Leave No One Behind: Disaggregating Homelessness in Support of SDG 11

By Professor Dennis Culhane
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Typology and Measurement

EGM Data Disaggregation
28 June 2016
Why a Common Understanding of Homelessness?

→ Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
  - 11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.

→ Disaggregation is essential for meaningful dialogue: not just amongst researchers, but also between policy makers and practitioners

→ Without a common ‘language’ and reference point to frame exchanges across different countries and world regions, we risk ‘talking past each’ about different sorts of phenomena

→ Homelessness is distinct from slums and not likely to be impacted by slum improvement; yet is not subject of broad advocacy and policy focus
The Conceptual Model

Our core concept focuses on ‘severe housing deprivation’: "Lacking access to minimally adequate housing"

Three ‘domains of home’ within which to evaluate housing adequacy:

1. **The security domain**: security of tenure, exclusive occupation and affordability

2. **The physical domain**: sufficient quality of accommodation (durability, amenities, protection from weather, etc.) and quantity of accommodation (not severely overcrowded)

3. **The social domain**: ability to enjoy social relations, privacy, and safety
The Proposed Typology of Global Homelessness

Covers three broad categories of people who may be considered homeless:

1. People without accommodation
2. People living in temporary or crisis accommodation
3. People living in severely inadequate and/or insecure accommodation
## Proposed Typology of Global Homelessness

(IGH focus marked in **green**)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 People without accommodation</td>
<td>1 (a) People sleeping in the streets or in other open spaces (such as parks, railway embankments, under bridges, on river banks, in forests, etc).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 (b) People sleeping in public roofed spaces or buildings not intended for human habitation (such as bus and railway stations, taxi ranks, derelict buildings, public buildings, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 (c) People sleeping in their cars, rickshaws, open fishing boats and other forms of transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 (d) 'Pavement dwellers' - individuals or households who live on the street in a regular spot, usually with some form of makeshift cover.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Proposed Typology of Global Homelessness

(IGH focus marked in green)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>People living in temporary or crisis accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 (a) People staying in night shelters (where occupants have to renegotiate their accommodation nightly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 (b) People living in homeless hostels and other types of temporary accommodation for homeless people (where occupants have a designated bed or room)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 (c) Women and children living in refuges for those fleeing domestic violence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 (d) People living in camps provided for 'internally displaced people' i.e. those who have fled their homes as a result of armed conflict, natural or human-made disasters, human rights violations, development projects, etc. but have not crossed international borders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 (e) People living in reception centres / temporary accommodation for asylum seekers, refugees and other immigrants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Proposed Typology of Global Homelessness

*(IGH focus marked in *green*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 (People living in severely inadequate and insecure accommodation)</td>
<td>3 (a) People sharing with friends and relatives on a temporary basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 (b) People living under threat of violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 (c) People living in cheap hotels, bed and breakfasts and similar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 (d) People squatting in conventional housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 (e) People living in conventional housing that is unfit for human habitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 (f) People living in trailers, caravans and tents</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 (g) People living in extremely overcrowded conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 (h) People living in non-conventional buildings and temporary structures, including those living in slums/informal settlements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Approach

- The distinction between poor housing v homelessness rests on the severity of deprivation in the three key ‘domains of home’

- But is also embedded in varying economic, cultural and institutional contexts

- We therefore do not think it helpful (or possible) to try to impose a single definition of homelessness, applied uniformly across the globe

- What is more important (and feasible) is to develop a Typology of Global Homelessness as a ‘reference frame’ – an aid to transparency - that national and local definitions can be set in relation to

- *But* a clear and consistent definition, that has global resonance and application, is needed to guide IGH’s work....
The IGH Proposed Definition

 Proposal: IGH should focus on Category 1 and 2 (a-c) of the proposed Typology of Global Homelessness, i.e. people without any accommodation and those living in temporary or emergency accommodation specifically provided for homeless people.

 Three main reasons

 - Higher level of commonality concerning “literal homelessness” - street homelessness and shelters of various kinds - across the globe.
 - Street homelessness is particularly neglected; international and local strategies to tackle ‘homelessness’ often focussed on more numerous and better organised groups (shack or slum dwellers).
 - Many other organisations and networks focus on slum dwellers, refugees and internally displaced persons.

 SDG-oriented homelessness activities should fill an existing gap.
Three Common Enumeration Methods

1) Registry Based Estimates
2) Point In Time (PIT) Counts
3) Retrospective Reports from Household Surveys
Registry Based Estimates:

• Advantages:
  • Unduplicated, longitudinal counts
  • Any time period can be measured
  • Captures service use dynamics
  • Useful for typologies

Examples: US HMIS, Denmark, Netherlands, Canada
Registry Based Estimates:

• Disadvantages:
  
  • Shelter-based **do not track unsheltered** periods or persons
  
  • Incomplete bed coverage
  
  • Requires long-term commitment of resources and training
The Point In Time (PIT) Counts (Rossi, 1987):

- Enumerate people in shelters – relatively straightforward

- Estimate unsheltered through visual count

- Example: “HOPE Count” in NYC and S. Korea Street Surveys
NYC divides the city into 2 kinds of areas based on the expectation of finding people:

- High Probability: 1+ People (2+ in Manhattan)
- Low Probability: 0 People (0-1 in Manhattan)

Cities usually sample low probability areas, and survey all high probability areas; some designate “medium” probability also.

**FINAL SAMPLE:**
- 1,549 Total Areas
- 1,103 High Probability
- 445 Low Probability
Retrospective Reports in Household Surveys

- Toro’s work in US and Europe
- Recent UK-based surveys
- FEANTSA and European Observatory efforts with EuroStat
- US American Housing Survey (just recent movers)

*To be covered in “measurement” breakout session*
Two Less Common Methods:

1) Service based methodology (Burt, 1988) – also a corrective for PIT counts

2) Hotspot counts

3) “Capture and Recapture” – Chile
Some ways forward:

- Unlikely to have a global count any time soon – need for training and dissemination of best practices, especially PIT and Household Surveys

- National Statistical Agencies not likely to lead

- Trends may be discernible in PIT enumerations focused on “hot spot areas” (train stations, parks, roadsides)

- Need to grown enumeration efforts, alongside other knowledge development and policy and practice strategies