

Why do Homeowners Decide to Renovate?

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Summary of findings

Why do homeowners decide to renovate?

Households are more likely to be thinking about renovations *if*:

- they find differences between their and others' homes unsettling
- they face competing commitments in arranging life at home
- they share and transmit information about renovations

renovation decisions begin as an adaptive response to 'misalignments' within certain conditions of domestic life

Research questions

Why do some homeowners decide to do energy efficient renovations ... *and others don't?*

amenity vs efficiency renovators

And why are homeowners interested in deciding about renovations *in the first place?*

renovators vs non-renovators

renovations = major structural changes or additions to home typically requiring outside contractors with specialist expertise

amenity renovations = kitchens, bathrooms, living spaces, etc.

efficiency renovations = boilers, insulation, windows, doors, etc.

Research approach

sampling design and group comparisons to try and address potential biases

Mixed methods approach: part 1 (qualitative)

Why do homeowners decide to renovate?

Or: Differences between renovators and non-renovators?

semi-structured interviews

UK homeowners

n=35

Jan – May 2012

*not thinking
about
renovations*

*considering
efficiency
renovations*

*completed
efficiency
renovations*

*considering
amenity
renovations*

*completed
amenity
renovations*

key finding: six conditions of domestic life help differentiate renovators from non-renovators

conditions of
domestic life

Delineating

Embodying

Adapting

(not exclusive!)

Demonstrating

Prioritising

Negotiating

Conditions of domestic life: **Delineating**

Why do homeowners decide to renovate?

Delineating:

the process through which households identify themselves as similar to or different from others, and normalise or justify their own self-identity

e.g., Gabb 2011



[F] *"I would describe it as a family home. A typical family home, comfortable ...*

[M] *I think that's what we want most, isn't it?*

[F] *Yeah, it's a family home where we can all sit down ...*

[M] *Somewhere you feel safe"*

conditions of
domestic life

Delineating

Embodying

Adapting

Demonstrating

Prioritising

Negotiating

Conditions of domestic life: **Prioritising**

Why do homeowners decide to renovate?

Prioritising:

the balancing of competing commitments in domestic life which may be identified in the crossing of boundaries

e.g., Nippert-Eng 1996



[M] “[new kitchen/dinner] is a great place to entertain people, we’re all together.

[F] Yeah, it’s easier family wise, if you’ve got homework you can still be doing jobs in the kitchen or whatever yet you can still sort of help. The children still feel they’re in the same room instead of being a wall away...”

conditions of domestic life

Delineating

Embodying

Adapting

Demonstrating

Prioritising

Negotiating

Conditions of domestic life: **Embodying**

Why do homeowners decide to renovate?

Embodying:

how views of the body and its abilities impact the use of space at home, and the physicality (present and future) of domestic living

e.g., Imrie 2004



[F] *"I use the bath so seldom, I thought, well I could do without it. And, you know, I shall be 66 on Saturday ...and I might stay here for another ten years, I don't know, I'm gonna become a little less agile rather than a little more, and I just think a walk-in shower is more practical for somebody of my age"*

conditions of
domestic life

Delineating

Embodying

Adapting

Demonstrating

Prioritising

Negotiating

Conditions of domestic life: **Demonstrating**

Why do homeowners decide to renovate?

Demonstrating:

challenging or confirming
activities in the home,
absorbing ideas and
inspirations for the design
and use of space at home,
and transmitting those
ideas on

e.g., Hand et al. 2007



[F] “You know, I do a similar job to yours, going out interviewing people on surveys, and quite often we’ll be sitting, either in the kitchen or the sitting room, and I’ll say, excuse me but I really like this kitchen, I want to [LAUGH] sort of make one or two notes ... I’m gonna steal some ideas.”

