

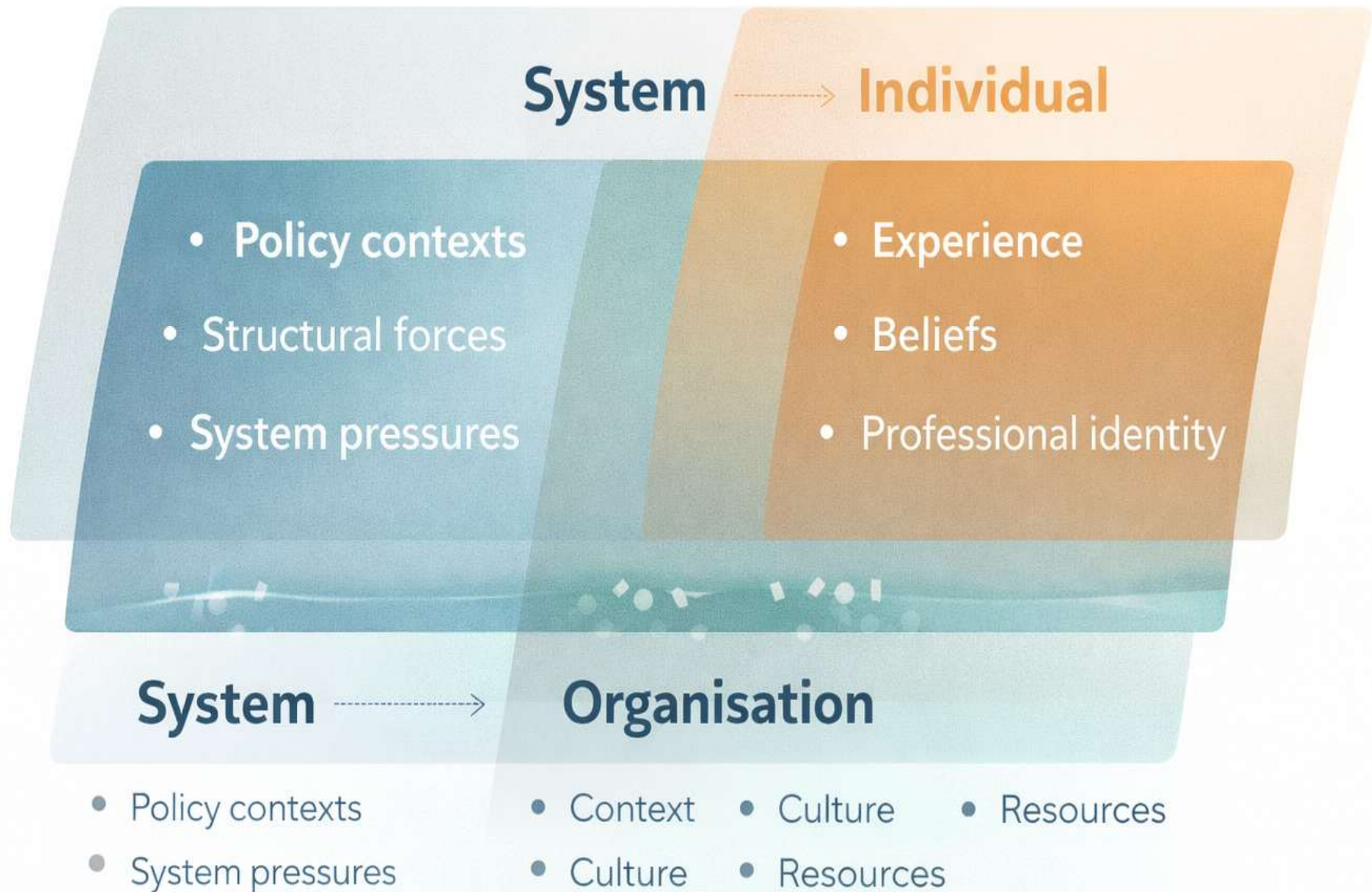
AI-Assisted Research Methods in Action:

**Insights from a Rural and Coastal
AHP Workforce Study &
Allied Health Professions
Workforce Research Partnership
(WRaP)**

