaccessibility, insecurity and inadequacy: the symptoms of housing crisis which can lead to conditions of homelessness.

Chapter Three relates housing inadequacy and insecurity to Bourdieusian social theory. Through the insights of Pierre Bourdieu (1986), the following themes are related to housing: symbolic and material function, social reproduction, individualisation and social positioning. Attention is particularly drawn to Bourdieu's ideas on internalised social norms (habitus) and dominant rhetoric (sociodicy) (1986, 2005). The individual and societal imperatives of housing are emphasised, and the home is presented as a site of political manipulation and increasing social disparity.

Chapter Four is a detailed summary of the methods underpinning this work. It contains the research design, the design rational, the sociological importance of the study, ethical considerations and researcher reflections. Theoretical foundations and empirical objectives are detailed, and the research approach of constructivist grounded theory is discussed, as a method in which direction is informed by the research process and participant knowledge is central. The research location of North Queensland caravan parks is described and is acknowledged in terms of its sociological relevance, in the context of permanent housing provision. Qualitative

data collection and analysis methods are documented, including the recording, coding and analysis of the research findings.

Chapter Five provides an overview of Australian housing provision. National housing estimations and predictions are reported, and traditional forms of Australian housing tenures are examined. Changing Australian demographics and household structures are outlined in their capacity of influencing housing demand, notably, the demand imposed by an aging population. The motivations and efficacy of Australian housing policy initiatives are examined, starting with the significant measures initiated by the Howard and Rudd Governments. This is followed by the caretaker roles of the subsequent Prime Ministers, Gillard and Abbott, and finally, the housing initiatives of the recent Turnbull and Morrison Governments are considered. These accounts situate the past, present and likely future of Australian housing.

Chapter Six examines Australian homelessness and marginal housing, linking Australian Bureau of Statistics' definitions to misleading and incomplete classifications and data collection. Classifications are outlined, and primary, secondary and tertiary homelessness are explained. Following social researcher Chris Chamberlain (2014), marginal housing is proposed as a hidden form of homelessness. Routes to homelessness are identified and shown to be available to all Australians, regardless of prior housing circumstance. An overview of Queensland housing issues is presented, and the social consequences of housing inadequacy and insecurity are explored.

Chapter Seven links empirical enquiry within caravan parks, to the material structures and ideological perceptions that prompt housing outcomes. Park dwellings are presented as a viable housing option and as places that are valued by the, predominantly aged, residents for their relative accessibility and for the sociability of an on-site community. However, parks are also shown to have negative issues, the resolution of which are proposed to be legislatively unsupported. This chapter highlights the participant responses of park rental residents and in so doing, the issues of inadequate amenities and declining accessibility of caravan park housing are brought to the fore.

Chapter Eight begins with a report of the research findings regarding caravan park homeownership. Parks are again presented as enticing housing environments, however, for homeowners, they are noted to harbour concerns of tenure insecurity and power disparity, the

negatives of park living which threaten residency and degrade daily life. Caravan park closures are aligned with biographical disruption and community displacement and park tenure is noted to be incongruent with traditional homeownership ideals. A disparity in perceptions and objectives between park landlords and tenants is considered under a Bourdieusian perspective, and polarised responses between resident tenure groups, regarding the terms and conditions in parks, are illustrated. The divergence observed in participant responses to marginal conditions, leads to the construction of the theory of 'housing habitus', and this newly developed idea is discussed as an analytical tool.

Chapter Nine contains a synthesis of the research findings and details research recommendations. Australian housing reforms are proposed to tackle dwelling inaccessibility, insecurity and inadequacy. With initiatives that address the terms and conditions of caravan park housing marginality, mobilise, hitherto neglected, existing housing resources and broaden public provision. These recommendations are made with the benefit of insight from the theory of housing habitus, which is centred in the dynamic between structure and agency and recognises the power of ideological forces, in relation to material change.

Chapter Ten summarises the thesis, evaluates the research and proposes areas for future enquiry. The relevance of Bourdieusian social theory in discussions of contemporary housing issues is confirmed and its advancement here, by the theory of housing habitus, is noted. The value of the research is assessed, in terms of its theoretical contribution and possible practical application in matters of housing reform. Finally, directions for future enquiry are suggested in the realms of system restructuring and the regulation of marginalised dwelling contexts.

Conclusion

This thesis is concerned with adequately and securely housing society. It is undertaken in acknowledgement of the essential material and ideological foundation homes provide, and in recognition of the destabilising and polarising social effects of housing crisis. Bourdieusian ideas of structure and agency command significant attention and are inventively applied to housing circumstance, within a framework of dwelling tenures. Theoretical analysis is supported by empirical data, which is undertaken within a constructionist grounded theory approach. In this way, the social context of housing is theoretically situated, empirically

illustrated and an original perspective of Australian housing is presented. This perspective meets the research objectives of exposing the socially devastating effects of housing inadequacy and devising innovative strategies for safeguarding the stability and parity of society.

This thesis will situate the place of housing in society over time and indicate dominant themes associated with the domain within the discipline of sociology. It will suggest that housing is at the foundation of society and that adequacy in this area is crucial for societal stability and parity. The research will highlight a crisis in Australian housing provision, it will map governance over time, and will connect crisis to marginality and conditions of homelessness. Empirical evidence of marginality will be provided by an illustration of the terms and conditions of caravan park housing and first-hand knowledge from park residents and operators. The contextual and empirical data will be analysed under a Bourdieusian perspective and significant attention will be given to the dynamic between structure and agency. This dynamic will be specifically related to housing and marginality, and this will uncover the powers which affect housing outcomes. In result, this thesis will bring attention to the social costs of housing crisis, expose the neglect of marginal contexts and explore the material and ideological forces which influence housing outcomes. The culmination of these ideas will aid theory development and inform recommendations for Australian housing reforms, that are designed to safeguard the wellbeing of our nation and ensure that we are adequately housing the homeless.

Chapter Two - Literature Review: The Sociology of Housing

Introduction

This chapter investigates the social context of housing over time. It begins with an introduction to the perceived role of property within social theories of the 1800s and early 1900s, notably the relationship between housing and social positioning, and the dynamic between structure and agency. This is followed by a concise account of the evolution of housing research during the seventy-year history of the discipline of the 'sociology of housing', including changing focus from the post-war interest in public housing, to the championing of homeownership at the turn of the twenty-first century. Finally, this chapter culminates in the contemporary awareness of the multi-facetted social dimensions of home, by outlining the theoretical relationship between housing and well-being, and the social ramifications of dwelling inadequacy.

2.1 Early Focus

Property tenure has been recognised as a key element of social positioning since the emergence of sociological enquiry. In 1845, Friedrick Engels (1820-95) documented the housing circumstance of the English working classes, in his pioneering ethnography *The Condition of the Working Class*. Engel's ethnography revealed the appalling living conditions of the lower echelons in England at that time and proposed that this housing degradation was an accepted social norm, despite evidence of a growing affluence among the elite:

> One day I walked with one of these middle-class gentlemen into Manchester. I spoke to him about the disgraceful unhealthy slums and drew his attention to the disgusting condition of that part of town in which the factory workers lived. I declared that I had never seen so badly built a town in my life. He listened patiently and at the corner of the street at which we parted company he remarked: "And yet there is a great deal of money made here. Good morning, Sir". (Engels, *Condition of the Working Class* 1845:312).

In collaboration with classical social theorist Karl Marx (1818-83), Engels subsequently proceeded to define social stratification in relation to property ownership, within a politicised economic system and to shape the foundations of sociological thought.

In Marxist terms, the power afforded by the control of property has been historically apparent since the times of master and slave, and the later feudal era of landed gentry and

subordinated labourers (Joseph 2006). The power of domination inherent in property ownership said to be later accelerated, by the forces of capitalism; first in the midst of rural agricultural automation, and increasingly, in the urban industrial revolution of the modern era (Swingewood 2000). These advancements were reflected in the social order and were astutely observed by Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto* of 1848:

> From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burgher of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed… Modern industry has established the world-market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land… in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the middle ages. We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange (Marx and Engels 1848:8).

Following Marxist thought, the ownership of property (capital assets) is a vehicle of social control which is bound in economic concerns and domination, which favour the minority at the expense of the masses (Swingewood 2000). Therefore, property ownership signifies a distinction of class between those who control access to property and those who do not, because control of the “mode of production” (capital assets) is a “basic determinant of social structure” in a capitalist regime (Swingewood 2000:42). Furthermore, over time, “the tendency of pure capitalism is to concentrate property in fewer hands, [which] forces the middle classes into the proletariat and transforms all labour into wage labour” (Swingewood 2000:42). Marx identified ‘alienation’ as a major consequence of capitalist systems; the separation and exclusion of workers from the fruits of their labour and the control of their subsistence (Swingewood 2000).

Although Marxism is generally viewed in materialist terms, Rockmore (2002) highlights the ideological element of Marxist theory, particularly in relation to the concept of ‘alienation’. Alienation may be “understood as a separation which can be overcome by unity” and Marxism assumes the term in relation to the estrangement within modern industrialised society (Rockmore 2002:61). This Marxist interpretation follows the origination of the concept of alienation in the Christian bible, which was later secularized by Rousseau, idealized by Fichte and subsequently philosophized by Hegel (Rockmore 2002). In an examination of Marxism, Rockmore (2002) notes that alienation is the result of people being “regulated to unfulfilling tasks [and structures] in modern society where they can at best meet their individual

needs, but not develop their individual, or specifically human capacities" (Rockmore 2002:69). A consequence of the alienation of the masses, is that they become "separated from their true essence" and assume the 'class consciousness' relative to their position in the social world (Joseph 2006:11). No "possibility of social mobility" within capitalism is possible and emancipation can only be realised by incidents of trauma or acts of revolution, which transform the system (Swingewood 2000:44; Joseph 2006). This research identifies alienation in the housing realm, this is related to tenure insecurity and the estrangement of society from the control of dwellings.

Housing alienation is experienced as a disconnection from a home, both "in a physical sense as external to him and in a non-physical sense as alien to his self-development" (Rockmore 2002:62). This alienation is socially debilitating because a lack of control within the dwelling domain, restricts the self-realisation of individuals beyond daily necessities. They are unable to "freely develop" and instead, in the words of Rockman, "He merely meets his basic needs best he can…able to sustain physical existence, but certainly not capable of developing to a higher level… [due to] a generalised estrangement in human relations" (Rockmore 2002:63). In dwelling terms, alienation is the lack of control of a home, which in turn, precludes expression beyond survival. Marxist alienation theory has been linked by sociologist Peter Saunders (1995), to the 1940s work of psychologist Abraham Maslow. Within Maslow's concept of the 'hierarchy of needs':

> The most basic and fundamental needs were those deriving from the physiological requirements of the human organism – the need for food and shelter, for example. If these needs were not satisfied, then, according to Maslow, their absence would eclipse all other concerns… [including] the fulfilment of one's potential (Saunders 1995:77).

Maslow echoes Marx in the recognition of the foundational quality of a 'shelter', upon which everything else can build. So, in the event of limited housing tenure security, which is represented for example, by short-term rental property agreements and marginal housing arrangements, individuals are socially restrained by the necessity of repeated acquisition of the most basic of needs - a home. In consequence, periodic (and possibly involuntary) resettlements place limitations on personal development and social engagement, thereby restricting society, due to decreased individual contribution. Housing inadequacy is debilitating, and it is by no means just an individual problem.

Classical theorist Max Weber (1864-1920), although adopting a differing theoretical perspective to Marxism, also acknowledged that social structures are interconnected and that they are significantly influenced by the control of property. Weber positioned property ownership in the realm of ideology and observed a higher degree of agency than that afforded by Marxist, structural explanations (Dodd 1999). Kane describes Weber's "foundational definition of sociology" as encompassing the premise that "subjective meaning [is] the basis of social action and structure" (Kane 1996:163). Within theories of social status, Weberian thought offers a "competing structure of stratification", to the Marxist economic view of class distinction (Swingewood 2000:106; Dodd 1990). According to Weber, social standing, or status, although also bound by class, may be defined by attributes other than economic capital and this is exemplified by the influence of ideologies such as the 'Protestant Ethic' (Weber 1904). Weber famously argues that the expansion of European capitalism is not purely the result of evolution in the economic system, but instead, is largely influenced by individual agency and the power of ideas (Swingewood 2000). The influence of Protestantism (particularly Calvinism), for example, was said to promote both the diligent work ethic necessary for capitalist success, and the teachings of fatalistic predestination and 'fear of damnation' required to sustain it (Swingewood 2000). Thus, agency may wield power over structure, via the cultural and symbolic capital ascribed by ideology. Notwithstanding their differing causal explanations of capitalism, Swingewood notes that the founding fathers of social thought, Marx and Weber, are in accord regarding the power imbued in capitalism's major facet, property ownership. These leading theorists agreeing that "property, or the lack of it, constitutes 'the basic categories of all class situations' and the factor which produces class 'is unambiguously economic interest'" (Swingewood 2000:105).

This thesis explores the social dynamic between structure and agency, in the realm of domestic property, as a politically saturated 'economic interest', this is developed here in relation to housing tenure as a signifier of social differentiation. A narrowing of housing access is explained as an extension of the mode of production to the domestic sphere (profit derived from dwellings), wherein housing control is increasingly dominated by an affluent minority and marginality is normalised. The power of ideology is considered and, using a Bourdieusian perspective, agency is acknowledged to be politically and structurally constrained within the housing field. Furthermore, it is suggested that the normalised order of housing circumstance, shapes the social responses and outcomes which are attached to it.

2.2 Development of the Sociology of Housing

In the early 1900s, W.E.B. Du Bois became a forerunner of modern sociological enquirers, by exposing the adverse conditions of minorities in a context of racial inequality (Green and Wortham 2018). Du Bois is credited with defining "social conditions" as distinct from philosophical thought and "conceptualising sociology as an empirical science" (Green and Wortham 2018:59). Green and Wortham (2018) note that the findings of Du Bois' empirical research, paved the way for theories of the later Chicago School of Sociology, although he has received "little recognition for these scholarly accomplishments" (2018:74). The distinct discipline of the 'sociology of housing' has its origins in 1940s America and The Chicago School of Sociology. Louis Wirth is accredited as being amongst the earliest influencers of the discipline (Atkinson and Jacobs 2016). Wirth (1947) identified key elements of home as being social values that operate within social systems and which are orchestrated by governmental policies (Atkinson and Jacobs 2016). Emphasis was placed on architectural design and an acknowledgement of the place of housing in building communities (Atkinson and Jacobs 2016). In the 1950s, Robert Merton is suggested by Atkins and Jacobs (2016), to have extended the sociological concept of housing espoused by Wirth, by linking housing inadequacies to detrimental social and psychological outcomes, such as crime and poverty, and further emphasising the role of the State in these outcomes.

The post war context of the 1950s, was characterised by social housing expansion and an emphasis on the collective, with broad scale production of "planned communities" (Foley 1980:458). However, by the late 1970s public housing was generally observed to exhibit socially incompatible design and this perspective overshadowed the positive non-shelter aspects of public housing provision, those of tenure security and dwelling adequacy. Negative issues were used politically to justify a retraction in social housing engagement and an emerging trend "towards income-maintenance and housing-allowance approaches" (Foley 1980:466). According to Soloman, by the 1970s "most social scientists and housing specialists agree ... that public housing has failed to provide decent housing, that it has segregated tenants by income and race and that it has isolated residents from the larger community" (Soloman 1974, cited in Foley 1980:464). Such conclusions sealed the impending doom of the institution of public housing by a gradual withdrawal from public provision, reportedly due to its social incompatibility.

Foley (1980) outlines the emergence of multi-faceted social research approaches in the 1970s, which recognised the necessity of scrutinising associated structural forces to obtain a full understanding of housing impact. By the late 1970s, Foley observes that there was an

> increasing recognition that "housing" comprises much more than physical shelter and that it especially encompasses the broader residential setting… When households consume 'housing,' they purchase or rent more than the dwelling unit and its characteristics; they are also concerned with such diverse factors as health, security, privacy, neighbourhood and social relations, status, community facilities and services, access to jobs, and control over the environment. Being ill-housed can mean deprivation along any of these dimensions... Thus housing comprises a complex bundle of considerations, including privacy, location, environmental amenities, symbolic characteristics, and investment (Foley 1980:457).

Attention to the interconnected dimensions of home, emphasised that individual life chances are closely linked to housing circumstance, and that this subsequently impacts upon the wider community. Significantly, housing is animated by Foley's report on homes as an active force, as it maintains that the way in which individuals are housed has wide effects both on the occupant and on society. In the 1980s a number of "subspecialties" emerged, which narrowed focus to the housing challenges experienced by minority groups, such as the "elderly, physically disabled, poor, Black, or woman-headed households" (Foley 1980:459). The studies of minority cohorts illustrated, that although many fundamental housing issues are broad and all encompassing, age, health, socio-economic status, ethnicity and gender may all present additional housing pressures. These pressures are still debated in current times.

2.3 Contemporary Interest

The sociological fascination with public housing of the 1900s has dwindled in the 2000s, as political arenas recoil from public welfare provision. Homeownership expansion and the global financial crisis of 2008 "elevated housing issues to a level of national and international debate" and, fuelled by accelerated increases in housing eviction and homelessness, the social consequences of housing instability were brought to the fore (Pattillo 2013:509). Housing adequacy and security cannot be assured in the 2000s because they exist in a market-based system, wherein economic outcomes are supreme and social issues are espoused as individual problems. Despite a widening awareness of the social centrality of housing, researchers Crawford and McKee (2017), suggest that the transition marked by de-

industrialisation in the 'Financial Accumulation' epoch of the 1980's and 1990's, signalled the ultimate demise of housing parity because

> the political economy had shifted from one which was focused on production (making things to sell), to one which was focused on consumption (the purchase of goods made abroad) …[and] the creation of significant amounts of personal debt (Crawford and McKee 2017:8).

This shift rendered any form of housing affordability to be contrary to the dominant political and economic agenda, and therefore obsolete. In this way, structural issues both define and confine notions of individual agency and reinforce the premise that the government is a significant arbitrator of housing structures.

A rejection of the collective is a characteristic of the current neoliberal epoch. An individualisation of society has diverted "the emphasis from collective to individual solutions to social problems, decoupling material disadvantage from structural factors and connecting it to the poverty of individual aspiration" (Crawford and McKee 2017:4). For example, Australian housing adversity is commonly represented as a personal failing, rather than as a symptom of inadequate housing structures, and this individuality is actively promoted and reinforced by governmental action and social welfare retraction (Crawford and McKee 2017). In a 2017 discussion of housing aspirations, Crawford and McKee suggest that "objective reality is largely determined by the dominant mode of production in that particular epoch …[and] transitions in the various epochs… not only bring new opportunities (objectively) but new expectations (in a subjective sense)" (2017:7). The progressive influence of economic rationalism since the late 1900s, is said by Crawford and McKee to signal "a shift from "expectational" to "aspirational" forms of citizenship" (2017:16). They maintain that "the state produces and over-sees, [and] is responsible for the shaping of aspirations, which are more or less adequately adjusted to the possibilities of their realisation" (Crawford and McKee 2017:16). Significantly, following Bourdieu (1986), Crawford and McKee note that agency is "socially structured insofar as the categories of perception that agents apply to the world are a product of that world" (2017:2). That is, seemingly subjective viewpoints are formulated by dominant rhetoric, and individual and collective ideology are largely a product of wider structural forces. This theme is a prominent feature of this thesis.

Housing Security

Sociological enquiry now includes interest in the reprocusions of housing insecurity and the implications of tenure (Atkins and Jacobs 2016). Giddens' (1991) concept of 'ontological security' has gained purchase in the field and is now a major factor considered by housing sociologists (Atkins and Jacobs 2016). Increasingly, ontological security, or a security of world view, is viewed by researchers as:

> an important consideration in trying to understand the deeper psychological foundations of individuals situated within wider social structures and processes… there are echoes here of Merton's move to consider the psychic impact of particular types of housing… the idea of ontological security has enabled a conceptualisation of the individual and the household within wider patters of sociotenurial structure (Atkins and Jacobs 2016:21).

Ontological security describes "the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments" (Giddens 2013:92). Housing tenure impacts on the terms and conditions under which a residence is held and therefore, affects daily life: Secure tenures provide foundational stability and relative autonomy, and insecure tenures impose uncertainty and an estrangement from the everyday control of the dwelling environment. Social studies have typically focused on the difference between homeownership and rental tenancy in relation to physical and emotional stability, where "ontological security is inherently linked to home ownership, whereas private renting is characterised by persistent precarity" (Morris, Hulse and Pawson 2017:656-7). The 'psycho-socio' benefits of housing tenure, are linked by Val Colic-Peisker and Guy Johnson (2010) to a stability of existence because, it is argued, individuals need a place that provides consistency and a measure of control over the changing circumstances of life:

> Home [is] a site of constancy where people feel in control of the world. Here the home functions as a safe haven that provides security and protection from the outside world… home is a site of autonomy where people are free from outside scrutiny and free to express themselves as they please… housing can provide social status and a base around which identities are constructed… Social status is important because ontological security can only be maintained as long as the self is viewed positively (Colic-Peisker and Johnson 2010:351).

A crisis in housing circumstance induces a crisis in individual identity because the sense of place in society, which is bound by a home environment, is under threat. Conversely, it is suggested that secure housing tenures can promote a sense of belonging, facilitate stable

positioning and enhance social participation (Colic-Peisker and Johnson 2010). Colic-Peisker and Johnson (2010) explain that:

> A key contention is that owner-occupiers derive more ontological security from home than renters, as owning a home is a means of gaining control over one's life and one's future… In addition, in Australia and other "homeownership societies", being an owner-occupier also conveys status and a means of earning a place among the "respectable majority", as opposed to renters whose sense of individual autonomy and belonging to local community may be limited (Colic-Peisker and Johnson 2010:354).

In relation to housing tenure, the sense of security instilled by the control of a dwelling is said to commute to social well being. and positive outcomes are commonly associated with homeownership. However, in the context of increasing 'mortgage indebtedness', Colic-Peisker and Johnson (2010) contest the traditional view that homeownership provides autonomy and stability. They propose that "mortgage holders have higher stress levels and a lesser sense of ontological security than either outright owners or renters" (2010:357). In Colic-Peisker and Johnson's research of homeownership, it is not regarded as a blanket tenure which solves all issues of insecurity but is presented as a potential financial nightmare because it is only when a home is substantially owned (and not heavily mortgaged) that stability is achieved (2010). Tenure security is linked by Catherine Leviten-Reid and Rebecca Matthew, to the accumulation and bonding of social capital. The capital which is promoted and shared by "trust, exchanges among neighbours and a sense of belonging to one's community", and this is observed to commute to community development and social prosperity (Leviten-Reid and Matthew 2017:1). This thesis illustrates that housing stability is indeed closely related to ontological security, which in turn is vital to societal well-being, in extension, it argues that its achievement need not be exclusive to the domain of homeownership.

Bevan highlights the increasing importance of dwelling security in "later life", by linking exposure to housing instability and the experience of "biographical disruption" (2010:970). He argues that enforced housing relocation can result in the "shattering of assumptions about daily life [which] amounts to a critical life situation" (Bevan 2010:970). If a "radical disruption'" of routines occurs in the dwelling domain, it has the potential to "challenge the core of peoples' ontological security" and fundamental notions of self-identity (Bevan 2010:970). de Jonge, Jones, Phillips and Chung, (2011) note that as individuals age, they generally spend more time at home and this increases the importance of the housing as central to everyday life, in terms of preserving ontological security and a sense of place. This

may manifest as an emotional connection to a dwelling because the ascribed significance of a home increases over time (de Jonge et al 2011). Pakulski claims that societal aging may be regarded as a characteristic of contemporary times, because it is estimated that "older (60+) people worldwide… will nearly double by 2050" (2016:112). The task of adequately housing an ageing population is a growing social issue, and maintaining residents' ontological security and social well-being during the process is crucial. Colic-Peisker and Johnson suggest that housing tenures have many sub-fields and "while we know a great deal about the economic and social significance of different forms of tenure, we have little insight into the different ways renters and owners experience tenure-related anxiety" (2010:359). The observation of tenure-related anxiety is expanded by this thesis, within the sub-field of caravan park housing, and an examination of the nuances of marginal dwelling contexts, in which the participant cohort are both renters and homeowners. Significantly, the research participants are predominantly aged citizens.

Social Stratification

Debate has risen in recent decades regarding the 'death of class', with some social theorists suggesting that class is no longer a relevant concept, as Malafaia, Neves and Menezes (2017) explain:

> Pakulski and Waters' work, "The Death of Class" (1996), claims that in post-modern societies the linear and stable correspondence between the objective and subjective features of social classes is gone: identities and social practices are now defined based on specific life-styles and collectively shared values, rather than by one's location in the network of social relations of production. Individualization, globalization and reflexivity render the social organisation more fluid (Beck, 2007), and consequently social classes become less appropriate to understand inequality. The increasing relevance of post-materialistic values in politics (Inglehart, 1997) goes along with the argument about the heterogeneity of social groups and the decline of materialistic cleavages (Malafaia, Neves and Menezes 2017:44).

In contrast, this thesis proposes that class is not somehow erased by the multiplicity of postmodernism, but instead, that society is increasingly polarised. For just as Marxism observed in the 1800s:

> The bourgeois society that… spouted from the ruins of feudal society… established new forms of struggle in place of old ones… [it] simplified the class antagonisms… splitting into two great hostile camps, into two great classes… [the] Bourgeoisie and Proletariat (Marx and Engels 1844:7).

In the postmodern era, new challenges have arisen and the social gap between the upper and lower classes is ever increasing. The banner of contemporary pluralism cannot mask the unequal distribution of economic and cultural capital, nor dilute the social reproduction or symbolic significance attached to it. The concept of class can still be defined by measures of socioeconomic status and thus, it continues to be very relevant in sociological discussions. Social disparity has not receded, it has metamorphosed and as Mullan points out:

> neo-liberal ideology, neo-liberal systems of governance, and neo-liberal policies have created the neo-inequalities that now define our age… as a set of public policies, neo-liberalism prioritizes downsizing government, reduction of social services and welfare programs, and the creation of new political institutions and practices to reify, promulgate and endorse neo-liberalism as a model vehicle for social transformation (Mullan 2017:112-114).

The neoliberalisation of society has not reduced social inequality, but rather, has symbolically transformed disadvantage into an individual problem. This individualism is used to justify contractions in the welfare system, in areas such as housing, and preserves "patterns of inequality based on the distance between classes" (Malafaia, Neves and Menezes 2017:44). For example, the value of, and the remuneration from, property assets has risen in recent decades and house prices and rents have escalated disproportionally to wage income (Mullan 2017). A polarisation of living costs and wage incomes is increasingly apparent, as housing is now commercially infiltrated and, as this research highlights, dwellings are increasingly transformed into a hybrid of commercial gain and domestic need, joining other traditional means of production as a tool of class division and alienation.

Qualitative research undertaken by Colic-Peisker and Johnson (2012) in Melbourne, Australia, examines housing tenures in relation to social class. They reveal that homeownership aspiration is "strongly influenced by… class position, defined primarily through family background and education" (Colic-Peisker and Johnson 2012:728). Class is not 'dead' as some theorists may contend, although class analysis has certainly been relegated "to the margins of sociological enquiry in recent decades" (Colic-Peisker and Johnson 2012:741). According to Colic-Peisker and Johnson (2012), social class remains and significantly influences the motivational force toward homeownership. With disadvantaged individuals in their 2012 research reporting that, "homeownership symbolises a rescue from uncertainty and social marginality", and middle-class participants describing "homeownership [as] an economic strategy, a nest-egg which will further enable them to pursue their creative solutions" (Colic-

Peisker and Johnson 2012:740). Housing tenure is found by these researchers to be a clear indicator of class structure and class reproduction in Australia, and other homeownership societies, and a significant indicator of life chances. Similarly, researchers Griff Tester and Aida Harvey Wingfield (2013) argue that, "to understand 'home' it is important to know the range of meanings that different people in different contexts give it", and these meanings can be related to class (2013:70). As an example, they maintain that a 'sense of home' may be experienced as a sanctuary for the middle classes, but perhaps as a "basic site for survival and staying out of poverty for many working-class families" (Tester and Wingfield 2013:72).

Reaction to housing circumstance is seen by Zavisca and Gerber (2016) to be subjective, and the match between expectation and eventuality to be of key consideration in levels of housing satisfaction. They maintain that the meaning ascribed to housing is as influential to resident well-being as the tenure itself (Zavisca and Gerber 2016). In examining the relationship between tenure and stratification, Zavisca and Gerber question "the evidence for causal effects" in respect to housing "quantity, quality and tenure", because they are culturally specific and influenced by social norms (2016:351). These views, regarding expectations and norms, resonate with the Bourdieusian theory of habitus (Bourdieu 1986), although this linkage is not noted by Zavisca and Gerber (2016). However, this connection is firmly made in this thesis, which contends that housing experience is significantly influenced by internalised expectations associated with tenurial norms.

Housing research undertaken in 2018 by Susanne Soederberg, observes that tenure insecurity is now commonplace and as a result, widespread evictions may be regarded as the "silent social tsunami of our times" (2018:286):

> Tens of millions of rental households across the globe, who are too poor to own their own dwellings, are continually exposed to the violence of contemporary capitalism marked by, among other things, a dangerous mix of impoverishment, austerity, debtfarism and speculation. These factors combined have greatly shaped the everyday lives of low-income people, whose places of survival have become increasingly transformed into places of accumulation (Soederberg 2018:286).

Soederberg credibly suggests that housing eviction has "become one of the most pressing social issues in contemporary capitalism" (2018:286). For the fundamental ability to retain a home is precarious and is overwhelmingly bound to increasing indebtedness, or to the whim of the

capitalist property owner, who has the autonomy to provide meagre facilities and exchange tenant security for financial gain, at will.

Reports from America-based findings, by Leung, Hepburn and Desmond (2020), suggest that the threat and actual incidence of residential displacement are increasing, are reaching a wider demographic, and are frequent and recurring:

> [This}challenges existing views of eviction as a discrete event concentrated among poor renters. Rather, it may be better conceived of as a routinized, drawn-out process affecting a broader segment of the rental market and entailing consequences beyond displacement (Leung, Hepburn and Desmond 2020).

Desmond (2012) explains the social cost of housing eviction:

> consequences of eviction are many and severe: eviction often increases material hardship, decreases residential security, and brings about prolonged periods of homelessness … it can result in job loss, split up families, and drive people to depression and, in extreme cases, even to suicide (Desmond (2012:91).

Research from America by Desmond, Gershenson and Kiviat (2015), highlights the connection between housing instability and community:

> Residential instability not only can adversely affect families, it can also destabilize both sending and receiving neighborhoods … a forced relocation increases the likelihood of not one but two moves, a single eviction may destabilize multiple city blocks: the street from which a family was evicted, the street to which the family then temporarily moves, and the street to which the family moves again … the enemy of civic engagement, neighborly trust, and local community (Desmond, Gershenson and Kiviat 2015:256).

Desmond and Tolbert Kimbro (2015) link housing instability to a loss of ontological security, life achievement and community contribution.

> In the absence of residential stability, it is increasingly difficult for low-income families to enjoy a kind of psychological stability, which allows people to place an emotional investment in their home, social relationships, and community; school stability, which increases the chances that children will excel in their studies and graduate; or community stability, which increases the chances for neighbors to form strong bonds and to invest in their neighborhoods (Desmond and Tolbert Kimbro 2015).

These reports from America echo the Australian position presented in this thesis, that housing precarity is widening, relocations are often recurrent and commonly destabilising, and that dwelling instability is likely to negatively affect individuals, families and the wider community alike.

The security of tenancies is not protected by a neoliberal state and little, if any, public provision is available to bridge the gap between housing and homelessness. This thesis contends that social positioning is clearly apparent in terms of property tenure and control, and that research into the nature of dwelling security, indicates that precarity is increasing and the social divide is widening, to the detriment of society.

Social Privatisation

In the midst of technological advancement, home has become the site of both actual and virtual connectivity, advancing its function as a place of public access. The invasion of technology into the domestic realm, within the last two decades, is observed by Atkinson and Jacobs as an “erosion of a genuinely private social self” (2016:4). This is caused by pervasive media and virtual social networks, which are “reconfiguring social relationships” and transforming the home into a “deeply social space” (Atkinson and Jacobs 2016:138). This eventuality changes and increases the significance of dwellings in the social world, because residents become recipients and arbitrators of the ‘world-wide-web’, and social life takes place virtually at home.

Following Daniel Bell (1973), Honeywell (2017) describes a ‘poststructural’ perspective of twenty-first century dwellings, which are termed as ‘postindustrial homes’. Such homes are described as:

> An arena of polymorphous sociability, consumption and production that can be analytically situated upon the axis of the private/public divide…Constitutive of both macro and micro processes, the postindustrial home acts as the ‘hub’ upon which the socio-structural infrastructure of so-called network societies increasingly relies (Honeywell 2017:150).

Significantly, Honeywell refers to a connectivity-transformation within the home, which reflects the change from industrial to technologically organised society, suggesting that:

> The role of the contemporary home may be best captured by considering it as a *mixed zone*; a space into which individuals, families, publics and markets assume common residency… The extension of the home into the digital landscape…[is] the renegotiation of traditional norms and values…[because] individuals today construct, manage and communicate via digital representations of self (Honeywell 2017:152-153).

Increased virtual connectivity within the home environment supplements and even replaces actual interactions; as we 'speak' to 'friends' on social networks, purchase home delivered goods and services from internet stores and work remotely. This is done "as a matter of convenience but increasingly as a matter of necessity, technological competence drives our lifeworld engagements" (Honeywell 2017:160). Honeywell suggests that "smart devices enable everyday individuals to produce their own evidence base, or access those created by their peers, in order to measure… variables best suited to individuals' wants, needs and capabilities" (2017:160). This proposes that the technological connectivity of post-industrialisation enables an expanded freedom of identity formation within the home. This freedom is reportedly available because "the sociological significance of a home changes...as our private, public and economic life is reshaped, the home becomes a site in which de-differentiation of society finds expression" (Honeywell 2017:161). However, Honeywell's (2017) observation of 'de-differentiation' does not consider, that the home invasion of virtual connectivity is also an effective tool for dominant rhetoric and stratified solidarity, and therefore, may further confirm the societal differences of the outside world. Furthermore, although virtual connectivity is pervasive, it is not necessarily understood, utilised or available to all. For those individuals who have limited technological understanding or restricted financial means (such as many elderly persons and others on low, fixed budgets), may not have access to the virtual world. Thus, technological advancements may be regarded as a further point of social disparity, rather than the fully inclusive phenomenon implied by Honeywell (2017). Purely post-structural explanations of dwelling environments neither acknowledge enduring social disparity, nor the power of ideological reproduction apparent within the home. In Bourdieusian terms:

> Given that the forces of the field tend to reinforce the dominant positions, one might well wonder how real transformations of relations of force within a field are possible. In fact, technological capital plays a crucial role here…but technological capital is effective only if it is associated with other forms of capital…So the changes in the field are often linked to changes in relation with the exterior of the field. To these boundary crossings must be added also redefinitions of boundaries between field: some fields

> may [actually] find themselves smaller… empirical analysis alone can determine these (Bourdieu 2005:203).

One cannot assume that virtual connectivity, however domestically pervasive, will be effective in minimising social disparity. This is because the effects of this invasion into the home, will depend largely on how the phenomenon is accessed, promoted and accepted within the existing structures of the housing domain. Furthermore, the 'technological turn' is complementary to a dominant ethos which encourages a rejection of traditional "modes of collective belonging, in favour of an ill-defined individualism" (Atkinson and Jacobs 2016:38). According to Bayırbag and Penpeciog (2015), virtual connectivity does not promote egalitarianism, instead, it enables 'capital engineering' and the fulfilment of two political objectives:

> to incorporate communal ties (family, kinship, religious and ethnicity-based networks) into the urban economic structure so as to contain the alienation created at the workplace; and to turn informal social networks (especially religious and ethnicity-based) into relatively safe channels of political representation. This strategy also propagates identity politics, which, in turn, serves to keep the masses (working classes) politically divided (Bayırbag and Penpeciog 2015).

Governmental promotion of individualism and the societal acceptance of a 'technological onslaught' within the home, is linked by Atkinson and Jacobs (2016) to social theories of the late twentieth century which explore social withdrawal. These theories detail a

> growing retreat in the West from the realm of collectivity …These changes can be identified as a kind of widespread social privatization in which the home, because of social, economic and technological changes, has taken on an increasing primacy in the lives of many people who are shunning social contact and face-to-face connections in the community (Atkinson and Jacobs 2016:37).

Theories of social withdrawal suggest a mass physical retreat into the housing environment, which results, in the further centrality of dwellings, as social life is accessed away from the traditional public domain and individuals strive to preserve their sense of place in society increasingly within the actual and virtual connectivity available at home. It is now common knowledge, that withdrawal from the social was rapidly accelerated in 2020 by the onset of global pandemic, the Coronavirus, when health fears and lockdowns saw nations like Australia enforcedly confined to the safety of home. At this time, connection to the virtual became essential to many. Significantly, within the limits of the empirical research here, virtual connectivity at home is conspicuous by its absence. Research participants are predominantly

only physically connected, often possessing neither the skill nor the opportunity for virtual connectivity.

Basic Human Rights

The discipline of sociology has recently developed a belated acknowledgement of human rights issues: "Although most classical sociological theory (e.g. Marx, Weber, Durkheim) looked askance [scornfully] on human rights (Turner, 1993), contemporary sociologists have begun to contribute significantly to the understanding of their development and of their evolving practices" (Dale and Kyle 2016:784). However, Morris (2011) maintains that although notions of social justice have generally evolved in Australia and overseas since the mid 1900s, no evolution is evident in relation to housing, because housing does not usually feature in social rights discussions. Morris explains that:

> advances in social rights do not usually extend to the notion that all citizens should have the right to adequate and affordable housing. This is viewed as an unrealistic demand, particularly in those countries… categorised as 'liberal welfare regimes'… Historically, the commitment of Australian federal governments to the right to housing has been minimal, and housing policy over the last two decades has contributed to a housing affordability crisis and a situation where a large proportion of low-income households have inadequate security of tenure. So, if we view housing affordability and adequate security of tenure as key features of a right to housing, a substantial proportion of Australian households do not have a right to housing. This lack of a right to housing has serious implications, adversely affecting the capabilities and health of many households and diminishing their possibility of living a decent life (Morris 2011:3-16).

Research by Pattillo (2013) highlights the commodified nature of dwellings in relation to housing as a basic human right. She quotes the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) to posit her position: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services" (United Nations General Assembly (1948), cited in Pattillo 2013:520). Pattillo (2013) suggests that housing commodification and human rights are incompatible because they exist in polar positions. This view is confirmed by Jessie Hohmann:

> The increasing recognition of the fundamental importance of the right to housing is tied to increasingly stark violations of it. In cities such as Sydney, Hong Kong, or London, those jewels in the crown of globalisation, housing is increasingly unaffordable, as it becomes financialized and hooked into global

> markets where its worth and purpose are divorced from the needs of those who live in it (Hohmann 2019:1).

Interest in inclusionary action regarding the concept of basic human rights has gathered momentum in some social spheres, however, this increased vigour may have come too late for some. Peim (2016) documents that a sense of nihilism is increasingly evident within our younger generations. This presents as an overwhelming sense of doom, that the older generations have corrupted the environment, the economy and society to such a degree that it is futile to strive for the future because the damage already done is irretrievable. Just such notions of futility are exemplified by the generally bleak dwelling prospects of future generations, which are discussed at length in this thesis.

Following Mannheim (1952), Hoolachan and McKee (2019) suggest that the blame for social, environmental and financial degradation is increasingly laid at the door of government:

> In contrast to the post-war period, the late 20th and early 21st centuries in the UK have been characterised by the advancement of neoliberal policies including privatisation of the housing system and employment casualisation. Consequently, there are growing socioeconomic inequalities between those born in the post-war period – the 'Baby Boomers' – and the younger generation – the 'Millenials'. Such inequalities have led to narratives of inter-generational conflict with Baby Boomers framed as jeopardising the futures of Millenials… Instead, many blame the government for not representing their interests. Thus, narratives of inter-generational conflict misleadingly direct blame towards the agency of Baby Boomers rather than political structures… similar patterns of inter-generational inequalities and narratives of conflict have been noted in other parts of the world including Australia (Cigdem and Whelan, 2017), New Zealand (Hurley, Breheny and Tuffin, 2017) and Japan (Hirayama and Ronald, 2008) (Hoolachan and McKee 2019:210-214).

