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SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

REVISED Systematic review: locating qualitative academic publications for reviewing tenants' and landlords' renting experiences and interaction in the Majority World

[version 2; peer review: 4 approved, 1 approved with reservations]

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v2 **First published:** 13 Aug 2024, **4**:178
https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.18234.1
Latest published: 02 Oct 2024, **4**:178
https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.18234.2

Abstract

This methodological protocol describes the step-by-step process of identifying the relevant international academic literature to be reviewed within the project 'The affective economies of emerging private renting markets: understanding tenants and landlords in postcommunist Romania" (AFFECTIVE-PRS). It presents: (1) the preliminary decisions taken related to the breadth of the review (choice of databases, type of research, type of reference, searching fields); (2) the operationalisation of keywords and Boolean strings; (3) the further calibration of the searching parameters through piloting; (4) the final retrieval of relevant references through systematic and manual searches; and (5) the geographical coverage of the retained literature. While the paper demonstrates the rigour of the methodological approach taken, it also opens up the space for other scholars to scrutinise, replicate or adjust this approach to their own work.

Keywords

Systematic review, Methodological protocol, Tenants, Landlords, Private renting, Private rental housing, Majority World, Literature mapping, SCOPUS, Web of Science

This article is included in the Marie-Sklodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) gateway.

Open Peer Review

Approval Status ✓ ✓ ✓ ? ✓

	1	2	3	4	5
version 2 (revision) 02 Oct 2024	✓ view			? view	✓ view
version 1 13 Aug 2024	? view	✓ view	✓ view		

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This article is included in the Horizon Europe gateway.



This article is included in the Sociology gateway.

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Author roles: Soaita AM: Conceptualization, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Funding Acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project Administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – Original Draft Preparation, Writing – Review & Editing

Competing interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Grant information: This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 101059188
The funders had no role in study design, data collection and analysis, decision to publish, or preparation of the manuscript.

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How to cite this article: Soaita AM. **Systematic review: locating qualitative academic publications for reviewing tenants' and landlords' renting experiences and interaction in the Majority World [version 2; peer review: 4 approved, 1 approved with reservations]** Open Research Europe 2024, **4**:178 https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.18234.2

First published: 13 Aug 2024, **4**:178 https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.18234.1

REVISED **Amendments from Version 1**

Text was added to explain: (1) why systematic searches returned fewer references than the manual searches; (2) the exclusive use of English as the language of publication and the likely implications of this; (3) the meaning of the Majority World and the Minority World; (4) the meaning of 'affective economies' used in this study; and (5) the meaning of FAIR data and the implications of pay-wall access to academic journals and databases.

Any further responses from the reviewers can be found at the end of the article

Introduction

The 2008–2010 Global Financial Crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic have highlighted rental housing as a significant source of inequalities in wealth, health, and well-being worldwide, often failing to provide many tenants with a true sense of 'home.' A burgeoning recent academic literature focusing on Anglo-Saxon countries and older EU member states has revealed troubling issues, such as poor housing quality, insecurity, eviction experiences and anxieties, and economic stress. These findings raise valid concerns about tenants' well-being in the less institutionalised and therefore riskier private renting sectors (PRS), where informal transactions elevate risks and conceal vulnerabilities from state action.

The project titled "The Affective Economies of Emerging Private Renting Markets: Understanding Tenants and Landlords in Postcommunist Romania (AFFECTIVE-PRS)" addresses these important concerns. As the project is centered on the notion of affective economies, a brief theoretical explanation is warranted. The concept was authored by Sarah Ahmed (2014) and has since attracted a small but growing subfield of studies. Starting from the widely agreed statement that "economies are social and material, as well as psychic" (2004, p.121), Ahmed conceptualises emotions as being affective investments in social norms (not just psychological dispositions) that is collective affects which construct collective bodies, e.g. the nation, the racialised skin, the poor, the undeserving, the refugee or, as I suggest, certain bodies of tenants or landlords. The concept helps us see the economies of private renting as a zone imbricated with collective rather than individual emotions, which are shared between some people and opposed, rejected or unrecognised by other people. It can also help organise the growing but still cluttered focus on emotion in housing scholarship.

The project aims to explore the affective economies that connect private tenants and landlords in the understudied regions of the Majority World, an expression devised by Alam (2008) to refer to a political-economic geography by what it has (the greatest majority of the global population), rather than by what it lacks (economic development), challenging thus the discursive political hegemony of its complement, the Minority World (see also Simone & Fauzan, 2013). To achieve this, the project will develop a Critical Interpretative Synthesis (CIS) of relevant academic literature. CIS is a novel review approach (Depraetere *et al.*, 2021) described as 'a methodology that enables the synthesis of large amounts of diverse qualitative data and facilitates critical engagement with the assumptions that shape and inform a body of research' (Farias & Laliberte Rudman, 2016 p:33).

Several systematic and scoping reviews have focused on the everyday experiences of private tenants in the high-income states of the Minority World, particularly in the well-researched Anglo-Saxon countries (Chisholm *et al.*, 2020; Garnham & Rolfe, 2019; McCarthy & Simcock, 2024; Rolfe *et al.*, 2023; Soaita *et al.*, 2020; Soaita *et al.*, 2022; Woodhall-Melnik & Dunn, 2016). In contrast, only one scoping review on rental arrangements in the Majority World has been identified, and it dates back nearly 30 years (Rakodi, 1995). Considering that the challenges faced by private tenants and landlords in the Majority World are likely to be more salient and fundamentally different from those elsewhere, assembling this expectedly small and fragmented literature for synthesis holds significant academic and ethical importance for knowledge representation.

Building on previous efforts to develop a feasible approach within limited resources (Soaita *et al.*, 2019b; Soaita *et al.*, 2020; Soaita *et al.*, 2023), a Critical Interpretative Synthesis (CIS) will address the following questions:

1. What is the geographical and temporal distribution of academic knowledge concerning the affective and everyday experiences and interactions between private tenants and landlords in the Majority World?
2. What are the collective affective experiences that drive the actions and interactions of private tenants and landlords in the Majority World?

This methodological protocol addresses the first question through literature mapping (Soaita *et al.*, 2019b), while the second question will be explored elsewhere by thematically synthesising a subset of the sampled literature. However, the primary contribution of this protocol is methodological, as it presents a rigorous approach, which is also feasible within the limited resources typically available to academic projects, in contrast to the resource-rich traditional systematic reviews. Additionally, it enhances the AFFECTIVE-PRS project's transparency by making the full set of references FAIR—that is Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable—for other academic users, albeit and regrettably only for those privileged whose affiliated institutions offer entry beyond the pay-wall of academic journals and databases and who more often than not belong to the Minority World. The paper not only demonstrates the rigour of the adopted methodological approach but also invites other scholars to scrutinise, replicate, or adapt it for their own research. By focusing on the retrieval of relevant literature rather than its synthesis, this paper aims to assist and inspire scholars and students across all social science disciplines.