Dr Sophie Willis, Dr Louise Howe

Dr Aparna Ramachandran

Layered Narratives



The Analytic Challenge



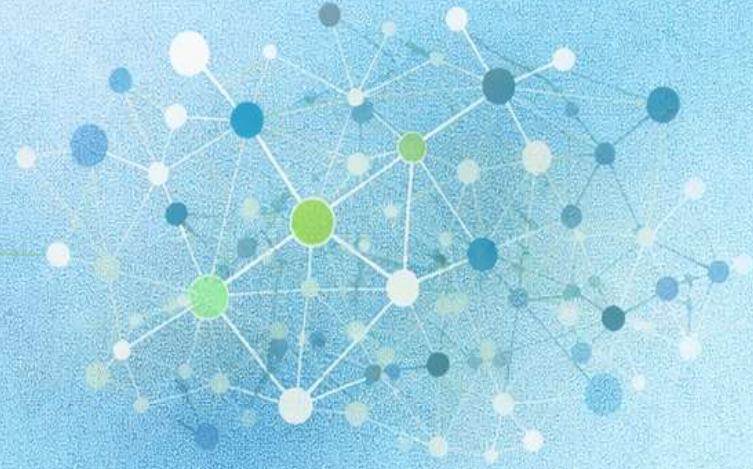
- **Complexity at scale**
- **Cross-cutting patterns**
- **Stakeholder expectations**

Why We Considered Augmentation



Straining manual analysis

- ✓ Large-scale, multi-group themes
- ✓ Limited coherence



Growing complexity

- ✓ Pattern explocation
- ✓ Analytic checking

Clear Boundaries from the Outset

AI would:

- ✓ support pattern identification across large datasets.
- ✓ assist with analytic consistency
- ✓ help us test emerging interpretations

