

Synthesis 1

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Refugee Camps/Homeless Camps/Homeless Shelters



- (1) Personal/Institutional Personal/Global Objective/Global Private/Personal (Homeless Shelter vs Refugee Camp). Explore the similarities and differences between a homeless shelter and a refugee camp. 1) Explore the differences for 2) everyone via 3) Imagery and text

The project explores what it is like to live in refugee camps, homeless camps and homeless shelters through facts, storytelling via videos. This is an interactive display. The subjects are outlined in bold. Visitors will click on specific words and images and text about the subject will be displayed.

The goal of the project is to explore how dire the situation of the homeless and the refugee often is. Anyone can, at any time, become homeless or become a refugee.

Tent Camps

Homeless tent camps and refugee tent camps are often ad-hoc camps set up without the help of an NGO like the Red Cross. Government organizations and NGOs attempt to manage refugees by setting up official tent camps. Similarly, government organizations and NGOs attempt to manage the homeless by removing them from tent camps and, when possible, convincing them to go to shelters.



Refugee Tent Camps

In the past few years, tent camps for refugees have sprung up on America's borders.

A butter yellow sun rose over the crowded tent camp across the river from Texas and a thick heat baked the rotten debris below, a mixture of broken toys, human waste and uneaten food swarming with flies.

Clothing and sheets hung from trees and dried stiff after being drenched and muddied in a hurricane the week before.

As residents emerged from the zipper-holes of their canvas homes that morning in August, some trudged with buckets in hand toward tanks of water for bathing and washing dishes. Others assembled in front of wash basins with arms full of children's underwear and pajamas. They waited for the first warm meal of the day to arrive, though it often made them sick. (Dickerson, 2021)

Homeless Tent Camps

Homeless tent camps have proliferated in the United States over the past few years, only to become more visible during the pandemic.

Phoenix's unshaded tent city is called "The Zone" by its inhabitants. Some of them call it "Trumpville," an echo of Depression-era shantytowns named "Hoovervilles" after President Herbert Hoover, who was accused of not doing enough to keep people sheltered.

The Zone's hundreds of residents are packed together - often not wearing masks, with many living just in sleeping bags or on a tarp. Without running water or plumbing, simple pandemic health protocols, like hand-washing, are difficult. Although the city has posted portable toilets and washing stations along the perimeter, feces and garbage litter the property. In some spots, the stench is overwhelming. **(In pandemic America's tent cities, a grim future grows darker.2020)**

Are Refugees Homeless?

Many people do not consider refugees in government camps to be homeless. This may be because refugee camps are similar to permanent supportive housing for the homeless. It may also be because refugees leave home for different reasons than the homeless do. Refugees often live in camps for years before becoming legitimate immigrants, if ever.

Often refugees are unable to leave managed camps that operate more like prisons than homes.

Border violence is a global problem. Scenes of border patrol agents on horseback whipping people from Haiti trying to cross the Rio Grande into Texas are part of the same migration machinery that puts babies on boats in the Aegean Sea and sequesters people for years in Australia's offshore detention facilities.

For those who survive these journeys, and make it to a place where they can seek protection, they are met with barbed wire, surveillance, and segregation. (Molnar, 2018)

Why are People Refugees?

People are refugees because of persecution, war, sexual orientation, hunger, and climate change. (Ruecker, 2017)

Why are people homeless?

Homelessness results from a complex set of circumstances that require people to choose between food, shelter, and other basic needs. Only a concerted effort to ensure jobs that pay a living wage, adequate support for those who cannot work, affordable

housing, and access to health care will bring an end to homelessness. Poverty, lack of work opportunities, lack of public assistance, housing, health care debt, domestic violence, mental illness, and addiction (*Why are people homeless?*2007)

Why don't the homeless have jobs?

Unlike refugees, the homeless are usually legal citizens and, unlike refugees, can find work although it can be difficult to maintain steady employment in a place like New York where one must leave a temporary shelter at 7 AM and return at 8 PM. Overnight shifts are out of the question. People often question why homeless people don't get jobs when there are multiple obstacles to employment.