conditions of
domestic life

Delineating

Embodying

Adapting

Demonstrating

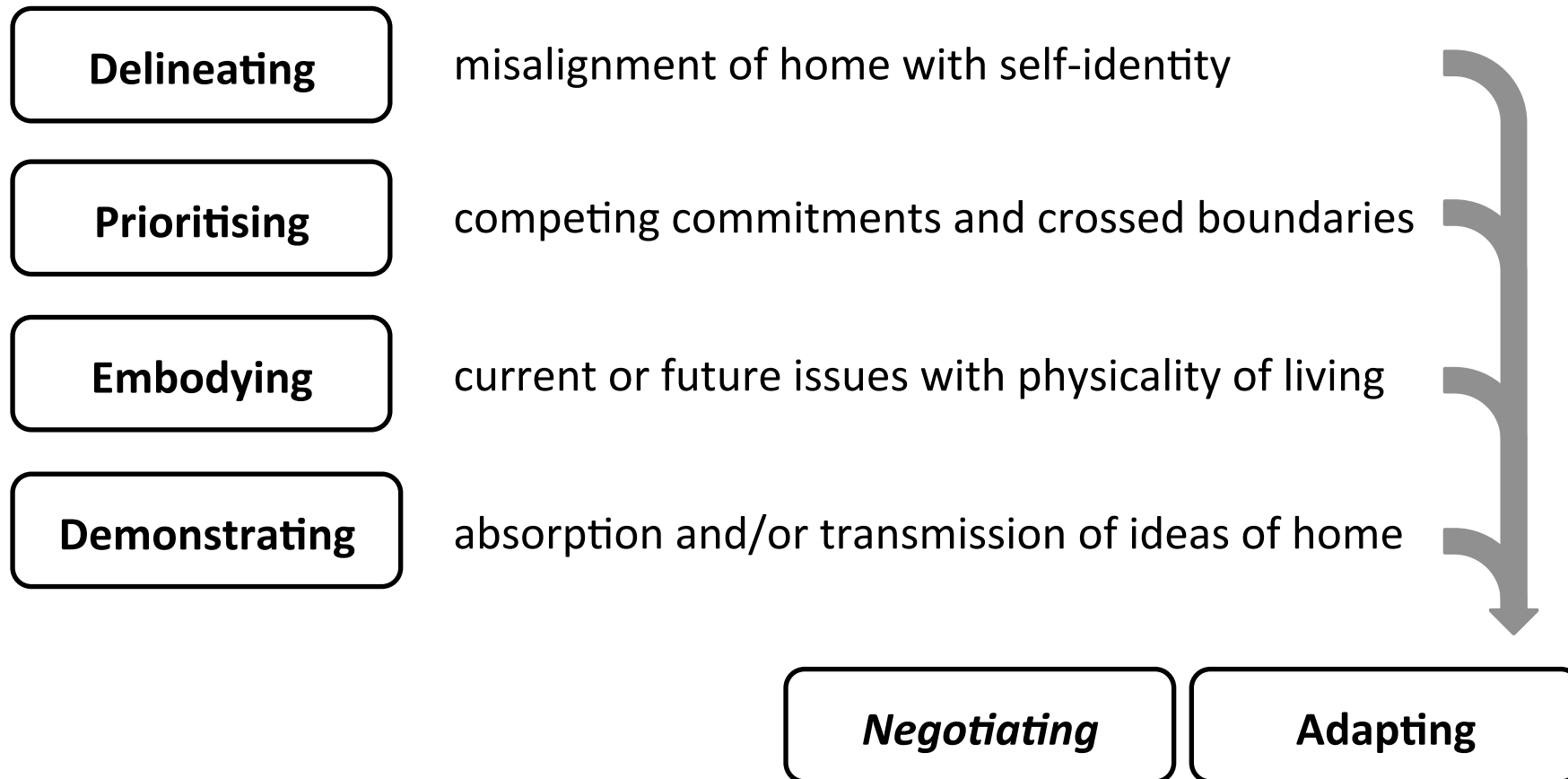
Prioritising

Negotiating

Findings: part 1 (qualitative)

Why do homeowners decide to renovate?

Households are more likely to be renovators if ...

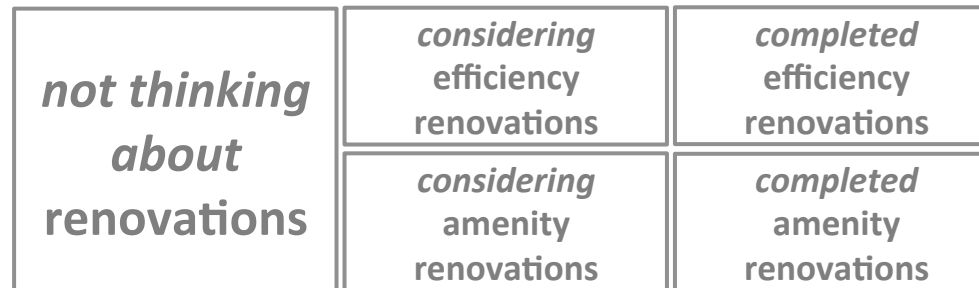


Mixed methods approach: part 2 (quantitative)

Why do homeowners decide to renovate?