Who is to 'blame' for present social conditions is now perhaps of secondary importance, as the pressing issue is to find solutions to growing disadvantage. Without a statutory human right to housing the status quo is likely to be maintained. Within this ethos, the prospects for housing are uncertain because future provision may be sustained only within a context of anticipated disaster, in which current conditions may be considered by many to be 'as good as it gets'. Society may now be poised for a new social epoch, an era characterised by a rejection of the individualistic ideals of society, which have minimised egalitarianism and have spawned a gradual erosion of the social. Housing is a possible vehicle for this reform.

Conclusion

The control of property has long been considered to be a defining feature of social organisation and its manipulation by government has been recognised to be an underlying force. Shelter has naturally been regarded as essential for all, but the reality of its accessibility is noted to be in the hands of the minority. Acknowledgement of the attributes of a home, of security, stability and parity, are a recent development in social enquiry, and the connections between home and the wider society are now better observed. Housing has evolved from feudal to public provision on to an individual responsibility and has been commuted from the domestic sphere to a vehicle a commercial gain. As a result, a crisis in housing has now infiltrated beyond the boundaries of class to generational exclusion and, far from being regarded as a basic human right, a dwelling is an increasingly inaccessible, economic commodity. In 2020 the home has become increasing central to everyday life, yet housing inadequacy, insecurity and homelessness are now defining features of our times, and this social catastrophe must be urgently addressed.

Chapter Three - Housing and Bourdieusian Theory

Introduction

This chapter examines links between housing and social outcomes, in light of the concepts of Pierre Bourdieu (1986). Bourdieu aligns social organisation with political rhetoric (sociodicy), social responses with ingrained dispositions (habitus) and disadvantage with disruptions in social positioning (hysteresis) (1986). He reinforces the evolution of the social sciences towards inclusivity and an expanded interest in the dynamics between combinations of social forces. Following Bourdieusian ideas on structure and agency, housing circumstance is related here to stratified and politicised social constructions, which are internalised within the home. Dwellings are viewed as containing and facilitating the eventualities of life, whilst enduringly signifying an occupant's position in, and membership of, society. Homes providing an orchestrated sense of place, which enables societal stability and provides a foundation for social participation. The social composition of housing is examined here, on the premise that social positioning within the housing realm is constrained by societal structures, is reproduced by collective ideology and is largely perpetuated by individual agency. This discourse explores how society is created and maintained within the confines of the, seemingly innocuous, basic imperative of a home.

3.1 Pierre Bourdieu

French intellectual and social theorist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) was one of the most influential thinkers of the twentieth century. Johnson (2002) notes that Bourdieu supported the subjugated and advanced understanding of social life by the influence of his perspective, which marries historical, economic, political and social elements of society. Bourdieusian thought acknowledges the power of material structures and extends structuralist interpretations of the social, by connecting the power of ideology with individual agency. This, he contends:

> overturns entirely the usual image of 'structuralism', conceived as a form of 'holism' implying adherence to a radical determinism, this vision of action restores a certain free play to agents, without forgetting, however, that decisions are merely choices among possibles, defined, in their limits, by the structure of the field [social arena] (Bourdieu 2005:197).

Bourdieu explains the social world as a 'system of preferences', operating within 'fields of possibilities' and posits that individual agency is constrained by objectified subjectivities

(Bourdieu 1986). He maintains that structures, structure society and that they rely on the 'complicity' of the agent to operate effectively (Bourdieu 1986).

Bourdieu's seminal 1960's text *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1986), is "named as one of the 20th century's 10 most important works of sociology by the International Sociological Association" (Johnson 2002:1), and it emphasises the social construction of preferences and aspirations. In *Distinction*, Bourdieu suggests that "cultural needs… are the product of upbringing and education", because the inclinations which are learnt within sites of "social origin", such as the home, define the way in which we perceive the world (Bourdieu 1986:1). Furthermore, he observes that "social hierarchy", the way in which we see others and others see us, is closely related to legitimised "modes of appropriation", which make "tastes" (or preferences) "markers of 'class'", within established codes of societal signification (Bourdieu 1986:2). The preferences, and therefore the choices exercised in agency, are located within structures which are laden with social meanings. These meanings are learnt primarily at home, where they are coloured by wider social influences, such as political rhetoric.

3.2 Sociodicy and Disadvantage

To validate the status quo within a nation, governments deliver a series of narratives to justify social phenomenon, Bourdieu (2005) refers to this as the tool of 'sociodicy':

> It is indeed clear that in modern societies the main agent of the construction of the official categories through which both populations and minds are structured is the state… A social history of the process of state institutionalisation of the family – which would be more radical than ethnomethodological critique – would show that the traditional opposition between the public and private conceals the extent to which the public is present in the private (Bourdieu 1996:24).

Over time, the rhetoric espoused by the leaders of a nation are ingrained into constructions of social life and ultimately assume the normalised, and therefore unquestioned, order of society (Bourdieu 2005). In *The Social Structures of the Economy* (2005), Bourdieu explains the influence of the State on the housing market:

> the market in single family houses is (as all markets no doubt are to varying degrees) the product of a twofold social construction to which the state contributes crucially: the construction of demand, through the production of individual dispositions and, more precisely, of systems of individual preferences – most importantly regarding homeownership or renting – and also through the allotting of necessary resources (Bourdieu 2005:16).

Housing the Homeless

Governance in the Western world is guided by neoliberalism; the “unceasing movement of profit making”, which applauds capitalism and defines prosperity in predominantly economic terms (Nikolakaki 2012:4). The success of a neoliberal ethos relies on the complicity of the masses to accept the status quo, and this is achieved by governments via sociodicy and the moulding of dispositions. Within a neoliberal regime, social welfare provision is at odds with capitalist endeavours, and individual responsibility is promoted above collective well-being. Following Marxist thought, Nikolakaki notes that “capitalism depends on exploitation and oppression… [and] sentences billions of people to a subhuman existence”, while operating in ways that “serve the elite’s interest - not in ways that foster social justice” (2012:4). Housing inadequacy, for example, both reinforces social disparity and restrains social engagement, due to the considerable time and effort required to achieve basic subsistence.

To ensure societal complicity within the housing realm, the data which guides resource allocation is readily manipulated by government (and others) to support the dominant narrative. In Australia for example:

> what counts as being homeless is a critical problem …homelessness tends to be defined restrictively by those on the political right so that responses are only considered for those sleeping rough (Atkinson and Jacobs 2016:61).

This narrow definition renders homelessness research and initiatives inconclusive and inadequate (Chamberlain 2014; Chamberlain and Johnson 2020) and supports the dominant rhetoric by validating political actions, such as the retrenchment of social housing and a general withdrawal of public provisions (Crawford and McKee 2017). The non-intervention of government in matters of parity, is illustrated by a key point emphasised in this thesis - marginalised dwellers are largely overlooked, although they undoubtedly suffer adverse housing conditions. The invisibility of the marginalised minimises issues of homelessness, and the necessity for governments to engage in addressing housing injustices. This complements the dominant neoliberal ideology because it supports a withdrawal of public engagement and a general ethos of individual responsibility for dwelling provision. In Bourdieusian terms, sociodicy is at work, colouring the views of a nation with rhetoric which presents social disadvantage as being ‘normal’.

Public Housing Residualisation

The State is by no means an impartial observer of the housing arena, but instead, is a manipulative force and the gatekeeper of housing provision and access. As Bourdieu has long considered:

> There are, no doubt, few markets that are not only so controlled as the housing market is by the state, but indeed so *truly constructed by the state*, particularly through the financial assistance given to private individuals, which varies in quantity and in the forms in which it is granted (Bourdieu 2005:89).

Where Australian governments may once have represented housing as being integral to the well-being of society and therefore worthy of public support, this is no longer the case (Ferreira 2016; Dewilde and Ronald 2017). In the 2000s, dwellings are seemingly devalued of social worth and are instead, regarded in primarily economic terms, as the "social project…of post-war politics" has made way for the "neoliberal economic project" of recent decades (Forrest and Hirayama 2014:32). In Australia and overseas, social housing is in decline:

> perceptions of public housing have changed from it being a secure base to avoid or exit conditions of poverty, to one that is a causal attribute of poverty rather than a shelter from the worst problems associated with it. The stigmatization of public housing fits within broad framework of neoliberal policy making by disparaging the achievements of the public realm and valorizing private-sector enterprise (Atkinson and Jacobs 2016:122).

The stigmatisation of welfare provision presents as a clear example of Bourdieusian sociodicy, in which governmental rhetoric reflects the dominant ethos and, over time, this rhetoric is internalised and normalised within society. For example, housing inaccessibility is compounded by the demise of the Australian Public Housing System, yet minimal social provision is now justified as a residual service. This is supported by the dominant paradigm and is found to bear considerable social consequences. Within "political discourse surrounding public housing [it is] consistently framed as an inferior form of tenure" (Arthurson and Darcy 2016:198). However, such rhetoric is at odds with this research, which suggests that public housing has the potential to provide homes with a tenure security akin to homeownership and to represent a source of individual empowerment and societal stability. Yet "social and economic class differences are skilfully managed by policy makers in ways that deflect any culpability" (Atkinson and Jacobs 2016:128). In consequence, housing assistance in Australia is not represented by public assets such as social housing, but instead, is reduced to welfare

payments. These payments effectively increase the wealth of the, already relatively affluent, private landlord, by reconstituting social welfare benefits as private rents. The tangible effects of Australian sociodicy, in relation to housing, present as increasing disadvantage and a heightened polarity of social organisation.

Through the complicity of the neoliberal project, detrimental social effects are sustained by the prevailing political rhetoric of economic rationalism and individual responsibility, and their widespread public acceptance. Via the successful infiltration of the dominant narrative into Australian society, using that which Bourdieu describes as sociodicy, explanations and justifications for housing inadequacy have been sanctioned, validated and normalised.

Symbolic Representation

The worth of a home cannot simply be assessed by its material function, for housing encompasses both physical and symbolic structure (Allon 2008). The material is apparent in the tangible sense of a dwelling providing essential shelter. The symbolic, is represented by the individual and collective meanings ascribed to homes, which convey socially constructed representations of, amongst other things, social stratification (Tester and Wingfield 2013). Symbolism is culturally specific, although it is presented as universal, and housing is a signifier of the social value attributed to its inhabitants. In the words of Bourdieu:

> Property expresses or betrays, in a more decisive way than many other goods, the social being of its owners, the extent of their 'means', as we say; but it also reveals their taste, the classification system they deploy in their acts of appropriation and which…provides a purchase for the symbolic appropriation of others, who are thereby able to situate the owners [or users] in social space (Bourdieu 2005:19).

Perceptions of housing are saturated in culturally specific meaning and they form the norms of society. These are engineered and sustained over time by the dominant rhetoric, and they infiltrate society and become the accepted order of things. This is exemplified in Australia by the representation of housing tenures, where 'The Great Australian Dream' of homeownership is revered as a symbol of worthy 'Australian-ism', while social housing, at the opposite end of the continuum, is portrayed as shameful dependency (Allon 2008). In Australia, home ownership remains the preferred housing tenure for the population majority (albeit in recent statistical decline) (ABS 2018). According to Allon this trend has been so passionately adopted, that abstention from home ownership for any reason is to be somehow "un-Australian", for owning a home is akin to owning "a stake in the country" (2008:67). Allon claims, that

homeownership has "become more than an enduring social ideal" and more "a sign of individual achievement and aspiration" within Australian society: "Homeowners are commonly depicted as winners, as stakeholders, while at the other end of the scale, those on welfare may be regarded as losers, who are just not interested in the long haul of struggle and opportunity" (Allon 2008:69). But the Great Australian Dream will never be realised by some and will be lost by others, on the non-lineal path of twenty-first century Australian housing. Wiesel elaborates as follows:

> Owner-occupation has been described in housing studies literature as the pillar of an 'upward' housing career, both the means and the end goal of the 'Australian dream'…In Australia, where owner-occupation is prevalent and is strongly supported by policy and cultural norms, the loss of ownership can be experienced as a very unsettling break in this promised upward career. It can be both the result of personal and financial difficulties, and also a turning point from which things 'go bad'. Whereas the dream of homeownership is founded on the promise of capital accumulation, the loss of ownership may entail not only loss of financial capital but also, in some cases, a sense of failure and disappointment coupled with external stigma (Wiesel 2014: 329-330).

Such ideals are so embedded in the Australian ethos, that they may be considered by society to be universal truths rather than constructed national views. Indeed, in the words of Bourdieu:

> The conservation of the social order is decisively reinforced by what Durkheim called 'logical conformity', i.e., the orchestration of categories of perception of the social world, which, being adjusted to the divisions of the social order (and thereby to the interest who dominate it) and common to all minds structured in accordance with those structures, present every appearance of objective necessity (Bourdieu 1998:471).

In the view of Dam and Eyles, "the locational and physical characteristics of a place are important… [for] social or symbolic meaning for identity and attachment" (2012:19). A home is more than just a shelter, it is also a base for daily life, and represents who we are and where we come from, and as such, plays a significant part in the foundational aspects of society. Mallett describes housing as:

> a place where space and time are controlled and 'structured functionally, economically, aesthetically and morally' and where domestic 'communitarian practices' are realized… governments of advanced capitalist countries such as Britain, Australia, Canada and New Zealand have actively promoted the conflation of house, home and family as part of a broader ideological agenda aimed at increasing economic efficiency and growth. These governments have attempted to shift the burden of responsibility

> for citizens' welfare away from the state and its institutions on to the home and nuclear family (Mallett 2004:65).

In recent decades, housing has been presented as an individual responsibility, and the welfare safety net has been severely reduced. Yet the loss of a home is devastating for some, for it entails not only the physical and emotional upheaval of relocation, but also involves potentially damaging social stigma and negative identity formation (Johnson, Gronda & Coutts 2008). These effects are compounded over time by insecure housing arrangements and homelessness. For those individuals losing home ownership, the Great Australian Dream may never be realised again, and rental homes will be sought in a climate of housing scarcity (Petersen, Parsell, Phillips and White, 2014). Yet despite structural inadequacies resulting in a housing crisis, the onset of adverse housing circumstance is widely promoted and perceived, particularly in Australia, as being an individual failing.

Political rhetoric influences public opinion and, notwithstanding evidence of a national housing crisis, in Australia there is said to be an "enduring public perception that the homeless themselves are to blame for their plight" (Johnson, Gronda & Coutts 2008:19). Johnson, Gronda and Coutts suggest that a section of the housed portion of the nation adopt an "individualistic perspective [that] echoes themes of the [reportedly] 'undeserving' poor that emerged in England over 700 years ago" (2008:19). Such social stigma is said to influence self-identity, because the notion of self is constructed by individuals while they grapple with manifestations of social exclusion. Social stigma is reported by Johnson et al to compound the problems already facing the disadvantaged individual, because some resort to denial strategies to avoid perceived social condemnation: mental illness may be denied, domestic violence endured, or rent arrears ignored, in some degree, to avoid acquiring a "stigmatized social identity" (2008:19). So great is our attachment to home, that our housing circumstance is perceived to be an extension of ourselves.

Symbolic representation, social stigma and social exclusion are all apparent within the housing domain. and dwellings are enduringly regarded as signifiers of social standing and worth (Rydin 2015). The way in which individuals perceive their identity, how they engage with the rest of society and how society responds to them, are all key social elements that underlie the more obvious housing attribute and imperative of shelter. Furthermore, these

ideologies are intrinsically bound to the sociodicy which helps to shape them. In this way, those in power hold considerable sway over housing perceptions and outcomes.

Individualised Society and Insecure Tenures

In the political and social ethos of individual responsibility and market-driven eventualities, fundamental housing need is of secondary concern. For within the ethic of individualism, structural forces, such as housing inaccessibility, are underplayed while adverse housing circumstance is largely expounded to be an individual failing. In complement, notions of social welfare are eroded, and the basic requirement of a home is represented as an overwhelmingly individualised responsibility. The way in which this position is promoted by governance, is explained by theorist Willem Schinkel:

> The state effectuates, through what Bourdieu calls 'state magic', an ontological transformation, a kind of transubstantiation, of practical objects and situations, promoting them to regularized situations vested with symbolic significance… the state occupies a position from which it is able to naturalise and legitimise the universal. It represents class domination as universal and it concomitantly represents itself as disinterested and geared exclusively to the public interest… [a] function of the state is thus one providing consensus, of guarding… the pre-reflective taken-for-grantedness of the symbolic order (Schinkel (2015:218).

Examples of the consequences of this misleading guise of 'public interest', are evident in Australia: Australian Public Housing has been retrenched, leaving potential social residents to compete in a market-based system (Nicholls 2014), and the symbolic and material value of a homeownership tenure, undoubtedly revered in Australia, is subject to narrowing accessibility (Beer, Baker, Wood and Raftery 2011; Crawford and McKee 2016). Homeownership is largely unaffordable and is achievable only for those with substantial means, forcing a larger and more diverse cohort of Australians to present as rental tenants ((Sawa 2015). Homeownership and social housing traditionally offer secure tenures, however, private rental agreements commonly do not. This is particularly relevant within the current Australian housing landscape, because rental homes may no longer be regarded as a temporary prequel to the permanency of homeownership (Martin, Pawson and van den Nouwelant 2016). Housing research by Hulse and Burke (2016) highlight structural failings in the housing system, such as the incompatibility between outdated, short-term rental tenures and the current propensity toward extended rental property requirements. Yet, they report that a "politics of inertia due to mobilization of vested interests" is apparent within the Australian governance and that without significant measures

to curtail it, this apathy is set to continue (Hulse and Burke 2016:166). As Hulse and Burke remark:

> Despite incontrovertible evidence of the strong association between private rental living and living in poverty over the past 40 years, there have only been three occasions when federal governments have made explicit connections between housing policy and this type of regulation [of residential tenancies] …legislative reform to improve tenant protection is always hotly contested as it runs counter to strongly held assumptions about property rights (Hulse and Burke 2016).

Successive Australian governments have avoided addressing the rights of rental property tenants and have demonstrated a generally outdated and fractured responsibility for housing governance. This governance is administrated variously between political levels and welfare departments and amounts to a general neglect of the housing arena. Notwithstanding, political rhetoric is largely accepted as fact and society has largely adopted the ideology of individualism, irrespective of it operating at the expense of the collective.

3.3 Habitus and Inadequacy

Social norms which are constructed and maintained on a macro scale by national governance, are sustained within the micro home environment by social reproduction. The ideals of parents and care givers are reproduced in their children, and these projections largely reflect the dominant ideology of the outside social world. Bourdieu's concept of habitus, explains how a sense of place in society is connected to the dwelling environment:

> Social space tends to retranslate itself, in a more or less direct manner, into physical space in the form of a definite distributional arrangement of agents and properties. This means that all the distinctions proposed about physical space can be found in reified social space… Each agent may be characterized by the place where he or she is situated more or less permanently, that is, by her place of residence (Bourdieu [1991] 2018:107).

Habitus is defined by Bourdieu as a "system of dispositions", that assume the "characteristics of the different classes and class fractions", which are represented and reproduced within contexts of social origin, such as the home (Bourdieu 1998:6). The habitus is formed primarily at home and it unconsciously guides the social agent to adopt preferences in keeping with their social position, because it determines what may be considered to be appropriate for them and their peers; that which is for 'the likes of us'. According to Bourdieu:

> the 'sense of one's place' is the practical mastery of the social structure as a whole which reveals itself through the sense of the position occupied in that structure… [it is] the sense of what one can and cannot 'allow oneself', [it] implies a tacit acceptance of one's position, a sense of limits ('that's not meant for us') or – what amounts to the same thing – a sense of distances, to be marked and maintained, respected, and expected of others (Bourdieu 2005:71).

The dispositions inherent in the habitus function as "a sort of social orientation, a 'sense of one's place'… It implies a practical anticipation of what the social meaning and value of [a] chosen practice or thing will probably be, given distribution in social space" (Bourdieu 1984:466). Furthermore, Bourdieu claims that:

> Dispositions are adjusted not only to a class condition, presenting itself as a set of possibilities and impossibilities, but also to a relationally defined position, a rank in the class structure. They are therefore always related, objectively at least, to the dispositions associated with other positions…This occurs even without any conscious intention of distinction or explicit pursuit of difference (Bourdieu 1984:246).

In this way, the habitus subconsciously creates a division of difference, which manifests as a general acceptance of one's position in life and the assumed position of others. Social positioning is largely unquestioned, but instead, is internalised as being somehow predetermined. This is explained further by Bourdieu as follows:

> The habitus is socialized subjectivity, a historic transcendental, whose schemes of perception and appreciation (systems of preferences, tastes, etc.) are the product of collective and individual history…it is socially structured and determined, and, as a consequence, limited …[habitus] tends to conserve whatever confirms it, thus affirming itself as a potentiality which tends to ensure the conditions of its own realization (Bourdieu 2005:211).

Pierre Bourdieu illustrates the idea of class preferences by use of a food analogy and what he perceives as 'distances from necessity';

> The antithesis between quantity and quality, substance and form, corresponds to the opposition – linked to different distances from necessity – between the taste of necessity, which favours the most 'filling' and most economical foods, and the taste of liberty – or luxury – which shifts the emphasis to the manner (or presenting, serving, eating etc.) and tends to use stylized forms to deny function (Bourdieu 1984:6).

An equivalence of this 'distance', in relation to class dispositions and homes, can be described as differing attitudes; between those residents who view housing as necessity and value it regardless of quality or form, as are distinguishable from, those for whom stylistic and

symbolic attributes are supreme and utilitarian aspects are largely unconsidered. Bourdieu's "fundamental proposition" is that "habitus is a virtue made of necessity" (1984:372). Because:

> Necessity imposes a taste for necessity, which implies a form of adaptation to and consequently acceptance of the necessary, a resignation to the inevitable… Social class is not defined solely by a position in the relations of production, but by the class habitus which is 'normally' (i.e. with a high statistical probability) associated with that position (Bourdieu 1984:272).

Individuals may well be restrained by material structures, but the ingrained values inherent in their habitus and in the 'class habitus' that is shared with their peers, are just as confining. Habitus normalises the status quo, by aligning aspirations with probable outcomes, by a "mastery of distributions which makes it possible to sense or intuit what is likely (or unlikely) to befall" (Bourdieu 1986: 465). This alinement strengthens over time and Bourdieu observes that:

> The dialectic which is established, throughout a lifetime… [means that] Societal ageing is nothing more than the slow renunciation or disinvestment (socially assisted and encouraged) which leads agents to adjust their aspirations to their objective chances, to espouse their position, become what they are and make do with what they have, even if this entails deceiving themselves as to what they are and what they have, with collective complicity, and accepting bereavement of all the 'lateral possibilities' they have abandoned along the way (Bourdieu 1986:110).

The habitus is reaffirming and compounding and, in the context of housing, insecure tenure arrangements, inadequate provision of facilities and even inequitable tenant/landlord power relations, may be tolerated. This tolerance and ultimate acceptance are likely to be more apparent in older age, as conditions become more ingrained and normalised over time.

Stratified moulds are formed and duplicated within the home, perpetuated by the material and symbolic representations present in the dwelling environment and in society at large. Ingrained societal attitudes restrain transgression from the normalised order, but that is not to say that moulds cannot be broken, or that learnt dwelling circumstance cannot be transcended, however the pervasive power of socialisation is so great that it renders this a difficult path. Deviation from a seemingly predetermined destiny is so unlikely, that Bourdieu (1986) has recognised this as a social phenomenon he terms the 'trajectory effect'. Diversion from an expected social path, is said by Bourdieu to be dependent on an individual's success in the extreme "reconversion strategies necessary" to escape their class position (1986:111).

Should a ‘reconversion’ be achieved, “one can physically occupy a location without inhabiting it properly if one does not dispose of the means tacitly required for that, beginning with the proper dispositions, for it is the habitus that makes the habitat” (Bourdieu 2018:106). Consequently, an individual’s position in society, which is reflected by their dwelling circumstance, is intrinsically at odds with other social positions and is, therefore, likely to be largely sustained.

Critiques of Bourdieusian theory are often founded in misunderstanding. This is not surprising considering Bourdieu’s “tortuous” embellishment of his text, combined with the French context in which his ideas were conceived and written, which have then been transposed abroad and translated into English and other languages (Laberge and Kay 2002:261). Concepts have been scrutinised for being deliberately vague, however this is perhaps because “Bourdieu is forcibly opposed to the dogmatism which eventually leads to a sclerosis of thought”, and his unorthodox, sociological style which “attempts to integrate subjectivist and objectivist modes of knowledge, and to link structure and agency”, that may sit uneasily with traditionalists (Laberge and Kay 2002:261). Notwithstanding Bourdieu’s Orwellian writing style and possible corruptions in translation, his ideas are relevant to any nation who has experienced social differentiation, and to any researcher who recognises the multiplicity of the social world, and who admires his relentless advocacy for the dispossessed.

3.4 Cultural Capital

Integral to the formation of the habitus is the Bourdieusian concept of cultural capital, for it informs notions of social positioning. In the words of Pierre Bourdieu:

> The social world is accumulated history, and if it is not to be reduced to a discontinuous series of instantaneous mechanical equilibria between agents who are treated as interchangeable particles, one must reintroduce into it the notion of capital and with it, accumulation and all its effects. Capital is accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its ‘incorporated,’ embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor. It is a *vis insita*, a force inscribed in objective or subjective structures, but it is also a *lex insita*, the principle underlying the immanent regularities of the social world. It is what makes the games of society – not least, the economic game – something other than simple games of chance offering at every moment the possibility of a miracle… Capital, which, in its objectified or embodied forms, takes time to accumulate and which, as a potential capacity to produce profits and to reproduce itself in identical or expanded form, contains a tendency to persist in its being,

> is a force inscribed in the objectivity of things so that everything is not equally possible or impossible. And the structure of the distribution of the different types and subtypes of capital at a given moment in time represents the immanent structure of the social world, i.e. , the set of constraints, inscribed in the very reality of that world, which govern its functioning in a durable way, determining the chances of success for practices (Bourdieu 1986:241).

According to Bourdieu, cultural capital takes three forms, embodied, objectified and institutional, and the accumulation of capital situates a person in the social world. The "embodied state" begins with "hereditary transmission which is always heavily disguised, or even invisible" (Bourdieu 1986:242). These norms are the habits and values which are learnt from our care givers, within sites of social origin such as the home. Embodied cultural capital can be regarded as the foundation of the internalised social image we hold of our ourselves within the habitus. Culture which is embodied in formative years sets the scene for anticipated social norms, these norms differ across individuals and collectives because differing versions of what is 'normal' are presented. For example, rental property and homeownership encompass very different norms in terms of tenure security, and therefore, the level of authority one might reasonably expect over one's home. Anticipated norms are formulated by homemakers and are perpetuated by the infiltration of outside influences. These beliefs are then held, largely unconsciously, in the habitus where they influence life expectations and aspirations and colour the way in which individuals perceive themselves and others.

While embodied culture must be learnt, objectified cultural capital can be purchased, as it is represented by 'cultural goods', the material symbols of social position. Bourdieu explains that:

> cultural goods can be appropriated both materially – which presupposes economic capital – and symbolically – which presupposes cultural capital. It follows that the owner of the means of production must find a way of appropriating either the embodied capital which is the precondition of specific appropriation or the services of the holders of this capital. To possess the machines, he only needs economic capital; to appropriate them and use them in accordance with their specific purpose (defined by the cultural capital, of scientific or technical type, incorporated in them), he must have access to embodied cultural capital, either in person or by proxy (Bourdieu 1986:243).

In terms of housing, the style and tenure of a home signifies a certain level of objectified capital, which in turn, indicates a social position. In Australia for example, this objectification is keenly observed in terms of homeownership as the Great Australian Dream, which sits in stark contrast

to the lowly social worth (or lack of cultural capital) attributed to public housing provision. Which housing tenure is adopted may appear to be an economic decision, however as Bourdieu clearly indicates, exposure to embodied capital is crucial to securing objectified cultural capital and in the case of this thesis, internalised expectations and aspirations are indeed found to be closely related to housing outcomes.

Finally, institutionalised cultural capital is signified by credentials and the acknowledgement from a third party, that a certain level of knowledge and ability in a given field may be assured:

> Because the social conditions of its [cultural capital] transmission and acquisition are more disguised than those of economic capital, it is predisposed to function as symbolic capital, i.e., to be unrecognized as capital and recognized as legitimate competence, as authority exerting an effect of (mis)recognition… and yields profits of distinction for its owner (Bourdieu 1986:241).

As with embodied capital, institutionalised capital must be learnt and acquired but unlike the former, the latter is consciously sought and “formally independent of the person”: “social alchemy produces a form of cultural capital which has a relative autonomy vis-à-vis its bearer and even vis-à-vis the cultural capital he [or she] effectively possesses at a given moment in time. It institutes cultural capital by collective magic… the power to show forth and secure belief or, in a word, to impose recognition” (Bourdieu 1986:241). Research for this thesis did not encounter formally assigned institutionalised cultural capital, however a self-ascribed ‘recognition’ is evident from landlords. Caravan park operators seemingly regard experience in the field as validation enough for their social position, regardless of the absence of any formal qualifications. Recognition of the habitus assumes degrees of influence from forms of cultural capital, the social worth of which, are ascribed by society and are mediated by an externally influenced, but ultimately self-ascribed, social position.

Complicity and Symbolic Violence

Following Max Weber’s (1905) insights, the consequences of social stratification are, in Bourdieusian terms, evidence of ‘symbolic violence’: The “violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity” (Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), cited in Burke 2015:395). The concept of symbolic violence explains how and why disadvantage and social injustice are tolerated:

> Crucially, in order for symbolic violence to be effective, it needs to be performed on people who are predisposed by their habitus, or unconsciously acquired cultural dispositions, to feel or adhere to it…[who] often perceive their subordination as 'natural' and engage in social practices that act against their own self-interests…This acceptance of the existing hierarchical status quo, even by those deprived by it, is what Bourdieu refers to as 'the paradox of doxa', whereby people internalise the discourses of the dominant, meaning that 'the most intolerable conditions of existence can so often be perceived as acceptable and even natural' (Bourdieu, 2001, cited in Conway, McDonagh, Farrell and Kinsella 2017:64).

The premise of symbolic violence, that of a fatalistic acceptance by the lower echelons of society of 'how things are', expands to the aspirations of the higher echelons in terms of 'how things should be', this is termed 'inverted symbolic violence'. Within his study of the aspirations of middle-class graduates, Edmund Burke (2015) contends that:

> much work on the reproduction of position within social space and the directive impact of symbolic violence has focused on the working classes…[however] *inverted symbolic violence* – a form of symbolic violence that works 'against' the dominant group and forms a position of 'what is for the likes of them' through the doxic expectations of members from particular dominant groups, incompatible with an objective reality… They are unable to temper or redraw their expectations… creating a prolonged, even constant, hysteresis of habitus via inverted symbolic violence (Burke 2015: 394-404).

The acceptance of disadvantage may be well established for those of a lower socioeconomic status, but for members of the middle classes if social advantage is under threat, it destabilises the normalised social order and incites a hysteria of habitus and a crisis in ontological security. Botterill, Hopkins and Singh Sanghera (2017) offer the following explanation of the concept of ontological insecurity:

> The concept of ontological insecurity was originally found in R D Laing's psychoanalytic work on *The Divided Self* [1960]. 'Primary ontological insecurity', he argued, is 'the feeling of a precarious and threatened sense of existence'… The state of ontological security, by contrast, is that which 'ordinarily' should exist to be deemed psychologically stable. For Laing, the everyday social context of individual experience is important, the spaces and others that occupy their worlds influence the way individuals make sense of the world (Botterill, Hopkins and Singh Sanghera 2017:5).

A crisis on ontological security emerged as a significant issue in the qualitative research undertaken here, manifesting as homeowner participant anxiety provoked by an incongruence between anticipated housing terms and actual dwelling outcomes.

The confidence derived from consistency of home is of paramount importance in obtaining and maintaining ontological security. Homeownership and social housing are signalled as preferable tenures because they traditionally enable enjoyment of a secure, relatively autonomous dwelling. Conversely, insecure housing arrangements foster displacement anxiety, due to disruptions in the accustomed order, induced by possible eviction and relocation. Where an incongruence of dwelling expectation and outcome exists, the result is anxiety, and the tolerance of adversity is an example of symbolic violence.

Biographical Disruption and Community Displacement

When housing is lost, the residents, together with their ontological security and sense of place, are inevitably displaced. The insecurity which leads to the loss of a home can be devastating, because the condition of being potentially homeless saturates everyday endeavours and imposes considerably limiting effects on both individual well-being and social engagement. These effects are the result of disruptions in individual biographies and, on a broad scale, the displacement of entire communities. Bourdieu (2018) suggests that social position is "inscribed in physical space" and furthermore, that those who are "'without hearth or home', without 'permanent residence' or *sans domicile fixe*, as we say in French, have almost no social existence" (2018:107). This perspective is echoed by Dawn Rothe and Victoria Collins, who describe the homeless as being "socially dead" because they "have little or no value based on capitalist measures of worth" (2016:1). The plight of those who are homeless, is seemingly considered to be secondary to the 'progress' of capitalism, as adverse conditions have become "an expected outcome of neoliberalism" (Rothe and Collins 2016:2).

Researchers Darab and Hartman (2013) relate housing regeneration (such as the speculative change of land use of dwelling sites, or the large-scale redevelopment of entire housing collectives), to affordable housing loss and the plight of the displaced residents. Housing development and the 'gentrification' of areas lead to improved, more desirable and therefore more expensive homes. In consequence, residents who are probably already in the most rudimentary and cheapest housing available in the area, are 'priced out' of both their homes and community, with few prospects of obtaining alternative housing nearby (Darab and Hartman 2013). When low-cost housing is lost, the availability of affordable dwellings is diminished and simultaneously, the need for alternative homes elsewhere is increased. Yet

within a housing climate of limited accessibility and insecure tenures, adverse housing situations are both commonplace and recurrent.

Sandel and Desmond (2017) emphasise detrimental health outcomes in relation to housing inadequacy, they report that:

> Medical researchers and clinicians are increasingly recognizing the importance of the social determinants of health, which include stable, decent, affordable housing. Housing problems have been associated with a wide array of health complications, including lead exposure and toxic effects, asthma, and depression …Moreover, the lack of stable housing compromises the ability of clinicians to treat low-income patients with medical complexity, not only because eviction and residential insecurity thwart treatments and continuous care but also because families are often forced to choose between medication costs or rent (Sandel and Desmond 2017:2291).

The extent of social disconnection imposed by housing adversity, is further explained by Darab and Hartman (2013):

> In general, the experience of homelessness has lasting effects…Primarily, it disconnects homeless persons from the life of the community, which compounds the difficulty in obtaining employment, education and maintaining contact with friends and relatives. It impacts on health, well-being and sense of identity. The experience of homelessness or housing difficulties can become entrenched, leading to a cycling in and out of homelessness on a more or less permanent basis, involving significant costs in health, justice and policing services… In comparison to the general population, health services are used more often by the homeless and recovery from illness and injury is generally slower. It is extremely likely that homelessness will induce or exacerbate poor health and for a great many, this will include their psychological health (Darab and Hartman 2013:353).

This position is supported by Atkinson and Jacobs, who maintain that:

> The destruction or loss of a home is one of the most significant and damaging crisis within the range of human experience…[Notwithstanding] the loss of domestic homes often occur neither as a random or occasional events, but as frequent tragedies that are structured and propelled by national and global economy and political structures, including the withdrawal of financial support for the vulnerable (Atkinson and Jacobs 2016:56).

This thesis emphasises the social consequences of housing displacement which result in instability, inequality and polarity, issues which are often neglected in discussions of housing relocation. This displacement is significant, because when a connection to a dwelling is forcibly broken and the attachment to home is severed, the dweller is rendered powerless,

estranged from their housing context and alienated from the social processes associated with that environment. In times of housing inaccessibility, a connection to social processes is fraught with difficulties, because a fixed abode is a foundational aspect of social connectivity and the material and symbolic representation of our sense of place in society.

3.5 Hysteresis and Inaccessibility

Housing access barriers are no longer an issue reserved only for the poor, they are now increasingly experienced by those of middle socioeconomic status. These barriers are experienced differently across status groups. By virtue of the habitus, adverse housing circumstance may be fatalistically accepted by individuals who have normalised marginality, via the processes of social reproduction (Bourdieu 2005; Conway, McDonagh, Farrell and Kinsella 2017). However, a widening of housing inaccessibility to the middle echelons of society presents as a conflict between dwelling projections and eventualities, resulting in that which Bourdieu (2005) refers to as 'hysteresis'; a response of anxiety, prompted by unexpected outcomes. According to Bourdieu, the "effects of hysteresis, of a lag in adaptation and counter-adaptive mis-match, can be explained by the relatively persistent, though not entirely unchangeable, character of habitus" (2005:214).

Research concerning housing aspirations by Crawford and McKee (2016), relate hysteresis to Australian housing outcomes. A generation of middle-income earners who might once have reasonably expected to achieve homeownership are now largely restricted to rental tenancy, as the Great Australian Dream becomes reserved only for the elite. Crawford and McKee refer to a changing "relationship between housing and social class", they explain that:

> The 1980s and early 1990s, [was] a period of continued expansion of housing markets to groups who were previously excluded. The problem of 'continued compound growth forever'…is one of sustainability on a number of fronts…This has resulted in a new relationship between housing and social class as sections of the 'middle classes' with a disproportionate volume and structure of cultural capital…'marginal professionals', can today only dream of the home ownership opportunities which were readily available to the working classes during the period of transition from an industrial to a financially based economy (Crawford and McKee 2016:5-6).

A marginalisation of professionals within the housing realm brings into question the traditional financial and social standing of many professions, as the worth of cultural capital is seemingly

devalued and increasingly below adequate levels in terms of homeownership. This is further explained by Crawford and McKee (2016):

> The cultural middle classes (those with high levels of educational and creative capital but little financial resources), it seems, are in something of a unique position in the current [renter] epoch. For the first time since the early period of the post-war settlement, the cultural middle classes – the schoolteachers, academics, architects, as well as public officials and senior third sector managers – are struggling to realise the 'aspiration' of home ownership (Crawford and McKee 2016:11).

In a society that values money more than knowledge, the diminishment of the latter seems an inevitable consequence of shifting social constructions, within which financial capital is supreme. This devaluation of cultural capital signals a possible disruption in traditional modes of occupation, as economic restrictions permeate those careers which may have once been considered sources of affluence. These restrictions impede both the attainment of homeownership security and any claims to the positive social signifiers attached to it. The gulf between renting and homeownership may no longer be bridged by aspiring Australians with middle socioeconomic status, but instead widen into an increasing social divide between those who have substantial means and those who do not.

Access to Australian housing ownership in the future is likely to be restricted to the elite. The limitations of dwelling access have escalated to the point of a generational exclusion from homeownership, with younger Australians largely destined to be members of a generation of renters, because owning a home is now largely reserved for those with access to previously accrued wealth. (Forrest and Hirayama 2014). This premise is reinforced by Coulter (2016), who suggests that housing access is a clear indicator of social positioning:

> Scholars and policy-makers are concerned that young adults' housing opportunities are becoming more dependent on their family background. This could hinder social mobility and exacerbate inequality…Evidence that housing is a major component of wealth holdings indicates that current and future socio-economic inequalities are shaped by young adults' housing trajectories (Coulter 2016:1).

In this context, a dwelling is no longer a home, but rather, it is an essential commodity needed by all but controlled by few and this is a sign of increasing socioeconomic disparity. Agency is stifled by inadequate housing structures, which are either in complement or at odds with anticipated dwelling outcomes. Exclusion and disadvantage are well trodden paths for the lower echelons, but those with higher housing expectations are not as accepting. The middle-

income earners who are excluded from homeownership face a re-evaluation of their social positioning, as they vie for rental property occupation along-side low-income earners. Decreased homeownership and social housing increases rental-housing demand, and consequently compounds housing inaccessibility. This in turn, ultimately forces the least financially equipped citizens into marginal homes and conditions of homelessness.