The paper advances by detailing the following aspects:

- Preliminary decisions regarding the scope of the review
- The operationalisation of Boolean search strings
- The calibration of search parameters through thorough piloting

- The final retrieval of relevant publications via both systematic and manual searches
- A step-by-step summary of the process, including a geographical mapping of the results

It concludes with a brief summary.

Preliminary decisions

To align with the limited resources of this AFFECTIVE-PRS' work package of one-person/four-months while ensuring sufficient bibliographical breadth in retrieving high-quality academic publications, several restrictive decisions were made from the outset. These decisions will inevitably result in some relevant references being missed during the systematic searches. However, to mitigate this and as commonly recommended, the systematic searches will be complemented by manual searches in a select number of key journals and by recommendations from peers.

Databases

To systematically review the published literature on tenants' and landlords' experiences of renting, the extensive and complementary databases SCOPUS and Web of Science were selected. This approach aims to ensure broad coverage while acknowledging that the review will not be exhaustive (Soaita *et al.*, 2019b).

Search fields

Based on prior experience (Soaita *et al.*, 2019a; Soaita *et al.*, 2019b; Soaita *et al.*, 2023), searches will be performed in the fields of 'title', 'abstract' and 'keywords' in SCOPUS and 'topic' in Web of Science in order to get the most relevant results.

Type of research

Given the qualitative nature of the AFFECTIVE-PRS's research questions, the decision was made to focus exclusively on qualitative studies. This approach builds on Soaita *et al.* (2020), expanding their scope from Anglo-Saxon countries to the Majority World.

Type of references

Following others (Lee *et al.*, 2015; Wang *et al.*, 2016), as a way to proxy research quality, the decision was made to include only journal articles, books and book chapters.

Language

As a common practice (Garnham & Rolfe 2019; Lee *et al.*, 2015; Rolfe *et al.*, 2023; Soaita *et al.*, 2020), searches were exclusive to publications written in English (for an exceptional multi-language review of policy documents see Kholodilin, 2020). Given that the type of reference was restricted to academic publications as a proxy for quality, excluding other languages than English is not particularly problematic as it was shown that non-native English scholars prefer to publish in English for higher international visibility and greater potential for citations (e.g. Di Bitetti & Ferreras, 2017).

Operationalisation of the search strings

Drawing on Cooke *et al.* (2012) and the PICO method, the three search strings were designed to capture:

- Population and Comparison terms: tenants and/vs. landlords;
- Intervention: the field of housing (rather than other rental markets, e.g. land, commercial property);
- Outcomes: well/ill-being, through the proxy of methodology (i.e. qualitative research).

The operationalisation of each search string was designed to be inclusive of key meta-categories (e.g., housing, qualitative) and not to miss specific subcategories (e.g., flatmate, rooming house). This approach aimed to ensure that, collectively, the search strings would return the most relevant publications. Table 1 details the focus and operationalisation of the three search strings, which will be used together. An asterisk (*) is used to include both the singular and plural forms of a keyword.

However, any search string must be piloted to understand the characteristics of the publications so retrieved. Given its analytical tools, SCOPUS is particularly useful for preliminary piloting.

Calibration of search parameters: a SCOPUS pilot

Piloting the keywords

The keywords for String 1 (see Table 1) were piloted separately in SCOPUS on January 9, 2023 in order to monitor the size of hits returned. For instance, a search for tenant* AND landlord* (i.e. publications that contains both words, either in the singular or in the plural, in their title, abstract and keywords) returned 1,578 hits, an unmanageable amount for the resources of the project (for more details see Soaita, 2023). These initial tests revealed that certain keywords were heavily associated with specific disciplines (e.g., "flat*" and "flatmate*" returned many results in the physical sciences, and "boarding-hous*" in biology and veterinary sciences). However, these disciplinary associations diminished when Strings 2 and 3 were added,

Table 1. The search strings.

Strings	Fields	Operationalisation
String 1	Tenants OR landlords	(private AND (tenant* OR renter*)) OR lodger* OR squatter* OR flatmate* OR (HMO* AND resident*) OR (HMO* AND tenant*) OR (private AND landlord*) OR (tenant* AND landlord*) OR (landlord*-tenant* OR tenant*-landlord*)
String 2	Housing	(housing OR home OR house OR flat OR apartment OR flat-share OR (hous* AND "in multiple occupation") OR (rooming AND hous*) OR (boarding AND hous*) OR (Rooming AND hous*))
String 3	Method	(qualitative OR interview OR ethnograph* OR "case study" OR "case studies")

effectively refining the search results to better target the relevant literature.

It was also observed that introducing the housing String 2 reduced the total hits by approximately 13% for "private renter", 30% for "private landlord" and 49% for "tenant and landlord". This indicates that papers focused on renting other assets (e.g. land, money, commercial space) and seldom included both tenants and landlords.

Further refining the results with String 3 led to a substantial reduction in housing-related hits by approximately 70%, highlighting the predominantly quantitative nature of most publications returned.

Given AFFECTIVE-PRS's interest in regions beyond Anglo-Saxon geographies, the volume of literature related to Australia, New Zealand, the UK, and the USA was carefully monitored. Similar to findings in other studies (Liu *et al.*, 2021; Soaita *et al.*, 2023), the piloting exercise revealed that, for all keyword combinations, 50% to 80% of the hits pertained to these four Anglo-Saxon countries in terms of the geography of the case studies.

Setting additional inclusion/exclusion criteria

The SCOPUS literature was subsequently retrieved on January 10, 2023, using the search query "String 1 AND String 2 AND String 3". This search returned a total of 552 references of articles, book and book chapters. Upon examining the characteristics of these references, further exclusion decisions were made based on specific criteria:

- Discipline: 35 references were excluded[1]
- Language: 13 were excluded for being written in a language other than English
- Publishing timeline: given that a systematic review of the pre-1992 rental housing literature was already available (Rakodi, 1995) and only 12 of the retrieved references were published between 1973 and 1989, it was decided to focus the review exclusively on studies published after 1990.

Overall, it was determined that the combination of the three search strings, along with the additional excluding criteria, would yield a body of literature that is sufficiently focused on the topic while providing ample geographical, substantive and theoretical diversity.

