Editorial

In September 1985, a seminar was organised by the National Campaign for the Homeless (Ireland) in Cork, Ireland at the request of the Social Affairs Section of the European Commission, to bring together voluntary organisations across the European community, and to devise policies that would eliminate homelessness. One of the recommendations of the seminar was that: "the European Commission fund an association of organisations working with homeless people in the member states so that they may consult regularly on issues affecting homeless people, on methods that will secure improvements in the conditions of homeless people and advise the Commission on policy that will improve the conditions of homeless people." This recommendation led to the establishment of the Federation Europeenne d'Associations Nationales Travaillant avec les Sans Abris (FEANTSA) in 1989 and in 1991 the European Observatory on Homelessness (EOH). Those who participated in the seminar noted the need to gather information on the following areas to facilitate the development of programmes to deal with homelessness. These included:

- the extent and nature of homelessness in the member states
- the numbers of homeless people, profiled by age and sex
- the precise legal position of homeless people in the member states
- details of existing projects which help homeless people, especially innovative projects undertaken by the government, voluntary or private sectors
- details of existing studies on the problem of homelessness, and
- the causes of homelessness

Between 1991 and 2005 the EOH produced nearly 40 books and reports. They documented the extent of homelessness in Europe, examined issues of measurement and profiled homeless people. Themed volumes on homeless women and youth, immigration, legal systems, welfare regimes and housing regimes were also produced over this period. Thus, the EOH more than fulfilled the mandate set down by those who participated at the 1985 seminar. These various outputs provided increasingly sophisticated analyses of homelessness at the European level. The European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS) developed by Bill Edgar and Henk Meert, emerged from this research, and this facilitated more rigorous comparative research.

Following a restructuring of the EOH in 2006, where the practice of having each member state represented by one researcher was replaced with a smaller more focused EOH, the then joint co-ordinators of the EOH, Bill Edgar and Joe Doherty conceived of the *European Journal of Homelessness* (EJH) as a vehicle for nurturing and disseminating research on homelessness in Europe. Initially envisaged as an annual themed volume, in 2011 it moved to two open editions per annum. Bill Edgar, who edited the first two volumes of the journal, and Joe Doherty stepped down as co-ordinators of the EOH in 2009, having taken on that role in 1997. Volker Busch-Geertsema took on the role of co-ordinator, with Eoin O'Sullivan taking on Editorship of the EJH. In addition to producing the EJH, the EOH, since 2011, also produces an annual comparative research study and commencing in 2006, organises an annual European research conference on homelessness.

In conceiving the EJH, Edgar and Doherty set out a vision for the EJH where the journal would provide 'a critical analysis of policy and practice on homelessness in Europe for policy makers, practitioners, researchers and academics.' Thus, from the beginning the EJH aimed not only to publish theoretically and methodologically robust research on homelessness, but also to provide a forum where researchers would interact symbiotically with policy makers and practitioners. This desire to inform policy was set out explicitly whereby the EJH would 'facilitate the development of a stronger evidential base for policy development and innovation.' The EJH set out not only to showcase research on homelessness *in* Europe, but to also learn from significant developments in policy, theory and methodology by publishing contributions by established researchers in North America and the Antipodes. These contributions have proven a source of stimulation for researchers in Europe and inspired research on for example, the costs of homelessness and the duration of shelter use. While European researchers have learned much from research outside of Europe, equally the aforementioned European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS), the subject of vigorous debate in the pages of the EJH, has had a global impact on defining and measuring homelessness.

Over the 10 years of publication EJH has published 75 peer reviewed articles, 39 reviews and evaluations of local, national and European homelessness strategies and policies, over 60 think pieces (34) and debates (34), 13 research commentaries and 46 book reviews. The range of topics covered are shown in the table below. Some of the highlights include:

- Debates on FEANTSA's European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS) developed by Bill Edgar and Henk Meert then members of the European Observatory on Homelessness in 2005 (Volumes 5.2; 6.2; 8.2)
- Examination of the dimensions and development of Housing First (Volumes 5.2; 6.2; 8.1)

– Participation and the issue of agency: the role of homeless people in shaping their own conditions of living and determining their own futures: issues of choice and constraint (Volumes 4; 5.2)

– Evaluation of the jury report following the EU Consensus Conference on Homelessness December, 2010 (Volume 6.2)