Housing as a commodity, rather than a home, presents challenges for the habitus for it disrupts the accustomed social order, insights instability and enables polarity. When changing fortunes cannot be aligned with expectations, the result is a hysteresis of habitus. The shift of the middle classes into renters, which increases the inaccessibility of rental homes and reinforces the social boundaries for the lower and marginalised classes, is a source of societal anxiety and a poignant example of the widening of social disparity.

Conclusion

This chapter has cemented the relevance of Bourdieusian theory on the subject of housing. Responses to dwelling circumstance have been linked to the power of social reproduction and the dispositions created in the home environment. Socialisation in the home has been observed to be politically influenced and to form the basis of anticipated norms, which are internalised in the habitus. The political rhetoric of individualism has been linked to housing insecurity, and dwelling inaccessibility has been associated with disruptions in social positioning. The interplay between structure and agency has been explored on relation to the Australian housing system, where generally bleak dwelling outcomes have been found. Structural issues have been identified and individual agency has been shown to be complicit in the prevailing paradigm of neoliberalism.

Chapter Four - Research Methods

Introduction

The empirical enquiry for this study is based on qualitative methods which investigate the personal experience of caravan park permanent residents and operators. It approaches data collection with the ethos of constructionist grounded theory and is focused on four caravan parks situated in North Queensland, Australia. Data collection uses the tool of semi-structured interviewing, which places an emphasis on the daily experience of caravan park permanent housing. The approach to data analysis supports the essence of grounded theory research, within which the processes of data collection, collation and analysis operate concurrently, and where the nuances of the research context are of primary interest.

Research Objective and Questions

The research objective of this enquiry is to gain intimate knowledge of caravan park housing circumstance, in order to situate this knowledge within the broader realms of housing theory and practice. To this end, research questions have been formulated as follows:

RQ1. What is the relationship between housing, homelessness and caravan parks?

RQ2. How is caravan park dwelling experienced across tenure groups?

RQ3. How does this knowledge aid housing reform?

This enquiry increases the presently limited examination of life in a caravan park, by illustrating the daily lived experience in parks and situating this knowledge within the social position of housing.

4.1 Issues in the Field – Caravan Park Housing

All forms of homelessness in Australia are increasing (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006; 2011; 2016). Australian homelessness has many guises, ranging from the widely acknowledged street dwellers to the less visible insecurely housed. Akin to, statistically defined, homelessness is dwelling marginality (Chamberlain 2005). In rural Queensland, the home of the researcher and the location of this research, marginal living commonly presents as caravan park dwelling. Those who live permanently in marginal park homes exist within a

seemingly invisible sphere between being adequately housed and homelessness, because hitherto, this dwelling circumstance has received little legislative or academic attention (Newman 2014; Eastgate 2018). This thesis seeks to address this neglect, by highlighting caravan park permanent residency and situating it within the wider context of an Australian housing system in crisis.

Public and privately-owned caravan parks in Australia, are readily used to house low-income individuals (Nelson and Minnery 2008; Newton 2008, 2014; Bunce 2010, 2015). However, unlike traditional housing, the standard of park accommodation is only mildly regulated, and as a consequence, the terms and conditions fall well below those regarded as culturally acceptable for permanent homes (Chamberlain 2005). The evolution of caravan park usage has transformed them from designated holiday destinations to sites of permanent homes (Newton 2008). However, legislation has been slow to adjust to these changes and therefore, accommodation of a temporary standard is legally used for permanent homes.

Permanent park dwellings generally offer sub-standard conditions and tenuous security of tenure. The living conditions are culturally inadequate; consisting of small, non-standard construction homes, that commonly lack private amenities (Chamberlain 2005). Caravan park tenancy arrangements are arbitrary and typically enable the eviction of individuals, and entire communities, at the will of the landowner. Notwithstanding a strong demand for caravan dwellings, park closures are increasing (Bunce 2010; Eastgate 2018). The social cost of resident relocation, which commonly occurs due to park redevelopment, or 'gentrification', is now a pressing social issue because alternative housing is increasingly inaccessible (Nelson and Minnery 2008; Newton 2008; Bunce 2010, 2015). Tenuous caravan park tenancy arrangements confer overwhelming control of the dwelling environment to the park operator and so, the daily experience of residents is significantly influenced by the conduct of management (Newton (2014). This authority is amplified by enduring on-site presence of operators and their power to arbitrarily evict people. Although managerial style impacts considerably on the daily lives of residents, operational conduct is only mildly regulated (Manufactured Homes and Residential Parks Act (MHRP) 2003, 2010). A lack of empathy is a recurrent theme in landlord attitudes towards tenants and it is accentuated by power disparity (Jensen 2008; Eastgate 2011). This relationship is acutely observed within this research; the landlord makes the rules and however unreasonable they may appear the tenant must concur

or vacate. Adverse landlord/tenant relations are pervasive in the private rental sector and are particularly problematic within marginal housing (Low 2008; Wiesel 2014).

As this thesis has previously detailed, housing encompasses material and symbolic significance, because it provides a physical and emotional platform for individuals and collectives, situating them in society and providing perceived security. Homes are precious, often regardless of their individual characteristics. When a home is lost it can be akin to losing part of one's identity, the part that serves as an essential base and foundation for daily living (de Jonge, Jones, Phillips and Chung, 2011). The loss of a residential base threatens the stability of all else, as significant energy and effort must be channelled into the process of securing and settling into a replacement. Dwelling related disruption is increasingly experienced, often repeatedly over time, and it is an ever-present possibility if tenure security is not assured. In marginal contexts, tenure security is tenuous at best.

4.2 Qualitative Methods

This study engages with qualitative research, to gain a detailed understanding of the experience of being housed in a caravan park, based on the premise that first-hand experiences may be considered as both insightful and credible data (Charmaz 2014).

> The word *qualitative* implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured… researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality… [and] *how* social experience is created and given meaning (Denzin and Lincoln 2013:17).

A quantitative approach could be useful for the purposes of this research area, and indeed these methods were readily used by Bourdieu, but the uncovering of deeper cultural codes and narratives was deemed imperative. It was considered that these nuances would likely be lost in a quantitative approach. Qualitative enquiry facilitates a close connection to the research field, and although statistics are useful indicators, they cannot capture the experience of individuals. This is the understanding which is sought here; to uncover what it is like to live on a daily basis within the confines of the research location. Furthermore, forms of data analysis which are traditionally used in quantitative research are suggested by St. Pierre and Jackson (2014) to be inappropriate for qualitative enquiries, because during these processes the essence of the empirical findings may be corrupted, rather than enhanced. St. Pierre and Jackson (2014)

maintain that quantitative data analysis involves a process of data dissemination and the obliteration of contextual factors, the latter being arguably the mainstay of qualitative research.

Constructionist Grounded Theory

Using a qualitative ethos, grounded theory was selected as the most appropriate method. Grounded theory focuses the foundational level of a social phenomenon, that of daily experience, and the procedural qualities of the method encourage the development of emergent themes. In this approach the research direction is informed by the research process, participants are regarded as the experts in the field, and the researcher as a facilitator and data collector (Charmaz 2014). By using this approach individual perspectives are given voice, and in the reporting, it is possible to situate the micro of social life within the macro of wider systems, in this case, Australian housing.

The nature of grounded theory has evolved, from its origins in the Glaser and Strauss (1967) conception of the method, which combined Glaser's positivism with the pragmatism of Strauss. The dichotomies of the two polar positions having been ultimately resolved, by the formation of two distinct perspectives, objectivist and constructionist grounded theory (Charmaz 2014). Epistemologically, objectivists and constructionists are in accord with grounded theory methods:

> the logic of grounded theory involves fragmenting empirical data through coding and working with resultant codes to construct abstract categories that fit these data and offer a conceptual analysis of them. Grounded theorists start with empirical specifics to move towards general statements about their emergent categories and the relationships to them… [Allowing] researchers to address problems in specific empirical worlds and to theorise how their categories may apply to other situations and inequities (Charmaz 2014:295).

The two distinct grounded theory approaches differ in terms of the researcher's role in the research process. Significantly, objectivist grounded theorists take the Glaser positivist view and assume that the researcher's position as that of a "neutral but passive observer" who "simply gathers data as the authoritative expert and active analyst" (Charmaz 2014:305). The "researcher stands outside the studied phenomenon" and develops "abstract generalizations" which are used to create "a middle-range theory explaining social phenomenon" (Charmaz 2014:305). In contrast, within a constructionist grounded theory approach, and following Strauss, existing theory is tested and expanded, and the researcher is considered integral to the

data so a 'relativist approach' is adopted. The constructivist approach seeks "interpretive understanding", informed by an insider's view and a process in which researcher and participant are joint creators of the data through interaction (Charmaz 2014:305).

> The constructivist revision of Glaser and Strauss's (1967) classic statement of grounded theory assumes that people construct both the studied phenomenon and the research process through their actions. This approach recognises the constraints that historical, social and situational conditions exert on these actions and acknowledges the researcher's active role in shaping the data and analysis (Charmaz 2014:293).

Procedurally, the research positioning of a literature review differs between the two perspectives; objectivists advocate a post-mortem review, while constructivists contest the wisdom and practicality of being uninformed, credibly suggesting that "theoretical agnosticism makes more sense than theoretical ignorance" (Charmaz 2014:206). This view is echoed by researchers Tomonen, Foley and Conlon who maintain that,

> The idea of the researcher as a blank slate is no longer a realistic option …The key premise of GT [Grounded Theory] is remaining open to the portrayals of the world as encountered and not forcing data into theoretical accounts: This can be done with awareness of existing theories. Indeed, we argue that this can be done more productively with such awareness (Tomonen, Foley and Conlon 2018:4-5)

Constructivist approaches, such as found here, maintain that it is important to be aware of salient issues in the field which have already been reported. Indeed, I familiarised myself with housing studies literature as a foundation for this thesis, during which a lack of knowledge regarding marginal housing was identified, enquiry was then narrowed to caravan parks as they were found to be a particularly under researched domain (Newton 2014; Eastgate 2018). In the case of this research, had a preliminary literature review not been carried out ahead of empirical enquiry, caravan parks may have remained unstudied. Parks lay in a largely unconsidered marginalised sphere, which is buried under layers of housing structures and is submersed by the dominant rhetoric of homelessness.

The place of established theory in a grounded theory approach is a contested area, with critics of the approach maintaining that prior theoretical knowledge is at odds with the method (Seldon 2005). However, this view is countered here by the understanding that "pre-understanding is vital in preparing an objective for a research project" and that the researcher must, from necessity, start from a somewhat informed position (Seldon 2005:123). Theory serves as foundational fodder to the research process and constructionist grounded theory sees

value in this prior knowledge (Charmaz 2014; Tomonen, Foley and Conlon 2018). The researcher recognises that pure 'theoretical ignorance' is an unlikely occurrence for a practiced sociologist because their core assumptions are rooted in established knowledge of the social world. For example, in this research, a Bourdieusian perspective is present in so far as it acts as a foundation for what might be known about the social world and the way in which it may be known. However, following the grounded theory approach, Bourdieusian theory was not made prominent in the data collection stage of the study, nor was evidence of it sought. Instead, theorisation was applied to empirical data later in analysis, once prominent themes had been exposed by the participants.

A Bourdieusian perspective sits comfortably within constructionist grounded theory because it is largely focused on what is happening in the social world, in terms of the dynamic between structure and agency. In this research, this dynamic underpins the design, as the structure of marginal housing is closely observed, and the participants keenly illustrate their views and agency in relation to it. Data collection was conducted in as unbiased manner as is possible and themes were documented, only in the later research stage of analysis were these themes theoretically situated. This alignment, and the development of established Bourdieusian concepts, aided the researcher's explanation of the structure/agency dynamic in a marginal context and in due course, informed the research recommendations. For as Bourdieu astutely observes, "No doubt one can and should collect the most unreal discourses – but only so long as they are seen not as an explanation of behaviour but as an aspect of the behaviour to be explained" (Bourdieu et al 1991:38, cited in Baraway 2017:277). In this sense, to merely observe a phenomenon is a fraction of the sociologist's work, one must then seek to understand and, where appropriate, endeavour to improve the social condition. In this research, this objective came into play post data collection, once the emergent principles of grounded theory had been honoured and the data had been subsequently aligned with Bourdieusian thought.

Under a constructionist grounded theory ethos, the researcher begins as an outsider but during the process of researching they are drawn into to the lives of the researched and become so intimately connected to the data source that they assume a position more akin to that of an insider. According to Breen, this approach allows "the researcher to conduct research 'with' rather than 'on' their group or domain of interest, which contrasts starkly with outsider-research perspectives" (2007:164). Indeed, within this study, I became temporarily immersed in the private lives of the research participants. They welcomed me into their homes and spoke

candidly about their everyday lives, absorbing my research presence seamlessly. Interviews were interjected by brief visits from neighbours, I was included in the ensuing conversations and an overwhelming air of communal style living was profoundly displayed. These interactions demonstrated the reality of the close-proximity living, and the combination of public and private lifestyles, as small homes spill out into make-shift awnings and adjoin the enforced communality of shared facilities and space. In this way, I became very familiar with the conditions and was able to situate this research firmly in the context of caravan park housing.

The Researcher's Habitus

As Babbie observes, critics of constructionist grounded theory question the validity of data sullied by researcher influence, yet no sociological enquiry can be completely objective because that which can be known about the social world, and the way it can be known, are influenced by the perceiver's perspective (2016). Berg clarifies this view:

> Objectively, social scientists should recognise that research is seldom, if ever, really value neutral. After all, the selection of a research topic typically derives from a researcher orientated position… Furthermore, all humans residing in and among social groups are the product of those social groups. This means that various values, moral attitudes, and beliefs orientate people in a particular manner (Berg 1998:126).

Indeed, the research topic addressed and sociological perspective employed within this study, have emerged via my perception of the social world. This perception is mediated by that which Bourdieu (1984) would have likely described as my habitus; the internalised experiences which influence my perception of the world. It is the conglomeration of my personal situations and the significance that I attribute to them, which create my perspective here. My conclusions are deduced from my own attempts to rationalise the circumstance to which I have been exposed. As Denzin and Lincoln observe, behind all research "stands the personal biography of the researcher, who speaks from a particular class, gendered, racial, cultural and ethnic community perspective… [which] configures, in its special way… the research act" (2013:23).

I have experienced a chequered dwelling history, within more than thirty homes, and have found that housing circumstance has influenced my life significantly. I have lived in some of the best and the worst environments and been variously positioned in the housing world. My experiences have left me thankful that adverse housing conditions are personally (hopefully)

now a thing of the past, but incredulous that such living environments persist for others. This thesis is founded on a principle that the home is an important place in the broader social sphere. On this premise, the increasing inadequacy in this domain has the capacity to place individuals and collectives in a vulnerable position, because the foundation from which social beings embark upon the responsibilities and demands of daily life, is fundamentally unstable. This premise draws the research to one of the most vulnerable of groups, the marginally housed, and what I consider to be a source of expert knowledge in this field: residents' first-hand experience of this dwelling circumstance.

Semi-structured Interviews

With a constructionist grounded theory approach, the research tool of semi-structured interviews is complementary because this approach encourages the free expression of ideas from interviewees, guided only by a broad area of discussion (Rubin and Rubin 2005; Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). In the words of Pathak and Intratat:

> Semi-structured interviews are used when the research would benefit from a fairly open framework. They are also used when more useful information can be obtained from focused yet conversational two-way communication with the participants. In a structured interview, it is usual to formulate detailed questions before the interview. On the other hand, semi-structured interviewing starts with broad and more general questions or topics… While preparing for such interview only topics and sub-topics are identified rather than specific questions. This gives the interviewer more freedom to explore issues as a matter of course rather than pre-empting the issues (Pathak and Intratat 2012:4).

Semi-structured interviews are conducted to allow freedom for the participants to tell their story, but also to allow the researcher the opportunity to tap into their personal histories and their relationship to external and internal structures. In other more structured forms of research, interview sessions may be guided by scripted questions, which lead the participants through a series of pre-determined themes. In contrast, within a grounded theory approach to semi-structured interviewing, a general area of interest is suggested to the participant, who is then free to direct the ensuing discussion to the themes that are especially pertinent to them (Charmaz 2014). By the adoption of this approach, emergent themes allow the examination of existing knowledge, the construction of new ideas and the advancement of social theory (Charmaz 2014).

Following the approach of Charmaz (2014), the research participants were invited to share any aspect of caravan park living that was of relevance or interest to them. They were initially prompted by this opening statement from the researcher; "You are free to tell me anything you wish about your personal experience of living [or working] in a caravan park". The researcher sought to create a relaxed atmosphere and to instil confidence in the interviewee that she or he was an expert in their field of park living. Clear statements regarding researcher intention, and minor interjection by the researcher during the interactions, gave the participants the power to lead the discussions, and allowed the interviewee to guide the topics discussed unabated. In the view of Brinkmann and Kvale, the flexibility of the semi-structured interview technique is transferable across successive interviews because in the absence of a ridged research agenda, emergent themes may be revisited over time (2015). Indeed, at the end of each interview the researcher briefly enquired about issues raised by previous interviewees, allowing participants the opportunity either to elaborate or to dismiss the themes identified by others. These topics were shared with the participants in the researcher's concluding summary of the salient points, accompanied by the qualifying question; "Are any of these issues relevant to you?". Thus, inviting the expression of a participant's personal ideas, while fully exploring the views of others.

One challenge of interviewing is said by Charmaz (2014), to be the accurate understanding of interviewee. Charmaz suggests the imperative of understanding the participants words and phrases and their associated meanings, and in this sense, confers a duty to the researcher to pinpoint and to accurately define those terms (2014). Similarly, the style of language adopted by the researcher when conversing with the participant, should be clear of ambiguity and be appropriate to the social setting (Charmaz 2014). This observation was conscientiously adhered to in this research and its imperative was highlighted early in the research process. It soon became apparent that the term 'caravan' cannot be used generically for park dwellings. This is because there is a hierarchy of park homes and 'caravans' are the least desirable. The more appropriate term for referring to a park dwelling, was soon deemed to be the all-encompassing word of 'home'. This was immediately adopted when one participant strongly objected to me, "this is not a caravan, this is a mobile home!" (Bill, park homeowner). Park home terminology was quickly revised and the (somewhat surprising) hierarchical nature of park homes, duly noted. Following Charmaz (2014), when engaging in unfamiliar social settings, the researcher is obligated to quickly and consciously attune

themselves with the world of the participants, in order to successfully engage, fully comprehend and accurately report, empirical findings.

This research champions participant views and enables the presentation of perspectives, beyond their usual position of voiceless marginality. Within the parameters of qualitative research, structures and processes are duly considered and research recommendations made, enlightened by individual and collective experience. There are mutual benefits are to be derived from this research and the participant, the researcher and society may all be beneficiaries.

4.3 Research Location – Four Australian Caravan Parks

Qualitative research was conducted in 2014, in a rural area of North Queensland, Australia. The research locations of Yungaburra, Atherton and Mareeba townships, are situated on the Atherton Tablelands. The Tablelands is a predominantly agricultural area comprising small, established townships, some 100 kilometres inland from the nearest regional centre. This region covers approximately 65,000 square kilometres and, at the time of this research, accommodated over 45,000 individuals, comprising 17,692 households (Tableland Regional Council (TRC) 2014). The inhabitants were housed in 20,267 private dwellings (86.5% being separate houses), 104 non-private dwellings and 960 'caravans, cabins or houseboats' (TRC 2014). These statistics are likely to underestimate the number of non-traditional forms of housing (caravans, cabins or houseboats), due in part to the procedures used to count them. As theorist Chris Chamberlain (2005) suggests, statistics must always be approached with caution. Nevertheless, the statistical information available imply that non-traditional homes are common in this area and that public housing provision is scarce. Since the time of this research, the region has undergone administrative changes in relation to local council territorial borders. This makes statistical comparisons of dwelling circumstances over time problematic because no comparable figures exist.

The climate in the research region is tropical, which results in varied and sometimes extreme weather conditions. Climatic conditions range from forty-degree heat, torrential rain and minor flooding in the summer 'wet season', to near minus degree temperatures over-night in the dusty, dry winter. In any event, the weather in the tropics cannot be ignored. Typical dwellings found in caravan parks are of simple construction, with commonly detached communal amenities that amplify the environmental and climatic conditions in which they are

situated. This is particularly evident when, for example, the only semi-private outside area becomes flooded by rain and the small, private inside area of a caravan becomes the only usable living space. Use of a toilet or shower requires a walk-through outside, sometimes adverse, weather conditions. Although caravan parks are predominantly situated in idyllically scenic, well connected locations, and are highly valued for these attributes, the dwellings and infrastructure within them are often less impressive, especially in respect of their resilience to the elements.

The generic term 'caravan park' is used in this thesis and includes all forms of land designated to accommodate individuals in caravans or mobile-home style dwellings. In the research region, caravan parks may otherwise be termed residential parks, home parks, holiday or tourist parks and the like. However, no distinction is made here concerning non-generic names, because all parks under scrutiny were found to house both permanent and temporary residents, regardless of whether their name implied otherwise. Indeed, the daily use of these predominantly 'mixed-use' caravan parks, was found to encompass transient tourism and long-term permanent occupation, the latter, in some cases, lasting more than a decade.

Access

A total of four caravan parks were researched for this study; two are publicly owned and managed by lessees (Park One and Park Three), and two are privately owned and operated (Park Two and Park Four). This mix enabled the examination of both public and private housing conditions, although the difference between the two was found to be negligible. All parks are located in a specific area of rural North Queensland. A combination of local council assistance, advertising and direct enquiry secured researcher access to these locations. My access to the two publicly owned caravan parks was arranged with the local council who had stewardship of them. I achieved this access via initial telephone calls to the council offices and a subsequent meeting with council officials. These officials sanctioned researcher access to their parks during a specified period, which they confirmed by a letter of consent (Appendix 2). These two parks were confirmed by council representatives to be sites of 'mixed-use', that is, parks that accommodate both transient tourists and permanent residents.

Access to the two private caravan parks was gained. One park was accessed by newspaper advertisements placed in local 'free' publications (Appendix 1). Two slightly

different newspaper advertisements were published; one directed specifically to park residents, and the other targeting park management. Four park homeowners from one park responded to these advertisements, no responses were received from park rental tenants or operators. Access to the management team of the second privately owned caravan park was achieved by direct telephone contact with the park owner. This park was specifically targeted because, during the early interview process, two resident participants had recommended its inclusion. The managers of this park were very interested in the study and readily agreed to participate. Consequently, this research is representative of four caravan parks encompassing both public and private park dwelling contexts, and rental tenant, homeowner and operator perspectives.

Sampling

This research engages a sample population of individuals who live permanently in a caravan park in the Tablelands region of North Queensland. The participants have the commonality of caravan park dwelling, however, within this group various housing positions are held; those of rental tenant, homeowner and landlord. The representation of these differing tenures is considered to be essential in gaining knowledge of all styles of park living, and a vital element of this study in terms of understanding housing circumstance. Access to the target population within the four caravan parks was achieved, by the successful theoretical sampling of twenty-two research participants: eighteen caravan park residents, comprising both homeowners and rental tenants, and four caravan park operators. Theoretical sampling is commonly used within grounded theory methods and has been defined by Glasser and Strauss (1967) as:

> the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyses his [*sic*] data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory further' (1967:45). The initial case or cases will be selected according to the theoretical purposes they serve, and further cases will be added in order to facilitate the development of the emerging theory. As theory development relies on comparison cases will be added to facilitate this (Blaikie 2005:206).

Guided by the ethos of theoretical sampling, the initial research participants were either referred to me by local council representatives, prompted by my request for insider knowledge of caravan park living, or they volunteered their participation by responding to detailed newspaper advertisements. All other research participants were referred to me by people I had

already interviewed, and I continued this referral process until it yielded several members of all three tenure groups. The participant sample size was determined, to some extent, by the logistical limitations of the study but, within these confines, theoretical saturation was reached. Interviews were undertaken until themes became recurrent and ceased to be emergent, and therefore, the data collected provides a comprehensive view of park living across tenures. The anonymity of all research participants is protected by the use of pseudonyms and these ascribed names are used in the following outline of the participants, and indeed, throughout this thesis.

4.4 Research Participants

The majority participant group in this study are retirees who live alone, the eldest of whom, Steven, is over eighty years of age. There are also minorities, including one single mother, Sue, who rents an overcrowded van with her two pre-school aged children and her ageing mother Nancy. A middle-aged woman, Sandra, with a family of three. Three married couples, Pip and Ruby, Bob and Carry, and Clive and Erin, and one single, pre-retirement age person, Chad, are also members of the participant sample. Only four of the resident participants are working, Pip, Ruby, Sid and Julie, the rest fund their lives exclusively from welfare payments. All researched residents have lived in their present park homes for several years. The four park operators involved in this research are two married couples. One partnership, Melanie and Ken, have recently entered the caravan park industry and they operate a public park which they lease from the local authority. The second couple, Charles and Petra, are owner/operators who have lived and worked in their caravan park for over a decade.

Table 1. Research Participants

Participants	Gender	Age	Tenure Status	Household
Steven	M	>65	Rental Tenant	Lone Occupant
Nancy	F	<65	Rental Tenant	Family
Sue	F	>65	Rental Tenant	Family
Sandra	F	<65	Rental Tenant	Family
Chad	M	<65	Rental Tenant	Lone Occupant
Tom	M	>65	Rental Tenant	Lone Occupant
Karin	F	>65	Rental Tenant	Lone Occupant
Will	M	>65	Homeowner	Lone Occupant
Sid	M	<65	Homeowner	Lone Occupant
Julie	F	>65	Homeowner	Lone Occupant
Jade	F	>65	Homeowner	Lone Occupant
Bill	M	>65	Homeowner	Lone Occupant
Bob	M	>65	Homeowner	Couple
Carry	F	>65	Homeowner	Couple
Clive	M	>65	Homeowner	Couple
Erin	F	>65	Homeowner	Couple
Pip	M	<65	Homeowner	Couple
Ruby	F	>65	Homeowner	Couple
Melanie	F	<65	Operator	
Ken	M	<65	Operator	
Charles	M	>65	Operator	
Petra	F	>65	Operator	

4.5 Data Collection and Analysis

Within the field work for this study, I engaged in both informal and formal conversations with participants, in order to gain insight into the world of living in a caravan park. My formal data collection from residents and management took place within twenty-two, semi-structured interviews of one to two-hours in duration. During that time, participants were invited to share their personal experience of caravan park living. Fourteen were interviewed in their park environments. Eight other interviews took place in cafes and private apartments because certain participants felt uncomfortable about the researcher visiting their homes. Reportedly, this was due to fear of repercussions from the management, these alternative locations did not appear to hinder the research process. All research participants were articulate and eager to impart their story within the interview setting.

Prior to each interview the participants were informed about my study with the assistance of an ethically approved *Information Sheet* (Appendix 4), after which they were invited (and required) to officially give *Informed Consent* regarding their participation (Appendix 3). Interviews consisted of participant driven discussions, during which familiar and emergent themes were identified. All interviews were recorded to ensure accurate collection of data, using one of the most discrete of audio instruments, a mobile phone. The use of a mobile phone was considered by the researcher to be far more informal than larger technical equipment and potentially less intimidating. The presence of a recording phone placed casually on a table (turned to 'flight mode' to avert incoming calls), was soon forgotten and was in no way intrusive or detrimental to the research process. The sum of the interview data and additional researcher observation provides a comprehensive overview of caravan park permanent housing.

An inductive research strategy was adopted to ascertain salient themes, as described by Blaike:

> The inductive research strategy starts with a collection of data and then proceeds to derive generalisations… The aim is to determine the nature of regularities, or networks of regularities, in social life… The deductive research strategy adopts a very different starting-point… [it] begins with some regularity that has been discovered and which begs explanation… The researcher has to find or formulate a possible explanation, a theoretical argument for the existence of the behaviour or social phenomenon under consideration (Blaike 2005:25).

Jones and Alony (2011), emphasise that the grounded theory approach to data collection and analysis is a concurrent process. Following this approach, research for this study began with open codes, that is, general areas of enquiry which situated the work in a qualitative setting Initial codes were concerned with the tenure terms and living conditions of caravan park housing. Informed by initial and ongoing data collection, a process of selective coding was initiated, this involved the identification of dominant themes and a densification of data into core categories (Jones and Alony 2011). Emergent core categories included community, tenure insecurity and power disparity. Finally, theoretical coding took place, in which core categories were examined for evidence of processes and relationships to theory (Jones and Alony 2011). The final analysis highlighted the social position of housing, in a context of inadequacy and insecurity, and in connection to a hierarchy of tenure.

Table 2. The Process of Grounded Theory (adapted from Jones and Alony 2011:107).

Data Collection ↓ Initial Codes ↓ Emerging Core Categories ↓	Open Coding constant comparison
Data Collection	Theoretical Sampling
↓ Densification and Saturation of Data ↓	Selective Coding constant comparison
Social Processes ↓ Theoretical Model	Theoretical Coding analysis and theorisation links to existing literature

As Earl Babbie suggests, in qualitative research "data collection, analysis and theory are more intimately intertwined", than those within quantitative enquiry (2016:382). Certainly, data generation, application of theory and analysis here have evolved in a non-lineal fashion; while my focus was consistent in acquiring knowledge concerning caravan park housing, certain directives emerged, the most influential of which is the significance of housing tenure on dwelling experience. Ultimately, these themes were connected to the theoretical foundations

of the study, related to broader issues evident in the housing realm and finally, explored in terms of opportunities for the practical application of this knowledge.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

In order to respect the integrity of the data and ensure that any researcher preconceptions were held in check, I reflected often with my supervisors and with others on the data, to ensure that a process of reflexivity, as defined by Ibrahim and Edgley (2005), was well in place.

> Reflexivity is a self-awareness practice achieved by directing an analytical gaze into the self in an attempt to understand the dynamics between the researcher and the researched. This should extend beyond self-awareness to an in-depth understanding of the social context of the phenomena of interest and the participants of the study through examining the dynamics between them as researched and the researcher… Reflexivity is considered to be one of the core bastions of rigor in qualitative research; it involves researchers seeking to make sense of their influence either intentionally or unintentionally over the research process (Ibrahim and Edgley 2005).

Attention to reflexivity, together with my research knowledge and ability, narrows the possibility of a biased perspective. Furthermore, my perception is additionally informed by experts, who have knowledge of resident, landlord and scholarly perspectives of a housing context hitherto unknown to me. Together these influences form a very solid basis for data veracity. Furthermore, the processes inherent in grounded theory research, in which the researcher constantly travels back and forth between themes, categories and concepts, whilst simultaneously collecting data and scrutinising its fruits, lays a foundation for both comprehensive data compilation and an accurate analysis of empirical evidence.

The research contributing to this study was undertaken within the strict ethical guidelines adopted by *James Cook University*, Queensland, Australia. The position of social researchers, in relation to ethical considerations, is clearly stated by Berg:

> Social scientists, perhaps to a greater extent than the average citizen, have an ethical obligation to their colleagues, their study population, and the larger society. The reason for this is that social scientists delve into the social lives of other human beings. From such excursions into private social lives, various policies, practices, and even laws may result. Thus, researchers must ensure the rights, privacy, and welfare of the people and communities that form the focus of their studies (Berg 1998:31).

The research risk of breaking confidentiality, of revealing the identity of research participants, is an issue for ethical review boards and researchers alike. Protocols for retaining the anonymity of participants were strictly adhered to within my study, including the use of fictitious participant names and secure data storage. However, "there can be no absolute guarantee of confidentiality because records can [for example] be legally subpoenaed", thus allowing the capacity to link individuals to recorded data (Corbin and Morse 2003:336). Furthermore, there is also a possibility that identities may be revealed within subsequent research publications, should anonymous participant quotations or descriptions be recognised by readers (Corbin and Morse 2003:337). Thus, while considerable measures have been undertaken to conceal the identity of participants throughout this research process and beyond, there remains some risk of broken anonymity within research participation.

Conclusion

The purpose and significance of this study have been explained and the methodological and theoretical foundations have been outlined. A Bourdieusian sociological perspective has been applied. Descriptions of the research location and participants have been presented, together with the rationale concerning their sociological significance. The data collection, collation and analysis procedures have been explained, and ethical considerations have been considered. The central theme of this thesis, the foundational quality of home, has been reinforced, and housing stability has once again been presented as a societal imperative. Caravan parks have been identified as a valuable research area because regardless of the marginality of park homes, the continued use of these dwellings is now vital in the context of an Australian housing system in crisis.

This thesis now continues with an examination of the social implications of housing inadequacy. This includes: a narrowing of housing access, an under regulation of marginal dwellings, increasing instability and conditions of homelessness, and a somewhat bleak housing trajectory for rising numbers of Australians. The findings and conclusions drawn from this research are fully reported in the following chapters, where the data is situated within daily experience and is applied to wider considerations relating to the Australian housing context. Having set the scene of this research, this thesis proceeds with an examination of Australian housing and homelessness, and in doing so, cements the imperative for this research.

Chapter Five - Housing in Australia

Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of Australian housing provision, via a sociological examination of the tenures of homeownership, public housing and private rental accommodation. These tenures are linked to social outcomes and are related to political influences of Australian housing governance of the last twenty-five years. During this time housing has been overwhelmingly individualised and commodified, and dwellings have migrated from an essential human requirement to a vehicle of monetary gain and an indicator of increasing social polarisation.

Within an Australian context, the impact of inaccessibility and insecurity are documented here across tenures, and the politicised economic role of housing is juxtaposed with its position as a societal imperative. This juncture illustrates the pervasive and socially detrimental ramifications of an inadequate housing system, exposing the associated underlying forces which threaten Australian society. The motivations and efficacy of housing initiatives are examined in relation to the use of sociodicy, that is, the rhetoric that accompanies housing governance and which has the capacity to infiltrate society to such a degree, that it becomes accepted as a societal norm. In order to present a comprehensive account of Australian housing governance from the mid 1990s to 2020, a period in which housing was transformed from a basic social requirement to a vehicle of capitalist wealth, this review offers a summary of governmental ethos, policy focus and rhetoric over these decades. It details the social impact of the Howard (1996-2007) and Rudd (2007-2010) Governments, which are both noted to be of prominent influence in the recent history of Australian housing. Focus is then given to the treatment of housing by the subsequent four Australian prime ministers, Julia Gillard (2010-2013), Tony Abbot (2013-2015), Malcom Turnbull (2015-2018) and Scott Morrison (2018-). Finally, Australian dwellings of 2020 are situated within a context of housing crisis and the role of adequacy, in relation to societal stability and parity, is linked to Australian governance, as a prominent orchestrator of housing outcomes.

5.1 Howard Government

The Howard Government (Liberal-National Coalition 1996-2007) followed the political principles of economic rationalism, already set in motion in Australia and overseas

(National Archives of Australia 2012). Within this neoliberal context sat housing, situated in a transient position moving from the traditional and most basic use as a means of shelter, to that of a vehicle of monetary gain, and with minimal governmental involvement regarding direct housing provision:

> From 1996, the Howard Liberal-National Coalition Government dispensed with the housing portfolio entirely, with only the Social Services Minister having a formal, narrowly defined housing brief in relation to social housing policy (conducted largely through the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, a long-standing tied-grant funding arrangement, much reduced by the Howard Government (Martin, Pawson and van den Nouwelant 2016:14).

Home and financial investment became synonymous in the late 1990s. Australia is reported to have transformed into a 'renovation nation', with many individuals choosing to upgrade their homes in the hope of maximising capital gain (Allon 2008). A social consequence of this renovation trend is said by Allon (2008) to be a disruption of 'residential filtering', that is, cheaper homes become less available because households are less likely to trade up to more expensive properties and instead, refurbish to improve the value of their existing dwelling. This has the consequence of narrowing access to homeownership because, according to Allon:

> Continually improved (and hence continually more expensive) houses reduce the options for lower income families and first home buyers who traditionally used low-priced (un-renovated) housing as an entry point into home ownership. Choosing to renovate rather than move to a new address pushes up prices and contributes to the loss of affordable housing for those who need it most (Allon 2008:39).

Social justice outcomes of the Australian renovation frenzy are noted to include imposed fringe dwelling away from essential services and resources. This happens when the gentrification of central locations takes place, property improvements attract inflated rents and property prices, which in turn, forces low-income earners out of the area, often away from vital social infrastructure and existing social connections (Baum and Hassen 1999).

The Howard Government of the turn of the century is said by Allon (2008:52), to have redefined Australia as a "mortgage nation", because while property prices soared, increasing debt became a way of life. Furthermore, during the 1990s "many households were effectively excluded from access to home purchase because of the high cost of homes and their inability to amass a deposit due to high prices and rents" (Beer, Baker, Wood and Raftery 2011:1174). This widened the social divide, as homeownership became beyond the realm of possibility for

increasing numbers of the Australian population (Allon 2008:55). In addition, homeownership policies also impacted on rental tenants. By the turn of the century, rental housing was no longer a "transitional form of housing", perhaps utilised on the way to the Great Australian Dream of homeownership but was instead a probable lifetime situation (Allon 2008:63). The aspiration of social status and housing security, as manifested in homeownership, became increasingly unobtainable, and younger persons were destined to become a generation of rental tenants competing for scarce housing resources. The housing field evolved, promoted by the sociodicy of individualism, but policy neglected to consider consequences in the rental domain, as Johnson (2012) explains:

> In the 1980s, housing was relatively affordable and finding housing comparatively easy. This has changed… house prices have risen dramatically across the country and, despite the global financial crisis, remain relatively high…As a result of the sustained appreciation in house prices, many people can no longer afford to buy a home. This has put increased pressure on the private rental market, literally squeezing out the most vulnerable households. With few options in the private rental market and a small, highly residualised social housing system (about 5% of Australia's housing stock), services have increasingly struggled to find affordable housing (Johnston 2012:188).

The Howard Government approach to housing sat within an overarching goal of economic growth and, it has been said, to "virtually ignore the homeless, taking the view that any form of social welfare expenditure undermined economic competitiveness" (Johnson 2010:54). Significantly, homelessness was increasingly regarded "as a result of individual problems", despite research evidence to substantiate the claim that "a lack of affordable housing is both a significant cause of homelessness and a key factor in perpetuating homelessness" (Johnson 2010:54).

Allon notes that within the context of a global economic boom, "by 2005 Australians were two and a half times richer than they'd been in 1990. Real wealth increased more in the short space of fifteen years than it had in the previous thirty" (2008:206). Yet this abundance of personal wealth (and a simultaneous paucity of national debt) did not commute to social responsibility, instead, seemingly "blinded by the appreciation of our assets, we largely ignored attacks on our rights and the grinding down of our sense of obligation and ethical responsibility to others" (Allon 2008:207). It is this political and social context, which saw the succession to the Australian leadership of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, in 2008.

5.2 Rudd Government

Kevin Rudd was the first Australian Prime Minister to identify housing and homelessness as governmental priorities, and Australian Housing Policy may be said to have only begun in earnest with the Rudd Labour Government and the instigation of the 2008 White Paper, *The Road Home* (Milligan & Pinnegan 2010).

In January 2009, as part of Rudd's 'Road Home initiative, The National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) replaced The Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement and The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (Milligan & Pinnegan 2010). Crucially, the NAHA identified housing as one of the five core national service delivery areas, together with education, health, employment and disability services (Milligan & Pinnegan 2010). Remarkably, until this time housing was not awarded the same social and political significance as other foundational social structures. Thus, this belated focus on housing indicated a vital shift in Australian political awareness, and the impact of the Rudd Government focus is reported by Parsell and Jones to be important, as a positive "social and policy progression" (2014:432). Rudd achieved this positive progression via a skilful application of ideology, which presented social provision as being compatible with the, seemingly opposing, national rhetoric. According to Parsell and Jones:

> compared to the former crisis-based system, contemporary [Rudd] Australian approaches to homelessness are underpinned by a different set of normative ideas and assumptions about the problem of homelessness and the role of state intervention…Australia has adopted an approach to end homelessness based on three key arguments emphasizing morality, economics and the role of evidence informing the policy formation and implementation process ..By framing homelessness in tension with the much idealized notion that Australians value a fair go for all, Kevin Rudd was able to locate his focus on homelessness within a moral framework… Sitting alongside moral arguments, justifications for efforts to reduce homelessness drew on assertions of economic necessity and economic responsibility…the need to end and prevent homelessness as cost effective… Complementing moral and economic arguments, ending homelessness as part of an agenda of improving governance and public policy-making, draws heavily on the idea of evidence and research. Australian governments have cited the importance of evidence-based policy as both a reason to end homelessness and as a means toward achieving homelessness reductions (Parsell and Jones 2014:432).