The Majority World

The remaining sample (n=492) was downloaded in an EndNote database, where it was coded for countries of the case studies, then mapped in order to assess geographical coverage. As noted earlier, the results revealed a predominant focus on Anglo-Saxon literature (and some western European countries) in the geographical distribution of the case-studies (see Figure 1). Additionally, this dominance extended to institutional affiliation, authorship, and funding sources, as detailed in Soaita (2023) (https://zenodo.org/records/7566096).

Figure 1 highlights the lack of representation of many Majority World countries, particularly in Eurasia and Africa, which are marked in grey. Some regions, like Brazil, are represented by only a single paper. Although Liu *et al.* (2021) observed that China was well represented in the economic housing literature, ranking second after the USA, this was not the case in this pilot exercise.

To focus on the emerging and less-studied private renting markets in the Majority World (Alam, 2008), literature from Anglo-Saxon countries, old EU members and some other high-income states would be obviously excluded.[2] While informal renting arrangements do exist in these regions, they are relatively marginal (Morris *et al.*, 2021). The Minority World accounted for 378 references, or 77% of the retrieved sample, highlighting the substantial under-representation of the Majority World in academic literature. Consistent with Kholodilin (2020), the decision was made to include all Majority World states in the final review, notwithstanding their diverse renting contexts and uneven and fragmented representation.

Retrieving the literature for reviewing

Systematic searches

Once the exclusion/inclusion criteria have been calibrated to the study's aim, the literature was retrieved on January 10 2023 through systematic searches in SCOPUS and Web of Science (90 and 64 references respectively, both imported into EndNote). In more detail[3]:

- **SCOPUS Boolean string**: (TITLE-ABS-KEY ((**private** AND (**tenant*** OR **renter***)) OR **lodger*** OR **squatter*** OR **flatmate*** OR (**hmo*** AND **resident***) OR (**hmo*** AND **tenant***) OR (**private** AND **landlord***) OR (**tenant*** AND **landlord***) OR (**landlord*-tenant*** OR **tenant*-landlord***)) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ((**housing** OR **home** OR **house** OR **flat** OR **apartment** OR **flat-share** OR (**hous*** AND **"in multiple occupation"**) OR (**rooming** AND **hous***) OR (**boarding** AND **hous***))) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ((**qualitative** OR **interview** OR **ethnograph*** OR **"case study"** OR **"case studies"**))) AND (EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"United Kingdom"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"United States"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"Australia"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"Canada"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"Sweden"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"Germany"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"Netherlands"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"Italy"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"Japan"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"New Zealand"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"Denmark"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"Ireland"**) OR

[1] Earth and Planetary Sciences; Agricultural and Biological Sciences; Mathematics; Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology; Physics and Astronomy; Veterinary.

[2] Excluded countries (in 3-letter acronym): AUS, AUT, BEL, CAN, CHE, DEU, DNK, ELA, ESP, FIN, FRA, GBR, GRC, IRL, ITA, ISL, JPN, LIE, LUX, MLT, NLD, NOR, NZL, PRT, SWE, USA.

[3] Not all excluded countries/years were represented, hence only those represented could be excluded in the Boolean strings.

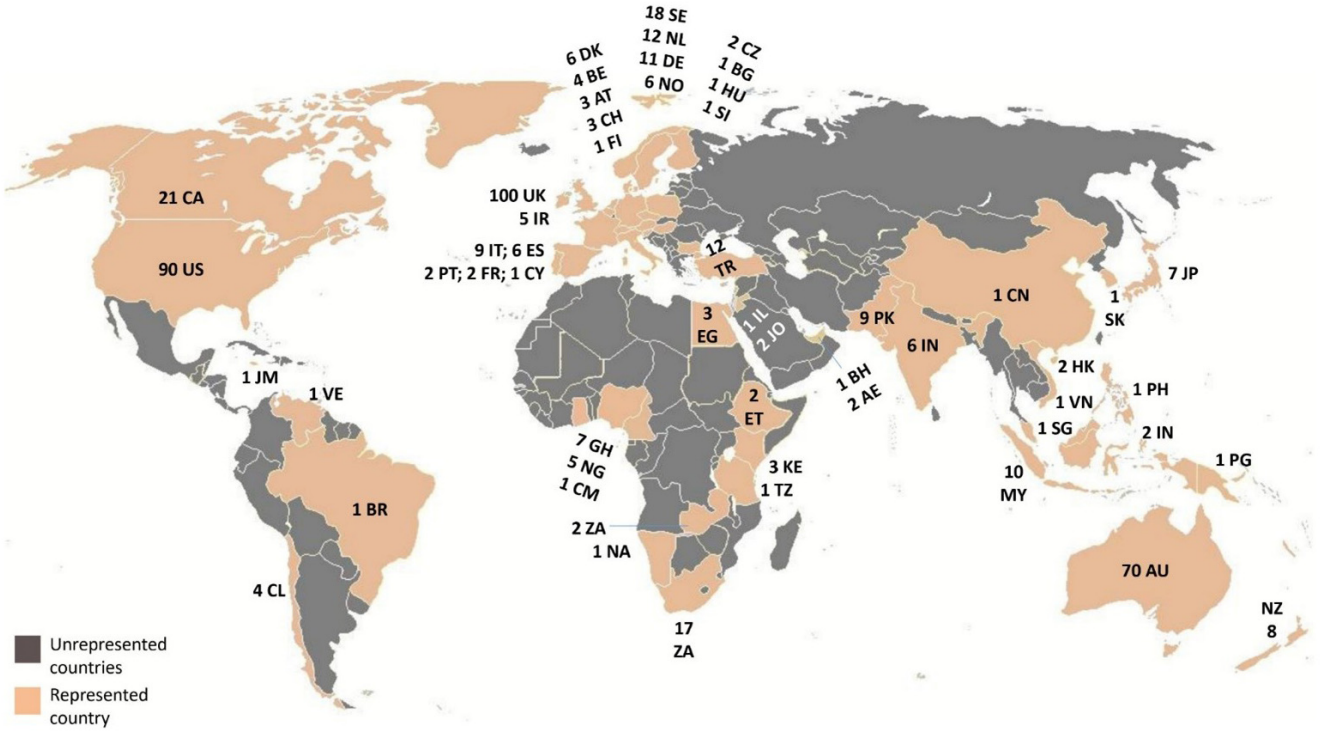

Figure 1. The global spread of the (SCOPUS) retrieved literature.

EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"Norway"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"Spain"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"Austria"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"Belgium"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"France"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"Switzerland"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"Portugal"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"Cyprus"**) OR EXCLUDE (AFFILCOUNTRY, **"Finland"**)) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, **"ar"**) OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, **"ch"**) OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, **"re"**) OR LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, **"bk"**)) AND (EXCLUDE (PUBYEAR, **1989**) OR EXCLUDE (PUBYEAR, **1988**) OR EXCLUDE (PUBYEAR, **1987**) OR EXCLUDE (PUBYEAR, **1986**) OR EXCLUDE (PUBYEAR, **1985**) OR EXCLUDE (PUBYEAR, **1984**) OR EXCLUDE (PUBYEAR, **1982**) OR EXCLUDE (PUBYEAR, **1976**)) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, **"English"**)) AND (EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, **"MEDI"**) OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, **"EART"**) OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, **"AGRI"**) OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA, **"BIOC"**))

- **Web of Science Boolean string**: (private AND (tenant* OR renter*)) OR lodger* OR squatter* OR flatmate* OR (HMO* AND resident*) OR (HMO* AND tenant*) OR (private AND landlord*) OR (tenant* AND landlord*) OR (landlord*-tenant* OR tenant*-landlord*) (Topic) AND (housing OR home OR house OR flat OR apartment OR flat-share OR (hous* AND "in multiple occupation") OR (rooming AND hous*) OR (boarding AND hous*)) (Topic) AND (qualitative OR interview OR ethnograph* OR "case study" OR "case studies") (Topic) and Infectious Diseases or Forestry or Water Resources or Genetics Heredity or Mathematical Computational Biology or Archaeology or Biochemistry Molecular Biology or Biotechnology Applied Microbiology or Chemistry or Critical Care Medicine or Emergency Medicine or Imaging Science Photographic Technology or Instruments Instrumentation or Mechanics or Medical Ethics or Neurosciences Neurology or Oceanography or Parasitology or Physics or Polymer Science or Food Science Technology or Meteorology Atmospheric Sciences or Pharmacology Pharmacy or Plant Sciences or Zoology or Agriculture or Geriatrics Gerontology or Veterinary Sciences or Surgery or Mathematics or Nutrition Dietetics or Geology or Immunology or Obstetrics Gynecology or Gastroenterology Hepatology (Exclude – Research Areas) and English (Languages) and ENGLAND or USA or UNITED KINGDOM or AUSTRALIA or CANADA or SCOTLAND or SWEDEN or NETHERLANDS or GERMANY or ITALY or NEW ZEALAND or NORWAY or DENMARK or FRANCE or NORTH IRELAND or SPAIN or BELGIUM or IRELAND or FINLAND or GREECE or UK or AUSTRIA or or JAPAN or PORTUGAL or SWITZERLAND or WALES (Exclude – Countries/Regions)

Notwithstanding the precision of the search strings and the automatic removal of duplicate references by EndNote (n=34), the retrieved literature must always be manually assessed for relevance. Of the 120 unique references retrieved, only 27 were retained for reviewing. Although there is no associated data, to ensure FAIR reporting of the process, Box 1 under Source Data lists all excluded references by type of misfit (e.g. language, country, thematic/method), with a few being inaccessible or previously undiscovered duplicates. The largest group of exclusions (n=66) was due to thematic or

methodological mismatches, their focus being on public/social renting, general housing or renting policies, homeownership while others employed quantitative methods or were tenure-blind in their discussion. However, some of these references were set aside for a better understanding of the policy context.

Manual searches

Best practice (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009; Carroll *et al.*, 2011; Cooke *et al.*, 2012; Erasmus *et al.*, 2014; Evans & Benefield, 2001) advocates for enhancing the systematically retrieved sample by incorporating manual searches in key journals, seeking peer recommendations, and reviewing the reference lists of the identified publications.

As the 27 references were dispersed across a wide range of journals, with none featuring more than twice, specific journals were selected for further manual searches using the broad keywords rent* and housing. These were: *Housing Studies* and the *International Journal of Housing Policy* for their international focus on housing; *Geoforum* and *Urban Studies* for their international albeit broader substantive focus; and *Habitat International* for its emphasis on low-income countries. *Google Scholar* was also used. Searches were conducted between January 12 and 16, 2023. As a result, 35 additional references were incorporated, bringing the total to 62. Peer recommendations produced no additions to the sample, which reinforces confidence in the relevance of the sample.

The apparently unusual fact that systematic searches returned 27 relevant references compared to the 35 returned by manual searches reflects a series of decisions that I have strategically taken to align the scope of the review with the available resources as well as the different searching options offered by databases (sophisticated Boolean combinations) vs journals (simple words). They refer to: my consideration of only two databases, which is a relatively rare approach in systematic reviewing and the tightening of the results via the three searching strings as opposed to the broad keywords used in the manual searches in journals. Have I used similarly broad keywords in database searches, the large number of overall returns would have made this project unfeasible while it would have discovered a larger set of relevant references. There is therefore a trade-off between broad and narrow database searches and the particular combination between databases and journal searches, which must be negotiated separately for each project.

Based on previous work (Soaita, 2018a; Soaita, 2018b; Soaita *et al.*, 2019a; Soaita *et al.*, 2019b; Soaita *et al.*, 2020; Soaita *et al.*, 2023; Soaita *et al.*, 2022), it was considered that a sample of 62 publications is sufficiently large to provide both theoretical and geographical nuance while remaining manageable within the project's time and resource constraints.

Further additions

During the analysis phase, authors will retain the flexibility to add and review new references if they are deemed particularly relevant, especially by checking the reference lists of the retrieved publications. Given the very fragmented geographical distribution of the retrieved literature, the decision was made to focus the analysis on three key regions: Western Africa and the Indian subcontinent, which were relatively well-represented, and Eastern Europe, which is highly relevant to the AFFECTIVE-PRS project's empirical case study of Romania. As a result, 15 additional publications were incorporated based on reference checks and peer recommendations. Consequently, the final sample of retrieved literature comprises 77 publications.

Summary and mapping

Table 2 summarises the process, showing the steps, the action, the number of references at the end of each action, and explanatory notes. A detailed PRISMA checklist and a flow diagram can be consulted in Soaita (2024) (https://zenodo.org/records/12794284).

Figure 2 displays the geographical distribution of the 77 publications. It addresses the first research question about the geographical scope of academic knowledge concerning private tenants' and landlords' renting experiences and interaction in the Majority World. The figure reveals several key points: many countries remained unrepresented in the sample,

Table 2. Summary of the process.