– A sustained recurrent interest in issues of governance especially the competing and collaborative roles of the housing market, local, national and supranational state authorities and various representatives of civil society NGO and community based organisations. And in this context, the concept of fluctuating relevance of welfare regimes (Volumes 1; 2; 3; 6.2; 8.1; 8.2; 9.2)

– Social and housing exclusion and the issue of poverty (Volumes 4; 5.1; 7.1; 7.2; 9.1); and the related processes of punitiveness and criminalisation (Volumes 6.2; 7.2; 8.2)

– Quality and effective delivery of homeless services, the focus in the first two volumes, recently revived (Volumes 1; 2; 8.2)

– Evidence and data collection – an abiding theme: 'point-in-time' and 'longitudinal data' and 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' approaches (volumes 3; 5.2; 7.1; 8.2)

– Housing and housing rights (Volumes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.1, 5.2, 9.1, 9.2; 10.1)

– Pathways into, through and out of homelessness (Volumes 2; 3; 5; 6.2)

Topics covered in EJH 2007-2016

TOPICS	KEYWORDS
Data	measurement, collection, definition (ETHOS)
Categories of homeless	young people, long term, migrants, older people, rough sleepers, refugees, women, families
Tenure, accommodation	hostels, shelters, private rented sector, homeownership, temporary accommodation, independent living, community provision, rent arrears
Services	delivery, procurement, quality, standards, costs
Homeless voices (as agents)	participation, consumer choice, communities, on the streets
Welfare & benefits	employability, living conditions, labour market, poverty, deprivation, social/ economic /political (multiple) exclusion, demography
Media	public opinion, stigma
NGO & voluntary sector	agency, participation, homeless voices, communities
Policies & Solutions	sustainability, prevention, housing for unusual groups, staircase model, Housing First, housing led, housing ready, staircase

State & EU governance	welfare regimes, national & local planning and housing strategies (urban/regional), EU strategies
Criminalisation	marginalisation, enforcement, social exclusion, eviction, stigma, victimisation, fear, control, containment, punitiveness, exclusion (public space, train stations)
Consensus	national, pan-Europe
Rights	criminal law, human rights, right to housing
Approaches to study (theory and method)	pathways, poverty, capabilities, participation, medical studies, longitudinal research, social mix, open method of coordination, structure/agency

All EU member states, with the exception of Cyprus and Malta are referenced in the journal as case studies or as comparators. Twenty-two countries are explicitly cited in the titles of articles, reviews or debates. Outside of the EU Norway, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Uruguay and Australia also feature. A key challenge for the next decade of the EJH is to broaden both the geographical coverage and as Michele Lancione in his contribution to this anniversary edition notes, to encourage submissions from the broad 'social science family', including anthropology, criminology and geography.

To mark 10 years of publication, an anniversary issue of the EJH was proposed by the EJH editorial board on the theme of 'Researching Homelessness in Europe' focusing on the broad areas of theory, methods and policy impact. The special issue was not intended as an 'audit' of the EJH, though reference to and evaluation of the journal's content and impact was encouraged. Rather we looked for an assessment of the 'state of play' of homelessness research in Europe and a consideration of its prospective directions of research development. We approached some of the best-known experts on homelessness who have been associated with the journal to submit contributions. While all replied with enthusiasm, several, because of work commitments, were unable to contribute within our relatively short time frame. We are grateful for the eleven authors below for their submissions. We were minimally directive in that while we suggested areas or topics of focus and reminded each of the journal's philosophy and remit we recognised each as an established authority and we were primarily interested in their interpretations and judgments; we were not therefore prescriptive as to content or coverage.

Synopsis of the articles

'*Researching Homelessness in Europe: Theoretical Perspectives*' by Nicholas Pleace is the first of 8 articles in this anniversary edition. In an exemplary and adroit handling of a copious and complex literature, Pleace presents a forensic analysis of recent theory development in homelessness. He starts with the 'new orthodoxy', a perspective that came to the fore during the 1990s, which established that homelessness is the result of the interplay between structural and individual factors.