Or: Differences between renovators and non-renovators?

semi-structured
interviews



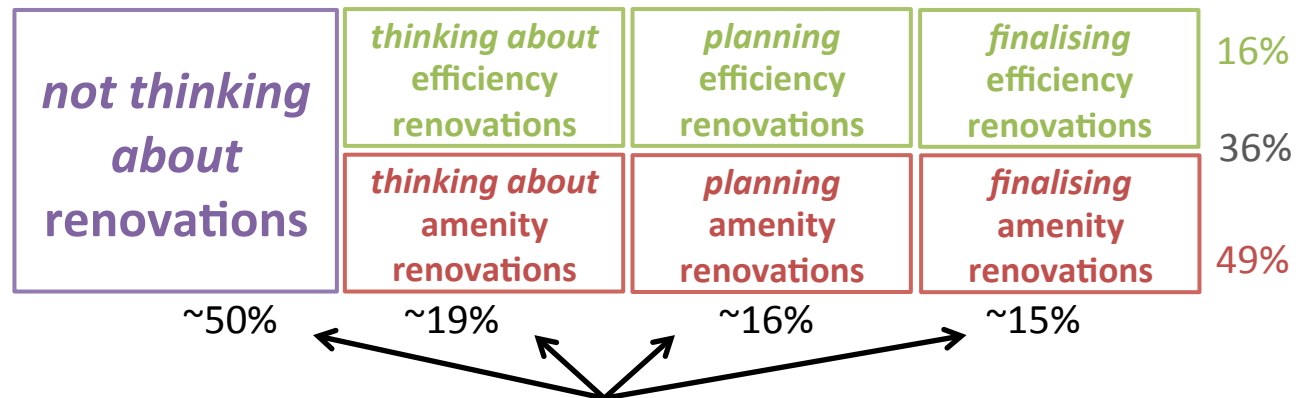
closed-ended survey

UK homeowners

n=1028 (quota sampling)

Sep 2012 and Jun 2013

Green Deal = 'natural experiment' (Jan 2013)

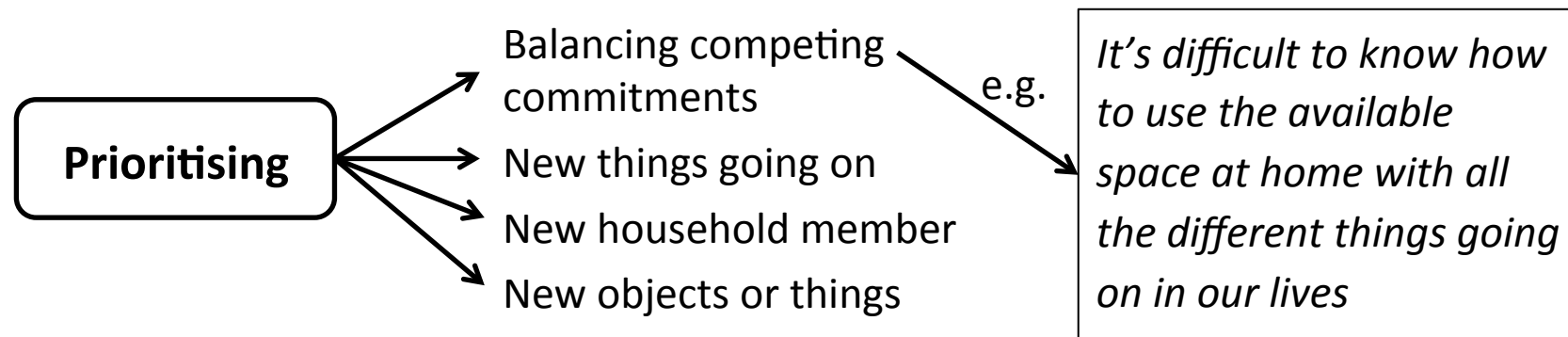


cf. 'scaling up' social theory
research: Pullinger et al. 2013

‘Measuring’ the conditions of domestic life

Why do homeowners decide to renovate?

Condition	Key constructs	Measurement items (agree / disagree)
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multiple measurement
items per condition ->
tested for latent factors