Steps	Action	No.	Explanatory notes
S1	Preliminary steps		Setting and piloting the parameters of the systematic searches (e.g. choice of databases, searching fields, type of reference, discipline, publishing timeline, geography).
S2	Retrieved	154	Systematic searched in SCOPUS and Web of Science (January 10, 2023). References exported in an EndNote database.
S3	Unique references	120	EndNote automatic removal of 34 duplicates.
S4	Manual check for relevance (in titles, abstracts and full text)	27	93 references excluded due to: language misfit (n=1), inaccessibility (n=6), unrecognised duplicates (n=7), country misfit (n=13) and thematic or methodological misfit (n=66).
S5	Boosting the sample with manual searches	62	35 new references were added following searches conducted between January 17 and 20, 2023. (Housing Studies, International Journal of Housing Policy, Geoforum, Habitat International, Urban Studies), and Google Scholar.
S6	Reviewing the reference lists of selected retrieved publications	77	15 references were added after the decision was made to focus the analysis on the regions of Eastern Europe, Western Africa and the Indian sub-continent.

Note: * The final samples at stage S4 and S5 were refined during stage S6, differing slightly from that reported in in Soaita (2023) (https://zenodo.org/records/7566096).

a possible outcome of the exclusive use of English keywords. Of the 29 represented countries: 16 countries are included by only one publication each; eight countries have between 2 and 5 papers; and only four countries have more than 5 papers. These observations underscore the need for further research into the renting arrangements and experiences in the Majority World but also the usefulness of a systematic review of multilingual resources. While English remains the most spoken language in the world, particularly so in published scholarship, inclusion of Mandarin, Hindu, Spanish, Bengali and

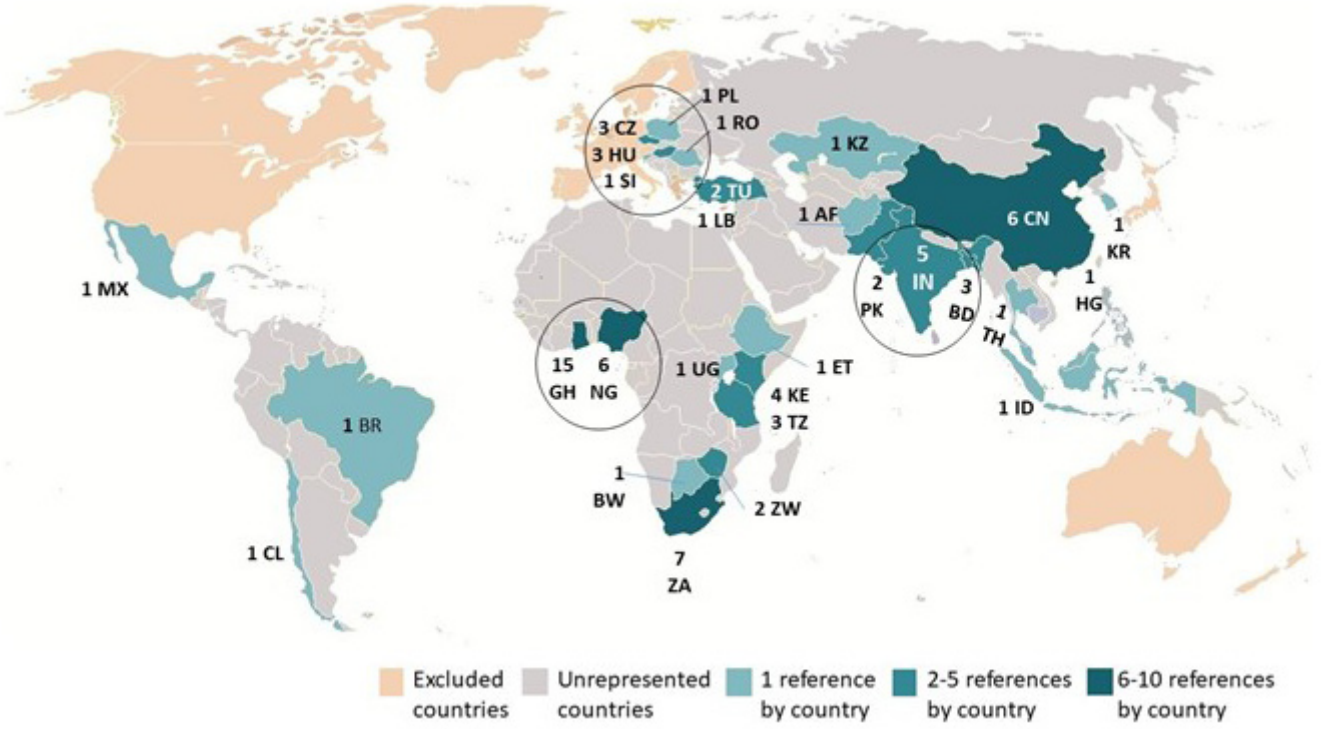

Figure 2. The geographical distribution of the final sample of publications.

Box 1. Excluded references by category of misfit

Language misfit (n=1)

1. Pérez, M., and Palma, C. (2021). "From foreigners to urban citizens: autoconstruction and migration in the Santiago Metropolitan Area." *Estudios Atacamenos*, 67, 1–21.

Not accessible (n=6)

2. Adianto, J., Gabe, R. T., and Sihombing, A. (2022). "Houses with permeable walls: a case study from Kampong Kwitang, Central Jakarta." *International Journal of Design in Society*, 16(2), 1–18.
3. Bocutoğlu, E., and Ertürk, Z. (2006). "Supply and demand analysis in the housing market: a case study in Turkey as a developing country", *Management, Quality and Economics in Building*. CRC Press, pp. 1566–1572.
4. Brezar, V. (2012). "The future of urban dwelling design." *International Journal for Housing Science and Its Applications*, 36(2), 89–98.
5. Kamruzzaman, M. (2012). *Housing for the urban poor through informal providers, Dhaka, Bangladesh*.
6. Kayila, J. O. (2019). "Improving urban settlements for the poor: case studies of Dandora and Chaani projects in Kenya", *Reaching the Urban Poor: Project Implementation in Developing Countries*. Taylor and Francis, pp. 145–162.
7. Lee-Smith, D. (2018). "Squatter landlords in Nairobi: a case study of Korogocho", *Housing Africa'S Urban Poor: Volume 2*. Taylor and Francis, pp. 175–188.

Unrecognised duplicates (n=7)

8. Akhtar, A. S., and Rashid, A. (2021). "Dispossession and the militarised developer state: financialisation and class power on the agrarian-urban frontier of Islamabad, Pakistan." *Third World Quarterly*, 42(8), 1866–1884.
9. Govender, V., and Loggia, C. (2021). "Adaptive reuse strategies in Durban inner city using hybrid mapping tools" *Urban Book Series*. Springer Science and Business Media Deutschland GmbH, pp. 219–250.
10. Govindasamy, A. R. (2010). "Indians and rural displacement: exclusion from region building in Malaysia." *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 18(1), 90–104.