The *National Affordable Housing Agreement* may be said to be the first significant attempt by Australian Governments to provide housing with due focus, regarding both governmental policy and legislative continuity. Although policy under the NAHA familiarly

focused on ‘joining-up’ services, one aspect of its approach differs considerably from those that had gone before. Homelessness was now no longer viewed to be just about temporary solutions and “providing crisis and transitional housing”, but also crucially concerned “the provision of housing that is permanent and affordable” (The Cairns Institute 2014:44). This initiative signified a public responsibility for housing the nation and confirmed homelessness as an enduring social issue, not merely a transient individual problem.

The proof of success for any policy is how effectively it accomplishes what it set out to do. Rudd’s White Paper, *The Road Home,* outlined clear objectives in relation to homelessness: by 2020, to reduce all homelessness by fifty percent and an interim target for 2013 to reduce “overall homelessness by 20 percent” and “primary homelessness by 25%” (Flatau 2009:9). However, the efficacy of the Rudd Government initiative is not easily discernible, because it is assessed largely in relation to national *Census* data. As Parsell and Jones highlight, the national *Census* has “limited capacity…to provide coherent indications”, due to the data being collected only every five years (2006, 2011 and 2016), making an analysis of the “2013 interim benchmark” problematic (2014:437). Furthermore, because the “setting of interim targets did not take into account how they would be measured”, the efficacy of *The Road Home* was assessed using outdated statistics and the results were said to be bleak (Parsell and Jones 2014:437):

> In a report on the national performance of the NPAH [National Affordable Housing Agreement], the Council of Australian Governments (2013) noted that between 2006 and 2011, the number of people enumerated as homeless increased … rather than meeting the interim target of reducing homelessness by 7% in 2013, in 2011 the homeless population had increased by 17%. A similarly problematic picture emerged with rates in indigenous homelessness. Between 2006 and 2011, the number of indigenous people experiencing homelessness rose by approximately 3%. This is compared to the interim target of indigenous homelessness reducing by 33% (Australian National Audit Office, cited in Parsell and Jones 2014:437).

Instead of reducing homelessness, the homeless statistics had increased. However, with no national statistics for 2013 being available, it is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions regarding policy efficacy at that point in time and indeed, Parsell and Jones recommend “caution about making conclusive assessments about Australia’s new [Rudd] homelessness policy based exclusively on the 2011 census trends” (2014:248).

Arguably, Kevin Rudd achieved a significant political shift regarding the official recognition of Australian housing as a vital public responsibility, and temporarily slowing the marginalising forces of neoliberalism. However, although “supply-side effort” was accepted as being a necessity, still “demand-side stimulus” continued to be the policy focus, and the former was only applied at nominal levels (Milligan and Pinnegar 2010:340). Thus, one may conclude that Prime Minister Rudd was significant in the instigation of housing and homelessness as recognised areas of Australian policy focus. Yet at the end of his short term in office, the issue of uncertain long-term housing prospects for many Australians remained. One can only speculate as to the possible positive housing impact Kevin Rudd may have had, should his time in the leadership position had been longer.

5.3 Gillard Government

After a successful leadership challenge, the Gillard government (Australian Labour Party 2010–2013), did little to sustain the housing focus momentum instigated by Prime Minister Rudd. This was so, despite party continuity and the familiar empathetic rhetoric of government readily stated by Julia Gillard, of fighting “for the right of ordinary Australians—those who have neither wealth nor power—to a fair go” (Gillard 1998:1). Instead of building on the housing policies instigated by Kevin Rudd, Australia’s first female Prime Minister took the role of caretaker of Rudd’s initiatives, until he waged a successful counter leadership challenge in 2013, regaining the prime-ministerial position for just thirteen weeks (Martin, Pawson and van den Nouwelant 2016:14). Housing was not considered in Gillard’s electoral campaign and at the start of her leadership in 2010, the *Community Organisations Housing Alliance* - a taskforce comprising of Homelessness Australia, National Shelter Inc., Across, National Council of Trade Unions and Community Housing Federation of Australia - made the following plea to Prime Minister Gillard:

> It was extremely disappointing that no major party thought housing affordability a significant issue during the campaign and yet it consistently rates highly in polling of issues affecting households. Indeed the largest single payment any household makes is its mortgage or rent. Australia has some of most inflated house prices in the world and rents have been rising at least 3 times faster than the Consumer Price Index for the past 3-5 years. Many of our least affordable housing markets are now in regions affected by resource extraction and our lowest income earners, often pensioners, veterans and people with disabilities, are the first and worst affected. COHA [Community Organisations Housing Alliance] believes we need to vigorously pursue an affordable housing agenda which links affordable housing with

> regional and urban development, with infrastructure, planning and tax reform… We also need to continue the welcome progress made by the outgoing government regardless of the make-up of the incoming one (Pisarski 2010:1).

However, this heartfelt and insightful plea was largely unaddressed and no significant housing initiatives were forthcoming. A Liberal party succession to power ensued three years later and the gradual dismemberment of Kevin Rudd's valuable housing initiatives prevailed.

5.4 Abbott Government

Tony Abbott's leadership (Liberal National Party 2013-2015) successfully destroyed the "housing reform momentum" which was instigated by Kevin Rudd. Abbott "dispensed with" the housing portfolio and set in motion a retrenchment of Federal "social housing policy and funding" (Martin, Pawson and van den Nouwelant 2016:14). During their first year in office, the Abbott Government abolished the *National Supply Council*, the *Housing Ministers Advisory Council*, the *Commonwealth Housing Minister* and the *National Rental Affordability Scheme* (Martin, Pawson and van den Nouwelant 2016). Furthermore, a withdrawal of Commonwealth support provoked "public housing transfer programs of unprecedented scale initiated by State Governments" (Martin, Pawson and van den Nouwelant 2016:14). Abbott focused on the redistribution of funds away from social provision and used the tool of sociodicy to justify his policies, as Ryan explains:

> Tony Abbott's time as the Prime Minister of Australia was as controversial as it was short, with [a] program of cuts in response to the 'budget emergency'…[which] was used to justify wide-ranging cuts to welfare provision. The logic of these cuts was contradicted, however, through prolific expenditures in other areas, such as corporate welfare, regressive tax breaks, and increases to defence spending. The paradoxical logic of cutting with one hand and spending with the other can only be understood through the lens of 'neoliberalism' – that is, if 'neoliberalism' is understood as a state-led project defined by a certain distributional outcome, rather than the 'free market' caricature used by many scholars and critics (Ryan 2016:6).

The 'distributional outcomes' of the Abbott Government, advanced the commodification of housing in a market-driven economy, sealed the fate of Australian social housing and served to further marginalise the housing prospects of the already disadvantaged. By 2014, "Australia's supposed egalitarianism [had] been eroded to the extent that the combined wealth of the top percentile is equal to that of the bottom 60 per cent (Oxfam 2014:1) – the most unequal distribution of wealth in Australia since records have been kept" (Ryan 2016:10).

Despite a crumbling housing system, the Abbott Governmental Policies continued to favour the wealthy, for example, by increasing tax incentives for corporations, while simultaneously reducing pension payments for the elderly (Ryan 2016). Aged Australians, a portion of society that may be amongst the most needy in terms of state assistance, were offered decreasing support both in terms of housing access opportunity and the financial capacity to accommodate it. Abolition of the Australian Social Housing System placed additional pressure on rental accessibility across all age groups, which increased the possibility of dwelling marginality and homelessness, while reinforcing a governmental position of non-intervention in these areas.

5.5 Turnbull Government

In yet another leadership challenge, Malcolm Turnbull (Liberal National Party 2015 - 2018) took the Australian Prime Ministerial office. The Turnbull Government did not represent a “break from hegemonic neoliberalism”, nor provide an adequate response to the “inequality [which] is being created on a generational scale” (Ryan 2016:6). Martin, Pawson and van den Nouwelant explain the Turnbull minimisation of housing governance:

> Under the post-2015 Turnbull Government, the Reform of the Federation White Paper has not proceeded, and the Council for Federal Financial Relations has instead been tasked with developing proposal for ‘affordable housing’ policy and assistance; ‘affordable housing’ is also part of the new portfolio of the Assistant Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation…Similar changes in policy governance can be seen at the level of the States and Territories…The dominant – albeit not universal – trend has been for the integration of formerly distinct housing entities within community services/human services departments (Martin, Pawson and van den Nouwelant 2016:14-16).

The economic value of a home continued to be reinforced by the Turnbull Government, with housing initiatives focused on enlisting broad-scale corporate investment in affordable housing provision, via incentives, regulations and collaborative works. In January 2016 the Affordable Housing Working Group was announced, with the objective of “investigating ways to boost the supply of affordable rental housing through innovative financing models” (House of Representatives 2016:8). This approach marks a structural shift from the traditional petty landlord system of ‘mum and dad’ investors, to a corporate model of rental housing providers. The landscape of Australian housing was in the midst of restructuring, as broad-scale corporate investment in housing provision was promoted (House of Representatives 2016). However, the

importance of housing as a distinct policy area was further diminished by Turnbull because federal support continued to be withdrawn and housing departments eroded.

In 2016 the Turnbull Government *Smart Cities Plan* was announced, via which it was said that the Federal Government "will partner with the states and territories and local governments to deliver coordinated housing supply solutions tailored to local needs" (House of Representatives 2016:45). The instigation of a national premise regarding low cost housing provision may be regarded as a positive progression in Australian policy. The *Smart Cities Plan* was an acknowledgement of a national housing shortage issue and an attempt to develop a centralised system to combat the mounting problem of housing inaccessibility. Private residential rental property investors held a vital position in achieving this. These landlords are traditionally private individuals with single or multiple rental homes, commonly termed 'mum and dad' investors. However, under Prime Minister Turnbull, corporate institutions were increasingly sort. In 2017, these corporate players were referred to by Treasurer Scott Morrison, as a "new emerging asset class" (Australian Housing and Research Institute (AHURI) 2017:1):

> As with any new emerging asset class this will need to be fundamentally driven by the private sector. It will require new liquid investment vehicles, greater investment scale, new players and partnerships, appreciation of the longer term investment horizon, the creation of more conventional asset management structures for residential real estate that institutional investors are accustomed to in other property investments sectors and a more sophisticated information and research base to support investment allocation models (Morrison sited in AHURI 2017:1).

If there were ever a doubt as to the commodification of housing, there can surely be none now. Furthermore, despite alarming levels of Australian housing insecurity, no national, systematic approach to address the crisis in Australian housing was put in place. As Martin, Pawson and van den Nouwelant report:

> Australia currently has no formal national housing minister, department or policy. It does, however, have what might be called an implicit housing policy embedded in official stances on tax, monetary settings, retirement incomes and finance sector regulation. A central outcome of this implicit housing policy – high and rising house prices – is contrary to conventional housing policy objectives of greater affordability, security and dignity, but those objectives are not properly articulated or prosecuted in present housing policy governance arrangements (Martin, Pawson and van den Nouwelant 2016:14).

Housing the Homeless

Whilst the task of housing the nation was effectively placed for corporate tender, the pressing issue of an increasing incidence of Australian homelessness was seemingly forgotten by the Turnbull Government, with established homelessness agencies cut as part of yet another reshuffle of housing related services. Indeed, the House of Representatives stated that:

> It is a disgrace how little attention is given to an issue as important as this [homelessness]. The Turnbull Government has only recently extended the funding for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) by one year to June 2018. NPAH provides up to 30 per cent of the budget of homelessness service providers across the nation. Added to this there are around 185,000 households remaining on waiting lists for public or community housing across the country (House of Representatives 2016:60).

As an alternative, and some might say, a desperate means of financing housing provision, the Turnbull Government turned policy focus to superannuation (aged pension) funds:

> Engaging super funds, sovereign wealth funds and other large debt and equity investors in financing rental housing has been a longstanding goal of governments seeking innovative ways to stimulate supply. …While interest in this objective has been evident in Australia for some time (underpinning the introduction of the 2008 National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS), for example), it has yet to be achieved (Martin, Pawson and van den Nouwelant (2016:19).

One might well speculate that the investment of retirement funds may prove to be a risky business, because the volatile Australian "financial system is highly exposed to a housing bust", with no guarantee of long term accumulation (Martin, Pawson and van den Nouwelant 2016:26). Nevertheless, in 2017, Treasurer Scott Morrison acknowledged that:

> Australians are increasingly carrying into their retirement larger mortgage debts, or are renting… The proportion of home owners aged over 45 with a mortgage has increased and, according to the Productivity Commission in 2015, the most frequent use of superannuation lump sums was to fund housing, including paying down mortgages. Saul Eslake's recent report to Superannuation trustees noted, 'it is likely that an increasing proportion of new retirees will use some or all of their accumulated superannuation savings to discharge their outstanding mortgage debt' and that 'an increasing proportion of retirees will be living in privately rented housing, spending a higher proportion of their income on rent' (Morrison cited in AHURI 2017:1).

In the event of equity release secured against a home, immediate housing provision may be funded by gambling the funds of future retirement provision. This is possibly a short-sighted strategy, which may credibly compound the already significant issue of an aging population.

5.6 Morrison Government

In August 2018, Scott Morrison (Liberal Party) waged a successful leadership challenge and became the Prime Minister of Australia, retaining his position in the May 2019 Federal Election. If the rhetoric expressed by, former Minister for Social Services and Treasurer, Prime Minister Morrison may be relied upon, Australian housing may possibly be better placed under his leadership, but this is not assured. In a 2017 address to the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Scott Morrison, then Treasurer, gave this overview:

> we need to wrestle… to make housing more affordable, more secure and more available to all Australians, wherever they find themselves on the housing spectrum… Previous governments have avoided dealing with these issues for fear of raising and disappointing expectations. There is always that risk. Failure to confront these issues in the past can be traced back to the problems we face today. Others have sort to oversimplify the issue… We are approaching these issues comprehensively, aware of the size of the challenges and in good faith. We are keen to work together with States and Territories, not for profits, developers and investors to leave the situation better than we found it. Let's hope we can take that ground, because that is the only hope we can offer a next generation who will otherwise find it harder to realize their aspirations than we have. We owe them that. (Morrison cited in AHRI 2017).

Morrison publicly observed that "the housing market is part of a continuum - ranging from homeowners, to renters, to social and affordable housing, and regrettably homelessness", and acknowledged that all tenurial positions were challenged (AHURI 2017:1). Symptoms of these challenges were noted to include rising community housing waiting lists, decreasing rental access and *Commonwealth Rent Assistance* inadequacy (AHURI 2017). Yet, the poorer, non-ownership, area of the dwelling spectrum received minimal support. The *National Affordable Housing Agreement* was replaced by the *National Partnership on Homelessness*, in a "a series of partnerships since 2008 to tackle homelessness" (Milligan 2018:1). However, in 2018, the Australian Housing and Research Institute reported that: other existing programs had been closed down, there had been no real increase in funding for affordable housing initiatives, no national housing strategy instigated and targets, although annually reportable, were ambiguous, "carefully crafted performance indicators" which deflected culpability (Milligan 2018:1). The disparity between the ideology expounded by rhetoric and the material eventuality, is described by Milligan as:

> a disconnect between the lofty goal of improving access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing and the funding capable of supporting it. Until this funding shortfall is addressed, any new national housing and homelessness agreements will continue to be essentially different in name only (Milligan 2018:1).

Familiarly, political rhetoric is at odds with outcomes and although issues such as low-cost housing scarcity and rising homelessness are acknowledged, little progress is achieved in eradicating these social problems.

Jacobs, recognises a global trend in housing policy across continents, observing that:

> while government interventions have been beneficial for many well-off households, they have also failed many of the poorest. Indeed, millions of people are affected by housing problems, and yet we are still accustomed to accepting that their plight is of less importance than a buoyant housing market that remains profitable (Jacobs 2019:4).

Indeed, in 2019, Prime Minister Morrison placed Australian policy focus on improving access to homeownership. His *Housing Deposit Scheme*, targets first-home buyers entering the market and facilitates home loans with a reduced property purchase deposit:

> Under the new home deposit scheme, the government would offer loan guarantees for first home buyers, allowing them to buy properties with deposits of just five per cent. The government is providing the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation with $500 million to deliver the scheme, along with $25 million to set it up and research the housing market. About 10,000 people are expected to benefit, which would have been about one in 11 new home-buyers in 2018 (Banger 2019:1).

This scheme is promoted by government, as being “aimed at low and middle income earners” and represents an economic acknowledgement of housing access restrictions (Banger 2019:1). Marnie Banger, a reporter from Australia’s *7 News*, quotes Morrison as saying that his scheme, would be successful “to help Australians to buy their homes more easily”, but he was less confident on its long-term effect on property prices (Banger 2019:1). In a context of dramatic income/price disparity and market-based volatility, one must hope that sufficient regulations are in place to prevent a repeat of the sub-prime mortgage crisis, seen in The United States of America in the early 2000s. Indeed, in a 2019 review of the *Housing Deposit Scheme*, National Shelter warn of the “risks enticing heavier borrowing by first home entrants which could leave them in negative equity if markets continue to fall”, suggesting that the scheme is an example of “poor policy” (Pisarski 2019:1).

Economic concerns are clearly a driver of successive Australian Government initiatives and thus, social benefit is likely to take a familiar secondary position. Much is expounded about homeownership access, but it is corporate provision which is the trajectory of Australian housing. Social housing is most likely confined to history and the least able to compete in the housing market are marginalised and homeless. Regardless of notions of a ’fair go’ being bandied in political rhetoric, the issues of a narrowing of housing access, and an increasing reliance on insecure tenures, remain prominent features of the Australian housing system. This disparity is recognised in Bourdieusian terms as sociodicy, which is illustrated in relation to housing throughout this thesis, by examples of rhetoric that justify housing policy neglect and negative outcomes, and which over time, have the capacity to ingrain governmental values within the, seemingly subjective, perspectives of the nation.

5.7 Narrowing Housing Access and Tenure Insecurity

Australian homeownership is steadily diminishing, social housing provision has been transferred to community groups and levels of affordable private rental dwellings are insufficient to accommodate additional demand (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) 2010; ABS 2011; House of Representatives 2016). In 2009, it was estimated that “there would be a cumulative gap [unmet need] by 2028 of 431,000 dwellings” (Council of Australian Governments, (COAG) 2009). By 2016, the predicted gap in unmet housing need was upwardly revised by the *Australian National Housing Supply Council*, to “a shortfall of 663,000 dwellings by 2031” (House of Representatives 2016:1). Approximately fifty percent of reported housing shortage represents the homes which are needed to house Australia’s lowest income earners.

Changes in Australian demographics and the structure of the Australian home, compound housing inaccessibility with two inextricably related factors; “societal change” and “population growth” (AHUR 2010:5; Gilbert 2011). Population growth, fuelled predominantly by an aging population and increased immigration, has raised demand (AHUR 2010). This demand is further increased by “changing patterns of household formation”, commonly caused by the dissolution of relationships, producing more one-person and one-parent households. In result, is an “additional demand” for smaller, cheaper, “affordable housing”, but there is a short fall in supply (AHUR 2010:6). Individuals on low or fixed incomes, such as retirees, experience housing shortage most acutely.

Wiesel explains the non-linearity of contemporary housing trajectories:

> In Australia and other 'homeownership societies' it has been conventional to think of housing pathways in terms of a smooth linear progression, leading to outright ownership in middle age and a retirement buffered by low housing costs. This vision of the welfare role of homeownership is an important buttress of Australian retirement incomes policy. However, this vision has been challenged in recent years as growing numbers of older Australians lose home ownership and consequently transition onto housing assistance programs… those losing home ownership have a higher chance of becoming users of housing assistance programs than similarly positioned longer-term renters, a result that is particularly evident among ex-owners that are exposed to adverse biographical events (Wiesel 2014:320).

In Australia, a decreasing homeownership majority is sustained by retirees, but a longevity of ownership is not assured (Crawford and McKee 2016). Other aging Australians compete in an economically driven rental property market or else succumb to forms of inadequate marginal housing such as found in many caravan parks, where significantly, older Australians are the majority age group (Office of Regulative Bodies 2010; Bunce 2010; Petersen, Parsell, Phillips and White 2014). This age demographic is confirmed by research here, where many aged Australians share a park housing circumstance characterised by sub-standard terms and conditions.

Although revered as the 'Great Australian Dream', homeownership in Australia has become simply inaccessible for many of the population (Beer, Baker, Wood and Raftery 2011; Crawford and McKee 2016). Beer, Baker, Wood and Raftery (2011) stress the social imperative of maintaining secure tenures such as public housing and homeownership:

> Policies that promote secure stable and affordable housing enrich their societies and add to population wellbeing, while those that precipitate house price escalation and excessive risk-taking may make some individuals and institutions rich while potentially beggaring society (Beer et al 2011:1190).

A gradual decline in Australian homeownership, indicates that tenure patterns are changing. Reports and predictions relate homeownership decline largely to affordability barriers experienced by younger members of the population, which restrict entry into the property market (Sawa 2015). Sawa recognises that the rising cost of housing is:

> threatening to lock large numbers of young people out of home ownership for the foreseeable future…Data shows the proportion of young people able to start buying a home continues to fall…Unless urgent action is taken to address housing affordability, we risk locking a generation out of home

> ownership, which will have significant implications for wealth creation and transfer in the long term (ACT Shelter chief executive Travis Gilbert, cited in Sawa 2015:5).

The disparity between income and property price rises, means that aspiring homeowners increasing rely on the 'bank of mum and dad' to enable home purchase, because "the threshold for accessing owner-occupation has become as much or more a matter of wealth rather than income" (Martin, Pawson and van den Nouwelant 2016:5-8). This issue increasingly results in exclusion from homeownership for those who do not have access to previously accrued wealth, thus increasing the housing tenure divide and assisting in polarising society.

Homeownership is widely valued in terms of 'non-shelter' benefits, such as tenure security, housing status and the minimisation of housing stress, which commute to better physical and mental health and enhanced lifestyle outcomes (Beer, Baker, Wood and Raftery 2011; Weisel 2014). However, home purchase is by no means an easy option. Inflated house prices have been accompanied by greater property borrowing income ratios for purchasers. Australians now mortgage up to nine times their incomes to secure the purchase of a home, because increases in incomes have not kept pace with escalating prices (Nichols 2014; Martin, Pawson and van den Nouwelant 2016). The present loan multiple required to purchase a home, may be said to be both stress-inducing and ultimately unsustainable.

At the opposite end of the housing spectrum is social housing. The individualism of neoliberal policy is instrumental to the demise of Australian public housing provision because within this ethos, previously public provisions have been transformed to individual responsibilities (Ruming 2015). The most secure, yet also the most elusive, form of housing tenure in Australia is social housing.

> The language of social housing in Australia is convoluted. "Social housing" is a relatively new term within Australian housing policy and refers to housing owned or managed by either state public housing authorities or a small, but growing, number of community housing providers…long-term macroeconomic restructuring [in Australia] …has seen government support directed away from social housing provision towards the maintenance of private housing tenures (Ruming 2015:1).

This welfare view of Australian social housing provision is explained by Darab and Hartman (2013):

> The high rates of home ownership [mean] that Australia has traditionally had a residual social housing system, consistent with what…has [been] characterized as liberal welfare states. Liberal welfare states

> are said to involve means-tested assistance and modest universal transfers and/or social insurance, in keeping with liberal principles of individual responsibility and a minimalist state…whilst housing regimes vary widely across the globe, there has been a near universal acceptance by governments of the neoliberal principles of deregulation, privatization and marketization. Australia's progressive winding back of social housing programs over a long period is arguably a contributing factor to the homelessness of many disadvantaged persons (Darab and Hartman 2013:350).

Public housing provision is vital, both as a basic resource in a context of housing scarcity and as a source of foundational stability for low-income individuals, many of whom are faced with bleak prospects in a private rental market and probably little hope of ever owning a home (Beer, Baker, Wood and Raftery 2011). However, years of Australian governmental neglect as a characteristic of social housing governance, has now produced "an irreparable situation in terms of the future provision" (Martin, Pawson and van den Nouwelant 2016:14). A shift in Australian Housing Policy has transferred the limited stock of social housing to not-for-profit providers. These community groups inherit inadequate levels of generally poorly maintained dwellings, estimated to be in the region of 300,00 homes (Beer et al 2011). Governmental policy in Australia has assisted housing instability, by adopting a minimal intervention approach and placing further reliance on private market forces to house the Australian population (Nicholls 2014). Yet this strategy may be misguided, for in the midst of housing crisis the task of housing the populous must surely be addressed from all directions possible and to embark on the delegation of low-cost housing provision to others, in this uncertain housing climate, seems untimely at best. Tester and Wingfield (2013) warn that eradicating contexts such as public housing, is destructive to society. This is because it destroys the

> positive support networks among public housing residents and the social interactions that are significant to their meaning of "home" …Scholars and policymakers need to broaden their definitions and understandings of public housing as places that can be "home" and consider these understandings when making decisions about public housing transformations (Tester and Wingfield 2013:8).

Escalating house purchase prices and diminishing social housing, leaves only private rental property as a traditional dwelling alternative. However, the resources of the Australian rental market are over-burdened (House of Representatives 2016). In the absence of social housing, *Commonwealth Rent Assistance*, the social welfare payment allocated to low-income individuals to subsidise private rents, is a major "recurrent component of the government's housing outlays" (Milligan and Pinnegar 2010:339). However, benefits are insufficient, and payments as a replacement for a social housing unit does not work for those individuals who

do not have the social skills or standing to secure a property in the private market (Nelson and Minnery 2008). They may not have references available or may be discriminated against due to "factors as mundane as being a single parent with young children" (Nelson and Minnery 2008:340). Thus, although funding for accommodation is made available via governmental assistance, finding and securing a dwelling is another challenge, particularly within a wider context of housing inaccessibility. Low welfare payments, when aligned with rising rental costs, result in private rental housing being largely unaffordable and therefore inaccessible for many welfare recipients. Inadequacy in housing accessibility, presents as decreased affordability and increasing numbers of Australians suffering housing stress; a situation where in excess of 30% of household income is required to meet housing costs (Tanton 2011).

> In Australia, the most widely used indicator of housing affordability is housing stress, a measure defined as a binary 30:40 rule, where a household is in housing stress if its housing costs exceed 30 per cent of income and the household is in the bottom 40 per cent of the income distribution (Yates, 2007). The measure splits the population into those in housing stress and those not in housing stress depending on which side of the 30 per cent expenditure benchmark they fall. All those in housing stress are assumed to have negative financial outcomes caused by their housing cost burden where housing costs take up such a high proportion of available income that non-essential, and sometimes essential, expenditure has to be sacrificed in order to meet these costs (Rowley, Ong and Haffner, 2014:2).

Although used as a crucial indicator, the calculation of 'housing stress' has been questioned by longitudinal research, orchestrated by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (Rowley, Ong and Haffner 2014). Their research suggests that the currently employed measure of housing stress is a "static framework and does not fully reflect the 'experiences' of financial stress that some households endure" (Rowley et al 2014:17). Rowley, Ong and Haffner emphasise that the "duration of stress" is also an important consideration when evaluating housing cost impact, because the longer the condition is endured the more profoundly the consequences will be felt (2014:17). AHURI recommend that the lower forty percent income category currently operationalised within housing stress calculations, be further segmented into smaller categories because very different housing experiences exist within the current, sizable, forty percent range (Rowley et al. 2014). Notwithstanding these recommendations, it is the 'static', '30:40 rule', which prevails as the commonly used housing stress measure. According to Nicholls, these measures suggests that the citizens who are

> Particularly negatively affected by declining affordability over the last decade are low-income earners renting in the private market. In 2010 the Productivity Commission suggested that while soaring house

> prices had produced a number of undeniable benefits, this had been accompanied by a 'marked increase in "housing stress" amongst low income earners and otherwise disadvantaged people', with almost 60 per cent of those on lower incomes renting in the private market experiencing housing stress as of 2008 (Productivity Commission 2010:15)…Statistics pertaining to the availability of affordable housing tell a similar story, with the level of public housing stock, for example, decreasing (Nicholls 2014:330-331).

Procuring a home is a difficult process in many respects. Weak tenancy rights and short rental tenancy periods, which are typical in Australia, require repetition of this ordeal at regular intervals. Wiesel (2014) suggests that a path to "chaotic turbulence" is experienced by low-income Australian renters and that this is "underpinned by housing policy and regulation" (2014:325). According to Wiesel:

> The absence of legislation to protect tenants from evictions…coupled with unaffordable rents, render the surface of this path very 'slippery', making it impossible for many low-income households to maintain long-term tenancies. Frequent moves between homes are not experienced as a progression of 'upwards' improvement or adjustment, but as an emotionally difficult and tiring process of stagnation or even deterioration. For many of these households, the private rental path is overshadowed by the constant risk of homelessness (Wiesel 2014:325).

Tenure insecurity within the private rental realm places many tenants on the brink of homelessness and imposes regular displacement associated with housing relocation or eviction. Periodic tenure insecurity is detrimental to the individual and to the wider social arena, because without an adequate, sustainable foundation, as is represented by a home, active engagement with society becomes largely unachievable (Worthington 2012). Worthington warns:

> The lack of affordable housing in Australia has many worrying implications. Apart from meeting the basic need for shelter, affordable housing also provides a foundation for family and social stability, and contributes to improved health, educational, social, and economic outcomes …Further, although affordable, high-quality rental housing also provides many of these benefits, the suggestion is they are even larger for home ownership. For instance, owner-occupiers may have a relatively stronger incentive for civic involvement, their typically longer residential tenure suggests minimal disruption to social networks and children's education, and the enhancement of self-esteem through homeownership can potentially reduce the incidence of socially disruptive behaviour and promote physical wellbeing…Combined together, the societal benefits of affordable housing help justify the interest and contribution of governments to this important policy area (Worthington 2012:237).

Australian homes present in many guises and it is the access to a dwelling in the first instance, coupled with the confident ability to remain in the home, which are of primary

concern to residents. Higher housing costs relative to income exclude many individuals in terms of property purchase, but also confer higher rents to tenants as the cost of housing provision rises for the investor-landlord. Individuals who are priced out of the market in terms of securing an affordable home, have typically only marginal housing and other forms of homelessness as a realistic dwelling option. The tracks of this bleak trajectory are covered by sociodicy and despite evidence to the contrary, the populace is duped into accepting that a neoliberal ethos can provide the coveted 'fair go' for all Australians.

5.8 Crisis in 2020

As 2020 draws to a close, Australia, and indeed the world, is gripped by a crisis of pandemic proportions; the virus Covid-19. This crisis has revealed the precarious nature of the Australian housing situation and prompted extraordinary measures for extraordinary times. In result of the pandemic, unemployment sored toward ten percent and the *Jobseeker* unemployment benefit payment was effectively doubled, by a $550 per fortnight Covid-19 supplement, and in doing so, exposed the previously unliveable level of welfare payments (Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) 2020). Indeed, proponents of the campaign to 'Raise the Rate' of benefits, contested that "we can never go back to the brutality of $40 a day as our unemployment payment" (ACOSS 2020:1). In complement, for the employed, the *Jobkeeper* allowance, of $1,500 per fortnight, was introduced in acknowledgement of the precarity of work, which was made most starkly evident by the casual workers sector who did not qualify for the payment (ACOSS 2020). In the housing realm, initiatives included the Federal Government placing an immediate moratorium on rental evictions, no doubt in order to avert a landslide disaster in this area, which has already been recognised here and elsewhere as the 'silent tsunami of our times' (Soederberg 2018). 'Economic stimulus' cash injection opportunities were increased for property owners, including financial incentives for new and existing homeowners and cautious moves towards the provision of accessible housing.

As the country grappled with pandemic fallout, Anglicare Australia demanded that "investing in social housing as essential public infrastructure should be a priority" (2020:1). This position was reinforced by a 2020 report by Anglicare, which drew a very bleak conclusion of private rental housing accessibility:

> This year Anglicare Australia's Rental Affordability Snapshot fell on the weekend of 21 March 2020, just days before the federal, state and territory governments enacted a

> range of extraordinary measures in response to the coronavirus pandemic. [On this day] there were 69,960 properties listed for rent across Australia … just three percent of all properties for rent were affordable and appropriate for households on government income support payments. For households on minimum wage it was 22 percent. These results show that finding an affordable and suitable home to rent in the private market if you are on a low income is extraordinarily challenging" (Anglicare Australia 2020:7).

Rental housing for the elderly presented as a particular concern because, according to Anglicare, of the 69,000 rental properties nationally available in March 2020, "just 526 properties were affordable and suitable for a single person on the Aged Pension". Yet "660,000 people on the Aged Pension do not own their own home" and are therefore, potential rental tenants (Anglicare Australia 2020:7-1). Such housing scarcity is not a new phenomenon in Australia, it has been recognised to have cumulative negative effects and attention to this area is urgently required. As reported by Anglicare Australia:

> The lack of affordable housing for people on low incomes has been a crisis for over a decade… The experience of the Anglicare Australia Network is that many people on low incomes avoid becoming homeless by sacrificing basic living needs to pay the rent – things like food, transport, heating or cooling, or visits to the doctor… We need long-term, structural change to stop a surge in poverty and homelessness… Australia has a dire shortfall in social and affordable rentals. Until we tackle that shortfall, people on low incomes will face uncertainty and dire odds in finding a home… Australia needs 500,000 social and affordable rentals to end the shortfall. We cannot wait any longer to achieve this target (Anglicare Australia 2020:12-15).

In accord with Anglicare Australia, the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) also report long-term housing inadequacies and support for increased engagement in social housing:

> Well before the impacts of the 2020 pandemic, large numbers of lower income Australian households were struggling to find affordable housing and there were long wait lists for social housing. AHURI research estimated that in 2016, there was a shortfall of around 431,000 social housing dwellings, and that this deficit would grow to 727,300 dwellings by 2036. The research concluded that 36,000 new social housing dwellings per year were required to meet this need. With high unemployment and increased incidence of homelessness a likely outcome of the economic downturn, new social housing will be essential to ensure housing outcomes do not worsen. Industry and community organisations and peak bodies are calling for a social housing building program as part of the economic stimulus response. For example, the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), in a recent report, proposes building

> 30,000 social housing dwellings as a way to reduce homelessness and to boost employment (AHURI Brief, May 2020).

Despite demands for urgent increases in accessible housing provision, Australian policy continues to favour public payment of market-based rents. According to a 2020 report by the Department of Social Services, "the Australian Government spends more than $6 billion every year to improve housing and homelessness outcomes". The vast majority of this money, "around $4.6 billion a year", is not capital investment but instead, is funding private rents, via *Commonwealth Rent Assistance* payments (Department of Social Services 2019:1). According to Anglicare Australia:

> Ending our affordable housing shortfall would be the most powerful way to tackle the rental crisis and boost our economy. This economic crisis has shown many Australians that our housing system is broken. A decade of Rental Affordability Snapshots also shows that crisis has been many years in the making. Instead of 'going back to normal', we need a vision for housing that works for everybody, including renters and people on low incomes. As we head into a historic downturn, it will again be political decisions that determine whether we are left to survey the wreckage of many thousands being left in severe hardship – or whether we truly face this crisis together and leave no one behind (Anglicare Australia 2020:22).

Notwithstanding a well muted housing crisis, at a State Government level, housing engagement in Queensland is piecemeal: *The Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027*, funded by government and private partnerships, states the aim to provide 4,522 social homes and 1,034 affordable homes, over a ten-year period, and to provide new jobs via a state-wide housing construction programme (State of Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works 2019). By 2019, construction contracts had been "awarded for 1,528 new social homes and 287 affordable homes", and a new private sector initiative, *Build to Rent*, was in development (State of Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works 2019:6). However, these achievements are mightily overshadowed by estimates from the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, concerning Queensland social housing need, which reported a 2018 shortfall of 8,700 homes (Lawson, Pawson, Troy, van den Nouwelant and Hamilton 2018:4). Indeed, AHURI call for significantly increased social housing engagement and reformed implementation methods, in order to abate an otherwise dire trajectory of unmet housing need:

> Australia's limited social housing is tightly targeted, and its market share is declining. A range of investment pathways have been pursued in recent years, including contracting out services, off balance sheet debt via Community Housing Organisations (CHOs), re-investment via densification, asset sales

> and internal cross-subsidisation. These strategies have extracted value from the public estate and have not generated sufficient social housing units to address Australia's growing need. Moving forward, a more sustainable pathway is required in order to grow and improve social housing stock… Over the next 20 years, it has been estimated that 727,300 additional social dwellings will be required (Lawson, Pawson, Troy, van den Nouwelant and Hamilton 2018:1).

While social housing flounders, homeowners are offered cash incentives. Federal initiatives under the *Home Builders Scheme* and the State of Queensland Government *Household Resilience Program*, enable grants to entice existing homeowners to make improvements to their homes and new homeowners to enter the market (State of Queensland Government 2020). However, Professor Geoff Hanmer, of the University of Adelaide, has described the *Home Builder Scheme* as follows:

> possibly the most complex and least equitable program the government could have devised to deliver construction jobs… It gives $25,000 to people who already own a home or already have enough money to buy one while delivering a minimal stimulus to extra construction. It isn't a program to create jobs, it is a way of making people who are reasonably well off richer… It does not address homelessness, precarious rental or any of the other pressing problems that are caused by our current housing mix… It might build more nice decks for sipping Chardonnay… but it won't help those suffering housing stress … It will encourage everyone who cannot afford to buy a home, or who is homeless, to believe the government has forgotten them (Hanmer 2020:1).

A 2020 report by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute concludes that, "the 'Australian dream' of home ownership is no longer relevant in the contemporary era" (Burke, Nygaard and Ralston 2020:2). Burke, Nygaard and Ralston suggest that, "no amount of tinkering with current housing or housing-related policies can rebuild home ownership" (2020:2). That while "the 1940s to 1970s era generated the Australian dream, with home ownership levels in excess of 70 per cent", now "declines in ownership are more likely, to around 63 per cent for all households by 2040 and to little more than 50 per cent for households aged 25–55 (down from 60% in 1981)" (Burke, Nygaard and Ralston 2020:2). An ineffectuality of governance is cited as being instrumental to homeownership decline:

> Both in Australia and internationally, home ownership policies have not been robust enough to increase ownership in the last decade or so. Changes in the broader institutional environment have been much more powerful in shaping tenure opportunities and constraints. In the domestic context, the projected declines mean Australia will no longer be a near universal ownership society, but must become a dual tenure society of ownership and rental (both private and social). This will require a substantial rethink

> and redirection of housing and related policy, with a particular focus on how to achieve greater security, affordability and liveability of private rental (Burke, Nygaard and Ralston 2020:2).

Reasons for the Australian homeownership downturn are reported to be the inability of younger cohorts to enter the market, due to unaffordability linked to price rises and the "plateauing of real incomes" (Burke, Nygaard and Ralston 2020:3). "Industry-lead recognition that ownership is not the future of housing growth", is evidenced by the production of "multi-unit dwellings… pitched at rental market and landlordism rather than home purchase" (Burke, Nygaard and Ralston 2020:3). The "financialisation of property", as dwellings are increasingly viewed as profit producing assets and the "policy environment" is increasingly geared to rentals, for example the new *Build to Rent* initiative (Burke, Nygaard and Ralston 2020:3). Burke, Nygaard and Ralston suggest that "housing policy conversation is now not about rebuilding ownership but about how to grow and better manage private and social rental" (2020:3). This research by AHURI goes on to suggest that:

> factors indicate we are at a tipping point for housing provision in Australia which requires a significant shift from what has happened in the recent past. Arguably this requires two directions of system innovation. The first is a transition from what has been a mono-tenure housing system, one dominated by ownership, to a dual tenure system that gives equal weight to ownership and rental… The second system change is to address the socio economic implications of no longer expecting near universal ownership, even in the later years of people's lives. A dual tenure housing system in which one segment (owners) acquires wealth and the other does not is a recipe for long-term social and economic problems. Addressing this will require new policy instruments to give renters the opportunity to create wealth and/or processes to redistribute some of the asset-generated wealth of owners (Burke, Nygaard and Ralston 2020:4).