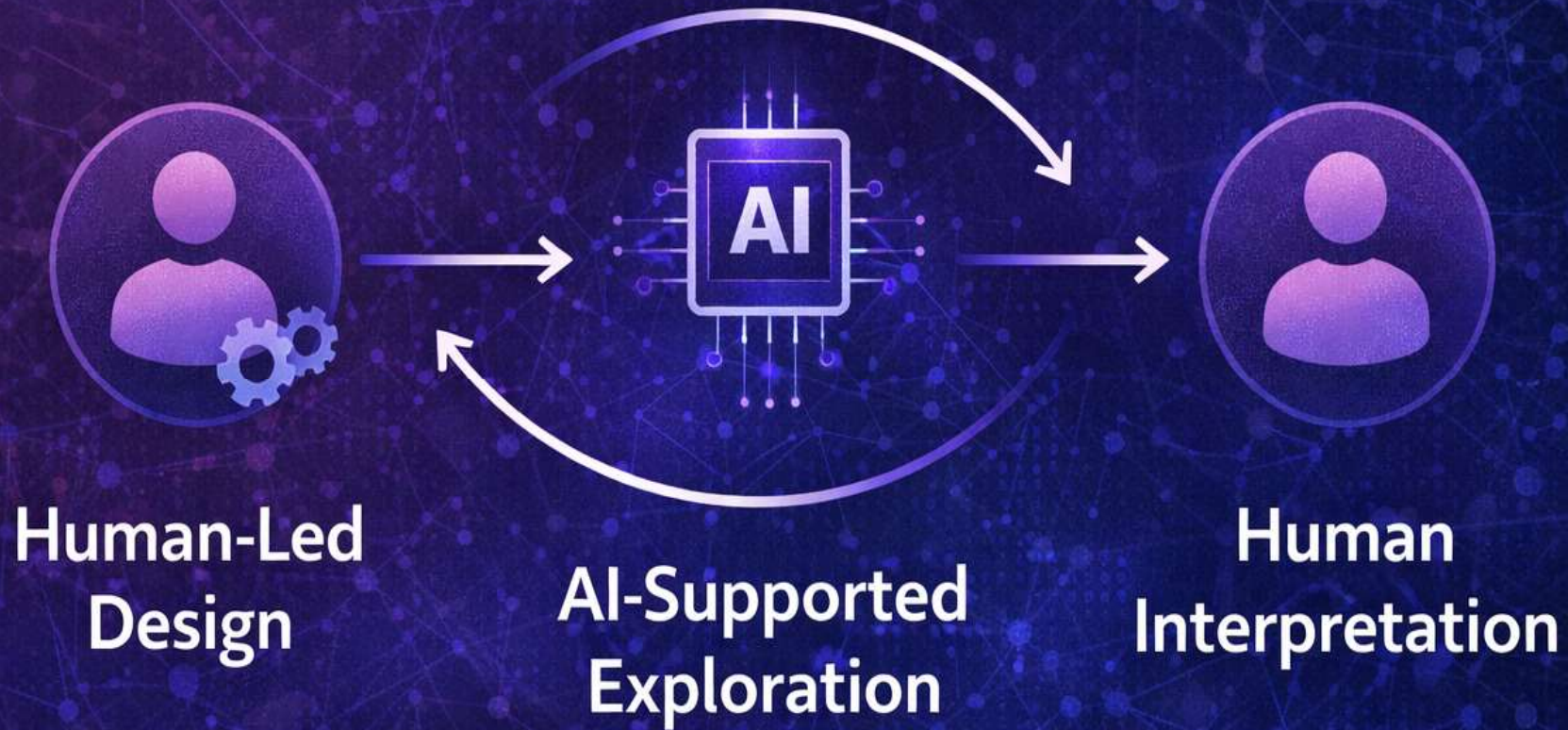


AI would not:

- ✗ generate themes independently
- ✗ determine analytic conclusions
- ✗ produce findings
- ✗ or influence policy recommendations

Interpretation remained entirely human-led.

Overall Workflow



Interpretation remained entirely human-led.

Data Preparation



✓ Deciding segmentation

✓ Marking context

✓ **Preserving** meaning

✓ Crossing granularity

An Iterative Approach

Human Analysis



- ✓ Identify themes
- ✓ Refine interpretations
- ✓ Test emerging ideas

AI Assistance



- ✓ Pattern exploration
- ✓ Contradictions & gaps
- ✓ New insights

Analysing Evidence



Human Analysis

- ✓ Identify themes
- ✓ Refine interpretations
- ✓ Test emerging ideas



AI-Supported Exploration

- ✓ Semantic exploration
- ✓ Pattern identification

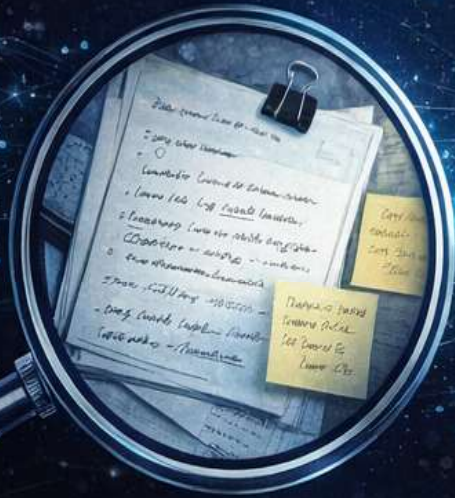
Pattern Exploration



- ✓ Scanning for commonalities
- ✓ Exploring differences
- ✓ Retracing threads

MICRO-MACRO INSIGHT SYNTHESIS

MICRO ANALYSIS



MACRO ANALYSIS



MICRO-MACRO INSIGHT SYNTHESIS

- Individual Narratives • Organizational Pressures • Professional Identities
- Structural Constraints • Policy Contexts

INTELLECTUAL RESPONSIBILITY

- We maintained **interpretive authority**.
- We exercised **professional judgment**.
- We subjected AI to critical interrogation.



**AI SUPPORTS PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT —
IT DOES NOT REPLACE IT.**

ETHICS & EPISTEMIC RISK

AI introduces questions of authority, bias, and representation.



Epistemic Risks

AI outputs can appear **authoritative** simply because they are computationally generated.



Transparency

We maintained a **transparent** process and **reflexive dialogue** in analysis.



Governance

Data was **anonymized** and handled within governance frameworks.



Interpretive Ethics

We focused on accurately representing participants.

RESPONSIBILITY INTENSIFIES AS AI IS INTRODUCED.

LESSONS LEARNED

METHODOLOGICAL CLARITY COMES FIRST

AI can amplify confusion without a clearly articulated analytic framework.



EXPERTISE IS NON-NEGOTIABLE

Strong qualitative grounding is essential to interpret AI-assisted outputs responsibly.



ITERATION IS CENTRAL

We moved repeatedly between AI-supported outputs and raw data to refine interpretations.

THE PROCESS WAS DISCIPLINED, NOT ACCELERATED.

UNDERSTANDING LIMITS

✓ APPROPRIATE FOR

- Large, multi-layered datasets
- System-facing, applied research contexts

! LESS APPROPRIATE FOR

- Deeply narrative or phenomenological studies
- Need for interpretive subtlety and immersion
- Relational engagement at the core

**AI-assisted qualitative analysis is not inherently superior.
It is context-dependent.**

Methodological choice must always be anchored in the research question, epistemological positioning, and analytic purpose.

If those are clear, technology can be used judiciously. If they are not, it should not be introduced.

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Thank you for listening