11. Jackson, A., and Archer, C. D. (2022). "Factors influencing Jamaican householders' housing choice." *International Journal of Housing Markets and Analysis*, 15(5), 1053–1071.
12. Kotyk, L. (2020). "Governing without governed and governors: an attempt to establish a non-hierarchical organizational repertoire1." *Partecipazione e Conflitto*, 13(3), 1308–1323.
13. McKay, T., Fakudze, N., and Gunter, A. (2022). "The middle remains missing: class exclusion from the urban rental market in suburban Johannesburg." *Acta Academica*, 54(1), 113–133.
14. Yung, B., and Lee, F. P. (2014). "'Equal right to housing' in Hong Kong housing policy: perspectives from disadvantaged groups." *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 29(4), 563–582.

Country misfit (n=13)

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Russian language capabilities would increase the number of publications to be reviewed and, depending on the review's guiding question, might enrich or just validate its findings.

The publishing timeline of the 77 references retained for review reveals that the majority were published after 2008, accounting for 70% of the total (n=54). In addition to these 77 publications, some papers were retained to provide broader context on housing policies in the Majority World, including two systematic reviews of rental tenure (Gilbert, 2016; Rakodi, 1995).[4] Although there is no associated data, to ensure the reviewing approach is FAIR, Box 2 under Source Data categorises all included references by search method (i.e. systematic, manual and additional).

[4] 2 Africa; 1 Argentina; 1 Asia; 1 Bangladesh; 8 China; 1 Eastern Europe; 5 Ghana; 3 Global South; 2 Hong Kong; 1 Hungary; 1 Indonesia; 6 India; 2 Kenya; 1 Latin America; 1 Mexico; 2 Malaysia; 3 Nigeria; 1 Pakistan; 1 South Africa; 2 South Korea; 7 Turkey; 1 Taiwan; 2 Tanzania; and 4 Theory.

Box 2. All included references

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Conclusion

This methodological protocol has outlined the rigorous methodology employed to identify the relevant publications for review, while adapting to the project's limited time and human resources. The protocol also provides a foundation for other scholars to scrutinise, replicate, or adjust this approach for their own studies. It details the preliminary decisions that defined the review's scope; the operationalisation of Boolean strings for systematic searches; the calibration of parameters through thorough piloting; and the retrieval of the final sample of publications. Additionally, it offers a step-by-step summary of the process and geographical mapping of the results. Findings, including coding, text extraction and data analysis will be presented in a separate paper.

This protocol aimed to enhance the AFFECTIVE-PRS reviewing approach by making it FAIR—that is Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable for other academic users, albeit and regrettably only for those privileged whose affiliated institutions offer entry beyond the pay-wall of academic journals and databases and who more often than not belong to the Minority World. The fact that Minority World's institutions increasingly finance open access publications and that more academic journals allow publication of pre-prints is encouraging and should be hastened but access to database searching remains exclusive to pay-walls. From this point of view, Open Research Europe is an important development. Nonetheless, in the current academic institutional landscape conducting a systematic review mostly remains a privilege of the Minority World.

Source data

Although there is no data associated with this methodological protocol, Box 1 and Box 2 list all references in order to ensuring transparency and accessibility of the review process according to the FAIR principles. Box 1 lists the 93 excluded references categorised by type of misfit, while Box 2 provides details of the 77 references retained for review, organised by search method (systematic, manual, and additional).

Data availability

No data are associated with this article.

Extended Data

Zenodo: *Systematic Review: PRISMA Checklist and Flow Diagram*. University of Bucharest. Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12794284) (Soaita, (2024)).

- PRISMA2024_checklist_sections.doc
- PRISMA_flowchart.docx

Data are available under the terms of the Creative Commons Zero "No rights reserved" data waiver (CC0 4.0 Public domain dedication).

Acknowledgements

My deepest thanks go to Stewart Cowe for patient proof reading and Egs, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=5688632 for sharing the world map, which the author further processed into Figure 1 and Figure 2. I also thank Konstantin A Kholodilin and Steve Rolfe for taking the challenge of open peer reviewing, which is a very novel approach in academic publishing, posing a completely different set of ethical considerations than its traditional blind counterpart.

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Open Peer Review

Current Peer Review Status: ✔ ✔ ✔ ? ✔

Version 2

Reviewer Report 20 January 2025

https://doi.org/10.21956/openreseurope.20054.r48831

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✔ **Efa Tadesse Debele**
Samara University, Semera, Afar, Ethiopia

The article is fascinating. If the author included some articles from low-income countries or Africa like Private Rental Housing Market in Ethiopia, which was published by Heliyon, the overall article standard and scientific soundness would be critical. The article conveys very important scientific ideas and the potential to be replicated.

Major Points
Strengths:
- **Focus:** The article addresses urgent and troubling issues in the private renting sector.
- **Methodology:** Methodological protocols for rental housing research are thoroughly investigated.
- **Relevance:** Emphasis on tenants' and landlords' experiences and interactions.
- **Methodological Rigor:** Employed meticulous methodological approaches.
- **Scientific Soundness:** The article maintains a high standard and conveys important scientific ideas.

Criticism:
- **Scope Limitation:** The article could have included more information on the private rental housing market in low-income countries in Africa, where the housing market's institutionalization is in danger.

Minor Points
- **Notability:** The author’s decision to open the methodology for scrutinization, replication, and adjustment depending on the needs and purposes of researchers in the area is commendable.
- **Replication Potential:** The article has the potential to be replicated due to its comprehensive methodological approach.

Overall, the article is a robust and well-constructed article, though it would benefit from a broader geographic focus. Great work in highlighting its strengths while suggesting areas for improvement!

Are the rationale for, and objectives of, the Systematic Review clearly stated?
Yes

Are sufficient details of the methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?
Yes

Is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?
Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results presented in the review?
Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Social Problems, Socioeconomic, Political economy, Urban Sociology, Housing, Urban development, Gender development, Social dynamics and other aspects of Society.

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Reviewer Report 06 January 2025

https://doi.org/10.21956/openreseurope.20054.r48823

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?

Edward Yiu
The University of Auckland, Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

This article presents the development of a Critical Interpretative Synthesis (CIS) as a methodological framework for retrieving relevant literature from various databases, exemplified by qualitative studies on private rental housing in the Majority World. It makes a contribution by advancing a Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable (FAIR) approach to literature search. It does not contain any statistical analysis, and thus the question on statistical analysis in the peer review form is irrelevant. It is noted that Version 1 of the manuscript has been reviewed by three scholars, and the author has addressed most of their feedback. This review report pertains to the revised version 2 of the manuscript. I found the author's responses to the reviewers' comments satisfactory, and the manuscript is well-written.
I offer the following suggestions for further improvement:

1. **Explanation of Less Common Keywords**: Providing remarks or legends to clarify the rationale behind the selection of less common keywords (e.g., *hmo*, *rooming*, *hous*) in the SCOPUS and Web of Science Boolean strings would enhance transparency and help readers better understand these decisions.
2. **Comparison Table of Search Results**: Including a table that compares search results

across SCOPUS, Web of Science, and manual searches would be beneficial. This table could detail:

- The total number of references retrieved from each source.
- Duplicated references identified across databases.
- Misfit references, along with reasons for their exclusion.
  Such a table would effectively visualize the impacts and contributions of different databases and search strategies.