The research undertaken here is in accord with the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, in recognising that the current Australian Housing System is failing the population and that reform is an urgent matter, which is relevant across all tenure groups.

> A dual system is not just about accommodating household choice, but also addressing blocked aspirations. It means working toward a housing system in which those who cannot achieve ownership (or do not want it) do not have to spend a lifetime in what many perceive as a greatly inferior living environment. It is also about building a housing system which within both ownership and rental offer a diversity of products and management models to provide choice consistent with households' incomes, aspirations and life situations (Burke, Nygaard and Ralston 2020:4).

As this thesis also warns, AHURI documents that without housing reform Australian society may be at risk in terms of instability and social polarity:

> The alternative of doing nothing (or tinkering with more small-scale incremental policy reform) is problematic. All the signs suggest large-scale property and spatial divides, substantial and potentially risky household debt, blocked aspirations for younger generations and insecure rental living circumstances for growing numbers. (Burke, Nygaard and Ralston 2020:74).

So bleak is the housing landscape in Australia, there can surely be no question as to the need for broad scale reform. Furthermore, these reforms are urgent because prolonged inaccessibility to adequate housing, has the capacity to undermine the stability and parity of the nation.

Conclusion

Homeowner-occupation, social housing and private rental accommodation, the traditional sources of Australian housing, are readily manipulated by political intervention yet housing instability is rife. Australian homeownership data reports a slowly diminishing majority of total housing provision, representing a decline in the enduring Great Australian Dream of owning a home. As homeownership access is increasingly compromised, a generation of renters is predicted for the future. Social housing is reduced to piecemeal levels, sited in the community sector and reserved as an acute service. The remainder of Australian housing provision responsibility is left securely with the private rental sector, which is traditionally dominated by 'mum and dad investors' but is increasingly engaging corporate involvement. The Australian private rental market is characterised by inadequate access and tenure insecurity. All traditional housing tenures considered here are found to bear the same fundamental pressures, those of narrowing accessibility and increasing instability, these issues have migrated from those related only to the poor, to housing concerns across a wide demographic.

Instead of a cohesive national policy which promotes societal well-being, the overarching political influences in recent decades appear to be largely economic considerations, under the banner of a neoliberal political ethos. Within the Australian housing arena, this has contributed to a virtual exoneration of public responsibility, a floundering housing system and pervasive housing insecurity. All of these are skilfully presented via sociodicy, and political views are indoctrinated into society regardless of their social benefit or

detriment. The Australian Housing System is failing to ensure adequacy and security, and therefore, to provide an essential foundation for the parity and stability of society. Those least financially and socially able are forced into conditions of homelessness, and the social consequences of this housing marginality are discussed at length in the following chapter.

Chapter Six - Homelessness and Marginal Housing

Introduction

This chapter sits in complement to the preceding chapter, by illustrating the social effects of an inadequate housing system. Classifications of recognised homelessness and its more discrete form, marginal housing, are outlined and definitions are related to governmental rhetoric (Bourdieu 1986, 1995). Routes to adverse living conditions are noted, a widening of the homeless demographic is highlighted, and marginal housing is situated within the context of an aging population. The marginal terms and conditions of Australian caravan park living are detailed, and park characteristics are illustrated and discussed in relation to the concept of habitus (Bourdieu 2005, 2013). In this way, housing circumstance is linked to governance and to ingrained dispositions; the structure and agency which formulate and perpetuate social norms.

All forms of homelessness in Australia are increasing (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2018), in addition, are those who are not classified as homeless, but live in conditions of homelessness in marginal dwellings. Homes with basic facilities which are well below Australian cultural standards for permanent homes and with tenure terms that are insecure (Newton 2008, 2014; Dyson 2016). Marginal caravan park homes have been referred to by researchers as the 'housing of last resort', because they are characterised by sub-standard accommodation and tenures which readily facilitate eviction (Reed & Greenhalgh 2004; Eastgate 2011). Marginal housing exhibits conditions of homelessness. Yet despite the apparent conditions, marginal housing is not statistically defined as homelessness and, furthermore, marginal caravan park housing exists in a politically and academically neglected field (Chamberlain 2014). It is the social ramifications of this situation, that are the focus of this research. The following analysis concerns the position of marginal homes in the Australian housing system, and this is linked to the Bourdieusian concepts of sociodicy and habitus, which are suggested as vehicles that enable marginality.

6.1 Australian Homelessness

Homelessness is a possibility for all members of society and no longer fits the outdated image of some unwashed, usually male, individual, within the changing demographics of the

twenty-first century, anyone could become homeless. Baker (2010) explains this in the following terms:

> people become homeless because of a range of issues…These are issues that can affect any one of us unexpectedly and leave us in need of assistance. Forget the stereotypical images you may hold today it could so easily be another school parent, a friend of your children or the family who used to live across the road. Perhaps you are even one of those living precariously close to the line… It's hard to imagine a more socially excluded group than the homeless, and the experience of it brings shame to those concerned, further hiding the true cost (Baker 2010:4).

Social researchers Johnson, Gronda & Coutts (2007) highlight several routes, or 'pathways' into homelessness. They acknowledge that the circumstance can be generational, long-term or short-term and can beset former rental tenants and homeowners alike because changes in life circumstance, for some people, can lead to homelessness.

Johnson et al (2007) detail the process of 'acculturation'; during which, over time, adverse living conditions become normalised, and behaviour akin to circumstance is adopted in an effort to manage adversity. The adoption of a new culture and community may include drug use, crime, entrenched welfare dependence, inevitable socialisation amongst other homeless people and the acceptance of conditions which permeate daily life (Johnson et al 2007). This acceptance is enhanced by governmental non-intervention and accompanying rhetoric (Bourdieu 2013), and its public acceptance, that adversity is an individual failing. The result of prolonged adverse housing conditions is said to be a re-invention of identity, which is necessitated by changing fortune and environment. This may have the unintended consequence, over time, of individuals becoming so entrenched in the homeless population, that their marginality is absorbed as a natural way of life (Johnson et al 2007).

Older Australians

The 2014 research by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, suggests that research attention and policy focus concerning independent aged housing are considerably lacking, yet are increasingly more relevant as the Australian population ages (Petersen, Parsell, Phillips and White 2014). In 2016 the national *Census* recorded that "the number of people aged 65 years and over had increased from one in every seven people in 2011 (14%), to nearly one in every six people (16%) in 2016" (ABS 2017a). The elderly may experience the arduous conditions of homelessness most acutely. Indeed, research from Homelessness Australia

documents that "homelessness has a negative impact on both physical and emotional health. People over 55 are much more likely to access the hospital system and data shows that 64% of people living on the street are at risk of death within 5 years" (Homelessness Australia 2016:1).

In 2016, "people aged between 65 and 74 years experiencing homelessness increased to 27 persons per 10,000 people, up from 25 persons per 10,000 people in 2011" (ABS 2018:1). Still more elderly Australians live in marginal homes; they are not recorded as homeless, but they are recognised to be on the brink of homelessness. Researchers Petersen, Parsell, Phillips and White. stress the imperative to include those 'at risk' of homelessness, when assessing and dealing with homeless issues:

> In addition to people officially defined and thus enumerated as homeless, the service sector is also highlighting the growing number of older people in housing crisis…who are not statistically defined as homeless. Thus current enumerations understate the level of homelessness or 'at risk' of homelessness for older Australians… broadening of 'homelessness' acknowledges the fine line between someone experiencing homelessness and someone living precariously with insecure tenure paying the majority of their income on rent. On the basis of this understanding…it is more accurate to view homelessness as a continuum rather than a strict dichotomy of being homeless or not homeless at a given point in time. It additionally brings a sharper focus to the prevention of homelessness and the varying and multiple degrees of social exclusion faced by this population (Petersen, Parsell, Phillips and White, 2014:6-21).

A "lack of affordable housing options" and dwelling eviction, are cited by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute as major causes of homelessness among the elderly (Petersen et al 2014:3). These eventualities are socially detrimental because inaccessibility and eviction cause disruption to foundational stability and represent an uncertain dwelling future (Petersen et al 2014). Furthermore, Soederberg (2018:256), describes eviction as the "silent social tsunami of our times" and as the "dominant mode of displacement" in a capitalist world. A home is particularly central to well-being in later life and housing adequacy is signalled as an increasingly pressing concern, in the context of an aging Australian population and a nation which is already in housing crisis.

6.2 Classifications of Homelessness and Marginal Housing

Following foundational work by Chamberlain and Mackenzie (2008), Australian homelessness may be broadly considered within three categories. Primary homelessness, or street living, which is a circumstance that exists for a minority of homeless people (Australian

Bureau of Statistics 2018) but represents the most visible form of housing deprivation. Secondary homelessness, which refers to temporarily living with others, otherwise termed 'couch-surfing' (Johnson, Gronda and Coutts 2007), and tertiary homelessness, which defines dwelling in temporary, non-self-contained accommodation such as boarding houses (Memmott 2010). The 2016 national *Census* data confirms that all forms of homelessness in Australia are rising:

> the 2016 Census of Population and Housing… estimates reveal more than 116,000 people were experiencing homelessness in Australia on Census night, representing 50 homeless persons for every 10,000 people… People living in 'severely' crowded dwellings, defined as requiring four or more extra bedrooms to accommodate the people who usually live there, was the greatest contributor to the national increase in homelessness… In 2016, this group accounted for 51,088 people, up from 41,370 in 2011…On Census night, 8,200 people were estimated to be 'sleeping rough' in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out – an increase from 3.2 persons per 10,000 people in 2011 to 3.5 persons per 10,000 people in 2016… People aged between 65 and 74 years experiencing homelessness increased to 27 persons per 10,000 people, up from 25 persons per 10,000 people in 2011 (ABS 2018).

Separately categorised in the national *Census* statistics, are people who are deemed to be 'at risk' of homelessness, who are marginally housed in insecure housing environments, such as caravan parks (Eastgate 2011). Marginally housed individuals are not included in the national homelessness statistics but, as this research suggests, they suffer the conditions of homelessness of inadequate facilities and insecure tenures (Chamberlain 2005; Chamberlain and Mackenzie 2013).

Statistical attention to homelessness in Australia is a recent initiative:

> Up until 2008, ABS [Australian Bureau of Statistics] had neither developed its own definition of homelessness nor adopted any other definition, and it did not provide official estimates of homelessness. However, ABS did support research undertaken by academics Professors Chamberlain and MacKenzie who estimated the numbers of homeless people in Australia using the 1996, 2001 and 2006 Censuses of Population and Housing (Chamberlain, 1999; Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2003, 2008). Their estimation work was underpinned by the cultural definition of homelessness developed by Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2008) … ground breaking work in establishing a world first approach to the use of Census data in estimation of the homelessness population (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012a:1).

Extensive examination of the method used for counting the homeless population has been undertaken by leading theorist Chris Chamberlain, who has for many years questioned the Australian Bureau of Statistics statistical collection methods and classifications of

homelessness (Chamberlain 2005, 2006, 2012, 2014; Chamberlain and Johnson 2020). He suggests that statistical limitations hinder efforts to address homeless issues in Australia (Chamberlain 2014). Chamberlain and Mackenzie (2013) highlight 'competing definitions' of homelessness, for example, caravan park dwellers are classified as the 'marginally housed', yet many live with the same terms and conditions as those found in boarding houses, who are deemed to be part of the tertiary homeless population. In 2009, the Australian Government "endorsed the cultural definition in *The Road Home*, which specifically noted that tertiary homelessness includes people living in boarding houses…both short and long term", (Department of Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, cited in Chamberlain and Makenzie 2013:3). Notwithstanding the belated inclusion of boarding house residents into the national homeless statistics, a 2011 review of *Counting the Homeless Methodology* by the ABS failed to adopt the cultural definition of homelessness offered by Chamberlain to include caravan park residents (ABS 2011).

A 2011 ABS initiative, to include 'overcrowding' and the 'housed-homeless' in the homeless count, is said by Chamberlain (2014) to render the *Census* homeless measures virtually redundant. By adopting a 'statistical definition' of homelessness this enumeration presents an incomparable and misleading account of the situation (Chamberlain 2014):

> The ABS [statistical] definition is more difficult to explain to the broader community. This is because the ABS definition contends that some homeless people live in houses and flats. The idea of the 'housed-homeless' is counter-intuitive to people in the general community for good reason. People living in houses may be *at risk* of homelessness, but they are not 'homeless' while they remain housed. According to the ABS, the housed-homeless are the largest group in the homeless population …However, these figures potentially understate the extent of housed-homelessness if the criteria specified in the ABS conceptual framework are applied. Not identified in the Census, for example, are…People living in houses that have inadequate facilities [and] people renting accommodation without security of tenure (Chamberlain 2014:22).

The methodological approach of the national *Census* is open to criticism, for although caravan park residents are not considered to be homeless, individuals living with other households in overcrowded houses and units, are now counted as the 'housed-homeless' (ABS 2011, 2016); an oxymoron that can only confuse homeless issues and distort homelessness statistics. Furthermore, as the *Census* is the statistical mainstay of policy decisions, any errors therein potentially bare considerable consequences. Chamberlain (2014) credibly suggests that *Census* results skew homeless statistics in terms of levels, household compositions and age groups,

and warns of misguided policy decisions which may be made as a result. Establishing the nature and level of use of caravan parks in Australia is primarily drawn from the national *Census* and, as a result, accurate evaluation is problematic. Researchers have long called for more timely and conclusive measures in order to produce more comprehensive data collection (Chamberlain 2012; Chamberlain and Johnson 2020). Nevertheless, the enduring statistical measures commonly used here, and in housing research elsewhere, are largely based on the national *Census* data.

The 2001 Australian national *Census* identified 144,000 residents of caravan parks. Research by Chamberlain in 2005, found over 22,000 caravan park rental residents to be marginally housed, that is, those not on holiday, not owners of their own van and without the resources to secure any other form of housing. Significantly for this study, of Chamberlain's (2005) total of 22,000 people, 8,000 individuals resided in Queensland and 6,000 of those persons (75%) lived in caravan parks located in "regional centres or country towns" (Chamberlain 2005:6). By 2010, there were estimated to be a total of approximately 168,000 permanent residents of caravan parks nationally, including some 15,000 park residents living in Queensland (ORB 2010:6). In 2013, the *Manufactured Homes Survey* established that in Queensland there were "24,200 people living in manufactured homes…88% are aged 65 or over… with most receiving an income of under $40,000 each year (90%)…[and] 9 out of 10 receive Commonwealth Rent Assistance payments" (State of Queensland Government 2014: 5-15). These estimates document a rising level of caravan park permanent residents in Queensland, with the dominant demographic being elderly people living on low incomes.

The Australian National Housing Supply Council (2013), identifies a direct correlation between the incidence of marginal homes and a scarcity of adequate, affordable housing:

> While the majority of the population is able to access adequate housing, between 2001 and 2011 there was an increase in both the number of people recorded as homeless and the number living in other marginal housing. While a myriad of social issues underlies homelessness and the use of marginal housing, the lack of available suitable low-cost housing contributes to people living in these circumstances (National Housing Supply Council 2013:xi).

Marginal housing is described by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011), as follows:

> housing which is not adequate for reasons such as no security of tenure, or the dwelling may be overcrowded, or it does not meet 'minimum expectations' – it does not have basic facilities or adequate

> facilities…An example of people living in marginal housing is those who live in caravans in caravan parks (Australian Bureau of Statistics Position Paper 2011).

Within the national total, the 2011 *Census* separately classified 12,963 individuals as being "people marginally housed in caravan parks" (ABS 2012:3). *Census* data collection methods do not facilitate detailed investigation and it is probable that many other uncounted caravan park dwellings may also represent marginal housing. Chamberlain has recommended local government records as a credible alternative to the national *Census* for dwelling enumeration, yet freely contends that this form of accounting is again subject to accurate collection (Chamberlain 2012). The need and value of additional databases, such as those found within local government, are supported by this research and are deemed to be vital to assess the true nature and magnitude of Australian marginality and homelessness.

In 2013, the *Commonwealth Homeless Bill* acknowledged caravan parks in relation to the condition of homelessness. Within the bill, an individual may be considered as homeless if: *"*the person is living in a caravan park, boarding house, hostel or similar accommodation, whether on a short-term or long-term basis, in respect of which the person has no secure lease and the person is not living in that accommodation by choice" (Walsh 2014:829). Although this progression is welcome, the reference to 'choice' is a matter of contention because it may be considered as an arbitrary, uneasily classifiable term, and, furthermore, any agency of choice is necessarily constrained by accessible resources. Due to the inclusion of 'choice' in the definition of homelessness, the conditions endured by many caravan park residents are discounted as being problematic, because the inhabitants may be deemed to have 'chosen' an inadequate living environment. It seems likely that most individuals would choose adequate housing above a marginal dwelling, if the choice were available to them.

The 2016 national *Census* recorded that "the number of persons marginally housed in caravan parks fell, down 18% to 10,685 persons in 2016" (ABS 2018a:1). However, definitions of marginality continue to hamper accurate assessment and the limitations imposed on defining marginal park dwelling leaves these statistics open to question. Excluded from this count, are all park homes "with a tenure type of owned" (that is, all homeowners) and all households "where at least one resident is working" (ABS 2018b:1). These exclusions seemingly assume, that homeownership or a wage of any level automatically negates the possibility of inadequate and insecure, and therefore marginal, dwelling. Research here suggests that this is an unrealistic

provision, because park residency is found to be marginal regardless of property tenure or occupant's occupation.

The characteristics of inadequate facilities and insecurity of tenure remain prominent features of Australian caravan park housing and, therefore, warrant the same focus as other contexts deemed to be realms of homelessness. However, the magnitude of homelessness in Australia is currently misrepresented by incomprehensive statistics and misleading classifications, which minimise the problem and fail vulnerable Australians. This minimisation complements the ethos of neoliberal welfare retraction because it reduces the number of people deemed to need assistance and, in this way, housing adversity is imposed by governmental non-intervention. This research suggests that government has a significant influence on housing outcomes and furthermore, that justification for inadequacy is readily sustained by inaccurate reporting and accompanying rhetoric.

6.3 Australian Caravan Park Housing

Caravan park usage has evolved in recent decades, from providing only temporary accommodation to now also offering long-term accommodation. Following changes in 1980s regulation, these sites have transitioned from being regulated as purely holiday destinations, to an acceptance of mixed-use to incorporate the provision of permanent homes (Newton 2008). However, the regulation of park conditions has been slow to follow this change in operations and caravan park occupation is enduringly regarded as being only 'temporary' and therefore, is only obliged to meet marginal standards. Dyson (2016) emphasises that caravan park evolution has:

> developed in a somewhat haphazard manner from traditional holiday parks to what is now a targeted permanent housing option for older people and retirees, and it is time to identify and implement the legislative and practice reforms to ensure that residents can experience the benefits of secure and affordable housing in supportive communities (Dyson 2016:23).

In consequence, van parks offer living conditions and tenancy terms well below those culturally regarded as suitable for permanent occupancy: simple construction dwellings with inadequate basic facilities and insecure tenures (Newton 2008). Notwithstanding the operational and regulatory failings of caravan parks, they now represent an important source of affordable, but marginal, housing (Bunce 2010; Australian Housing and Urban Research

Institute (AHURI) 2012; Homelessness Australia 2016). Inaccessibility to traditional public and private traditional housing options, prompts increasing numbers of individuals to gravitate to caravan parks. Yet the anomaly of largely excluding marginal caravan park residents from homeless statistics, may be said to understate the adverse conditions existing in these parks. Consequently, that which is possibly the most central aspect of everyday life, a home, manifests for many Australian park residents as a politically forgotten, culturally sub-standard, insecurely tenured dwelling.

Australian caravan parks are a little researched area, however, in the United States of America the issues faced in US 'trailer parks' are well documented. For example, studies by leading researcher Matthew Desmond (2012, 2015) expose the social problems associated with widespread housing insecurity and evictions in American van parks. Desmond aligns dwelling insecurity and eviction with associated effects which lead to poverty (Desmond 2015).

> Many people think that job loss leads to eviction, but eviction can also lead to job loss … [There is} a large and robust relationship between a recent eviction and increased material hardship … If material hardship is a measure of the lived experience of scarcity— assessing, say, hunger or sickness because food or medical care was financially out of reach—then these findings suggest that eviction is a driver of poverty (Desmond 2015:4-5.

In this way, Desmond reinforces the premise of this thesis that if housing is compromised, so too, are many other aspects of daily life. Thus, one might view Desmond's American housing analysis as a cautionary tale, that may provide impetus for immediate measures to combat housing precarity in Australia.

Park Living Conditions

Caravan parks in Australia commonly operate as mixed use sites, accommodating both residents and tourists. The degree of separation between the corresponding dwellings, is variable between parks but is often negligible; permanent and temporary residents reside along-side each other and share common areas and basic facilities such as kitchens, laundries, showers and toilets (Caldicott and Scherrer 2013).

Parks represent extremely close proximity living, in non-self-contained dwellings, made of simple construction, so many aspects of daily life are impacted by semi-communal living, which includes the behaviour of other residents. This is explained by Newton (2014):

"'Propinquity', or close living, and 'permeability' resulting from the thin walls in caravan park living, give rise to enhanced exposure to the environment and other people…this living situation allows scope for greater sociality and pressures towards the imposition of social boundaries and privacy" (Newton 2014:58). Communal living undoubtedly compromises individual privacy, but within caravan parks this is compounded by the scant construction of dwellings and the minimal provision of facilities. Furthermore, housing and tourism sectors compete for increasingly scarce caravan park resources, because their appeal as holiday destinations endures, while housing need increases. Caldicott and Scherrer (2013) elaborate on this point:

> The caravan park sector of the Australian leisure accommodation industry currently provides 50% of total domestic bed capacity. Recent decades have seen a gradual decline in caravan park establishments and despite its continuing market dominance in terms of bed capacity…total site capacity is declining nationally through the closure of parks…As demand for the caravanning experience increases, the contrasting trend of caravan park accommodation/sites is predicted to create a serious accommodation facilities shortage for the caravanning sector of the tourism industry (Caldicott and Scherrer 2013:118-20).

Other transient uses of parks, such as the accommodation of itinerant workers, are also competing forces in the overall supply of park accommodation (Basson and Basson 2014). Workers who are temporarily displaced from their permanent home, valuing the affordability and flexibility of park accommodation. Consequently, access to park housing is in strong demand from various quarters and the socio-economic disparity within mixed-use caravan parks is likely to become more pronounced. Despite reported shortcomings, caravan parks are a valuable housing resource which accommodates many diverse members of the Australian population. Marginally housed persons exist adjacent to holidaymakers, transient workers and others, in a semi-communal living environment. This unusual tenant-mix of permanent and temporary residents in caravan parks has not been fully explored and is worthy of future sociological investigation.

Park Tenure Security

According to Bunce, caravan parks "have long been a neglected area of both housing and planning policy", and park tenants are afforded less tenancy rights than their traditionally housed counterparts (2010:280). Issues of insecurity associated with tenure are persistently noted as being of concern to park dwellers. This includes park homeowners, because "there are

no laws to effectively protect residents if the owner of a caravan park decides to sell" (Bunce 2010:284). Even if residents own their park home, they do not own the land it stands on. This land is rented from the park owner who has complete power over it. As a result, homeowners and rental residents alike may be evicted with as little as "90 days notice" (Bunce 2010:280). The level of tenure security afforded to a van park resident is generally governed by the type of tenancy agreement a tenant has in place, but all tenure terms are observed in this research to be tenuous.

In Queensland, manufactured homeowners are legislated under a *Site Agreement*, but other residents, park homeowners and rental tenants, fall under the jurisdiction of a standard *Residential Tenancy Agreement (RTA)* (*Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Act* (MHRP) 2003 revised 2010). Neither form of agreement ensures a longevity of tenancy. Possession of a *Site Agreement* enables a homeowner to seek home-removal expenses from a landlord, in the event of involuntary relocation. Homeowners without this agreement have no recompense. These owner-occupiers, and park rental tenants, are tenured under a RTA lease, as is used for traditional rental properties (*Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Act* (MHRP) 2003 revised 2010). RTA leases are commonly short (six to twelve months) and make no consideration for homeowner occupation. This research finds that in practice, many owner-occupied park residences are either excluded or incorrectly classified, thus prohibiting some homeowners from securing the benefit of a *Site Agreement*. Furthermore, many rental tenants reside in parks without any form of tenancy agreement at all. Under all tenure arrangements eviction is readily achievable by the park landlord and insecurity of tenure is a prominent issue within the context of permanent park living, yet it has received little legislative attention.

Negative experiences related to tenure insecurity, are found to be considerably compounded by factors such as low incomes and limited alternative housing options:

> Overwhelmingly, older people experiencing first time homelessness or at risk of homelessness for the first time have low incomes, are highly vulnerable and, due to their exclusive reliance on the Age Pension, their financial circumstances are unlikely to improve. Many will require accessible housing or home modifications immediately or in the near future. Therefore an essential component of prevention and rapid response is provision of housing that is both affordable and accessible and, in most cases, the most appropriate response is social housing. We know from previous research that older people settle well often without the need for ongoing supports if they are resettled in a timely manner …The shortage of available and modified social housing in many locations is a significant barrier to achieving suitable

> outcomes and may result in marginal housing, homelessness or premature entry to residential aged care (Petersen, Parsell, Phillips and White 2014:93).

Permanent residents of caravan parks comprise both rental tenants and homeowners, but regardless of their tenure status, many of these residents live in culturally unacceptable living conditions, saturated by the daily reality of housing insecurity.

Power Disparity

Legislative neglect is apparent concerning the weighted power imbalance between caravan park owner and resident. No legislation exists to ensure park operator suitability or expertise and no mandatory requirements are in place regarding park management training (AHURI 2012). Private training providers have responded to the unsupported need for caravan park operator training courses, however, AHURI call for more "reliable training" to be provided by "independent government bodies such as TAFE" (AHURI 2012:9). In the absence of regulated industry standards, the experience of living within parks is largely dependent on operator preferences and unscrupulous park operators have the power to negatively influence their resident's lives. Although park management and owners are expected to allow "quiet enjoyment of the home" and to refrain from "fraudulent, misleading, harassing or unconscionable conduct" (*Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Act* 2003), such eventualities are not guaranteed. Indeed, many accounts received within the course of this research imply quite the contrary. The benefits associated with a caravan park community were certainly appreciated by participants, but residents also repeatedly spoke of very worrying unethical conduct by park owners, or their agents; operators who have the power to turn a dwelling "paradise" into a "living hell" (Erin, park homeowner). Accounts of these experiences, and others, are documented and discussed in later chapters, where regulation and operator training are highlighted as vital areas to be improved in the area of caravan park, permanent housing provision.

Since the deregulation of park usage in the 1980s, the position of caravan parks within the wider Australian housing market has changed, from exclusively tourism to mixed-use. Correspondingly, the role of park managers has metamorphosed from tourism operator to permanent housing provider. However, legislation is yet to acknowledge these transformations. Legislative neglect means that, the "issues and risk confronting all residents in caravan parks

are much the same as they were more than a decade ago. They include lack of security of tenure, inadequate housing standards, [and] risk of homelessness" (AHURI 2012:14).

Park Closures

Notwithstanding a strong demand for caravan park housing, "many parks have closed in recent years and the trend is continuing" (Bunce 2010:277). The numbers of both 'mixed-use' and 'residential parks', are reported to have reduced in Australia by 10% between 1997 and 2006. In recent years, "across the country caravan parks are closing down, leaving many residents who turned to them as a place of last resort now scrambling for new affordable homes" (Handcock 2018:1). The reasons for closure are often linked to economic influences, such as the lure of increased land values (Bunce 2010). Caravan parks are commonly large parcels of land sited in prime real estate locations, and some fall prey to the property market, where the highest and best use is measured purely in economic terms, regardless of the wider social implications (Reed & Greenhalgh 2004). Local government planning regulations regarding redevelopment are "flexible" and tenant security of tenure is virtually non-existent (Bunce 2010:278).

Bunce (2010:281), warns that "without local authority's effective exercise of land use controls, the land market will not work in the public interest". Researchers have called for zoning to more accurately reflect the current land use, with 'residential parks' being given 'residential' planning status, and the implementation of measures that acknowledge the value of caravan park permanent housing and which facilitates future residential land use imperatives (Bunce 2010; Dyson 2016). The three-tier system of government in Australia is said by Bunce, to have restricted caravan parks to an "essentially medieval land tenure", because no one department has overall authority over the park domain (2010:280). Rather than a cohesive regime inclusive of all levels of governance, local, state and federal departments deal with differing objectives, which may be in conflict. "The federal government play an overarching role in housing through policy levers and taxation regimes. The state and territory governments have responsibility for regulatory laws…and the local government have responsibility for land use planning" (Bunce 2010:280). Three levels of Australian Government, each with their own wider agendas, have an opportunity to influence caravan park operations. Yet little collaboration or continuity exists between regulative bodies, and no overarching governmental guidelines are in place, thus caravan park closures readily enforce resident evictions, while

simultaneously imposing biographical and community displacement, and diminishing housing supply.

Caravan park housing is no longer a primarily temporary arrangement and park closures have enormous repercussions for individual residents, entire communities and for an already overwhelmed housing sector. Closures impose an uncertain housing future on those who are displaced, and as Bunce reports, tenant eviction not only impacts on an individual's location but can also "result in the displacement of an entire community, disruption of close social networks [and] increased stress" (2010:279). The threat of private caravan park closure has been abated by local authority crisis reaction and the public purchase of parks, both in the State of Queensland and Australia wide (Nelson & Minnery 2008; AHURI 2012). The public purchase of caravan parks demonstrates the importance of park homes within a wider housing context. Moreover, it also signals an unacceptable trend in Australian social housing provision because social housing units are, to some degree, being replaced by caravans. Nelson & Minnery (2008) document the reason for the public purchase of a private caravan park in the Queensland capital, Brisbane:

> hundreds of caravan park residents risked being made homeless if the government didn't step in and save parks from land hungry developers…these latest purchases were in direct response to the potential social consequences of the closure of these parks (The Housing Minister, Robert Schwarten, cited in Nelson & Minnery 2008:483).

The motivation for public purchase is clear, "caravan park closure has an immediate and serious impact on low cost housing provision while at the same time increasing the demand for this housing" (Nelson and Minnery 2008:484). However, the crisis-response of the public purchase of private parks involves investing public monies in marginal housing and supplements social housing by replacing it with publicly funded caravans and mobile homes. This substitution seemingly ignores the simultaneous exchange therein, from adequate to inadequate terms and conditions, and the associated social justice implications of marginally housing vulnerable individuals who seek assistance for the state. A decline in social housing means that other forms of public money, such as the *Commonwealth Rent Assistance,* is increasingly accessed to secure private dwellings. However, unlike social housing, the standard of private accommodation secured is not scrutinised and so this assistance can be used to pay rent for any type of home, even a caravan. This trend is likely to continue because, as Goodman, Dalton, Gabriel, Jacobs and Nelson report:

> there is a growing recognition that the demand for marginal housing will intensify over the coming years because of the lack of affordable housing…[and] any attempt to reduce the supply of marginal housing in the current context is likely to exacerbate incidences of homelessness and place further strain on the affordable private rental market (Goodman. Dalton, Gabriel, Jacobs and Nelson 2012:3).

Already, housing inaccessibility in traditional domains has resulted in the increased need for marginal housing across Australia. For example, in Canberra, according to Low:

> housing has become so unaffordable that some would-be renters live in caravan parks, the ACT Tenants' Union says…marginal housing [has] borne "the absolute brunt" of the housing affordability crisis…there [is] no doubt people were being forced into accommodation they would not normally choose because the ACT lacked affordable rental housing (Low 2008).

As the crisis in housing availability filters through to increased rents and declining affordability, marginal housing is no longer reserved just for a disadvantaged minority but is now demanded by a widening demographic. It is not only the vulnerable and disadvantaged who are exposed to marginality, for example, according to the Tenants Union of Victoria:

> young professional couples who in the past might have bought their own home - but now can't afford to - are competing for housing with single people or low-income families…Caravan parks are no longer simply places for summer holiday makers or homes for society's most marginalized. Competition is fierce for a shrinking source of relatively cheap accommodation…Fueling this trend is the decline in the availability and affordability of accommodation in the mainstream housing market. According to the Office of Housing, available rental stock continues to run at a critically low 1 per cent, while rents have increased 12.7 per cent since last year, so that now only 20.8 per cent of all new lettings across the state [of Victoria] are affordable to lower-income households, compared with 27.9 per cent in 2007 (Ferraro 2009:17).

Caravan parks may be said to offer relatively low-cost accommodation however, rent increases in recent years have brought the affordability of park rental housing into question. Park homeownership too has become increasingly unaffordable. Costs are increasing, largely due to overwhelming demand in all housing sectors, ensuring low vacancy rates even for marginal dwellings, regardless of condition or terms. Caravan park homes may once have been considered as a cheap rental or homeownership option, however, "declining affordability" is now a key issue for park residents (AHURI 2012:18). Thus, access to renting or buying a caravan park home is narrowing and securing even a home of 'last resort' is increasingly out of reach.

Caravan Park Community

Despite their shortcomings, caravan parks are reportedly regarded by residents as an attractive housing option; one that offers very modest, relatively accessible accommodation with the added benefit of an on-site community. Manufactured communities, such as those found within caravan parks, are to some degree, becoming a replacement for what has been has observed as a paucity of familial interaction in the current age (Newton (2014).

Newton describes Australian caravan parks as "miniature suburbs" with a "modified concierge arrangement" (2008:230). Participants of Newton's (2008) research concerning permanent park dwellers living on the outskirts of Melbourne, Victoria, reported high levels of resident satisfaction with the environment. This point of view is similarly expressed in park-centred research by Bevan in the United Kingdom, who states that residents regard "park-home estates as safe living environments", with some older residents viewing their park as being "similar to neighbourhoods in bygone times…like a little village" (2010:977). A "recovery of community…rooted in an idealized past", is the sentiment exposed by Bevan's study (2010:980). Bevan found that park homes in the UK were also predominately occupied by persons over the age of 60 years. This British trend is not surprising, because approximately "two-thirds of park operators place age restrictions on the occupiers, with the most common being a minimum age of 50 years" (Bevan 2010:967). Caravan park housing is said to be valued by many, particularly the aged, as a "secure environment surrounded by a community of like-minded residents" (Office of Regulative Bodies 2010:10). Similarly, findings of the Queensland *Manufactured Homes Survey* (2013), recognised that "parks have become de facto retirement villages and senior's lifestyle resorts for many older Queenslanders", and reported that "typical" homeowners are persons over seventy years old (State of Queensland Government 2014:1). This survey, which only concerns homeowners, revealed that on-site community and safety were the most identified benefits of park living, and that the negatives of unscrupulous managerial practices and rising costs presented as being of most concern to residents (State of Queensland Government 2014). However, the *Manufactured Homes Survey* made no recommendations for legislative amendments and thus, the benefit of social connectivity is not protected, and negative tenure issues have not been addressed.

Bosman's 2016 study, which investigates the housing preferences of Australian 'Baby Boomers' (people born between 1946 and 1965), indicates a change in elderly housing

preference; away from 'ageing in place' to semi-communal living. Bosman highlights the key features of housing choices for the elderly as, "affordability, sense of community, safety and security" (Bosman 2016:128). These attributes are reportedly apparent within private sites of 'Active Lifestyle Communities', where age-restricted, owner-occupied homes create fabricated communities. However, this private, semi-communal lifestyle is often only for those with the financial means to meet house purchase and body corporate costs (Bosman 2016). Those aging individuals without substantial means, find the same housing attributes within public and private caravan parks, where, as within this research, their domicile is of a considerably lower standard.

Respondents of a South Australian study, of re-locatable homeowners and rental tenants, reported various reasons for entering park living, which primarily featured retirement downsizing and the dissolution of relationships (Bunce 2010). Two-thirds of the participants in Bunce's study were single and, as is consistent with my research, there was evidence of an "over-representation of older people" (Bunce 2010:282). Freilich, Levine, Travia and Webb (2014:11) report a scarcity of "age-friendly" Australian housing stock and also document the change in seniors housing "preferences" that manifest as a "greater emphasis on community living". Romensky (2016) highlights changes in industry to accommodate the aged:

> According to a Colliers International analysis, there are more than 2,500 caravan parks in Australia comprising a mix of tourist parks, residential living, and entirely residential. Although the majority of caravan parks are owned by single operators, the biggest change in the industry has been the development of entirely permanent residential villages for the over 55 market. Eight major companies own or operate five or more residential and mixed-use caravan parks across the country. The developments have been driven by a lack of affordability for an increasingly ageing population (Romensky 2016:1).

In a 2018 report for National Shelter, researcher Eastgate confirms an increase in levels of homeless and risk of homelessness people, and a "rapid loss" of permanent caravan park housing (Eastgate 2018:14). This report builds on 2011 research and Eastgate is of the familiar opinion, that the true state of affairs is not adequately expressed by the national *Census* statistics:

> Already in 2011, much of the research we used was beginning to date. There has not been much added to this literature since. Aside from these raw Census data, there is not a lot of indication about what is going on here. Where have these caravan park spaces and boarding houses gone? Where have the people gone who used to live in them? What, if anything, is taking their place? And how is it that 15,000 places

> for the most marginalised members of our society can disappear without anyone trying hard to find the answers to these questions? … This wafer-thin, patchy information is perhaps symptomatic of the overall marginality of these forms of housing (Eastgate 2018:14).

Eastgate (2018) points to trends which continue to impact on caravan park housing, including tourist demand and the gentrification of public and private park sites. As this thesis has already acknowledged, these trends have been evident for some time. In terms of alternative homes for displaced park residents, Eastgate suggests that: "there is no research, and little by way of anecdotal reports, that tell us anything useful about this. It is likely that they simply add to the number of low-income people trying to access other parts of the dwindling affordable rental market" (2018:15). According to Eastgate:

> For most of us working in housing or homelessness, marginal housing is at the margins for us too. We are focused on what we see as the main game – getting people into decent, secure housing… Marginal housing is a place for people to leave. However, the Census tells us that on any night we have almost 30,000 highly disadvantaged people in these forms of housing. Given their marginality, the true number may be much higher. Caravan parks and boarding houses are a pressure valve on our overheated housing market, a refuge for people who cannot find housing elsewhere. If we do not pay attention to what is happening here, they could end up somewhere even worse (Eastgate 2018:16).

Caravan parks are at the bottom of the housing spectrum and one of the few housing options available to some, but supply is diminishing, demand is diversifying, and costs are increasing. Australian legislation is yet to adequately address these issues and, without government intervention, insecurity and inadequacy continue, and the number of caravan parks in operation is likely to further diminish. Despite reported shortcomings, park homes are valued as sites of community and are now vital as a dwelling resource, especially so in terms of low income and aged housing.

Conclusion

Homelessness has many recognised guises, primary, secondary and tertiary, and although these may be readily acknowledged, other less visible forms simultaneously exist, in marginal contexts. This thesis challenges the accuracy of homelessness statistics and data collection methods, which obscure the true magnitude of the problem. Marginal housing, although receiving little attention, accommodates substantial numbers of the hidden homeless population of Australia. Individuals who endure culturally sub-standard terms and conditions but are not considered to be homeless, and do not attract legislative measures to improve their

dwelling circumstance. The majority of those permanently housed in caravan parks are found to be elderly people, a demographic which is likely to be sustained in the context of an ageing population. Housing instability is now reaching a widening demographic and is no longer just a problem reserved for the poor because, in a climate of housing crisis, individuals from any previous dwelling circumstance can find themselves without a home.