While recognising this amalgam of the individual and structural as an advance in understanding, Pleace argues that the new orthodoxy has its own problems arising from its 'inherent vagueness' and lack of precision especially with regard to how the causal interaction between the personal (individual) and the structural works. The identification of relatively homogeneous subgroups of homeless people and the demarcation of pathways (into, through and out of homelessness) went someway to address these problems, but they in turn are also seen as problematic. In the absence of appropriate European data, subgroup analysis relied too much on taxonomies developed in the USA where data collection was and remains more comprehensive (see Culhane, this issue). As data collection in Europe improves (see Benjaminsen and Knutagård, this issue) subgroup analysis will become more sensitive to European contexts. Pathways analysis served to highlight agency – a recognition of the cognisance of homeless people themselves in having some, albeit restricted, choice in how they conduct their lives. Welcome as agency is, in Pleace's view, subgroup analysis and pathways research have swung the theory game away from structural explanations towards an undue emphasis on individual experiences. This tendency labelled 'cultural gravity', together with 'assumptive research' (that is, the assumption that we know what homelessness is), constitute for Pleace the main obstacles to innovative theory development. As a corrective Pleace argues in the final section of his paper for a refurbishment of structural explanations which embrace not just systems failure (support, welfare and housing etc.) but also takes account of the impact of wider structural realities of poverty and inequality. Pleace here prefigures aspects of later commentaries in this issue by Arapoglou and Lancione.

In their article '*Homelessness Research and Policy Development: Examples from the Nordic Countries*' Lars Benjaminsen and Marcus Knutagård conduct a nuanced examination of the evolution of recent homelessness policy in Finland, Denmark and Sweden. These countries (along with Norway) have an established history of data collection and measurement of homelessness and a tradition of a relatively (compared with much of Europe) close relationship between research and policy development. Benjaminsen and Knutagård's paper reflects on the way research evidence on Housing First programmes and interventions in North America has informed the development of experimental Housing First programmes in Nordic countries. The impact has been uneven. In Finland and then Denmark Housing First programmes have been espoused, challenging hitherto dominant 'treatment first/ housing ready' approaches. In Sweden, however, the authors suggest that the continuing commitment to a long-established staircase model and the difficulties in accessing affordable social housing have inhibited the adoption of Housing First. As Benjaminsen and Knutagård observe, the interplay between research and policy can be difficult to articulate when policy development does not always follow a

linear path and research is not necessarily primarily aimed at contributing to new policies and practices. Even when research evidence points to the benefits of new developments, implementation and structural barriers can inhibit their adoption.

Boróka Fehér and Nóra Teller's '*An Emerging Research Strand: Housing Exclusion in Central and South East Europe*' recounts a rather different story from that of the Nordic countries and starkly illustrates the uneven relationship across European regions between research and homelessness policy. This is an ambitious paper seeking to 'summarize the state of the art of research' in Central Eastern and South Eastern Europe. Citing evidence, particularly from Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, the Baltic states, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, the authors identify the differential impact of a series of political, economic and social upheavals – the post-Soviet transition to a market economy, the Balkan wars and the recent refugee/immigrant crisis – in exacerbating problems of social exclusion and the challenge of homelessness. There is little or no history in homelessness research in this region. This has led to the instigation of policies based on weak or no evidence, the most alarming example of which is the re-criminalisation of homelessness in some counties – a policy with clear political motivations. However, while conscious of considerable uneven development from country to country, Fehér and Teller highlight the emergence in the past decade of significant advances in the development of housing and welfare research with exploratory qualitative and quantitative studies on the nature and causes of homelessness, an emerging understanding of pathways into and out of homelessness and analyses of the effectiveness of policy responses for selected groups. Mirroring developments in West Europe and overseas there has been a reorientation of research towards a more structural understanding of homelessness. The authors end with a plea for more comparative, interdisciplinary and applied research within and across CEE/SEE countries.

Set within the framework of recent theoretical developments which have challenged orthodox accounts of policy diffusion and transfer, Vassilis Arapoglou's paper '*Researching Housing Exclusion and Homelessness in Southern Europe: Learning Through Comparing Cities and Tracking Policies*' examines the issue of 'policy mobility' – the transfer of policy initiatives from one social, economic and political context to others with different societal complexions. The attendant challenges of 'policy translation' are scrutinized conceptually and variously illustrated by reference to supported housing, affordable housing and the housing of recently arrived immigrants and refugees. Arapoglou's account demonstrates that the process of translation is always complex and frequently contested. In particular, Arapoglou highlights the challenges posed in southern Europe by the neoliberal conventions, with attendant austerity tropes, that characterises many homelessness strategies and poverty policies originating in the EU and elsewhere. These he

suggests clash with the distinguishing characteristics of the Mediterranean welfare regime which include civic pride, pluralism, associationalism, local democracy movements, informal and spontaneous acts of solidarity and organised forms of community care and, more recently, a variety of grassroots initiatives stimulated by anti-austerity politics. Referencing Gramsci's 'theory of hegemony' and 'philosophy of praxis', Arapoglou examines the contradictions and tensions embedded in policy mobility, and discusses how some of these tensions may be addressed by a considered process of 'translation' and a 'politics of learning'. His conclusion considers the potential of policy mobility approaches for comparing homelessness initiatives within and across different types of welfare states.

