

KAIA MACLAREN MPP DEFENSE

Lived Experience and the Symbolic Work of Houselessness Policy



Abstract

Unsheltered houselessness in large US cities has become a top policy issue. Largely missing from this conversation are the voices of the houseless themselves. This study seeks to address this gap in our knowledge about what houseless individuals think of the public services provided to them, and by extension, the policies that are designed to serve their needs. Most of the literature that exists is either ethnographic or policy-focused. The purpose of this study is to combine these two lenses to gain an understanding of the meanings of provided homeless services and their efficacy for those who use them. I add an understanding both of the efficacy of the programs and the workings of symbolic power and how it is transmitted and reinforced – or in some cases challenged – by the institutions with which they interact. In this way, I bring the sociological understandings of social and symbolic power to bear on the policy space.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1:30PM
BEXELL 414 & ZOOM

Committee Members: Allison Hurst (Chair), Mark Edwards, Scott Akins