Caravan parks have long existed as tourism sites, but they increasingly accommodate permanent residents, and Australian legislation does not reflect this change in usage. Nevertheless, the value of permanent van park accommodation has been validated by public purchases of privately-owned parks, for the purpose of abating park closures and averting mass primary homelessness. The public initiative of purchasing private caravan parks may be said to represent a new breed of social housing and an unacceptable use of public money in desperate attempts to house the homeless in marginal homes. Caravan park owners and managers are not designated social housing providers for vulnerable members of our society, yet this is what many of them have become. Increasing park closures and resident evictions have been shown to prompt many individual and societal repercussions, including individual stress, community displacement and a diminishment of accessible housing supply. Despite playing a crucial housing role, regulations do not protect caravan park homes and it is financial considerations that appear to govern their future. General dwelling inaccessibility signals the imperative policy direction of protecting all forms of housing and, in this regard, caravan parks are signalled by this research to be worthy of urgent attention.

Caravan park living presents relatively accessible housing, with opportunity for social connectivity. The sense of community evident in caravan parks suggests that parks may be an appropriate basic model for housing, particularly aged housing, which encompasses a valuable source of on-site sociality. However, these sites are lacking in the basic requirements of adequate housing, and it is the role of government to recognise the current value of marginal homes and to safeguard and improve the terms and conditions of the marginalised residents therein. Housing the homeless in caravan parks, under present tenancy, facility and operational arrangements is not acceptable practice. However, parks as a sites of community and basic housing supply are valuable and essential in the current Australian dwelling landscape.

Marginal housing has become so ingrained as a dwelling alternative it is vital that efforts be focused on sustaining these sites. To abandon caravan parks as a housing option

would be to trade one form of homelessness for another, because primary homelessness is the likely result. The culturally unacceptable living conditions and detrimentally insecure tenure arrangements of park homes must be acknowledged and reformed, in order to provide adequacy and equity for residents, now and in the future. It is evident that caravan parks have substantial housing advantages, but in their present marginal state are insufficient as an alternative to traditional housing.

Chapter Seven

Research Findings Part One: Caravan Park Housing Structure

Introduction

This narrative is the first of three chapters which report and analyse the empirical data, and in doing so, broaden knowledge of marginal living and extend the realm of Bourdieusian thought. This chapter details the structure of housing in four researched caravan parks and the following Chapter Eight, examines the agency exercised by participants, in relation to the terms and conditions of park life. The final analysis in Chapter Nine, highlights internalised perceptions of property tenure which influence housing marginality and proposes an extension to Bourdieusian thought, in the theory of 'housing habitus'.

Experiences of life in a caravan park are illustrated here by the responses of research participants, which are drawn from qualitative research undertaken in parks in North Queensland, Australia. The hinterland sites accessed for this study exhibit the features of established caravan parks; places which were originally designed exclusively for tourism but that now also accommodate permanent residents. This study indicates that caravan park homes are a relatively accessible housing resource, which offers weakly tenured, modest to sub-standard dwellings, in semi-communal environments. Park homes can be rented or purchased and have comparatively low entry and ongoing housing costs. The terms and conditions of tenure are largely determined by the park landowner. In this research, the negatives of park living are centred around operational issues, and inadequacy, insecurity and power disparity are highlighted as dominant themes. The sociability of an on-site community emerges as a very positive aspect of caravan park living and is found to be of particular significance to the predominantly elderly park residents.

This narrative begins with a contextualisation of the study, in the form of profiles of the research locations and participants. It proceeds with an examination of the marginalised structure of caravan park permanent housing and ends with an assessment of the future of this housing resource.

7.1 Research Locations

Of the four caravan parks researched; two parks provide permanent rental accommodation and two, house homeowners. Two are publicly owned and two are privately operated. All parks provide permanent housing alongside tourist operations, and all have landlord/operators who live on site.

Table 3: Tenure of Caravan Parks and Residents

Caravan Park	Publicly Owned	Privately Owned	Rental Tenants	Homeowners
Park 1	*		*	
Park 2		*	*	
Park 3	*			*
Park 4		*		*

In parks One and Two, the permanent residents are rental tenants. Both parks are set on impressive parcels of land, situated within a few kilometres of small country towns, bordered by expansive natural environments. The permanent rental housing at these sites range from antiquated to modest one room caravans or cabins, with an adjacent van-sized, semi-private, concrete outside area. None have private bathrooms or laundries. Homes are located in close proximity to each other and are approached via communal grounds and dirt roads. The boundaries between the homes, and between permanent and tourist zones, are ill-defined or non-existent.

Publicly owned Park One is operated by lessors. All permanent homes are rented and the landowner and the operator arrangement, designates responsibility for the land to the owner, and duty of care for the dwellings to the operator. The park is loosely arranged into three areas. On one side is ‘tent city’ which accommodates campers who are, for the most part, ‘backpackers’ (camping style, working tourists) and itinerant workers who might stay for a few days, weeks or months. In the middle of the park is an area of powered and non-powered tourist-van-sites, which are host to short-stay mobile travellers and ‘grey nomads’ (mobile retirees). The ‘permanents’ section is on the far side and is comprised of terraces of closely-sited, antiquated caravans, which are separated by dirt access roads. These dwellings have

commonly been home to their present occupants for several years, yet no leases, and therefore no security of tenure, are in place. Park One houses between fifty and one hundred long-term residents at any one time. The occupants live a metre from their neighbours, in non-self-contained, shanty-style dwellings of simple construction, and residents share limited communal park facilities among themselves and with up to one hundred transient visitors. The local authority, who are custodians of the land, have recently leased the site and dwellings to the operators and are aware of the living conditions imposed on park residents. Likewise, the newly appointed managers readily acknowledge that the accommodation they provide is sub-standard (Melanie, park operator). Nevertheless, these dwelling conditions persist.

Park Two also accommodates rental tenants and is a large, privately owned and operated site. Pristine and expansive, it presents as a desirable holiday destination. Indeed, it is regarded by the owner-operator, Charles, as a "holiday park" but is, nevertheless, also home to long-term permanent rental residents. All permanent dwellings herein are owned by the owner-operator and are rented under 'periodic leases' (see below). These homes have minimal, shared facilities and range from old, shabby caravans (similar to those in Park One) to basic one-roomed cabins, and the rents charged are between $170 and $350 per week. The park-owned permanent homes and their small sites (eighty to one hundred square meters in size) are interspersed between tourist accommodation, fully enclosed with dense shade cloth. The purpose of this cloth is reportedly to hide the residents and their possessions from tourists, who apparently "don't like to share the park with the permanents" (Charles, park operator). This arrangement confirms the priority of tourist residents in this caravan park and symbolises the subjugated status of the permanent rental tenants.

Park Three is a publicly owned caravan park, and Park Four is privately owned, both have permanent residents who are homeowners. The owner-occupied residences in parks Three and Four are generally well maintained by their residents, each occupies approximately one hundred square meters of land and they are situated in close proximity to their neighbours. Caravan park homeownership is observed to be precarious, for although the dwellings are owned by their occupants, the land on which the homes are situated is not. The land is rented as a caravan park site. This rental aspect of owner-occupied park homes largely negates the accustomed security and autonomy associated with homeownership. These neat, park dwellings are primarily homes for retirees, who may face eviction because the homeowners do

not have an enduring right of tenure. The park owners have virtual autonomy regarding their daily operations, future development, or disposal of park land.

Publicly owned Park Three displays the same positive attributes of social connectivity and scenic outlook as the other researched parks. The owner-occupied homes are modest, typically without private facilities and are interspersed among tourist sites. The issue regarding insecurity of park homeownership is particularly poignant within Park Three because the demise of this caravan park is planned, as part of an impending local authority, tourism-focused development, which will eventually necessitate the displacement of all permanent residents and their homes (Julie, Sid, Will, Park Three homeowners). When these permanent residents are forced to relocate, the social impact of individual biographical disruption and community displacement is likely to be considerable.

In privately-owned Park Four, there are over fifty, predominantly elderly, homeowner residents who are permanent. As with the other three sites, this park occupies prime real estate land close to local amenities, and this one offers superb water views. All permanent homes are owner-occupied or vacant, all have private ablutions and there are no communal facilities aside from roadway access and common park grounds. The permanent residents' section of the park is situated adjacent to a busy tourist area and the boundary between the two is only mildly defined by a low hedge. Conversations with residents reveal that operator conduct significantly influences their current well-being and overshadows future hopes.

7.2 Research Participants

The following section gives a brief introduction to the participants of this study and in doing so, provides insights into the people and daily life observed in the four caravan parks. The research participants involved in this study comprise park rental tenants, homeowners and landowners/operators. The resident participants commonly rely solely on government welfare payments as a source of income and the majority group are retirees who live alone.

Rental Tenants

Steven: Permanent resident Steven is a frail man in his eighties, who has lived in his rented caravan in Park One, for some two years. He is now awaiting relocation to a unit found by the social services. Steven's home is a mass of old sheet metal fit only for a recycling station.

His dwelling consists of a small, damaged and dirty caravan (circa 1960s), housing only a bed and a two-burner electric cooker. In addition, there is a small outside area with damaged, uneven, concrete ground, a cause of major concern for the occupant. I met Steven on two occasions and each time he sat in the same position, undoubtedly because his infirmity hindered his mobility. This was especially problematic when accessing the detached ablutions. Steven sat outside his van on one modest chair with a small, old, camping-style table beside it. There was no second chair for the researcher, who hovered somewhat uneasily alongside his very basic accommodation. Steven disclosed that his rent for this park home was $165 per week, a fee he was happy to pay, primarily because it permitted him to live together with his two dogs, 'Cindy and Brumby', whereas many other rental residences prohibited animals.

Nancy and Sue: At the same caravan park, a three-generation family of four, Nancy, her daughter Sue and her two small children, reside in similar circumstances to Steven. They live in a park owned, antiquated caravan with the same limited facilities - one room for cooking and sleeping, a small outside piece of concrete for living space, and detached ablutions which they share with other residents. The mother or the ageing grandmother must diligently escort their children to the shared toilet and shower facility, situated a short walk away, because of safety issues. For the privilege of living here, this extended family pay a weekly rent of $240. They acknowledge the rudimentary nature of their home, and cite a lack of alternatives and unaffordability, particularly when living is financed entirely from social welfare payments, as barriers to securing an alternative home (Nancy). The two pre-school age children in this family, have already spent a good portion of their young lives living in this caravan park, with no secure outside space or private amenities, and it is likely that they may spend many more.

Sandra: Next door lives a family of three, Sandra, her teenage son and her boyfriend (and their three cats), who have been residents here for two years. Once again, the park owned van is old, in need of repair and provides only one room for all inhabitants to cook and sleep. As is common in this study, the family exists primarily on welfare payments. Sandra's "boyfriend" does "odd-jobs" around the park to subsidise their $210 weekly rent (Sandra). This is an unofficial work arrangement and Sandra reports "it is very hard to get by on Centrelink [welfare] payments". Issues of decreasing affordability, overburdened shared ablutions and the close confines of "noisy neighbours" are all said by Sandra to be reluctantly, yet fatalistically, endured, not least because she views her park residency to be transient. Sandra's presently prolonged park residency is reportedly due to the limited availability of traditional housing and

high entry and ongoing rental costs elsewhere. The family's intended temporary move to this caravan park has become a permanent situation and is static for the foreseeable future.

Chad: A single man in his thirties, Chad, lives a few vans away from the two families. His rented caravan has the same basic condition and configuration as the other vans described. He shares his dwelling with several animals, namely snakes and caged birds. Chad is also unemployed, and he reports that his lack of finance leaves him unable to afford the deposit or rent for a traditional property. This, together with the limited accommodation options allowing pets, in his opinion, makes it virtually impossible to secure an alternative home. Chad says he would prefer to live in a house, but a traditional home is definitely beyond his financial capabilities, "I've been looking [for a house], it's hard... it's the finances really". However, resident Chad values the "great community" afforded by his caravan park, where neighbourly interaction is commonplace. Chad shares his small site with a friend who lives in a tent, opting to subsidise his rent by sharing his limited outside area. Like many residents, Chad uses his inside area for sleeping and cooking, choosing not to prepare his food in the one shared camp-kitchen available to all permanent and transient dwellers. The communal kitchen is described as over-used, ill-equipped, old and dirty, a condition not dissimilar to the ablution blocks which he and others must share. Although Chad's home has impressive views over the pristine countryside and river to the rear of this publicly owned park, this vista sits in stark contrast to the point from which it is viewed - a shanty town of caravan park permanent homes.

Tom: "You must speak to Tom", "Tom knows everything around here" (Nancy and Sandra, park residents). This information was confided to me by Tom's fellow Park One residents, so he was duly sought and interviewed. Tom, an elderly resident of this caravan park for ten years, is indeed a wealth of information. Tom's caravan has fared a little better over its long life than the other worn-out, publicly owned rental vans which are common in this park. Tom's van is used just for sleeping, his cooking facilities spill out into a shared arrangement of outside areas which adjoin other caravans. These areas are connected by make-shift tarpaulin roofs, under which he and other residents regularly prepare communal meals for each other. Tom's home is among the 'backpacker' contingent, the "noisy neighbours" tolerated by other permanents. These temporary residents are a source of joy for this man of seventy-six, who wholeheartedly welcomes and values them in his life. His pleasure was recounted to me, in comical stories and fond recollections of interactions with his transient park companions. Tom presents as being extremely content with his home, his lifestyle and his social connectivity,

displaying no desire to move from his present dwelling arrangement; “I’ve got everything I need here” he says, including his two cats.

Karin: Karin has resided in a quieter corner of Park One, in a rented van, for more than four years. She came to Australia in the 1970s from Germany, on a ‘ten-pound passage’ (a governmental initiative of the times, designed to encourage European immigration), and she is now 64 years of age. Unlike the other caravans here, her home has been repaired and decorated, not by the landlord but by the tenant herself. Karin, in a clear display of individual agency within structural adversity (Bourdieu 1984), has transformed a meagre dwelling into a European artwork, complete with artefacts and extensive folk-art. Her home is a fully enclosed, private sanctuary in which Karin and her dog enjoy a quiet life, venturing out only for the necessity of using the communal bathroom and laundry facilities. Karin values the limited social interactions she encounters and derives a constant sense of security from knowing that the landlords and other residents live on-site. The shared use of toilet, shower and washing machine are accepted by Karin as an unavoidable inconvenience. Cooking is carried out by this resident inside her van and the kitchen doubles as a thoroughfare between the sleeping area inside and a small sitting area outside that is completed by a tiny garden. Karin expresses contentment with her dwelling arrangement and is confident that it is only a temporary housing situation.

Park Operators

Melanie and Ken: Lessee-operators of Park One, Melanie and Ken, came to park management from a background of mining and hospitality respectively and have no prior experience regarding the provision of permanent housing. They say that they are powerless to transform the “disgusting” dwellings within their park, because of an insecurity of tenure provoked by the short duration of their business lease. These lease terms reportedly deter investment in the property because the future of their business occupancy is not assured. Short term leases, whether business or residential, offer no assurance of longevity and, as with this example, incites liminality which deters plans and supresses outcomes until some unknown future time (Johnsen and Sorensen 2015). Melanie and Ken present as approachable, empathetic landlords, who appear to voluntarily adopt a parental-style role in their dealings with the permanent and transient residents they accommodate. Their conscientious approach

to daily responsibilities was clearly apparent, but so too, was the minimal level of regulation legislatively imposed over caravan park standards and operations.

Charles and Petra: The owner-operators of Park Two, Charles and Petra, have lived and worked in their privately-owned caravan park for more than twelve years and it is apparent that the park is a huge part of their lives. Charles readily spoke of his authoritarian approach to management and talked about written park rules and regulations, verbal warnings and incidences of resident evictions. In my role as researcher, I was taken on a golf-buggy tour of the premises by owner Charles, a tour which illustrated both how immaculately the park is maintained and how discretely the permanent residents are housed. The clear focus of this park is to attract tourist trade and a jarring contrast exists; pristine tourist cabins and sites are interspersed with worn permanent dwellings, and luxury motor homes sit beside caravans that are fit for demolition. The main business interest is clearly tourism. This caravan park is currently for sale and the fate of the permanent residents who live there, without security of tenure, is uncertain.

Homeowners

Will: Will is a seventy-six-year-old man, who has been a permanent, homeowner resident in Park Three for some six years. Will reported that he is content with his living arrangements, which consist of a large, fully roofed caravan with an enclosed outside area and that presents as a well-established and immovable structure. The shared park ablutions are housed separately nearby, and these facilities are of a similar inadequate and basic state as those in Parks One and Two, the rental sites considered above. Nevertheless, homeowners like Will value these facilities and reportedly prefer sharing a bathroom, rather than maintaining one of their own. Will chose to purchase his home as his last move in life but, because of landowner development plans, he now lives with the uneasy prospect of imposed relocation and is acutely aware that he is facing an uncertain housing future in his twilight years.

Sid: Will's neighbour is Sid, a man in his late fifties, who lives alone apart from periodic visits from his primary-school-aged daughter. Sid's home is similarly constructed to Will's; an extended and converted caravan which is stabilised by additional roofing and simple boundary walls. He also uses the shared park facilities and Sid has actually removed the bathroom from his dwelling in favour of extra space, and the added advantage of bathroom

cleaning and maintenance being provided by the park operatives. Sid's accommodation is essentially an immovable structure, yet his home and residency are vulnerable to forced eviction should the park owners demand it. This circumstance would impact profoundly on dwelling mobility and impose considerable physical, emotional and financial pressures in relation to relocation. The prospect of moving to a new house and home appears to be more readily accepted by Sid than by his neighbour, possibly because he is one of only three park residents in this study who is neither aged nor on a fixed budget. However, the harsh reality of relocation is ever present, and Sid believes that eviction will be the likely conclusion to his residency.

Julie: Julie lives a few caravans away and has been a homeowner resident of Park Three for the last seven years. Julie's home has the familiar characteristics; a converted caravan with an attached awning, occupying approximately one hundred meters of total living space, with detached, shared ablutions. Affordability is Julie's major enticement to park living and this, together with the scenic and convenient location of the park and the sociability it offers, are regarded by Julie as great benefits. However, as a single woman Julie speaks of the vulnerability of her living environment, which she says is primarily fostered by insecure tenure arrangements and the power exercised by the park custodians to impose arbitrary rules and discretionary eviction. Julie refers to poor managerial practices and excessive regulations, which she says negate homeownership rights. She notes that the positive attribute of park living of an on-site community, is considerably marred by excessive operator power which allows inequitable treatment of homeowners, within their additional capacity as renters of caravan park land.

Jade: Jade has owned her home in Park Four for many years, and although she purchased it to be her long-term, possibly last, retirement home, she now wants to sell. Her reasons for wishing to leave her comfortable, well-presented home, are connected to the conduct of the park operator. As a single, aging woman, Jade sought tranquillity and community in her later life, but instead, she encounters hostility and is plagued by the dictatorial attitude of her on-site landlords. The daily experience of Jade's 'golden years' is not the peaceful enjoyment of her property but a feeling of entrapment. This is due to legislative shortfalls (Manufactured Homes and Residential Parks Act 2003, revised 2010), that allow park landlords to have ultimate authority over homeowners' lives. The tenure of Jade's site is unprotected and thus, she lives with a constant fear of eviction. Furthermore, she feels that she

may be unable to move voluntarily because her home is unattractive to potential buyers, due to insecure occupancy rights.

Bill: Bill, a single man in his late seventies, is Jade's neighbour. He also purchased his park home as an enduring retirement option, but he too has his property offered for sale. Bill's opinion is the same: park management is at the discretion of the operators and consequently, his quality of life is largely controlled by them. The effects of limited operator training and minimal regulations are evident in this park, in the strained tenant/landlord relations. Furthermore, when everyday pleasantries are exchanged for constant reprimands, he feels that no redress is possible because residents are unsupported by regulative bodies. Bill is in a fortunate position because he has the means to move away, without first securing the sale of his home, which he intends to do imminently. Bill's home is currently offered for a sale price of $120,000, but he thinks he has little hope of securing a purchaser, due to insecure tenancy arrangements and the obstructive gatekeeping of the park operators. Others, like Jade, are not able to even consider relocation without first securing a purchaser, because their life savings are tied to a dwelling asset which they may be unable to sell.

Bob and Carry: Retirees Bob and Carry, sold their modest home in Park Four for a mere $20,000, substantially less than they had purchased it for, many years prior. Again, operator abuse is cited as the impetus for their relocation, and the extremely low sale price eventually achieved is attributed by them to the insecure tenure of the home and the obstructive practices of the caravan park operator. Carry says she felt confined to her home lest she encounter the wrath of the operator, who apparently complained about resident's conduct at every turn. Bob and Carry eventually chose to leave the caravan park, despite considerable financial loss, and currently live in a small rental unit in a neighbouring town. Their Great Australian Dream of homeownership is now extinguished.

Clive and Erin: Retirees Clive and Erin resided at Park Four for only a few months, after which time they too returned to traditional housing. The barrage of rules and complaints from the operator reportedly brought distress to their lives, particularly for Erin. Clive refers to the loss of a sense of community that had once existed under previous operators, who had a style of management which enabled residents to feel confident about enjoying the park surroundings and their later years, un-spoilt by harassment. These accounts illustrate that park

living is an attractive housing option, but one that can easily be marred by those in charge of operations.

Pip and Ruby: Pip and Ruby are current homeowners in Park Four and have also had many disputes with the present operators, however, they are determined not to leave their home. These residents were attracted to caravan park living because of the perceived quiet and simple life it offered. Both Pip and his wife Ruby say that their expectations have not been realised. They have documented unfair managerial dealings and have brought their contentions before the law, but to no avail, for despite a court decision in favour of the residents, no legal redress was forthcoming. This situation continues several years later, because park regulatory bodies have only symbolic, rather than actual, power to assist tenants, even if they are homeowners with justifiable grievances.

7.3 Marginality and the Structure of Caravan Park Housing

This research suggests that the structure of caravan park housing fosters marginal terms and conditions. Park dwelling is characterised by inadequate facilities and insecure tenure arrangements which leave the resident participants of this study living on the brink of primary homelessness (Chamberlain and Mackenzie 2006). Homes researched in the four caravan parks are of a temporary nature and do not meet usual standards for permanent housing, although they are readily used as such. The dwellings are meagre and the permanent residents who live these homes typically share toilets, showers and laundries with other permanents and transients. These facilities are of a basic camping-style and are in short supply. Tenure security is observed to be tenuous at best and renters and homeowners alike are vulnerable to eviction at the discretion of the caravan park landowner (MHRP Act 2003, 2010; Tenants Union of Queensland 2013). These findings are in accord with existing research, which acknowledges caravan park housing to be sub-standard (Newton 2014) and recognises that park conditions are akin to homelessness (Chamberlain and Mackenzie 2006; Chamberlain 2014; Chamberlain and Johnson 2020).

The overwhelming majority of resident participants live alone, and only two park homes were found to be overcrowded. In these cases, two and three generations, respectively, share a caravan with one room, used for both sleeping and cooking for up to four people (Sue and Sharon, park residents). Although the association between homeless conditions and

overcrowded dwellings is made by other researchers (Dawes and Gopalkrishnan 2014; Chamberlain 2014), in this study the issue of overcrowding is not common, except in relation to shared amenities. A greater cause for concern is the exceptionally poor standard of accommodation and tenuous tenure terms, which are legally permitted to be offered by private and public housing providers alike.

Living Conditions

In publicly owned Park One, none of the homes have private facilities yet there are only two shared toilet/shower blocks, one laundry and one "camp-kitchen" to cater for up to two hundred people, approximately one half of them being permanent residents (Melanie, park operator). The camp-kitchen is more like a campsite than a kitchen and none of the permanent residents I spoke to make use of this facility. Instead, they cook in their one-room caravans, typically using only a fitted, two-ring, electric cooker. Beyond the caravans, the minimal provision of amenities results in overcrowded facilities and a scarcity of basic services, such as hot water which is regularly unavailable. Resident Sandra describes the reality:

> We have cold showers mainly all the time, there's so many backpackers here…once the workers get home there's no hot water left… The downfall of living here is that you don't have your own toilet and shower, you have to share with everyone else. (Sandra, park resident).

Similarly, Sandra's neighbour, Nancy, discloses: "it's hard when you've got a little one [a child] and they want to have a shower and it's so cold". Resident Sandra continues; "there's only three washing machines, we're not allowed our own" (Sandra, park resident). The washing machines in this park are coin-operated, cost three dollars per load to use and private machines are prohibited. The scarcity of amenities is confirmed by resident Chad:

> There's only two toilet blocks for the whole park …they definitely need another block at least …it would make a huge difference if they made a separate block for the permanents (Chad, park resident).

Residents also emphasise the rudimentary nature of the amenities, in relation to the safety of the users. For example, park resident Nancy reports:

> They need to do something about guys walking into the girl's toilets, it's a bit dangerous, they could have a [lockable outer] door or something (Nancy., park resident).

This brings into question both the quality of the facilities and the conditions that force permanent residents to share ablutions with tourists and other unknown people, who, in some cases, deface and abuse the common areas. Park One operator describes her fleet of permanent rental vans in the following terms: "I wouldn't let my dog live in one, I know it's disgusting" (Melanie, park operator). The management team in this park acquired the caravans (mostly tenanted) a year ago as part of their leasing agreement. If their business lease is extended, Melanie and Ken hope to exchange their rental caravans for small cabins at an approximate cost of $15,000 per cabin (Ken, park operator). Ken said that access to housing provision grants or subsidies would speed the process of upgrading the park accommodation, but that no such funding is available to them (Ken, park operator). Meanwhile, these operators continue to let sub-standard housing, which is owned by the local authority and is unrestricted by housing regulations.

Caravans may be said to represent a new breed of social housing because the housing gap which has been produced, in part, by a withdrawal of public housing provision, is now filled to some degree by marginal homes in caravan parks. Furthermore, the rent for this sub-standard housing is being largely met by social welfare payments. Where parks are privately owned, this effectively reconstitutes public money into landlords' rental income and subverts social housing to a privately owned, publicly funded, provision of inadequacy and insecurity. Significantly, this rental arrangement has been absorbed seamlessly into the housing system and presents as being readily accepted by those involved. Park landowners exercise the accustomed authority of land ownership supremacy and the freedom to offer marginal homes. Their rental tenants largely accept the marginal terms and conditions as an anticipated but, in intent at least, temporary housing situation.

Tenure Terms

Existing research has established caravan park tenure insecurity as an overarching theme (notably Chamberlain and Mackenzie 2006; Chamberlain 2014). Indeed, operator Charles states that caravan park rental tenants, if they are granted any lease at all, are typically under a *Periodic Lease* which has a start date and runs until termination, either by the tenant or by the landlord. This allows the tenant to leave at any time but also gives the landlord the power of eviction over any tenant who is deemed to be "in breach of the park rules". (Charles, park landowner/operator). The term 'in breach' is open to interpretation and at the discretion

of the operator. Furthermore, only minimal operational legislation or tenant support measures are in place and resident eviction is readily obtainable by the park operative, an arrangement typical of park living (MHRP Act 2003; Tenants Union of Queensland 2013).

Rental tenants arrive in caravan parks via various routes, or pathways, and often the move to a park is seen as temporary, yet as time elapses the relocation results in permanency. For analytical purposes, permanent residency is defined as housing occupancy of thirteen weeks or more (Chamberlain and McKenzie 2006). All research participants involved in this study have well exceeded this time frame. Nevertheless, many permanent rental residents view their stay in the park as temporary and a liminal state prevails. According to Johnsen and Sorensen:

> Liminality designates a situation of 'betwixt and between'… designed to transfer an individual from one social position to another [Van Gennep 1960] … However, in recent years, inspired by Turner [1969] … some scholars have suggested that liminality may be gradually becoming a *permanent condition* (Johnsen and Sorensen 2014:1).

The notion of the temporary becoming permanent, yet still being regarded as a temporary situation, was recalled by many of the research participants. It was common to hear phases such as "I only pulled in here for a couple of weeks…that's four and a half years ago" (Tom, park resident for ten years), and "I don't want to stay [here] it's just temporary – a long temporary!" (Karin, park resident for almost five years). These recollections are from individuals who believe they will leave 'one day', but for one reason or another they remain in the caravan park as permanent residents. Conversely, liminality is not a concept akin to homeowner perceptions of park living, quite the contrary. For those individuals who have invested their wealth in the purchase of a park home, these dwellings are viewed very much as a permanent, if not even the last, home of their lives: "We were going to be buried there (Bob, park homeowner)".

The tenure of caravan park homeowners is no more secure than that of their rental counterparts. Homeowners rent sites from the park landowner, upon which to place their homes. These dwellings are either 'converted caravans', said to be moveable, or 'manufactured homes' which are regarded as immoveable (MHRP Act 2003, 2010). Due to the long term occupancy of some of the homes and the improvements which have been made over the years, the distinction between which vans are 'converted' and movable, and those that are

'manufactured' and immovable, is unclear. This is a cause of contention and concern for many of the homeowners interviewed for this study, as the following participants explain: "they can kick me off… I would have to move this myself" (Jade). "I own the property… got money invested" (Pip), "he could give me a fortnight's notice [to vacate]" (Will). The influence afforded to the owners of manufactured homes outweighs those available to owners of converted caravans, in terms of financial assistance from the landlord to relocate, in the event of eviction (MHRP Act 2003, 2010*)*. Home classifications influence tenure arrangements, but in any event, all tenures are observed to be weak and resident eviction is easily achievable.

The owner-occupied park homes researched for this study are tenured, either under a standard *Residential Tenancy and Rooming Accommodation Lease* or a *Site Agreement.* (MHRP Act 2003). What type of tenure awarded is dependent on the dwelling construction style (converted van or manufactured home) and the actual allocation of the lease or agreement by the park operative. Park operators are reportedly reluctant to offer *Site Agreements*, even if the dwelling in question fits the agreement criteria, because this tenure status commands financial assistance for the resident in the event of eviction. Yet if this agreement is withheld, it inhibits the resident's home mobility, and adversely affects the value and saleability of the home due to future "fears of relocation" (Sid park homeowner). In situations where permanent, owner-occupied park homes are governed only by a *RTRA Lease,* instead of perhaps a more appropriate *Site Agreement*, homeowners and their dwellings command little more status or security than if the homes were only rented. This is because the (rented) site, on which their dwelling stands, is the part of their home to which the lease actually pertains (*MHRP Act* 2003).

The prospect of relocating a park home is a huge financial and emotional burden for residents, many of whom are elderly and of limited means. Ageing compounds the impact of moving home; many retirees cannot meet the costs of dwelling relocation, nor can most afford to leave their virtually un-saleable and completely un-rentable property because, according to homeowner Clive, replacement-housing funds are restricted. Not only would the sheer cost of removal be prohibitive for most, but, in many instances, these homes have been in place for many years and, consequently, the additions and improvements made over time have rendered the homes fixed and immovable anyway. As Will homeowner remarks:

> If they give notice to leave, we have to up and go. Look at this [his home] how could I pack this up and go? Right? (Will, park resident for six years).

Will's home is a large cyclone-proof fixed shed, which has been constructed around a caravan that is now trapped inside. He brought his home in its present state, with no lease or agreement, assuming that his tenure as a homeowner was secure. Will is over seventy years old and he believed that this would be his final, retirement home, but he now faces possible eviction because the landowner, the local authority, has plans to gentrify the site with a development focus on tourism (Optium Planning Group, 2020).

Residents have regulative authorities that they may consult, but they are reported to act primarily as mediators and to exhibit little power. The influence of these authorities is weak and largely dependent on the park operator adhering to recommendations, which they may or may not decide to do. Long term park homeowners, Pip and Ruby, brought their home with the benefit of an *RTRA Lease,* but because the caravan to which the classification applied had long since been removed and a home had been built in its place, they applied for a *Site Agreement*. Their application was agreed by the owner/operator who issued, but never signed, the new agreement, this situation has not changed for several years (Ruby and Pip, park homeowners for five years). Park homeowner Pip, elaborates:

> Legislation is like a self-licking ice cream, they don't want to do anything, they don't want to upset him or you…those organisations are toothless… They [the park operators] are skating a fine line between law and unlawful and they're very good at it, it's very hard to pin them down…and they're doing it without any fear of reprisal…We went to Residential Services… It's a legal requirement for them to issue a *Site Agreement*, but they still won't do it… It's fucking with our lives to be frank (Pip, park resident).

Adverse tenure terms cloud all aspects of daily life for some residents because caravan park housing is insecure, regulative bodies are weak and eviction is discretionary. Furthermore, in the event of forced eviction, alternative housing arrangements rely on existing and already inadequate housing accessibility. Caravan park residents in this research are found to be marginally housed, due to limited tenure rights, ineffectual regulative protections and arbitrary park operations.

Power Disparity

Insecurity of tenure negates resident power, which is transferred securely to the park operator. Such power imbalance invites power misuse, as was found to be the case in one particular park. Where elderly residents are reportedly victimised by the operators and

reminded to "toe the line" to avoid repercussions, single older ladies are cited as being the most at risk of such inequitable treatment (Clive, Ruby, Jade, park residents). Jade explains:

> When you are a woman on your own and [the park] owners threaten and bully you…that's when you get into trouble, because you haven't got anyone to stand-up for you…They threaten you with 'three breaches and you're out'…It depresses me…I cannot understand why they have to be like that… I love living there, its lovely…I've done nothing wrong to be treated like this…they're vicious people… It breaks my heart, to think that such a lovely spot, can be destroyed by rotten people (Jade, park homeowner).

Due to the demographics of the park, one might conclude that this location essentially functions as a retirement village. Certainly, the small, well presented owner-occupied homes, many with cottage style gardens and small pets, within a peaceful treed setting beside a glorious lake, appear to be an idyllic retirement place. However, managerial harassment has made this apparent paradise into a "living hell", from which, for some, there is no escape (Jade, park homeowner).

Within the parameters of this study, the standard of management expertise appears to be a crucial factor in the pursuit of equitable tenant regulation. The quality of life in a caravan park is found to be largely dependent on the management and operators who, because of the hybrid nature of mixed-use parks, are possibly more likely to have experience in hospitality than housing management (Melanie, Ken, park operators). Yet it is a combination of these skills that are needed (Nelson and Minnery 2008, Bunce 2010). Managerial conduct is considered by some to be a paramount issue, as park homeowners Clive and Bob explain:

> So much of life in a caravan park depends on the people in charge…I feel that most people living in my type of environment are pensioners, are retired people, they are very vulnerable and I think there should be some standards [that the operators should adhere to]…It's so much up to the management of what happens in these parks, I don't think I can emphasise that enough, I think there should be some training…when you're dealing with the public you should have to be [qualified] (Clive, park homeowner).

> They have to start at the beginning, the quality of the person [the park operator] for starters: For arguments sake, we were both bus drivers, so we had to go through a test, we had to be checked out by the police to make sure we're not paedophiles…and we have to do the right thing by society…We have criteria we've got to work by – there doesn't seem to be any criteria for these bloody caravan park owners. If they've got the money to buy in, they're in…They don't care if they upset people. (Bob, park homeowner).

Caravan park operators are reportedly reluctant to relinquish control over any aspects of park living, from defining the physical appearance of properties, to monitoring how they are used and the behaviour of residents and visitors. This research finds that park controls are weakly regulated and, as a result, are largely at the discretion of park operators. This situation allows weighted power disparity and can result in inequitable housing outcomes. In consequence, residents are detached from the control of their living environment, a disconnection which causes the home, the foundation of daily life, to be dominated by others and manipulated to fulfil competing objectives.

7. 4 Community

The social connectivity offered by park living emerges as being one of its major advantages. The presence of an on-site community is found to be an extremely positive aspect of park sites and one which is highly valued by residents. Despite the pitfalls associated with van parks, isolation is not one of them, in fact quite the contrary is apparent. In this study, it is evident that parks can be places of community where "people look out for you" (Karin, park resident), and "everyone knows their neighbour (Chad, park resident). In accord with existing research (Newton 2008; Bevan 2010; Queensland Government 2014), this study reports a prominently elderly caravan park population and a prevalence of retirement age communities.

A sense of belonging is engendered within caravan park housing, by the semi communal and partial out-door living, and the often only implied notion of where the dwelling boundary might be. Indeed, during the research interviews many visitors came to the park dwellings to say a few words, and the interactions seemed as informal as entering a room in one's own home. Daily interactions continued as normal, regardless of the research process, with conversations about gardening, comments on the outcome of the previous night's football match, and other social exchanges. Caravan park dwellings are very different from traditional homes, where one might knock or hover before an entry, no such formality is evident here. Social interaction is also commonplace because the communality of shared facilities gives frequent opportunities for social encounters, as the following statements show:

> I get around on an electric buggy because of my knees and I've made friends with a lot of the old ladies on my way to the showers (Clive, park resident).

> you have your socialising, you know, you meet down at the barbeque, you have all your friends around you. It's just a close community (Erin, park resident).

Sociability is also extended to transient community members; the tourists and seasonal workers who periodically swell park numbers and will soon move on. In the height of the tourist season, permanent residents report visitors as being packed into every available space, with sites "buffered one meter from my fence" to accommodate increased temporary resident numbers (Jacky, park homeowner). Nevertheless, permanent residents commonly refer to their temporary neighbours as an enhancement to their everyday lives and a welcome addition to their park community:

> I like to be amongst the tourists…I like this transience…because I don't want to stay here forever, if people move on that's ok with me…and it's always interesting to meet people who come from other places (Karin, park resident).

> I like the friendships I've made in the park…I do like to come home and hear the laughter in the park (Jacky, park resident).

> There's interesting people here to talk to at times, you really get to know them and they are having a ball, I really enjoy that (Tom, park resident).

> At this stage of my life [aged 70] I wouldn't change it [living in the park]. I could go and get a flat or something and lock myself in there and watch TV all day, but that's not really me…Like a couple might come in, next thing you know you're sitting there for three hours and you're listening to all their trips, it's quite bloody educational really, I don't have to go round the world [he laughs]. Then they get out their computer and I'm talking to their mother or someone…face to face …and they're on the other side of the world! (Tom, park resident).

It is well documented that housing becomes increasingly more important later in life, because more daily activities take place within the home (Bunce 2010, Freilich, Levine, Travia and Webb 2014). This age-related housing centrality is confirmed in this study, by the predominantly elderly park residents who are at home most of the time. Home-based activities are interspersed with regular 'get-togethers', while other members go about their daily routines. In this regard the social is brought to home, as park semi-communal living provides the community interaction so vital to everyday life. The caravan park environment provides a socially connected alternative to traditional aged housing, and the benefit of community support within an age which may be described as one of familial dearth (Newton 2014**).**

7.5 The Future of Parks - Narrowing Access and Community Displacement

A sense of community is clearly apparent in the park research setting, however this social connectivity, and the stability it implies, are insecure. Caravan Park housing in the researched area is found currently to be only marginally less expensive than traditional homes and, in line with unaffordability trends in the wider Australian Housing System (Nicholls 2014; Wiesel 2014; Anglicare Australia 2020), costs are increasing. Furthermore, also following trends across Australia (Reed and Greenhalgh 2004; Handcock 2018), gentrification is common and in two of the four parks studied it is an immanent possibility. Consequently, the housing fate of the residents therein is uncertain. Caravan park housing access is subject to pressures from increased costs and discretionary closures, which threaten the present housing circumstance of permanent residents and signal the future inaccessibility of park housing resources.

Declining Affordability

Currently, access to caravan park housing is relatively affordable in comparison to traditional homes, and ongoing costs are low, however, this dwelling resource is subject to narrowing access from increasing costs. Renters report rising rents and homeowners refer to increasing site fees, thus, this study raises some debate as to whether caravan park homes may continue to be regarded as affordable housing.

Caravan park rents are by no means cheap; within the rural Queensland parks studied, a resident might expect to pay between $80–104 per week rent for a site on which to place their own home, or upward of $160 per week for a park owned caravan. By comparison, rents for traditional, self-contained, rental accommodation are reported to be in excess of $200 per week. Sue, who is part of a three-generation family, sharing a one-roomed, park owned caravan, and Sandra her neighbour, describe their financial stress as follows:

> $240 I pay a week [to rent a caravan] …we've lived here for about a year and a half now. There's myself, my daughter and my two little grandkids… It ain't cheap no more (Sue, park resident).