Dennis Culhane, in his lucid commentary on *'The Potential of Linked Administrative Data for Advancing Homelessness Research and Policy'*, identifies and explicates the research potential in linking administrative data across multiple social systems and geographical scales. In the context of a widening use of integrated administrative data systems in North America, Europe and Australia, Culhane enumerates the benefits that the use of such data brings to social research: the data has already been collected and does not have to be generated by expensive and time consuming trials and is therefore relatively cost effective, it does not rely on self-reporting and is population-based and, further, as data accumulates over time the potential for longitudinal analysis grows. With regard specifically to homelessness research integrated administrative data offers a low cost, continuous source of measurement of the prevalence and duration of homelessness in a community. When linked with other records, such data can facilitate interrogation of, for example, discharge practices from social welfare systems such as prisons and other institutions in assessing the impact on homelessness. Similarly, interventions to reduce rates of homelessness or to expedite exit from homelessness can be tracked and the impact on other health and social welfare systems evaluated. Notwithstanding Culhane's enthusiasm for the collation and interrogation of administrative data – an enthusiasm clearly demonstrated over two decades of innovative research only a fraction of which is cited in this article – he is acutely aware of the risks associated with the use of integrated administrative data for social research. The final part of his article is devoted to encouraging an explicit and transparent discussion of the ethical considerations relating to issues of intentionality, privacy and security. In Culhane's view compilation and analysis of integrated administrative data enterprise requires a new set of legal, ethical, technological and procedural standards. He concludes that the basic ethical requirement for the operation of integrated data systems is a transparent communication strategy that brings together government data owners and community partners with 'general citizenry (including sceptics)'. In this way, he argues people can participate and ensure appropriate policies for the beneficial use of data.

Nicolas Herault and Guy Johnson's '*Homelessness in Australia: Service Reform and Research in the 21st Century*' begins in 2008 when the newly elected Australian Labour Government made homelessness its highest policy priority. This fundamental change was predicated on the emergence over some years of the so-called 'new homeless' – young people and families replacing 'skid row' populations – and changes in the housing market characterised by a crisis of affordability and contraction in the availability of social housing. From the beginning research evidence was explicitly identified as key in determining the direction of homelessness initiatives. Overall A$11 million was allocated to support the development of programmes to both prevent homelessness and end chronic homelessness. A$5 million of this total was awarded to Melbourne University to undertake a large scale, national longitudinal study focusing on housing instability and homelessness. The resulting project, 'Journeys Home', is the main subject matter of Herault and Johnson's article. Their informative and detailed account suggests that the research design and methodology of the longitudinal study might serve as a base model for similar studies elsewhere. The finding from analyses of the six-wave dataset cover among other topics health, psychological distress and crime, exit rates and substance usage; these have made important contributions to the evidence base certainly in Australia and, as Herault and Johnson suggest, perhaps internationally – the interrogation of the database continues. Yet, disappointingly, despite 'Journeys Home' being recognised around the world as an exceptional dataset capable of answering fundamental questions about the dynamics of homelessness, it has yet to have a meaningful impact on Australian homelessness policy and service delivery. The authors attribute this failure to resistance from entrenched interests committed to transitional support tied to short and medium term accommodation, and to a lack of political leadership and commitment. For Herault and Johnson a key message of the Australian experience is that it is important to have independent non-aligned people and institutions driving policy and practice change and conclude that the bigger lesson is that 'without structural reform increasing the supply of affordable housing, the capacity of systems reform to reduce homelessness, let alone end it, is limited'.