These additions would improve the manuscript's clarity and utility for other researchers replicating or adapting the approach.

Are the rationale for, and objectives of, the Systematic Review clearly stated?
Yes

Are sufficient details of the methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?
Yes

Is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?
No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results presented in the review?
Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Real Estate Economics, Urban Studies

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard, however I have significant reservations, as outlined above.

Reviewer Report 10 October 2024

https://doi.org/10.21956/openreseurope.20054.r44812

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Konstantin A Kholodilin
DIW Berlin, Berlin, Germany

I am fully satisfied with the revision.

Are the rationale for, and objectives of, the Systematic Review clearly stated?
Yes

Are sufficient details of the methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?
Yes

Is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?
Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results presented in the review?
Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Housing market; governmental regulations; economic history; business cycle analysis.

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Version 1

Reviewer Report 01 October 2024

https://doi.org/10.21956/openreseurope.19705.r43559

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Danielle Jane Kerrigan
Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada

Echoing the other two reviewers, the choice of limiting the review to English language journal articles should be discussed and justified.

Further discussion of how the 'manual searches' and 'further additions' differed would be appreciated specifically regarding peer recommendations.

Overall, this systematic review is high quality and makes important contributions.

Are the rationale for, and objectives of, the Systematic Review clearly stated?
Yes

Are sufficient details of the methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?
Yes

Is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results presented in the review?
Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: private rental social relations, landlords and tenants, qualitative methodologies

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Author Response 01 Oct 2024

Adriana Mihaela Soaita

Dear Dr Danielle Jane Kerrigan Thank you for offering your time and valued expertise for peer reviewing in the Open Access Europe's approach as well as for finding my contribution to be of high quality. Following the previous comments that I have already received, I added in version 2 of this paper the following. In response to the exclusive use of English, the following text was added:

- **Under "Preliminary decisions":** (1) "… the limited resources of this AFFECTIVE-PRS' work package of one-person/four-months…"; (2) Language: As a common practice (Garnham and Rolfe 2019; Lee et al. 2015; Rolfe et al. 2023; Soaita et al. 2020), searches were exclusive to publications written in English (for an exceptional multi-language review of policy documents see Kholodilin 2020). Given that the type of reference was restricted to academic publications as a proxy for quality, excluding other languages than English is not particularly problematic as it was shown that non-native English scholars prefer to publish in English for higher international visibility and greater potential for citations (e.g. Di Bitetti and Ferreras 2017).
- **Under "Summary", in explaining Figure 2**: (3) …many countries remained unrepresented in the sample, a possible outcome of the exclusive use of English keywords. (4) These observations underscore the need for further research into the renting arrangements and experiences in the Majority World but also the usefulness of a systematic review of multilingual resources. While English remains the most spoken language in the world, particularly so in published scholarship, inclusion of Mandarin, Hindu, Spanish, Bengali and Russian language capabilities would increase the number of publications to be reviewed and, depending on the review's guiding question, might enrich or validate its findings.

In response to the fact that the systematic searches returned fewer references than the manual ones, I added the following explanatory text:

- **Under "Piloting the keywords"**: The keywords for String 1 (see Table 1) were piloted separately in SCOPUS on January 9, 2023 in order to monitor the size of hits returned. For instance, a search for tenant* AND landlord* (i.e. publications that contains both words, either in the singular or in the plural, in their title, abstract and keywords) returned 1,578 hits, an unmanageable amount for the resources of the project (for more details see Soaita 2023).

- **Under "Manual searches"**: The apparently unusual fact that systematic searches returned 27 relevant references compared to the 35 returned by manual searches reflects a series of decisions that I have strategically taken to align the scope of the review with the available resources as well as the different searching options offered by databases (sophisticated Boolean combinations) vs journals (simple words). They refer to: my consideration of only two databases, which is a relatively rare approach in systematic reviewing and the tightening of the results via the three searching strings as opposed to the broad keywords used in the manual searches in journals. Had I used similarly broad keywords in database searches, the large number of overall returns would have made this project unfeasible while it would have discovered a larger set of relevant references. There is therefore a trade-off between broad and narrow database searches and the particular combination between databases and journal searches, which must be negotiated separately for each project.

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Report 04 September 2024

https://doi.org/10.21956/openreseurope.19705.r43560

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Steve Rolfe
University of Stirling, Stirling, Scotland, UK

This note provides a valuable guide to literature searching for a systematic review. I'm sure it will be useful for researchers conducting such reviews, particularly in related fields.

I would suggest that there are a couple of issues which the author should address in order to strengthen the article further.

Firstly, I thought it was interesting that the systematic application of Boolean search strings to academic databases actually produced fewer relevant items than the 'manual search' approach of examining specific journals and employing Google Scholar. I would suggest that the author should provide at least some comment on this outcome and the potential implications for search strategy.

Secondly, as the previous reviewer has already noted, I think some further discussion of the exclusion of studies in languages other than English is necessary, particularly given the focus on Majority World countries.

Finally, on page 3 there is a reference to 'less developed' countries and on page 5 a reference to the 'developed world'. I would recommend against using this language, especially as most of the paper refers to Majority/Minority World. If it is necessary to explain these terms, a wording related to income levels would be preferable to more/less developed.

Are the rationale for, and objectives of, the Systematic Review clearly stated?
Yes

Are sufficient details of the methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?
Yes

Is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?
Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results presented in the review?
Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Social policy, housing, evaluation and review methodology.