> The rents are so dear… I pay $210, it goes on how many people are in the caravan with you…there's my son, myself and my boyfriend. I have my older son constantly there, but he lives in tent city over there…he pays $85 a week for a tent, no electricity, just a tent on the ground! Yes, it's very expensive to live in a caravan park. I've been here 2 years…unfortunately we don't have any other choice at the

> moment…for a house you've got to have two weeks rent, you've got to have a bond, then you've got to have the deposit for the electricity – yes money stops us doing a lot of things…They're going to be charging us power on top of our rent, it's going to be difficult to be living here shortly 'cos a lot of us are on 'Centrelink' income, we're not workers, and it's hard to scrape-by every fortnight especially when you have children (Sandra, park resident).

In privately owned Park Two, rents for a park-owned caravan, or a "basic cabin" (both of which have no bathroom or hot water), range from $185 to $210 per week, yet reportedly due to traditional housing scarcity, "even at those prices we have a waiting list…could be 15 to 20 people on the list" (Charles, park operator). Caravan park rents are competitive especially as other initial and ongoing housing costs are included in the rent:

> Parks aren't always necessarily cheaper but there're easier to get into…there're good in so far as you can go to a park and it's all furnished, absolutely everything is there…all you need is just to walk in the door - so that's a very big plus. They do have to pay extra for power here but there's no rates and no other expenses that they contribute to… I think the reason a lot of people come here [to live in a park], is because they can't actually find anything in town, or agents are very selective and just turn them away (Charles, park operator).

Although homeowners' park site rents are also set to rise, they are much lower than van rental charges, as homeowners Jacky and Sid confide:

> It's affordable, very affordable… we have been allocated 100 square meters…I only pay $89 a week [park site fee] and that is the draw card of living here and the electricity is included but that will change soon, they've [already] cut down the electricity you can draw (Jacky, park homeowner).
>
> First of all, it's the economy of it, it's cheap cos you only pay for the site and that includes electricity and everything else, so I'm paying approximately $83 a week and that's it…it's very affordable… I don't know why many more people don't live in this situation – it's cheap!... either I'm going to rent a place [traditional housing] for $200, $300 a week, or I'm going to buy this place [his park home] (Sid, park homeowner).

All participants cite the cost of housing as a major factor when considering park residency and for some individuals, the aspect of affordability becomes increasingly more important with age. Caravan park rental tenant Karin is of the opinion that:

> Most rents [for a unit] are over $200 a week, for me most certainly now, going into retirement, there's nowhere for me to live, I couldn't afford $200 rent a week and have electricity and everything on top of it, I think that is why people look for alternatives in caravan parks… It's very frightening when you think

> about your future, you live longer, yet you can't afford the rents and we don't all have terrific superannuation (Karin, park resident).

The parks studied which do not currently charge for electricity, have plans to do so in the future, this will clearly increase weekly costs and has been shown to be of concern for many residents (Chad, Sandra, Sue, park residents). However, it is somewhat surprising that power costs are not already passed on to tenants, on a cost by use basis, because all parks have the facility of individual site electric meters in place and this 'free' power is used abundantly. Invariably, residents made reference to the virtue of inclusive rent and on many interview occasions televisions or music players played unattended in an adjoining area. Furthermore, some residents unashamedly boast of their abuse of the service; "I don't pay electricity, so I have the heater on, or air-conditioner on, all the time" (Sid, park resident for one year). Additional charges for power will inevitably increase overall living costs and will correspondingly, decrease the affordability of caravan park housing.

Marginal caravan park housing consists of temporary style homes, which are on the brink of primary homelessness, yet for many of its residents it is regarded as the only housing option. These homes are not cheap, although their basic characteristics may suggest as much, and their continued presence as affordable permanent housing in the future is uncertain. Should the cost of this housing increase and the level of access decrease, there will be severely reduced housing options for park residents, many of whom have been shown to be aged and already living in the most rudimentary housing available.

Park Closures

Caravan parks are typically situated on prime real estate sites, in scenic, well-connected locations and these attributes are clearly valued by their residents:

> It's [the caravan park] on a beautiful peninsular on the outskirts of a gorgeous little town (Jacky, park resident for six years),

> And look at it, it's beside the lake, its beautiful (Sid, park resident for seven years)

> It's a good life if you get into a nice caravan park… I can wake up in the morning and see the lake – a million-dollar site (Chad, park resident for over a decade).

While the scenic environment and locational connectivity of caravan parks are attractive to residents, they are also appealing from the perspective of property development. Gentrification interest in park sites is likely to result in involuntary eviction, residential disruption and community displacement.

Park Three is soon to be subjected to a tourism-driven development (Optium Planning Group, 2020), at which time all permanent residents must move themselves and their dwellings, at their own expense (Sid, Will park homeowners). The landlords (the local authority) are obliged to find alternative sites for the residents, at a location "close" to where they are now (Sid, park homeowner). However, due to the limited number of parks in this rural area, relocation is likely, at best, to be to a neighbouring town and to a park where the resident's rights of tenure will be no more secure than at this present time. Consequently, individuals will be under threat of an eviction situation reoccurring. Caravan park eviction will inevitably have the largest impact upon the least able and most vulnerable of residents, as park homeowner Sid reflects:

> They do have the power to throw us out…and relocate us…at our expense…They want to improve this place…so they might have to remove us…it's all good…it has to be somewhere near by…it's not too bad…I'll probably buy a new caravan a much, much bigger one…and dismantle this one – this can be all reused… But if I was sick and also in a position where I need help it would be a different story, or if I was unemployed it would be very different…We will help each other if the time comes. (Sid, park resident).

In a similarly precarious position, are the residents of Park Two. This privately-owned site, which is described by owner/operator Charles as a "holiday park", is currently for sale. The rental tenants who live permanently in Park Two have no security of tenure and so their continued residency will be at the discretion of the new owner and is therefore, far from guaranteed. Should these park residents be evicted, they may struggle to find alternative homes because of the wider context of narrowing dwelling access, which also exists in the traditional housing realm.

Caravan park zoning is flexible, park closure is discretionary, and the sale or development of a park ensures vacant possession of the land, that is, it is free of the encumbrance of tenants (Bunce 2010: Dyson 2016). Therefore, residential disruption is a daily possibility. Should cost rises and park closures continue, it is likely that park communities will

be displaced, and the availability of caravan park housing will decline. This would leave the residents, who are already on the bottom rung of housing opportunity, to compete for alternative homes in a context of wide-spread Australian housing inaccessibility. This research suggests that the need for park housing is likely to increase in the future, particularly within the context of an ageing population, while access to caravan parks is set to decline.

Vacant Homes

A neglected area of existing research is highlighted by this study - that of vacant caravan park homes. While some parks are being disbanded and gentrified, others accommodate dwellings that are unoccupied. Vacant caravan park permanent housing is an unknown quantity. However, the Australian national *Census* statistics record a consistent level of traditional 'unoccupied private dwellings' in the region of ten percent of all Australian housing stock (ABS 2006, 2011, 2016). So, while growing numbers of the population struggle to secure housing and homelessness increases, many homes, including caravans, are being unused.

Empty homes are particularly apparent in the caravan park homeownership sphere, where rental restrictions are in place. Within the researched locations, park directives prohibit the rental of privately-owned homes (Bob, Jade, park homeowners). Should a homeowner wish to move away from their property for any reason, they must either sell the home which, without security of tenure may prove to be difficult, or leave the premises empty. Denying the homeowner an option to rent their home, effectively leads to a situation where owner-occupiers are encumbered by their property. Owners of homes which are already negatively affected by insecurity of tenure, are further inhibited because they do not have the option to rent. The issue of rental prohibition is a concern for many park homeowners: Clive says, "wouldn't rent mine out, but it would mean it would be easier to sell…They [park homes] should be rented out – there's seven here sitting empty", and Ruby is of the opinion that, "one change that needs to be made is the ability to rent your own home…otherwise you're a captive". Ruby's sentiment is echoed by Jade, "I can see there are people out there [living in the park] who are never ever going to get out of there", and Erin, "some people are retired, this is the end of the line for them – it's like 'Lotus Glen' [the local prison]".

Reports from homeowner participants suggest that rental restrictions warrant further investigation, not only in respect to homeownership rights, although these alone clearly have

merit, but in order to address the issue of vacant park dwellings and to facilitate the use of park homeowners' housing in the rental sphere. While homeownership control is diminished, and these residences lay idle, empty dwellings remain a grossly unconsidered area of Australian housing opportunity.

Conclusion

Australian caravan parks have long existed as tourism sites, but they now increasingly accommodate permanent residents. Legislation has been slow to follow this change in usage and caravan parks present as a neglected area of policy and research. Yet parks may be said to play a crucial role in the provision of Australian permanent housing. This research confirms that caravan park dwelling environments are sites of inequitable and unstable housing circumstance, but that they are nevertheless valued and needed by their users. On-site community emerges as a primary benefit of caravan park living and an atmosphere of belonging is clearly evident within the semi-communal design of park housing. Notwithstanding, this housing is marginal, characterised by questionable operational controls and is threatened by developmental gentrification. Caravan park closures provoke biographical disruption and community displacement, while adding to wider issues of declining affordability and narrowing housing access. These issues are compounded by a predominantly elderly caravan park demographic, which is sited in a context of an aging population. Those permanent residents who strive to maintain their ontological stability, supported by their home and park community, live with an uncertainty regarding its preservation.

The way in which caravan park terms and conditions are experienced was found to differ across participant groups. In this study, homeowner residents appear to crave the sense of autonomy, yet park landowners/operators seek control over their parks and all aspects of park living. In response, homeowners resist this perceived encroachment on their homeownership rights. This is at odds with rental tenants' responses, which are found to be compliant and accepting of the marginal terms and conditions parks provide. These differing responses are later examined in relation to societal norms associated with housing tenures; wherein landownership is recognised as supreme, homeownership implies autonomy and rental residency is typically subjected to dwelling domination. The following chapter examines the

role of agency within the marginalised structure of caravan park housing, via the continued analysis of empirical data and an alignment of Bourdieusian thought with housing circumstance. It is proposed that the participant responses to marginality are significantly influenced by internalised ideas relating to tenure which, in turn, influence agency. This is the foundation of the following theorisation of the housing habitus.

Chapter Eight

Research Findings Part Two: Agency and Housing Habitus

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the agency, or action, exercised by research participants in relation to the terms and conditions of caravan park housing. Analysis here highlights divergent responses to the marginality of caravan park living, which are considered in light of Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) concept of habitus. This analysis expands Bourdieusian thought, via a focus on anticipated trajectories of housing circumstance, which it is proposed, are embodied in a 'housing habitus'; an internalised perception of housing tenure norms, that guide social action. Within this analysis, the forces of structure and agency are aligned and influences in the realm of housing marginality are identified. This analysis further exposes the adverse terms and conditions of caravan park dwelling and expands social knowledge regarding the influence of agency in gratifying, perpetuating and modifying housing structures.

Within this study, responses to the terms and conditions of caravan park living are by no means homogenised. Indeed, diversity is clearly apparent, and this is understood to be a reflection of the internalised expectations and aspirations related to housing, which colour responses to dwelling circumstance. In extension to the Bourdieusian theory of habitus (that is, the proposition concerning the existence of internalised systems of preferences), the concept termed here as 'housing habitus' is proposed. Housing habitus is defined as an anticipated, and often realised, projection of housing outcome, which is fashioned by internalised norms relating to tenure. This internalisation of tenurial norms is significant because it is observed to influence housing outcomes. For example, in this study, caravan park residents and operators undoubtedly realise the rudimentary nature of their housing, but where some express a certain anticipation of this circumstance, others do not, for it sits uneasily with their housing expectations. Marginal housing conditions are found to be readily acknowledged and fundamentally accepted by landowners and rental tenants to be an inevitable consequence of being housed in a caravan park. Culturally inadequate living conditions and tenure insecurity are largely considered to be features of daily park life and have been incorporated into the lives of those who recognise them as being just the way things are. In contrast, homeowner participants express an incongruence between their housing expectation and eventuality, and

for them, attempted normalisation is not accepted. It is suggested that incongruence brings to the fore an inclination to challenge structural inadequacies, whereas, an internalised anticipation of marginal circumstances, serves to normalise the condition and to contribute to its perpetuation.

Amid structural adversity, agency has the potential to both perpetuate or to challenge disadvantage, notwithstanding, the seeming subjectivity of agency is objectified by internalised norms, which influence perception and guide response (Bourdieu 1986). The following discussion exposes the dynamic between structure and agency, within a marginal realm, and proposes that there is an underlying force which influences dwelling circumstance: internalised perceptions of tenure normality, which are inherent in the housing habitus.

8.1 Housing Habitus

Dwelling tenure is a defining feature of the material and symbolic conditions under which homes are held. Tenure suggests a housing hierarchy, within which, property ownership is traditionally viewed as supreme and is recognised to encompass the shelter and non-shelter benefits of adequacy, security, status and autonomy (Swingewood 2000, Atkins and Jacobs 2016, Morris, Hulse and Pawson 2017). Conversely, rental occupancy is commonly assumed to be characterised by variable conditions, periodic insecurity and a social standing which is readily subject to manipulation (Colic-Peisker and Johnson 2010; Atkins and Jacobs 2016). In this thesis, participant responses to housing circumstance are suggested to be influenced by traditional notions of tenure and, significantly, caravan park tenures are observed to be distorted in terms of hierarchical housing norms. This research finds varying responses to marginalised terms and conditions which, it is theorised here, are guided by a perceived alignment or incongruence, between established expectations of housing circumstance relating to tenure and actual dwelling outcomes.

It is well established that property tenure implies social positioning and that it has the capacity to influence perceptions of individual identity and community status, while reflecting wider social composition and contribution (Marx 1848; Weber 1904; Allon 2008; Colic-Peisker and Johnson 2012; Pattillo 2013; Atkinson and Jacobs 2016; Crawford and McKee 2017). In accord with this view, research here observes that the tenures under which dwellings are held denote a hierarchy of housing and that ingrained perceptions of tenure reflect

hierarchical positions. Land ownership is typically represented as being at the top of this hierarchy, followed by home ownership (and in many cases the two are synonymous), with rental occupation being seen as the lower hierarchical level. It is proposed here that each tenure symbolises and reflects a set of ideals which are internalised in the housing habitus.

Following Bourdieu (1986), social action is presented as being guided by internalised perceptions of social position. According to Bourdieu:

> Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed… The antithesis between quantity and quality, substance and form, corresponds to the opposition – linked to distances from necessity (Bourdieu 1984:7).

This premise, of we have what we think we can achieve, and we learnt to like what we have, is applied here in relation to housing circumstance. It is proposed that the housing habitus embodies occupancy expectations in relation to tenure. These preconceived ideas imply an intimate and expansive perception of social position in dwelling terms, in so far as, perception colours ideas relating to dwelling circumstance and assists in the assessment of housing terms and conditions. For example, the housing habitus of landowners encompasses notions of ultimate dwelling control and the autonomy to define living environments. The homeowners' habitus holds a similar tenure expectation, in so far as ownership implies residential control, although, as this research highlights, its realisation is considerably reduced if the land the home stands upon is owned by someone else. In contrast, the housing habitus of rental tenants reflects expectations which are attuned to the rental sphere, where they commonly have no dwelling control and are largely at the mercy of their landlords. The housing habitus guides responses to dwelling circumstances and has the capacity to empower or restrain agency, based on a perceived value or outcome within the boundaries of experienced normality. The internalised norms inherent in the housing habitus determine the acceptability of, and therefore the response to, dwelling terms and conditions. Where expectations and eventuality are aligned, a dwelling circumstance is likely to be regarded as acceptable and therefore, the status quo may prevail unchallenged. However, where anticipated housing characteristics are incongruent to actual outcomes, the resulting dissonance has the potential to prompt challenges to current order, such as protesting issues associated with housing marginality.

The influence of tenurial position is keenly observed in this research and the satisfaction gained from the field of caravan park housing is found to correspond to ingrained dispositions. Tenures delineate housing structures and, according to Bourdieu (1971):

> while individuals retain the “authorship” of their actions, “what they can or cannot do is largely determined by the structure in which they are placed and by the positions they occupy within a structure (Bourdieu 1971, cited in Crawford and McKee 2016:7).

In Bourdieusian terms, socialised, embodied cultural capital sets the scene for fundamental aspirations and, by way of the social objectification of capital, colours the expectations commonly associated with a social position (Bourdieu 1986). Furthermore, the institutionalisation of capital cements this implication into social ‘fact’ and into an ascribed, and largely unchallenged, recognition of elevated positions (Bourdieu 1986). The concept of cultural capital is linked here to tenurial positions and the differences in housing perceptions reported by research participants. Cultural capital, it is argued, impacts upon dwelling outcomes because housing expectations are aligned with social norms, relating to tenurial positions and the social standing that they imply. In this study, it is observed that landowners readily assume ascribed authority and control, that rental tenants are typically familiar and compliant to subjugation, and that homeowners commonly cling to homeownership ideals of autonomy. In this way, housing structures define social boundaries and the complicity of agency, this is significant to the perpetuation or dissemination of social organisation and, in this case, societal norms of tenure.

Within this research, caravan park operators are observed to justify and promote the meagre homes they offer. For example, Charles, a park operator, admits: “I don’t know if there’s a downside [to living in a park]”, and assumes an authoritarian approach to housing provision. A laissez-faire “life is what you make it” outlook is common among the rental participants and a general acceptance of adversity was rationalised by comments, such as “after all this is **only** a caravan park” (Karen, park rental tenant). Comments which are spoken as if the shortcomings of the housing were somehow excused by the home classification. Although housing disadvantage may be imposed, it is also seen to be assimilated and normalised, and it may even sit comfortably if it is in alinement with an individual, or collective, housing habitus. However, homeownership presents a different set of ideals to those in the rental sphere, and the terms and conditions so normalised by renters and landlords, are found to be less acceptable to those who own their home. Within a caravan park setting homeownership is subverted,

because homeowners do not enjoy the accustomed status and autonomy afforded in traditional arenas. Instead, owner-occupiers, such as Jade, believe that they "haven't got any rights whatsoever", and this incongruence is found to be a source of anxiety and cause for dissent. In this way, preconceived expectations of housing guide responses, which in turn influences agency in the inclination to accept or to challenge structures, such as the terms and conditions of marginal homes.

8.2 Responses to Marginality

The research analysis recognises that park rental tenants and homeowners are not an homogenised resident cohort, and that the polarised position of park operators is significant to both. This differentiation is apparent in the contrasting responses to park terms and conditions, and this contrast is linked here to ingrained perceptions relating to tenurial positions. This analysis is informed by the Bourdieusian premise that structures of social organisation (such as property tenure), which are designed by governance, learnt by socialisation and perpetuated by sociodicy, become so embodied in the subconscious, that they emerge as being perceived as norms and are ultimately considered to be the natural order (Bourdieu 1986).

Perceptions of dwellings are proposed here to be inherent in the housing habitus, which guides agency in its capacity to accept, challenge or promote social disfunction, such as housing marginality. These ideas inform dwelling expectations and influence housing outcomes because, as Bourdieu suggests, established, socially constructed, norms are presented and accepted as being natural:

> One of the most important effects of the correspondence between real divisions and practical principles of division, between social structure and mental structures, is undoubtedly the fact that primary experience of the social world is that of doxa, an adherence to relations of order which, because they structure inseparably both the real world and the thought world, are accepted as self-evident… [and imply] the most absolute form of recognition of the social order (Bourdieu1984:471).

Within this research, caravan park homeowners are seen to protest tenure uncertainty, in contrast to those who rent homes, who are seemingly fatalistic about the insecure, but flexible, tenure arrangement. Similarly, renters are found to accept, but homeowners to manipulate and redefine, the sub-standard housing conditions observed in parks. While caravan park landowners appear to comfortably assume ultimate control of the park environment, acting as the gatekeepers of tenure and the orchestrators of living conditions. Each of these

positions are proposed here to have their foundations in the housing habitus, and that which is deemed to be acceptable, or 'normal', circumstance and practice, in relation to tenurial position and housing provision.

Landowner Housing Habitus

An innate authority stems from the position of landowner, which is supported by tradition and legislation, and that presents as a largely unquestioned housing habitus with the power to determine housing outcomes. The weakly legislated, operational structure of caravan park housing provision enables landowners to operate autonomously. Consequently, the approaches and procedures that park operators adopt are variable (Bunce 2010; Goodman, Dalton, Gabriel, Jacobs and Nelson 2012). In a caravan park setting, the interests of park tenants and landlords are observed to be often at odds and to be compounded by power disparity. In this context, attention is drawn to the relationship between the landlords who live on-site, in their hybrid commercial/residential investments, and the weakly tenured residents with whom they have close daily contact.

The on-site relationship in caravan parks is distinct from that of detached landlords and tenants, and the ever-present landlord/operator has a significant impact on the lives of residents. Operator participant Melanie explained to me her position, claiming that the role of caravan park manager is quite diverse:

> You [as operator] have to be social worker, psychiatrist, mum, dad, financial advisor and security-guard…one step ahead of them…can't rely on anyone, or show any favouritism (Melanie, park operator).

The self-appointed, parental style role adopted by park operators such as Melanie, is readily accepted by her rental residents. Melanie and husband Ken are seen as conveners and mediators, who can be trusted and confided in, as resident Sandra explains:

> The management are very fair and supportive…if we have a problem all we have to do is just talk to them (Sandra, park rental resident).

The rental norm, of conferring authority, seemingly sits comfortably in a park rental setting. This is prominent in Park Two where, in contrast to Park One, the managerial style presented by Charles and Petra is dictatorial, and no such camaraderie is evident. These operators attempt to pre-empt potential problems, such as noise disturbance, by displaying written park rules or

giving advance verbal warning of strict codes of behaviour. Charles, owner-operator for twelve years, explains his approach to new tenants in the following terms:

> I explain to them [new residents], now if you think you are going to have an argument, what you have to do is get in your car, go down the road and have the argument somewhere else, and then come back here. Because if you are arguing here in the park and your neighbour hears it, they've got a problem. If that neighbour then tells me, "I've got a problem", I get rid of the problem. Really what you are doing if you are arguing, it doesn't matter what words you are using, to my ears every sound that comes out of your mouth is screaming out; "Come here and throw us out, we want to be thrown out right now, please we're begging, throw us out" – and I do! So that's a downside in a way. You can't have loud music and you've got to keep the TV down…but what that means is…you have peace and quiet and tranquillity all around you. So, what might seem to be a negative, is actually a positive (Charles Park operator).

Park rules not only impose restrictions on the individual but on the entire park community and, in theory, serve to ensure a cohesive living environment. Certainly, from this park operator's perspective, rules were not only enforced but also readily acknowledged to be stringent. Charles explains:

> The second something starts [an issue in the park] you jump on it …We're very fair, but very firm …I don't know if there's a downside [to living in a park] …In this park perhaps there is, because it's very strict here (Charles Park operator).

Within the confines of weakly regulated, mixed-use caravan parks, permanent dwelling sites are secondary to tourism, so the responsibility of providing adequacy in permanent housing provision is largely unaddressed. The power disparity evident in rental housing exacerbates this situation and is viewed here as a heightened representation of the control traditionally embodied in property ownership and which is subsequently ingrained in the housing habitus relating to that tenurial position. In this research, landowners are observed to justify and even promote dwelling disadvantage, furthermore, their influence is amplified because they are ever-present landlords. Landowner conduct is widely accepted by the research participants who rent caravan park homes from them and, in the rental context, housing adversity is observed to be largely normalised by landlord and tenant alike.

Renter Housing Habitus

Rental property occupancy is typically assumed to be transient, unpredictable and dominated (Nelson and Minnery 2008; Wiesel 2014). Tenure security in the traditional rental

sphere is periodic at best, with lease terms being commonly short (six to twelve months). Housing conditions are variable, the standard of facilities is largely determined by the landlord, and the landowner has the right to inspect and monitor the property condition, and the residents conduct in relation to it. This tenure structure, with its clearly defined dominant/subordinate relationship, has been generally adopted as a societal norm.

Tenure insecurity is amplified in a caravan park housing setting because leases are typically arbitrarily administrated, incorrectly allocated or non-existent. Tenure follows the same anticipated trajectory of traditional rental housing instability and this is seen to be normalised by park rental tenants. In Bourdieusian terms, "the dominated only have two options: loyalty to self and the group (always liable to relapse into shame), or the individual effort to assimilate the dominant ideal" (Bourdieu 1986:384). In this way, embodied structures regulate the user, because accustomed classifications pre-empt and rationalise circumstance and in so doing, restrain agency to the limits of probable outcomes. Bourdieu explains that:

> The classificatory system, which is a product of the internalization of the structure of social space, [is] the generator of practices adjusted to the regularities inherent in a condition. It continuously transforms necessity into strategies, constraints into preferences, and, without any mechanical determination, it generates the set of 'choices' constituting life-styles which derive their meaning, i.e., their value, from their position in the system of oppositions and correlations. It is the virtue of necessity which corresponds to the condition of which it is the product. Though taste, an agent has what he likes because he likes what he has, that is, the properties actually given to him in the distributions and legitimately assigned to him in the classifications (Bourdieu1984:175).

In this way, material structures and a whole swathe of associated symbolic factors are pre-empted by the habitus which, in turn, defines outcomes and reinforces social composition. Furthermore, stressing the relationship between structure and agency, Bourdieu identifies that a social hierarchy cannot be maintained without the complicity of social players:

> Dominated agents… tend to attribute to themselves what the distribution attributes to them, refusing what they are refused ('That's not for the likes of us'), adjusting their expectations to their chances, defining themselves as the established order defines them… what Durkheim called "logic conformity… and common to all minds structured in accordance with these structures, present every appearance of objective necessity (Bourdieu1984:471).

Life choices are made in complement with perceived life chances and are fashioned to sit comfortably within the realms of possibility defined by the habitus. In the same way, responses

and actions are made within the confines of social structures which are so familiar to the habitus that, whether oppressive or otherwise, they are anticipated, accepted and normalised. In this study, the objectivity of subjectivity is clearly apparent as the rental resident participants commonly embrace tenure insecurity as an inevitable characteristic of their dwelling arrangement. They have assimilated this insecurity as being natural and, in extension, happily regard their residency in a caravan park as temporary, as resident Karin explains:

> I don't want to stay [here] it's just temporary – a long temporary! I chose a caravan because I don't have to commit to a long lease, I don't have to commit to anything…I've been here going on five years (Karen, park rental resident).

In this study, tenuous tenancy arrangements are adapted by the rental tenants involved, who rationalise it as representing a modicum of dwelling choice and therefore, perhaps an element of power in an otherwise powerless housing situation. Terms and conditions may be largely accepted because the rental residents feel free to move away from the park if a more enticing housing opportunity arises. This approach was echoed by many of the research participants and it was not uncommon to hear phases such as:

> I only pulled in here for a couple of weeks, that's four and a half years ago… I kept saying I'll go next week, next month, and I'm still here" (Tom, park resident for ten years).

These recollections come from accidental permanent residents, who believe they will leave 'one day', but for one reason or another they remain in the caravan park indefinitely. The idea of moving home may be only an illusionary notion of transience because, over time, it is the existing circumstance that is seen to prevail. In the context of this study, many issues which are fatalistically endured by residents are described as if they are a temporary circumstance. This notion of transience fosters an acceptance of the status quo because, as Bourdieu claims:

> Objective limits become a sense of limits, a practical anticipation of objective limits acquired by experience of objective limits, a 'sense of one's place' which leads one to exclude oneself from the goods, persons, places and so forth from which one is excluded… A *sense* of limits implies f*orgetting* the limits (Bourdieu 1984:471).

This 'sense of limits' signifies a sense of place in the dwelling sphere and the likely outcome associated with tenurial position. Marginal housing conditions are largely tolerated in the rental domain. Renters, such as research participant Karin, are found to be accepting of problems such as permeability (Newton 2014) for example, that in a caravan "you have no privacy

[because] the walls are very thin", but she and others still think that their housing arrangement is "terrific". Rental resident Karin explains:

> no matter where you live, it's what you make it …for me this is like a little unit ...for me, coming from a struggling background, I've learnt to live in small places and to make the best of what you have. I have the gift to make something out of nothing (Karin, park resident).

In Bourdieusian terms, "necessity imposes a taste for necessity" (1986:372) and this taste is closely maintained by self-regulation:

> The calls to order ('Who does she think she is?' 'That's not for the likes of us') which reaffirm the principles of conformity – the only explicit norm of popular taste – and aim to encourage the 'reasonable' choices that are in any case imposed by the objective conditions also contain a warning against ambition to distinguish oneself by identifying with other groups, that is, they are a reminder of the need for class solidarity…Perhaps the most ruthless call to order is… the closure effect of the homogeneity of the directly experienced social world… [where] the universe of possibilities is closed [and] other people's expectations are so many reinforcements of dispositions imposed by the objective conditions (Bourdieu 1984:381).

Where dwelling adversity is a familiar outcome, an improved circumstance is unlikely to be achieved. The housing habitus both constrains dissent and seeks to engineer conditions aligned to accustomed norms, including those which find justification and solace in disadvantage. Caravan park rental housing tenants are observed to adopt such strategies, and with similar ease, park landowners are found to confidently offer marginal terms and conditions. The widespread application and general acceptance of inadequate circumstances in the park rental sphere, is observed to aid the perpetuation of housing marginality.

Homeowner Housing Habitus

A normalisation of disadvantage is not so easily assigned to park homeowners because their housing habitus also defines their housing expectations, and in the case of homeownership, the expectation is status, security and autonomy (Beer, Baker, Wood and Raftery 2011; Weisel 2014). However, park homeownership does not provide these attributes. The Great Australian Dream is fragmented in a caravan park setting because this traditionally secure and autonomous tenure is exchanged for housing instability, disempowerment and domination. This research demonstrates that park homeownership tenure can be a precarious encumbrance, rather than the opportunity for social standing that ownership is traditionally

perceived to be. This incongruence, between the anticipated values associated with owning a home and the actual state of affairs, is expressed by homeowner participants as an anxiety which pervades all-else. This is presented here as a response to disruptions in social positioning and departures from anticipated norms, and an example of that which Bourdieu (2005:214) refers to as 'hysteresis'; a crisis in ontological security due to "a lag in adaptation and counter-adaptive mis-match". In dwelling terms, this is observed as an expression of a crisis of housing habitus; a sense of being ill at ease, prompted by the disparity between homeownership expectations and park restrictions which obstruct the realisation of these ideals.

Caravan park homeownership tenure is insecure, and this is at odds with traditional perceptions of the permanency of owner-occupation. While the rental participants of Parks One and Two reportedly value the flexibility of tenure offered by caravan park living, for the homeowners of Parks Three and Four, this flexibility creates foundational insecurity. Anxiety relating to tenure insecurity is a prominent issue for the dwelling owners participating in this study and the apparent appeal of transience, which is evident in a rental setting, does not apply to homeowner perceptions of park living, quite the contrary. They speak of their intentions to own their dwelling as a very permanent housing solution, possibly even their last home; "we were going to be buried here" (Bob, park homeowner). However, under present legislation no such certainty of housing security is guaranteed, and this uncertainty is a potential source of material and ideological crisis. The housing habitus mediates responses and when, for example, tenure insecurity presents in an otherwise assumed, secure scenario, it prompts dis-ease and calls for agency.

The hybrid tenure of park housing imposes many restrictions on daily practices, which are inconsistent with traditional homeownership. Reported restrictions include charges for overnight guest stays, rental prohibition, property sales conditions and terms of tenure detrimental to the transfer of ownership. In the absence of dwelling control and tenure security, these residents live with a subverted version of owner-occupation. Residents, such as Jade, expect the rights associated with being a homeowner, yet she feels vulnerable and it is her opinion that "people like me" are disempowered. Residents expect a degree of autonomy in their own homes and this expectation is found to be especially acute for park homeowners. However, those individuals who are a "captive audience", due to their housing investment in the purchase of a park home, repeatedly report an uneasiness about caravan park regulations which negate their autonomy: "this is our home I own the property…it's my asset…[I've] got

money invested" (Pip, park homeowner). Due to arbitrary operator conduct and tenure insecurity, park homeownership is far removed from the traditional expectations associated with owner occupation and instead of providing liberation, it manifests for some residents as an oppressive dictatorship, as homeowner Jade explains:

> I suffer depression, and all of this has got me down… I can't cope out there anymore…you don't have any rights… They can kick me off for any reason, they don't need reasons, so therefore I have to be careful what I do, so I don't get their backs up, otherwise they can kick me off (Jade, park resident).

Many resident participants of Park Four report receiving unjust treatment from the park landowner/operators, who are said to typically victimise the most of vulnerable people (Jacky, Jade, Clive, Paul, Erin, Pip, park homeowners). This landlord intimidation is epitomised by phrases such as, "They say jump and I basically have to say; 'how high?'" (Erin, park homeowner). Homeowner Pip contests the classification of his dwelling and has taken his contention to regulative authorities however, rulings were not enforced, and no cooperation has been forthcoming from the park operator (Pip, park homeowner). Homeowner Bob has a similar issue, he says; "ours was a manufactured home, we had a letter from the builder, we had planning permission", but still the park operator will not acknowledge the correct classification of his home. Another homeowner, Will, explains his position:

> I live in a home park…we don't live in moveable caravans although they try to tell us that some of us do, which is a big issue… My home was built by the previous owner of the caravan park…it was one of these big forty-foot vans, it's been there - 1992 it was built…it's all on proper metal stumps welded on, they're not bolted on anywhere, then there was a gigantic roof put over that…then the second part was a concrete slab and built like a home. And then a year later, I put another slab out the front for the garage. Now, I'm down as a caravan and annex, which means in theory if he wanted to, he [the owner/operator] could give me a fortnight's notice to move my caravan and annex off. I've taken my plans down to him…it's all council approved, but he won't budge (Will, park resident).

Amendments to the *Manufactured Homes and Residential Parks Act* in 2010, imposed rental status to the homes of many caravan park homeowners, because under the revision authorities "can no longer order park owners to offer site agreements to converted caravan owners" (Tenants Union of Queensland 2013:1). This has resulted in minimising the home site tenure security for many Australian homeowners. The plight of these residents, who are at risk of primary homelessness, is clearly expressed in the following statement by homeowner Jade:

> I live in a residential park…I'm on a *RTRA Lease*…I can't get on a *Site Agreement*…If the park decided they wanted to sell out…I would have to move this myself…If I was on manufactured homes [a *Site Agreement*] they [the operators] would have to move me [pay removal costs]…people like me have no rights whatsoever…I am a pensioner…most of them [the other residents] are pensioners…they cannot afford to move their properties…most people out there are doing it [living in a park] because it's a cheaper way to live (Jade, park resident).

Caravan park living conditions are a prominent aspect of this research and the incidence of shared amenities is of particular focus. In Park Four, ablutions are internally housed in compact, private bathrooms and little mention of them was made by their owners. In Park Three, however, the homeowners typically use shared facilities, which have the same external, antiquated and overburdened nature of the rental parks One and Two. The Park Three shared ablutions are found to be extremely valued by the homeowner users and although it may be considered culturally unacceptable for a permanent dwelling to be without private facilities, shared bathrooms are regarded as a great advantage:

> you have your amenities over the other side, they're all looked after, you don't have to scrub the toilets and your showers (Erin, homeowner resident of parks for some ten years).

So esteemed are the shared facilities, that homeowner Sid has actually removed his private bathroom in favour of additional space:

> The only problem is the public amenities but it's just next door…I used to have a bathroom here, but I got rid of it 'cos I need more room… the caravan is turned into an entertainment room and her bedroom [his pre-school age daughter] … [what was] the bathroom is her bedroom… You don't have to clean it [the bathroom] … you don't have to buy toilet paper…it's always there (Sid, park resident).

The choice of whether or not to have a private bathroom, is observed as a display of agency in a largely powerless situation, and perhaps an attempt to take dwelling control in a largely dominated environment. The common assertion, that shared ablutions are a characteristic of housing inadequacy, is subverted here because the already modest dwellings are deprived of private amenities by their owners. By default, the cost, cleaning and maintenance of bathrooms is transferred to the park operators, who essentially provide a utility service to homeowners who join tourist consumers and are possibly empowered by a seemingly inadequate ablution arrangement.

The attributes of adequate conditions and dwelling control, which are associated with homeownership tenure and are ingrained in the associated housing habitus as an anticipated outcome in relation to it, are largely absent from the caravan park housing realm. Insecurity of tenure negates resident power, which is transferred securely to the park landowner, and this imbalance facilitates power misuse and negates homeowner autonomy. Those residents who have invested their hopes in the Great Australian Dream of homeownership and have internalised the individual and social benefits this tenure implies, are displaced from their anticipated housing trajectory, by the instability of park tenure terms. In terms of housing habitus, this incongruence is found to prompt an anxiety response from homeowners and to provoke challenges to the marginality of caravan park housing.

In summary, caravan park landowners and park rental tenants readily administer and tolerate marginal housing terms, which assists in maintaining the status quo. In contrast, homeowners find the subverted guise of park owner occupation incongruent to anticipated norms and they are seen to resist the attempted normalisation of housing marginality by challenging the existing order. Thus, the housing habitus prompts responses, which influence agency and, as this research illustrates, can assist in perpetuating or modifying dwelling marginality.

8.3 Caravan Park Society

Park community emerges as a dominant theme of this research. Research participants repeatedly refer to the social aspects of parks, and to the value of the companionship and support. The nature of caravan parks is such that they provide both housing and social setting. This amplifies the fundamental attribute of housing, that of foundational stability which serves as a base from which all other life activities can be embarked upon (Bevan 2010; Atkins and Jacobs 2016). Parks readily facilitate social contact via neighbourly interaction, which, together with a commonality of circumstance, presents as encouraging solidarity and fostering community membership. Previous researchers have described caravan parks as “miniature suburbs” (Newton 2008:230) and have referred to park society as a “recovery of community…rooted in an idealized past” (Bevan 2010:977). The research here supports these descriptions because despite their dubious terms and conditions, people like caravan park life and they derive a sense of belonging. The importance of community is common across tenure groups, incorporated into the habitus as an innate human need which transcends material

concerns. Caravan park sociability heightens the centrality of home in daily life, because the dwellings exist in self-contained estates which encompass on-site communities.

Residents are seen to engage in park society to varying degrees and there is evidence of a constant, underlying, sense of security which is provided by close neighbours who "know you" (Chad, Sandra, park residents). Despite the associated pitfalls, isolation is not one of them, indeed, quite the contrary. In this study, it is evident that parks can be homely places where "people look out for you" (Karin, park resident). "Everyone knows their neighbour" in a caravan park (Chad, park resident), a situation that is increasingly uncommon within traditional housing contexts (Newton 2014). Limited housing options elsewhere impose a mutual umbrella of circumstance over caravan park residents which, together with the close proximity of semi-shared living, encourages solidarity and community interaction. Resident Karin explains:

> There used to be a stigma to living in a caravan park, especially the stigma was about alcoholics, the drunks, the losers, but I think it has changed. Now I think it is about economics, that more people simply can't afford to live in a unit …we are all in the same boat (Karin, park resident).

The participants of this study demonstrate how the foundational centrality of housing increases over time, and with age, and this is expressed in reference to the importance of companionship. Aged housing can be synonymous with isolation if individuals are housed in single person units, perhaps displaced from a familiar area and visited only occasionally. Stephen, a resident of Park One, is over 80 years of age and he spoke about his impending move to a one-bedroom unit. His new home was arranged by the social services and was some fifty kilometres away. Steven said he did not have any family and did not know if he would get any visitors, but the important thing was he had his dogs with him - his closest companions in life. The issue of pet prohibition commonly presents in the context of traditional properties, because many landlords are reluctant to risk possible damage caused by animals. Conversely, caravan parks are found to readily accommodate pets and the companionship they offer is clearly valued by their owners.