In the penultimate contribution to this anniversary issue, '*Homeless Non-Governmental Organisations and the Role of Research'*, Mike Allen explores the reciprocal and often complex relationships between homelessness research and NGOs. Allen's principal focus is on the role and motives of homeless NGOs in commissioning and undertaking research and the impact this research has on NGO practice. In this later context – citing the example of Housing First and the challenge to traditional homelessness taxonomies by Dennis Culhane and his colleagues in North America – Allen also references the influence on NGOs of research emanating from the broader research community. Throughout Allen uses 'Focus Ireland',

where he is Director of Advocacy, Communication and Research, as a case study. NGO research reflects all aspects of their multiple functions: evaluations of the process, impact and outcomes of service delivery, assessment of social return on investment, advocacy appraisal and fundraising. But can on occasion also be agenda setting, exampled in this paper by the adoption of regular measurement of homelessness by Irish statutory bodies. The ethical challenges of NGO homelessness research reflect those of the wider research community whether academic or state sponsored, with additional unease regarding the potential exploitation of NGO clients. Citing such concerns, some NGOs refuse to engage in research arguing that their primary role is to address clients' personal problems; thus, Allen argues, buttressing individual interpretations of homelessness with a consequent downplaying of structural issues. Here Allen cites Amartya Sen's critical take on 'positional objectivity' in support of his arguments, and echoes – though without direct reference – some of the concerns raised by Pleace's notions of 'cultural gravity' and 'assumptive research' (see this issue). Addressing ethical concerns is central to Allen's advocacy of research and Focus Ireland has established a 'research ethics committee' to this end. The impact of research findings on the practice of service delivery, Allen suggests, is rarely direct and sometimes hard to detect. Field workers – and some mangers – rarely read research reports. Allen argues for the establishment of conduits for the communication and transfer of research findings. In this context, he cites Focus Ireland's 'lunchtime and occasional evening talks' in partnership with researchers from Trinity College and plans to stream these to other Focus Ireland centres in other Irish cities. Allen also advocates collaborative NGO research, to avoid duplication certainly, but more proactively to enable better resourced, larger studies with robust research designs. Allen concludes his article with an evocation for NGOs to engage in a 'critical and constructive dialogue with frontline staff and service users' to tease out and articulate 'timely questions' for future research endeavour.

This anniversary edition concludes with Michele Lancione's article '*Beyond Homelessness Studies*'. This is a challenging and provocative paper calling for a period of self-reflection and auto-critique on the part of the homelessness research community. In the context of major political and social changes evidenced by growing nationalisms, the treat of EU dismemberment, refugee influx, continuing austerity and economic uncertainties, the author argues that it is time to rethink our notions of what homelessness research is all about – to go 'beyond homelessness study', to challenge the status quo and to question habitual ways of thinking. Lancione approvingly references Pleace's identification of 'cultural gravity' and 'assumptive theory' (see Pleace in this issue) as among the main risks facing current homelessness research and adds a third – which he suggests is implicit in Pleace's critique – the fact that most research is policy driven, related to the evaluation of

this or that program, often at a very small scale and with little interaction with broader debates and agendas. Being self-referential it is often 'out-of-sync' with the latest advances in social theory, and as a consequence not able to contribute meaningfully to those debates. This is not a blanket criticism. Lancione recognises in 10 years of publication, the EJH has frequently reflected on and posed such questions and that even among the work he castigates there is frequently an implicit and sometimes explicit, appreciation of such problems. Reflecting on some of the papers in this anniversary issue Lancione cites approvingly Culhane's recognition of the dangers of uncritical data collection and measurement as an objective means to bolster political ambitions, and Herault and Johnson's acknowledgment that data, no matter how well constructed, can be 'porous' because its impact and effectiveness depends on factors that transcend data itself – in the Australian case the opposition of policy makers and the inertia of homelessness practitioners. And he is appreciative of Benjaminsen and Knutagård's demonstration that 'context matters' and how structural forces and political orientations can lead to very different results in homelessness policies and practices. Yet, as an incitement and challenge to homelessness research and homelessness researchers, Lancione concludes with the question: how can this field of study address and overcome the future risks of being assumptive, relativist, policy-driven, self-referential, inertial and potentially positivist?

Finally, we would like to thank all those who have so generously contributed to the journal over the past ten years with a special thanks to the contributors to this anniversary edition for their enthusiasm and for so willingly committing time to writing their articles. We hope this anniversary issue will spark significant response and initiate lively debate which will feature in future issues of the journal.

Joe Doherty and Eoin O'Sullivan,
December 2016.