

Re-Thinking Research on Typologizing Homelessness

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Abstract

In homelessness research and policymaking, it seems to be axiomatic that single adults have three temporal kinds of homelessness: chronic, episodic and transitional. Despite this typology's research and policy influence, its theorization and the empirical research supporting that theorizing have important problems. In this paper, we analyze serious flaws with both of these. We then suggest a different way to think about typologizing temporality and report findings using that approach which suggest a radically different typology. We conclude by observing that, contrary to much argument, no one typology is necessarily accurate, in the sense of being "true", and that we should develop typologies based on theory and the uses to which the typology is put.