The caravan park community extends well beyond the parameters of the permanent resident cohort engaged in this research, because all parks studied continue to accommodate travellers, in their capacity as tourist destinations. The dynamic between permanent and transient residents is a pervasive relationship, which is integral to the daily experience of those

who reside in the close confines of mixed-use, Australian caravan parks. Yet the permanent resident/tourist relationship has commanded little research attention (Caldicott and Scherrer 2013; Newton 2014). Nevertheless, this interface is acutely observed here, not least because the population of caravan parks can double during peak holiday periods, with consequential disruptions to normal conditions. At the height of the tourist season, holidaymakers' mobile homes, tents and cars are squeezed into every available space, and the scant amenity blocks must somehow cater with an influx of extra residents. This onslaught of visitors attracts mixed reactions from permanent residents, and it is recognised as both a drain on the already overburdened resources and as a valued addition to the park community. Yet despite the additional pressures, permanent residents largely report positive attitudes towards tourist interactions. Whether temporary or permanent, a sense of park community is clearly displayed and extremely valued.

The sharing of common ground and facilities induces a tendency to forge friendships, and a sense of place is reinforced as social life is brought to the park housing environment. Parks provide homes and facilitate community, providing a valuable foundation for both private and public life. The benefit of the combined public and private foundation provided by caravan parks is seen to be significant across tenure groups, for although the housing habitus is noted to be different in matters of dwelling adequacy, the innate need for sociability appears to be common to all. Caravan parks may be lacking in relation to operational conditions, however, in terms of social interaction and support, they are valued sites of community.

Conclusion

The ways in which caravan park housing is experienced, have been illustrated here by participant responses to park living. Tenurial positions have been presented as signifying a housing hierarchy, which encompasses material and symbolic norms that once internalised, instinctively guide social agency. Research here indicates that, for people accustomed to housing adversity, marginality is widely accepted and fatalistically endured. Whereas for others, whose dwelling expectation and eventuality are incongruent, this marginality has the potential to prompt anxiety. It is suggested that the manner in which individuals respond to housing circumstance, is influenced by how compatible it is with preconceived notions of an acceptable home, as defined by the housing habitus. It has been highlighted, that the rental tenants engaged in this research largely normalise marginal conditions and even find

contentment with them, and that park landowners readily assume the power superiority their tenurial position commands. Furthermore, caravan park homeowner participants resist a normalisation of housing marginality, as being at odds with their expectations of homeownership. The divergent responses to marginality evident in this study have been scrutinised from a Bourdieusian perspective and have been linked to perceptions of tenurial norms, as embodied by the housing habitus.

The application of Bourdieusian theory to dwelling circumstance, has resulted in an extension to Bourdieu's concept of habitus and the development of the theory of housing habitus. Within this, perceptions of home are proposed to be formulated by internalised ideas of anticipated housing outcomes. For example, caravan park tenure insecurity fosters a general feeling of uncertainty and uneasiness, for those residents who have invested their wealth and sited their ideology in their home. Park terms are uncharacteristic in terms of homeownership tenure and are cause for descent for homeowners. However, tenure insecurity is typically anticipated and accepted across the rental sphere, where short leases and a close scrutiny of conduct are 'normal' practice. Contrasting participant responses have been explained, by the influence of housing habitus and the premise that responses to housing circumstance are guided by internalised norms of tenure, which influence agency and, therefore potentially, structure, in the housing field. The theory of housing habitus broadens understanding of how marginality is experienced and why housing disadvantage is promoted, accepted or challenged.

Thus far, this thesis has proposed the following: firstly, housing is an essential social structure and that adequacy in this domain is a matter of social wellbeing and parity. Secondly, that housing inadequacy is a reflection of both structural failings and social agency, that are influenced by social composition and socialisation, the product of which, is internalised perceptions of what is 'normal' and therefore acceptable, circumstance (Bourdieu 1986). Thirdly, that the Bourdieusian (1986) concept of habitus acutely observes the social context of internalised perceptions and is a worthy conceptual framework in the context of this research. Finally, that the extension of the concept of habitus, posited here as housing habitus, is credible in terms of its linkage between tenurial norms and housing outcomes. Further, that housing habitus may be considered to be a useful analytical tool in the domain of housing research generally, and specifically, in terms of this study, in relation to marginality. The following chapter contains a discussion of the significance of these findings and considers possible practical applications of this knowledge.

Chapter Nine – Synthesis of Research Findings

Introduction

This thesis has examined the social context of housing, with a particular focus on dwelling access, security and adequacy. Enquiry has been considered within a framework of dwelling tenures, and landownership, homeownership and rental occupancy have been situated within a housing hierarchy. Theoretical investigation has found an Australian Housing System in crisis and this crisis has been connected to increasing dwelling marginality. Housing circumstance has been empirically observed within a caravan park housing setting and park dwelling has been found to encompass marginal terms and conditions, which are akin to those of tertiary homelessness and that readily facilitate the onset of primary homelessness.

Responses to the marginal terms and conditions of caravan park housing have been examined under a Bourdieusian perspective. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus, the structure of internalised perceptions of normality, has played a central role in research analysis (1986). The interplay between structure and agency has commanded significant attention, and this has been exemplified by an alignment of caravan park terms and conditions and the research participants responses to them. Research findings have presented differing responses to marginality across park tenure groups and this differentiation has been linked to internalised perceptions of tenurial norms. The sum of which, has been defined here as the housing habitus; a collection of ingrained assumptions relating to dwelling tenure, which anticipate and influence housing outcomes. The concept of housing habitus has been proposed as an extension to Bourdieusian thought in its specification to housing circumstance, and the value of this concept, has been presented by an alignment of dwelling marginality with tenurial expectations.

The theoretical and empirical orientation of the research is exemplified in this chapter, by a synthesis of the findings and subsequent recommendations for practical application. It begins with a premise regarding the foundational centrality of housing within society. This is followed by an identification of inadequacies in the Australian housing landscape, which are linked to increasing marginality and conditions of homelessness. With respect to this broad assessment, a specific illustration of marginal housing is presented, by way of a summary of the dwelling terms and conditions observed in four caravan parks. Guided by a Bourdieusian

perspective, research participant responses to park living are linked to tenurial norms and the concept of housing habitus is considered in relation to legislative reform. Finally, in light of the research findings, possible reformations are suggested to address the pressing housing concerns of inaccessibility, insecurity and inadequacy; issues which are proposed as dwelling characteristics of our times, and which are recognised as significant threats to the stability and parity of Australian society.

9.1 Housing in Society

The significance of property in society has been noted since the earliest of social enquiry, with tenure being recognised as a reflection of social position and property control as a vehicle of capitalist endeavours (Marx and Engels 1848; Weber 1904). In the 1940s, development of the Sociology of Housing narrowed focus to residential property and aligned the home with social values and systems orchestrated by governments. By the 1950s, housing conditions had begun to be linked to social outcomes (Atkinson and Jacobs 2016). Post-war years were characterised by focus on the benefits of social housing, which by the 1970s had turned full circle to espouse the social incompatibility of public provision (Foley 1980). The 1980s saw recognition of the interconnected dimensions of home, in terms of individual life chances and possible impacts on the wider community, and the emergence of sub-specialities focusing on marginalised groups (Foley 1980). In the 2000s, the social consequences of housing inadequacy have been brought to the fore and governmental influence is starkly apparent (Crawford and McKee 2017).

From a Bourdieusian perspective, housing provides a foundation and context for societal placement, within which, identity is constructed and sustained via the socialisation of social norms (Bourdieu 1986). Furthermore, socialisation, which is at its most powerful within the dwelling environment, is politically influenced and perceptions of social structures, such as housing, are readily manipulated via the governmental tool of sociodicy; the dominant rhetoric which guides social norms (Bourdieu 1986). Therefore, the way in which housing structures are organised and portrayed, is closely linked to wider governmental agendas and, through the mechanism of socialisation, dwelling terms are ingrained, and social agency becomes largely compliant.

Housing the Homeless

Many benefits to society are attributed to housing, including the provision of a foundational imperative for individual ontological security, the promotion of societal stability and a solid base for active and purposeful involvement in the social world (Colic-Peisker and Johnson 2010; Atkins and Jacobs 2016). Cohesive societies rely on members who possess a secure sense of place; individuals who inhabit a stable position in society, from which they may situate themselves and others and define their role in social world. A confidence of world view is essential to a full engagement in society, because without it there is a loss of foundational continuity and repercussions of transient community membership ensue (Bevan 2010). Indeed, dwelling insecurity has been linked to biological disruption, community displacement, and to the associated negative consequences of social disconnection (Bevan 2010). Nevertheless, Australians increasingly face dwelling uncertainty, instability and inadequacy. Furthermore, these norms have been seamlessly absorbed into the Australian housing system.

9.2 Australian Housing Marginality

Characteristic of the Australian Housing System is a hierarchy of tenure and the tenure under which a dwelling is held significantly influences terms and conditions. The impact of tenure status may variously alienate the home occupant or facilitate the fulfilment of resident potential, with corresponding effects on social engagement and contribution (Colic-Peisker and Johnson 2010). This is because tenures encompass deep-rooted attributes; homeownership and public housing traditionally render the highest non-shelter benefits of security and adequacy, with rental occupancy typically offering the least (Morris, Hulse and Pawson 2017).

In Australia, the traditionally secure housing tenures of homeownership and social housing are diminishing. Homeownership has declined over successive decades and is now sustained predominantly by the elderly, predicted to be beyond the financial capabilities of an emerging generation of renters (Sawa 2015; Martin, Pawson and van den Nouwelant 2016). Although Australian governmental policy and public opinion have traditionally favoured homeownership as the preferred housing option, political initiatives have proven to be ineffective in supporting the realisation of homeownership aspirations and now, political focus has moved to the rental realm (Burke, Nygaard and Ralston 2020). Australian social housing has been minimised and commuted to not-for-profit organisations (Beer, Baker, Wood and Raftery 2011). This governmental tactic has effectively reduced the level of secure tenures

available and imposed further pressure on private rental housing accessibility, particularly for low-cost homes (Nicholls 2014). Where public housing and homeownership are traditionally characterised as secure tenures, rental housing is not. Insecurity of tenure is recurrent within the context of the private rental property domain and resident relocation is noted to cause disruption to individual and social life (Colic-Peisker and Johnson 2010). The repeated reacquisition of basic shelter needs, imposed by the commonly short terms of private rental agreements, fosters instability. As the foundation of daily activity is undermined by an uncertainty of the placement of self and societal participation is compromised and confined by recurring resettlement. Furthermore, as private rental housing is increasingly sought, inaccessibility becomes a problem. Rental inaccessibility forces the least financially and socially able into marginal housing and conditions of homelessness, where they are inadequately housed and socially polarised (Newton 2008, 2014; Dyson 2016).

In the absence of traditional housing options, accessible dwellings in Australia are increasingly represented by marginal housing. Primary homelessness (or street dwelling) is only part of the Australian homelessness story because the majority of persons who experience homelessness are those who are insecurely housed in inadequate and insecure dwelling conditions (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006, 2011, 2016). Marginally housed individuals contribute to the hidden homeless population of Australia and the statistical treatment of cohorts, such as caravan park residents, indicates that national homelessness data is likely to be grossly underestimated, while marginal housing contexts remain largely unconsidered (Chamberlain 2014; Dyson 2016). Notwithstanding their questionable terms and conditions, and in the context of limited alternatives, marginal dwelling environments are an increasingly accepted form of Australian permanent housing arrangement (Homelessness Australia 2016).

In rural Australian communities, marginal housing commonly presents as caravan park living, and homes originally designed as holiday destinations, which accommodate permanent residents. However, Australian legislation has yet to fully acknowledge a transformation in park usage, so terms and conditions within caravan park permanent housing are regarded as temporary and are therefore, below cultural standards for permanent homes (Newton 2014; Eastgate 2018). Nevertheless, research here has indicated that park dwellings are desirable in terms of accessibility and for the support provided by an on-site park community. Negative issues regarding caravan park permanent housing, have been linked in this research to weak legislative controls, that facilitate inadequate and inequitable housing outcomes. For despite

the prevalence of permanent housing integration within caravan parks, legislation does not acknowledge this provision. This means that park residents live in inadequate and unstable conditions, because landlords are able to operate autonomously in offering meagre living facilities and tenure security that is limited or non - existent. Thus, the regulatory neglect of permanent housing, facilitates tertiary homelessness and poses a threat in terms of a future risk of primary homelessness. This research has confirmed that caravan park housing substantially accommodates the aged and other vulnerable members of society, and these homes are inadequate and insecure.

Previous knowledge is expanded in this thesis, because the findings expose the increasing impact of the legislative neglect of marginal housing. This is particularly significant because, in the wider context of a national crisis in housing accessibility, marginal contexts such as park dwellings may now be regarded as a vital Australian housing resource. Social repercussions present in this research as individual inequity and societal instability, evidenced by inadequate facilities and insecure tenure arrangements. These outcomes are particularly impactful, in terms of park demographics, in the context of an ageing population. The research suggests that the fate of caravan park permanent housing lies substantially with the government, and requires a legislative recognition of caravan parks, as the interface between being sheltered and living on the street. Should the level of access to this marginal housing decrease, it is likely to result in severely reduced housing options for those on the fringe of society, and the sense of place provided by an on-site caravan park community will be lost. These residents are already living in the most rudimentary housing available and with limited alternatives beyond the caravan park, this may indeed be their 'housing of last resort' (Eastgate 2011).

9.4 Housing Habitus and Appropriation of Social Change

The concept of housing habitus developed here, has identified that the characteristics associated with a housing structure are so deeply ingrained, that the anticipation of accustomed attributes significantly influences dwelling expectation and outcome. For embedded in the housing habitus, are internalised perceptions of housing circumstance which guide social agency to accept or reject the terms and conditions of a home. This theory has been illustrated in the research, by a linkage between participant responses to marginality and anticipated conditions of tenure. Within which, adverse conditions were seen to be anticipated and

fatalistically rationalised by renters, by comments such as “well this is **only** a caravan park” (Karin, park rental tenant). Whereas homeowner expectations were found to be aligned with ideas of homeownership status, and adversity was commonly rejected and was expressed as unfulfilled housing “rights” (Jade and Pip, park homeowners).

Research findings encompass insider knowledge of the experience of caravan park housing and have confirmed the existence of housing disadvantage across tenure groups. Participant responses to marginality were found to differ between groups and this has been theorised as providing evidence of the housing habitus. The research suggests that when housing disadvantage has been normalised, responses present as largely unquestioning. However, if the condition of marginalisation is alien to internalised ideas of anticipated dwelling outcome, it is incongruent and is therefore a source of anxiety and cause for contention. For example, renters gave reports such as “I have everything I need here” (Tom, park rental tenant) and largely expressed contentment with their housing situation. In contrast, homeowners’ commonly protested park conditions and expressed anxiety; “all of this has got me down … I can’t cope out there anymore” (Jade, park homeowner). These alternative views have been explained in this thesis as the outcomes of alignment or incompatibility, between anticipations which are inherent in the housing habitus and a realised dwelling outcome. This premise gives insight into why adversity is tolerated by some and is challenged by others, as the housing habitus decides what is, and what is not, acceptable in relation to dwelling terms and conditions.

As social norms are guided by governance, political influence is the key to societal appropriation, and modifications to the current order of housing provision are reliant on governmental support to facilitate societal normalisation. As Bourdieu has well observed, “there are, no doubt, few markets that are not only so controlled as the housing market is by the state, but indeed so *truly constructed by the state*” (Bourdieu 2005:89). For example, in 2007, Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd skilfully presented homelessness initiatives as tools of economic advantage, whilst pursuing a generally non-neoliberal moral focus of social justice. Indeed, Rudd successfully appealed to the economic rationalists of the day, by presenting homelessness eradication as an ultimately public-cost-saving-scheme (Parsell and Jones 2014). This emphasises that in order to successfully accommodate social need, policy reform must present an acceptable ideological grounding. Thus, the symbolic nature of housing must be acknowledged and, in the current context of economically driven individuality,

consideration must be given to financial leverage and individual responsibility. The housing habitus internalises dwelling norms and this guides agency. Norms are socially constructed by those in power, who augment society via dominant rhetoric and the presentation of the 'normalness' of social organisation. Thus, the concept of housing habitus suggests that the path to structural reform, must involve an alignment in the ideologies associated with various dwelling positions and governmental objectives.

Governmental commitment has been found to be paramount and within the current ethos of neoliberalism, avenues of engagement seek social benefit and public kudos at a minimal cost to the public purse. Therefore, in order to effectively engage the Australian Government, the minimised costs of consumption-side solutions may sit more easily than those of production. Private rental housing providers have been described in this thesis, as capitalist landlords who seek to maximise profits from their dwelling investments. Therefore, any enticement to engagement with accessible housing provision must focus on landlords' financial gains. In terms of housing strategies, landlord property costs are an opportunity for governmental levers, such as the manipulation of local property rates and federal taxation liabilities. In respect to residents, a basic housing need has been characterised in this thesis as accessibility to a secure home. Longer tenure terms and stronger tenancy rights may be an avenue to alleviate rental instability, and in respect to adequacy, the need for a marginal housing governance manifesto is detailed below.

The concept of housing habitus has given insight into the symbolic nature of housing and following this insight in the pursuit of social change, it is evident that successful appropriation of reform must appeal to interest groups at a symbolic level. For social organisation may be framed by structural forces but, in order to operate successfully, it is reliant on the compliance of social agency (Bourdieu 1986). In the dwelling realm, it has been proposed here that agency is guided by expectations held in the housing habitus which are influenced by the presentation of social norms and that it is governance that defines these norms. In the realm of marginal housing, little governance is evident, and it is policy neglect that defines the norms of caravan park housing.

9.5 Research Recommendations

Recommendation 1 – Marginal Housing Manifesto

The research reveals that caravan park homes have become an integral part of Australian housing. Therefore, it is appropriate that park dwellings be formally integrated into the housing system and adhere to the terms and conditions required of traditional homes. The development of a specific manifesto for marginal housing arenas is needed, in order to safeguard dwelling security and improve living conditions in marginal domains such as caravan park housing.

A marginal housing manifesto might include protection of caravan park permanent housing from gentrification and closure, in the form of planning and development regulations, in order to abate diminishing dwelling access and increasing resident evictions. Secondly, the regulation of park operations and implementation of industry standards for managerial competency in operating sites of permanent housing. As the evolution of caravan park usage, from exclusively temporary to the inclusion of permanent housing, suggests that increased responsibilities and attributes may now be required to promote equitable park operations. Thirdly, increased tenancy rights in relation to caravan park owner-occupied dwellings, in respect to tenure security and dwelling control. To include a revision of park dwelling classification legislation pertaining to *Site Agreements,* to encompass all home-owned park dwellings, for without a formal agreement, homeowners demand no more tenure status and security than a rental tenant. In addition, revision in terms to permit park homeowners to rent their dwelling, is proposed. In order to increase homeowner mobility options, enhance rental accommodation availability and engage vacant park homes as an accessible housing resource. Vacant housing represents a wasted resource, a waste which is apparent both in the park research setting and Australia wide (see below). Finally, this thesis proposes a legislative acknowledgement of caravan parks as sites of permanent homes and standardised terms and conditions for park contexts, akin to those required of traditional housing. For without this acknowledgement, park residents do not enjoy culturally acceptable, adequate housing, but instead reside in sub-standard, marginal homes.

Recommendation 2 - Renovation Resources

Informed by the research, the strategy of 'Renovation Resources' is proposed to address barriers to housing access, by focusing on two sources of existing housing resources – marginal housing and vacant property. Renovation Resources may take the form of a public grant, which is made available to dwelling owners to upgrade housing conditions. Where existing initiatives, such as the *Home Builders Scheme* and *Household Resilience Program* (State of Queensland Government 2020), provide homeowner-occupier assistance, Renovation Resources differs by focusing on rental contexts. The proposed Renovation Resources framework requires property owners to commit their property to long term, rental housing provision.

Renovation Resources promotes housing adequacy, by targeting marginal and unused dwellings, via increased governmental support and tighter regulation of neglected sites. The need for a regulative manifesto for marginal dwelling contexts, such as caravan parks, has already been noted and the recent decline in these sites has been closely linked to developmental financial gain. Correspondingly, the refurbishment assistance available under the Renovation Resources initiative is a financial incentive, designed to encourage upgraded versions of presently marginal sites, in preference to gentrification or closure. In doing so, this may encourage current and future availability of park homes and ensure a much-needed standardisation of basic amenities and terms.

The Renovation Resources strategy is also transferable to vacant housing, which in Australia is conservatively estimated to represent approximately ten percent of all housing stock (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006, 2011, 2016). This is an under researched area and little is known about the characteristics of empty properties, because no systematic approach to this potential housing resource is in place. This neglect signals a housing provision opportunity, which may be responded to by the Renovation Resources initiative. In the form of refurbishment assistance for owners of neglected homes, to facilitate the conversion of empty property into occupiable dwellings. Engagement in this scheme may be further promoted by legislative penalties, such as increased property rates for empty homes, an initiative which is already apparent overseas, but only currently imposed in Australia on foreign investors. A detailed analysis of Australian vacant housing and its utilitarian possibilities is noted to be an obvious research opportunity, particularly in extension to this current thesis.

Recommendation 3 – Broadening the Safety Net

Public provision is the safety net of housing which, in principle, is designed to ensure that vulnerable citizens need not succumb to homeless conditions. Australian social housing provision has historically been of minimal proportions and is now the domain of community groups and not-for profit organisations. Narrowing access to social housing has a ripple effect; it contributes to the diminishment of secure tenures available and restricts the resource of low-cost rental housing. This increases the overall demand for private rental housing and forces the least equipped to compete in a market-based system, into marginal housing and conditions of homelessness. Although it is strongly recommended here, substantial increases in the provision of social housing is an unlikely event in a neoliberal context. However, governmental opportunities exist for manipulating private provision of low-cost housing and this avenue could have a far broader application than is currently in place.

Within a neoliberal context many aspects of life are assessed primarily on their economic merit, therefore, financial manipulation of the populous has been identified as a viable solution to housing issues. State and federal financial incentives and disincentives, such as grants, subsidies, penalties and taxation strategies, have the capacity to increase engagement in the provision of secure and adequate housing. Social housing has been highlighted as an imperative public provision, and paths to securing accessible private housing, have been noted to be only cautiously explored so far. Social organisation and public opinion have been shown to be readily manipulated by governance and this thesis calls for immediate actions of public duty, in relation to Australian housing and homelessness policy. In exploring the Australian housing landscape and highlighting the culturally unacceptable terms and conditions of caravan park living, the research has confirmed that conditions of homelessness are common, and that dwelling insecurity and inadequacy may now be regarded as characteristics of our age. This surely signals an urgent need for governmental intervention.

Based on current measures and predictions, the Australian housing domain is at crisis point. This thesis recommends that political policies focus on a public commitment to housing and a timely increase in access to secure and adequate homes. While ensuring the fundamental function of a home, of situating and sustaining individual membership and engagement in society, by promoting a stable sense of place. Secure homes encompass benefits which are

amplified in the social world, by settled residents who can contribute to their community beyond repeatedly satisfying basic shelter needs.

Conclusion

The research has examined the social position of housing from a Bourdieusian perspective and has culminated in recommendations for Australian housing reform. This enquiry has been situated within a framework of dwelling tenures and issues across all tenure groups have been identified. These issues have been specifically related to marginal housing. Caravan park dwelling has been empirically observed and research findings have been theoretically and contextually situated. In culmination, a broad overview of Australian housing has been presented, and research participant responses to the terms and conditions of caravan park housing have been explored.

There has been little good news to report because it is evident that the Australian housing system is in crisis across all tenure groups. Access to secure Australian tenures, as found in social housing arrangements and the Great Australian Dream of homeownership, is narrowing; public provision has diminished, and homeownership accessibility is under threat. This situation has compromised general housing levels and pressurised access to rental property, a domain where security of tenure is fleeting, and dwelling relocations are frequent. Those who are unable to complete in an overburdened, private rental market, flounder for dwelling options and are at risk of falling into of conditions of marginality and homelessness. Marginal dwelling contexts are largely neglected, while increasing numbers of Australians reside in sub-standard housing. The research suggests that the trend of Australian housing inadequacy and instability will continue, unless it is abated by timely governmental action.

Following Pierre Bourdieu (1986), the research has confirmed the foundational significance of sites of social origin and the sway of, politically influenced, socialisation within the home. In extension, the construction of the concept of housing habitus has provided further insight, regarding the impact of internalised perceptions of tenurial norms. This insight has been aligned with responses to dwelling marginality, and this has highlighted the symbolic nature of housing and the influence of ideological forces in respect to material need. Bourdieusian thought has been extended by the idea of housing habitus because it provides insight into structural perpetuation and change in the dwelling realm. In recognition of the

housing habitus, it has been theorised that embodied expectations associated to housing tenure, significantly influence whether disadvantage is accepted or rejected and therefore, likely to be absorbed or challenged. Analysis of this association has illustrated the interplay between structure and agency in the dwelling domain and has informed the construction of strategies for housing reform.

Analysis has exposed a conflict of interest in the current Australian housing landscape; an urgent need for governmental support and intervention, and the restriction of this by an economically driven, individualised, governance. However, this thesis proposes that housing cannot be assessed in these terms but instead, must be viewed as a matter of public duty and with an increased level of governmental engagement. Areas of immediate concern have been identified as: narrowing housing access, insecurity of tenure and inadequate living conditions. Recommendations to address these issues have been devised with initiatives intended to: bridge the gap created by public housing disengagement, address the terms and conditions of marginal contexts and to utilise neglected dwelling resources. These recommendations are made in light of the concept of housing habitus, where the foundational social value of home has been cemented and internalised views associated with tenurial norms, have been found to be instrumental in matters of agency. This concept has informed the reform proposals, because social structures have been observed to be closely aligned with ideological forces and housing circumstance to be largely dependent on them.

Chapter Ten – Conclusion: Housing the Homeless

Introduction

This thesis has considered the imperative of adequate housing and the social implications of dwelling crisis. These themes have been explored in relation to established social theories, particularly those of Pierre Bourdieu (1986), and exemplified in an Australian context by research concerning housing experience, in North Queensland caravan parks. Housing has been situated at the foundation of society, and the material and ideological aspects of dwellings have been linked to the hierarchical nature of property tenure. Emphasis has been placed on the dynamic between structure and agency. Local responses to housing terms and conditions have been aligned with internalised perceptions of tenurial norms. Participant responses to housing marginality have been analysed under a Bourdieusian perspective, and this has led to the construction of the conceptual framework of housing habitus. The application of research findings has informed strategy proposals in respect to Australian housing reform, and recommendations have been made. This chapter now summarises the salient aspects of the thesis, evaluates the worth of the research and suggests possible directions for future enquiry.

10.1 Thesis Summary

The general social context of housing over time has been outlined, and the theoretical relationship between housing and social well-being has been emphasised. The control of property, as represented by tenure, has been described as a defining feature of social organisation, and its manipulation by government has been identified as an underlying force. Housing inaccessibility, insecurity and inadequacy have been posited as characteristics of our times, and are presented as urgent issues, in the interests of social stability and parity.

Following the perspective of Bourdieu (1986), homes are depicted as forming and sustaining an orchestrated sense of social place, which is embodied in internalised perceptions held in the habitus. In extension to Bourdieusian thought, discernment of housing conditions is situated within a hierarchy of property tenure and is linked to social agency. Structural issues in relation to housing are identified and individual agency is shown to be complicit in the social organisation defined by the dominant rhetoric.

Housing the Homeless

The research has been contextualised by an overview of Australian housing provision and a sociological examination of the tenures of homeownership, public housing and private rental accommodation. This has been supported by a summary of Australian housing governance over the last twenty-five years. During this time, housing has been overwhelmingly individualised and commodified, and dwellings have degenerated from being an essential human requirement, to a vehicle of monetary gain and, it is posited, an indicator of increasing social polarity. The dominant political influence in recent decades is presented as economic considerations, under the banner of a neoliberal ethos. In this context, all traditional property tenures are found to be compromised, and increasing numbers of societal members are on a trajectory of housing marginality and conditions of homelessness. Australian housing is exposed as a fragile continuum. The diminishing Great Australian Dream of homeownership is replaced by the reality of overburdened private rental housing provision, and the dissolution of social housing availability has increased the prospect of marginal housing and conditions of homelessness. Generally, bleak dwelling prospects are found, particularly for those people on low incomes and for individuals who are already marginalised within Australian society.

Homelessness in Australia is not confined to street living. It is also closely related to the general condition of being inadequately and insecurely housed, and this is shown to have far reaching social implications. These include, individual biographical disruption and community displacement, which are presented as being detrimental to individual wellbeing, social engagement and stability. Inadequacies in housing data collection methods are noted, and the public duty of ensuring housing accessibility is observed to be absent from Australian political agendas. Duty presents only in the form of symbolic rhetoric in which the basic human right of adequate housing is espoused, but not legislated. A lack of governmental commitment regarding access to adequate housing, is evident in areas such as the Federal dismemberment of the Australian Public Housing System, which places increased responsibility of housing accessibility within a private, economically driven sector. This policy seemingly ignores the intrinsic value of a home as an essential foundation for daily life and exacerbates the negative social significance of accelerated and prolonged housing instability. However, without the instigation of effective acts of public duty for ensuring access to adequate housing, (as recommended by the United Nations, NACLCI 2007), this thesis suggests that it is unlikely that an Australian housing crisis will be contained.

Housing the Homeless

Symptoms of housing crisis is linked to a broadening of marginal living. This connection is supported by empirical research findings, concerning caravan park living. Park housing is found to encompass insecure terms and inadequate facilities, which are aligned with conditions of homelessness. Similarly, park dwelling is presented as a hidden form of homelessness, which is not accounted for in homeless measures. Occupants are observed to live in dwellings that range from modest to culturally sub-standard. Essential basic facilities are shared and typically overburdened, and tenure security is weak or non-existent. Notwithstanding the apparent failings, caravan park housing is acknowledged as a desirable dwelling option - relatively accessible and highly valued by participants for the social benefits of an on-site community.

A constructionist grounded theory approach has been adopted, wherein the nuances of the research context are paramount and research participant knowledge is invaluable. This approach gives participants freedom to inform research direction and, in the reporting of personal experience of park housing, life in a caravan park has been illuminated. Under a Bourdieusian perspective, research analysis is centred on the dynamic between structure and agency operating in caravan parks. In consideration of this dynamic, the influence of perceptions of tenure is linked to participant responses to park housing terms and conditions. A divergence in responses between tenure groups is identified, leading to the construction of the concept of the housing habitus. This concept recognises the power of ideological forces in matters of social organisation and is of particular relevance in respect of material change. This understanding is applied to recommendations of housing reform.

Parks are identified as a valuable area of enquiry because, regardless of the marginality of the homes, the continued use of these dwellings is found to be vital in a context of narrowing access to traditional housing. However, this domain is legislatively neglected. In response, recommendations are proposed for the appropriate governance of the valuable housing resource found in parks. Areas of reform are outlined, to elevate caravan park dwelling terms and conditions to those already afforded to traditional permanent homes, and to safeguard the future availability of permanent park accommodation. Such reforms are necessary because the research indicates that legislative shortfalls threaten the housing security and daily wellbeing of caravan park permanent residents and their communities. Furthermore, that legislative neglect negatively affects the standard and potential longevity of park permanent housing provision. These recommendations are made, in acknowledgement of the necessity of caravan

park housing resources and to address the present inadequacies of marginal housing regulation. In the wider sphere of Australian housing, these reforms assert the public duty of ensuring housing adequacy as a basic human right and recognise the enduring value to society that secure housing can provide.

10.2 Theoretical Contribution

The research aligns caravan park housing circumstance with conditions of homelessness, and links responses to park structures to agency. Research analysis reveals that the marginality of caravan park housing is variously experienced and suggests that, ingrained expectations of housing circumstance significantly colour participant responses. It is identified that the key themes of terms, conditions, power disparity and community are common to all participants. However, the responses to these themes differ between cohorts. Participating rental tenants are observed to fatalistically rationalise their position of disadvantage, homeowners are seen to anxiously protest the marginality, and park operators appear to justify their style of housing provision. This divergence in responses to park term and conditions, is linked to internalised aspirations and expectations, which are embodied in the habitus (Bourdieu 1986).

In extension to the Bourdieusian notion of habitus, my concept of housing habitus has been constructed. This concept acknowledges the power of pre-conceived assumptions, as recognised by Bourdieu (1986), and extends this idea, by linking this force with associations relating to tenurial structures. The foundations of participants' responses to housing circumstance are proposed to be seated in notions of societal norms relating to housing tenure. In this, landownership is recognised as supreme, homeownership implies autonomy and rental residency is typically subject to dwelling domination. In aligning participants' dwelling expectations with tenurial norms, I proposed that agency is influenced by anticipated outcomes in relation to tenure status. These themes are exemplified by the analysis of empirical data. In this way, the material and ideological features of housing, are shown to be ingrained in societal norms of tenure. The internalisation of dwelling norms is recognised as the housing habitus, and this is presented as a guiding force in matters of agency and, as such, an influencer of housing outcomes. In the context of caravan park housing, the construction of this concept has broadened understanding of how marginality is experienced. It gives insight into why disadvantage is promoted, accepted or challenged. In a wider context, housing habitus

highlights the interplay between tenure structure and agency. The increased knowledge of this dynamic is applied to recommendations for housing reform.

10.3 Strengths, Limitations and Future Directions

This thesis offers an historical and a contemporary overview of the place of housing in society and provides an illumination of an Australian housing situation. This assessment is a timely recognition of a structural shift in housing provision, from public and small-scale providers, to the increased provision by corporate players. This enables identification of specific areas of need, including dwelling inaccessibility, insecurity and inadequacy, and informs proposals for housing reform which may abate these symptoms of housing crisis. The practical application of the findings presented here is vital, because housing is foundational to society. Therefore, dwelling inadequacy must be regarded as one of the most harmful of societal failings.

The concept of housing habitus is presented as defining the social significance of housing tenure. The application of this framework may be considered as a useful tool in future research, for it highlights moving boundaries of class, in relation to property control. In an age where housing trajectories are uncertain, younger generations are destined for a life of rental residency and elderly housing sector need is steadily growing. The concept of housing habitus captures the nuances of tenure, but it is newly formed, and further development may be of theoretical value.

The research highlights the enduring neglect and mounting problem of Australian housing marginality, which is illustrated by empirical enquiry. This gives focus to the valuable housing arena of caravan parks and exposes the inadequacy and insecurity of these homes. These findings contribute to the existing, but limited, body of knowledge of park housing, by reporting valuable insider understanding of dwelling marginality. Founded on this comprehension, recommendations are made for park reforms, designed to improve the living conditions and protect the tenure security of caravan park homes and communities. By bringing new knowledge and perspective to dwellings, this thesis exposes the considerable shortcomings of existing systems, and the compliance of society in their perpetuation. In doing so, it uncovers several problems to be solved and theoretical gaps to be filled. The areas signalled for

additional enquiry include the construction of a new regime for housing governance and a fuller exploration of the concept of housing habitus.

Broad scale reform of Australian housing is recommended. Reform to be orchestrated by governmental engagement and the construction of policy initiatives to increase accessibility to adequate and secure housing. Recommendations include: a belated acknowledgement of an Australian public duty regarding housing, and initiatives to increase dwelling access and improve tenure security. Measures to address inadequacies in the terms and conditions of marginal dwellings, and finally, strategies to explore the full potential of marginal contexts and other existing resources, such as empty homes. The recommendations made here, intimate areas of reform that require further development, and directions for future enquiry include: the development of public-private social housing provision modalities, the instigation of a marginal housing manifesto and regulation of vacant property. These proposals represent a change of focus in housing governance, from the creation of new homes to attention to existing resources. For example, the neglected sites of caravan parks and vacant property. The recommendations are made on the premise that dwelling adequacy is a social imperative, which is so vital to a stable and equitable society, that housing must surely feature as a priority in political agendas.

Conclusion

Housing is the foundation of society it is materially vital and ideologically experienced. Bourdieusian thought has long established the home as a site of social origin and has recognised the dynamic of structure and agency which operates within. This thesis has expanded existing housing knowledge, by the application of a Bourdieusian perspective to an unusual focus, that of marginality. In doing so it has identified the housing habitus. This concept recognises the ingrained perceptions of tenurial norms, as signifiers of housing expectations and influencers of dwelling outcomes. This understanding is associated with dwelling marginality and applied to recommendations of housing reform. These reforms are presented as vital, in a context of an Australian housing system in crisis.

The research has confirmed that the problems of Australian housing inadequacy and insecurity are not new, are not improving, nor are they likely to within the current political ethos. Successive Australian Governments have been found to present housing as an individual

responsibility, rather than a basic human right, and the symptoms of housing crisis are now upon us. In a prosperous country such as Australia, it is surely unacceptable that the basic human requirement of an adequate dwelling is not available to all citizens. However, the public duty of insuring adequate Australian housing accessibility is merely symbolic rhetoric, rather than legislated imperative. This results in increasing housing marginality, and an insecure national dwelling foundation. One might well feel privileged to be adequately and securely housed in Australia at this time, for to be so is not a forgone conclusion, nor a basic human right. Marginal living is increasing. In caravan parks, this includes the homes of young children, who know nothing of an enclosed back yard to play in, or a bathroom that is private and safe to use free from potential predators, and homeowners, who are trapped in hostile and insecure living environments, unsupported by legislation. Furthermore, parks typically house aged individuals who, having made their life-long contribution to society, are reduced to caravans, with antiquated ablutions shared with a myriad of transients. The prospect of ageing in Australia as a low-income individual, is signalled by the research to be considerably bleak and this situation is likely to worsen, in the context of an ageing population.

The future provision of housing must be drawn from all possible avenues, including established housing systems, existing dwelling units, and innovative policy practices. Australian homelessness is rising, and the government is not committed to social housing. Policy has inadequately fostered private rental housing provision, has failed to secure a future majority of homeownership and has neglected arenas of marginality, such as caravan parks and vacant dwellings. Set in a context of housing inadequacy, this research joins a much larger swathe of reports which warn of the social ramifications of housing crisis and the issues of instability and polarisation. The findings here warn that the scale and immediacy of recent housing policy initiatives, are seemingly unheeding of the proportions of Australian housing issues and their social implications. This thesis concludes, that in order to safeguard the stability and parity of Australian society, the housing system must urgently be reformed. This involves initiatives that improve dwelling access, protect the standard and security of existing and future homes, and explore the potential of neglected dwelling resources. Furthermore, the necessary reform requires effective support from the Australian Government, with a recognition of the social imperative of adequate housing and the full acceptance of the public duty of housing the homeless.

Appendix 1

NEWSPAPER ADVERTISMENTS

CARAVAN PARK RESIDENTS

HAVE YOUR SAY

To be part of a University study on local housing

Phone Geraldine on 0419 …

………….

CARAVAN PARK OPERATORS

HAVE YOUR SAY

To be part of a University study on local housing

Phone Geraldine on 0419 …

Appendix 2

APPROVAL FROM LOCAL AUTHORITY

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Appendix 3

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

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Appendix 4

INFORMATION SHEET

Information Sheet

Project: Study of living in a caravan park in North Queensland.

Project Funding: Australian Government Postgraduate Scholarship. James Cook University, Cairns.

Project Subject: The advantages & disadvantages of caravan parks, as places for permanent homes.

Project Use: Information from this project, will contribute to Geraldine Mallinson's degree of 'Doctor of Philosophy' (PhD) from James Cook University.

Your Involvement: One short interview (about one hour) to talk about **your experiences** of living or working in your caravan park. With your agreement, this interview will be recorded. You are also invited to discuss your photographs of home, but this is not essential. No information or photographs will be used without your written consent.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and you can stop taking part at any time without any explanation.

Your responses and contact details will be kept strictly confidential. Should the information from this study be used in research publications and reports in the future, you will not be identified in any way.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the supervisor, Dr Roger Wilkinson, James Cook University, Cairns Tel: roger.wilkinson@jcu.edu.au

If you have any concerns regarding the ethical conduct of the study, please contact Human Ethics, Research Office James Cook University, Townsville Tel: 4781501 ethics@jcu.edu.au

If you have any concerns regarding distress as a result of the study, a free counselling service is available at: LIFELINE 24hr TELEPHONE COUNSELLING Tel: 13 1114

Researcher: Geraldine Mallinson Faculty of Arts and Social Science James Cook University, Cairns

Tel: Email: geraldine.mallinson@my.jcu.edu.au

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