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#### **Authors**

Nosrati, Shervin  
Lee, Tara Nicole  
Abboud, Nicole

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# Addressing homelessness in LA County by combat or cure: Examining the effect of conceptual metaphor on reasoning

**Shervin Nosrati**

California State University Northridge, Northridge, California, United States

**Tara Lee**

California State University, Northridge, Northridge, California, United States

**Nicole Abboud**

California State University Northridge, Northridge, California, United States

## Abstract

The way we think about social issues may be significantly affected by the language used to speak about them. Thibodeau & Boroditsky (2011) found that significant differences in reasoning were noted after exposure to even a single metaphor. In four experiments, we suggest similar findings through testing the effects of metaphorical framings of the crisis of homelessness in Los Angeles County where either 1) HOMELESSNESS IS AN ILLNESS, 2) HOMELESSNESS IS A HOSTILE ENCOUNTER or 3) a non-metaphorical framing. Participants read a brief passage or were given visual stimuli (a novel approach) designed to evoke one of the frames or the control and then responded to a series of questions on how to best address the issue. Current analysis of the data in the ongoing survey suggests that use of conceptual metaphor leads participants to recruit frame-semantic knowledge of the source domain to draw inferences that lead to differences in reasoning.