single factor

Prioritising

Embodying

Demonstrating

complex

Delineating

Negotiating

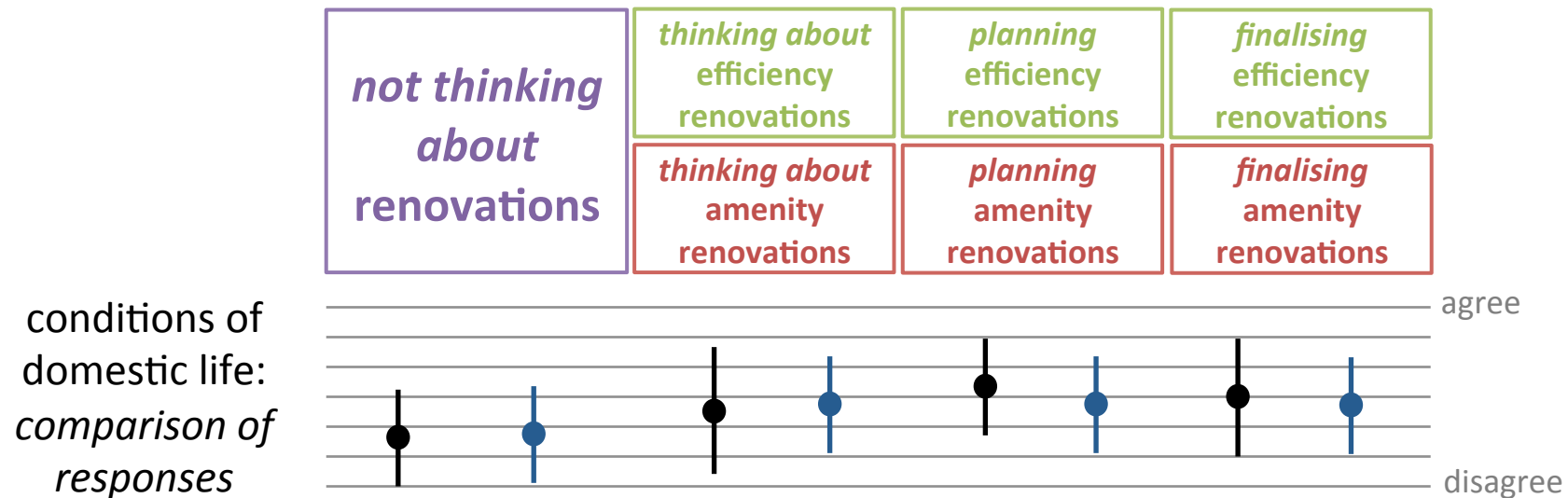
Adapting

major | DIY | make do

Findings: part 2 (quantitative)

Why do homeowners decide to renovate?

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Prioritising – single factor

increases from *not thinking about* -> *thinking about* -> *planning*

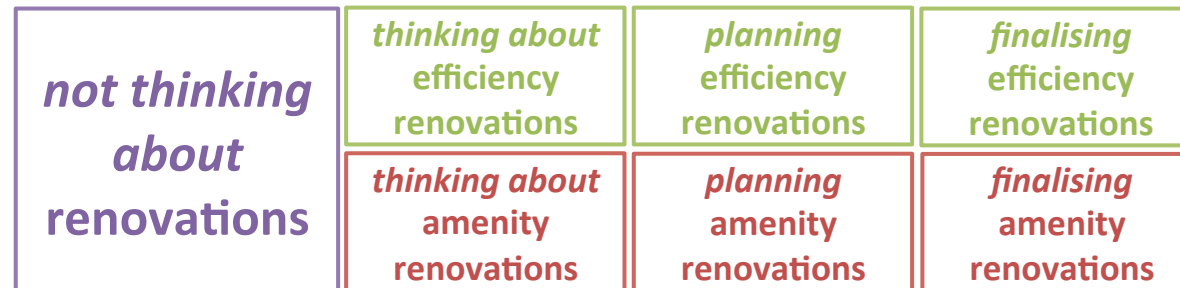
Adapting – construct: major changes

increases from *not thinking about* -> [any decision stage]

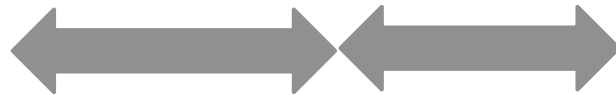
Findings: part 2 (quantitative)

Why do homeowners decide to renovate?

Or: Differences between renovators and non-renovators?



conditions of domestic life:
comparison of responses



higher scores

thinking about
vs.
not thinking
about

Delineating – construct: unsettled identity +0.9, $p < .01$

Prioritising – single factor +0.6, $p < .01$

Demonstrating – single factor +0.7, $p < .01$

Adapting – construct: major changes +1.4, $p < .01$

and Embodying [‘vulnerable’ households only]

Summary of findings

Why do homeowners decide to renovate?

Households are more likely to be considering renovations *if*:

- they find differences between their and others' homes unsettling
- they face competing commitments in arranging life at home
- they find ideas and inspiration for the home from external sources
- they share and transmit information about renovations

i.e., renovation decisions begin as an adaptive response to 'misalignments' within certain conditions of domestic life

caveat (1): (largely) correlational not causal

caveat (2): up to 1 in 3 renovation decisions are 'triggered' by external events

and: *no real differences between would-be efficiency and amenity renovators*

-> efficiency as means not end

Overall 'model' of renovation decision process

