

# Why Homelessness?

The use of research and the role of experts in the construction of a policy field

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# The use of research and the role of experts

- How is research used?
- What kind of research?
- What roles do experts have?
- How do networks influence research and experts?

# Homelessness in Norway

- First National definition in 1996
- Surveys regular since 1996
- Several strategies aimed at reducing homelessness 2001-2020
- Survey 2016: 3909 persons experience homelessness
- Population is dominated by persons with complex challenges, the majority has an extended history of homelessness

Dyb & Lid 2017

# Data material

- Official Norwegian reports
  - White papers
  - Project- and strategy descriptions, reports +++
  - Research referred to in these documents
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- Interviews with policymakers

# Research utilization

## Categories

- Instrumentalist
  - Knowledge as problem-solving, realize the role of the user in its production
- Symbolic
  - Legitimizing/substantiating
- Knowledge driven
- Gradual absorption
  - Interactive, several sources

# Research utilization

## Findings

- First impression,- Mainly instrumental through the whole period
  - Power?
- Or symbolic?
  - Institutional isomorphism
  - Research contributions not affecting policy
- Gradual absorption
  - Influence from Europe
  - Interactive approach during Project Homeless?
  - Enlightenment?
    - Or «endarkenment»?

# Different types of research

- Instrumentalist

- Descriptive
- Explanatory
- Predictive

Boswell 2009

- Regulatory, goal of delivering truth for policy
  - Knowledge production/synthesis/prediction

Jasanof 1990

- Research science

- Has to answer to established scientific paradigms
- Open ended, relatively unlimited time pressure
- Published in papers, peer reviewed

Jasanof 1990

# Different types of Research

- Mostly reports financed by governmental agencies involved
- Fills knowledge gaps, describes and explains, according to the definition, mostly housing structure and service delivery
- Few projects during the period has data from persons experiencing homelessness
- Causes of homelessness?
- Finds the definition inadequate
- Questions the approach and solutions to experienced homelessness



# The role of experts

- Researchers as experts
  - The pure scientist
  - The issue advocate
  - The science arbiter
  - Honest Broker of policy alternatives
- In-government experts
  - Technocracy
  - Extensive mandates
  - Limited mandates
  - Servants-of-power

Pielke 2007

Brint 1990

# Networks

- Epistemic communities/  
knowledge networks
  - Nordic Network
  - Feantsa

*Knowledge based networks play an important role in articulating the cause-and-affect relationships of complex problems, helping states identify their interest, framing the issues for collective debate, proposing specific policies, and identifying salient points for negotiation.*

*Haas 1992*