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Author Response 08 Sep 2024

Adriana Mihaela Soaita

Dear Dr Rolfe S Thank you for offering your time and valued expertise for peer reviewing in the Open Access Europe's approach as well as for finding my paper useful for helping researchers to conduct their literature reviews. Following your comments, I added: **In response to the fact that the systematic searches returned fewer references than the manual ones, I added the following explanatory text**:

- **Under "Piloting the keywords"**: The keywords for String 1 (see Table 1) were piloted separately in SCOPUS on January 9, 2023 in order to monitor the size of hits returned. For instance, a search for tenant* AND landlord* (i.e. publications that contains both words, either in the singular or in the plural, in their title, abstract and keywords) returned 1,578 hits, an unmanageable amount for the resources of the project (for more details see Soaita 2023).
- **Under "Manual searches"**: The apparently unusual fact that systematic searches returned 27 relevant references compared to the 35 returned by manual searches reflects a series of decisions that I have strategically taken to align the scope of the review with the available resources as well as the different searching options offered by databases (sophisticated Boolean combinations) vs journals (simple words). They refer to: my consideration of only two databases, which is a relatively rare approach in systematic reviewing and the tightening of the results via the three searching strings as opposed to the broad keywords used in the manual searches in journals. Had I used similarly broad keywords in database searches, the large number of

overall returns would have made this project unfeasible while it would have discovered a larger set of relevant references. There is therefore a trade-off between broad and narrow database searches and the particular combination between databases and journal searches, which must be negotiated separately for each project.

In response to the exclusive use of English, the following text was added:

- **Under "Preliminary decisions":** (1) "… the limited resources of this AFFECTIVE-PRS' work package of one-person/four-months…"; (2) Language: As a common practice (Garnham and Rolfe 2019; Lee et al. 2015; Rolfe et al. 2023; Soaita et al. 2020), searches were exclusive to publications written in English (for an exceptional multi-language review of policy documents see Kholodilin 2020). Given that the type of reference was restricted to academic publications as a proxy for quality, excluding other languages than English is not particularly problematic as it was shown that non-native English scholars prefer to publish in English for higher international visibility and greater potential for citations (e.g. Di Bitetti and Ferreras 2017).
- **Under "Summary", in explaining Figure 2**: (3) …many countries remained unrepresented in the sample, a possible outcome of the exclusive use of English keywords. (4) These observations underscore the need for further research into the renting arrangements and experiences in the Majority World but also the usefulness of a systematic review of multilingual resources. While English remains the most spoken language in the world, particularly so in published scholarship, inclusion of Mandarin, Hindu, Spanish, Bengali and Russian language capabilities would increase the number of publications to be reviewed and, depending on the review's guiding question, might enrich or just validate its findings.

To explain the terms Majority/Minority World the following text was introduced (also, all references to 'developed' states were replaced):

- …an expression devised by Alam (2008) to refer to a political-economic geography by what it has (the greatest majority of the global population), rather than by what it lacks (economic development), thus challenging the discursive political hegemony of its complement, the Minority World (see also Simone and Fauzan 2013)

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Report 03 September 2024

https://doi.org/10.21956/openreseurope.19705.r43558

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?

Konstantin A Kholodilin
DIW Berlin, Berlin, Germany

I find that this note is a useful guide to a systematic literature search. It should help the researchers to conduct their literature reviews.

Although the purpose of this note is purely technical, still it would be very interesting and useful for the readers, if the author could explain in a few words what "Affective Economies" is.

A concise explanation of the FAIR approach is necessary.

If I correctly understand the FAIR approach, the references must be easy to find. However, my experience with SCOPUS and Web of Science databases shows me that their use is not very easy and may require paying a fee which can be an insurmountable obstacle in particular for the researchers from the Global South. I hope that I am mistaken. But if it is true, what are the ways to overcome this challenge.

Is exclusion of studies written in other languages than English is fruitful? It can lead to information losses, which are especially relevant when the countries beyond the Majority World are the focus of your study.

Are the rationale for, and objectives of, the Systematic Review clearly stated?
Yes

Are sufficient details of the methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?
Yes

Is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?
Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results presented in the review?
Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: economics, housing, history

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard, however I have significant reservations, as outlined above.

Author Response 08 Sep 2024

Adriana Mihaela Soaita

Dear Dr Kholodilin KA Thank you for offering your time and valued expertise for peer reviewing in the Open Access Europe's approach as well as for finding my paper useful for helping researchers to conduct their literature reviews. Following your comments, I added:
A brief explanation for the term "Affective economies" was given in the second paragraph of the introduction:

- "As the project is centred on the notion of affective economies, a brief theoretical

explanation is warranted. The concept was authored by Sarah Ahmed (2004) and has since attracted a small but growing subfield of studies. Starting from the widely agreed statement that "economies are social and material, as well as psychic" (p.121), Ahmed conceptualises emotions as being affective investments in social norms (not just psychological dispositions) that is collective affects which construct collective bodies, e.g. the nation, the racialized skin, the poor, the undeserving, the refugee or, as I suggest, certain bodies of tenants or landlords. The concept helps us see the economies of private renting as a zone imbricated with collective rather than individual emotions, which are shared between some people and opposed, rejected or unrecognized by other people. It can also help organise the growing but still cluttered focus on emotion in housing scholarship."

The following text was added as a concise explanation of the FAIR:

- **In the "Introduction":** …references FAIR—that is Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable—for other academic users albeit and regrettably only for those privileged whose affiliated institutions offer entry beyond the pay-wall of academic journals and databases and who more often than not belong to the Minority World.
- **In the "Conclusion":** This protocol aimed to enhance the AFFECTIVE-PRS reviewing approach by making it FAIR—that is Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable for other academic users, albeit and regrettably only for those privileged whose affiliated institutions offer entry beyond the pay-wall of academic journals and databases and who more often than not belong to the Minority World. The fact that Minority World's institutions increasingly finance open access publications and that more academic journals allow publication of pre-prints is encouraging and should be hastened but access to database searching remains exclusive to pay-walls. From this point of view, Open Research Europe is an important development. Nonetheless, in the current academic institutional landscape, conducting a systematic review mostly remains a privilege of the Minority World.

In response to the exclusive use of English, the following text was added:

- **Under "Preliminary decisions":** (1) "… the limited resources of this AFFECTIVE-PRS' work package of one-person/four-months…"; (2) Language: As a common practice (Garnham and Rolfe 2019; Lee et al. 2015; Rolfe et al. 2023; Soaita et al. 2020), searches were exclusive to publications written in English (for an exceptional multi-language review of policy documents see Kholodilin 2020). Given that the type of reference was restricted to academic publications as a proxy for quality, excluding other languages than English is not particularly problematic as it was shown that non-native English scholars prefer to publish in English for higher international visibility and greater potential for citations (e.g. Di Bitetti and Ferreras 2017).
- **Under "Summary", in explaining Figure 2**: (3) …many countries remained unrepresented in the sample, a possible outcome of the exclusive use of English keywords. (4) These observations underscore the need for further research into the renting arrangements and experiences in the Majority World but also the usefulness of a systematic review of multilingual resources. While English remains the most spoken language in the world, particularly so in published scholarship, inclusion of Mandarin, Hindu, Spanish, Bengali and Russian language capabilities would increase the number of publications to be reviewed and, depending on the review's guiding question, might enrich or validate its findings.

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.