They don't have addresses, and most employers require addresses. This is a lose-lose situation: They can't get a place to live until they get a job, but can't get a job until they get a place to live. Many employers won't consider unemployed job applicants (not even those with homes). (Shay, 2020)

Homeless people may lack reliable phones, be unable to stay clean and neat, have gaps in their employment history, have bad credit scores, lack transportation, have a criminal record, have a disability, an addiction, or they may be employed but not make enough to pay rent. (Shay, 2020)

Homeless Shelters

Advocates for the homeless prefer permanent supportive housing. Not only does it get people off of the street but it's less expensive than temporary shelters.

Permanent supportive housing is an intervention that combines affordable housing assistance with voluntary support services to address the needs of chronically homeless people. The services are designed to build independent living and tenancy skills and connect people with community-based health care, treatment and employment services. (*Permanent supportive housing*. 2021)

The quality of homeless shelters ranges from shelter to shelter and city to city. Like refugee camps, they can often feel like prisons.

For discipline, The Refuge utilized a point system. A staff member could issue a point to any resident for any rule infraction or disobedience. Once issued, the point could not be reversed, unless formally erased by the issuing staff member. Residents were terminated from the shelter after receiving three points. (Molnar, 2018)

Can Americans be Refugees in America? (Internally Displaced Persons)

Interestingly, the refugee label has also been used for people in the United States who, because of fears of violence or persecution, have had to flee from one area to another within the country. This flight sometimes involved great distances. From the opening of the Civil War, for instance, many people fled slave-holding

states and territories west sought refuge hundreds of miles away in Kansas, a newly established free state. (PETRUCCI & HEAD, 2006)

An internally displaced person, or IDP, is someone who has been forced to flee their home but never cross an international border. (*What is a refugee? definition and meaning | USA for UNHCR.*)

The term “refugee” for American citizens who are displaced is controversial, so we can use the term ‘migrant’. Historical examples of “migrant camps” in the United States include Hoovervilles and the Dust Bowl camps on the West Coast

Hoovervilles were built during the great depression and were named after the President at the time. “Hoovervilles were typically grim and unsanitary. They posed health risks to their inhabitants as well as to those living nearby, but there was little that local governments or health agencies could do.” (*Hoovervilles.* 2018)

Dust Bowl camps were built by migrants who fled to the West when their farms and homes were the victims of a man-made disaster caused by poor farming practices. The attitude towards dust bowl migrants should be familiar to anyone who lives near a homeless camp.

As many of the migrants languished in poverty in camps on the outskirts of California communities, some locals warned that the newcomers would spread disease and crime. They advocated harsh measures to keep migrants out or send them back home. (*How the dust bowl made Americans refugees in their own country.* 2019)

More recently, many migrants left New Orleans after Katrina. The term “refugee” was banned by the media in reference to those who left New Orleans because of the stigma. There is little doubt that they were, in fact, homeless and that the cause was, indirectly, climate change.

What do you call people who have been driven from their homes with only the clothes on their backs, unsure if they will ever be able to return, and forced to build a new life in a strange place? News organizations are struggling for the right word. (*Calling Katrina survivors ‘refugees’ stirs debate.*)

Climate Change

There can be little doubt that like many refugees, many of the homeless are without a home due to climate change.

Events like floods, heatwaves, hurricanes, wildfires, and drought are becoming more frequent and/or intense. And in the worst case scenario, natural disasters like these can level homes and even entire communities. And in the worst case scenario, natural

disasters like these can level homes and even entire communities. And they're doing it at the same time that America is experiencing an affordable-housing crisis. (*Homelessness and the climate crisis*. 2019)

Summary

The causes of homelessness and being a refugee may not always overlap, but the consequences of being without a home are the same. A lack of employment/money, sanitation, health care, and a safe place to live. As if this writing, hundreds of migrants are trapped on the Belarus border under unimaginable circumstances. The crisis in Syria started with farmers protesting conditions and the lack caused by climate change. Over the next few years, many individuals will be displaced by extreme climate issues including drought, extreme storms, and fires. These are all issues that the international community needs to struggle with.

References

Dickerson, C. (2021, Oct. 29,). Inside the refugee camp on america's doorstep. *New York*

Times <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/23/us/mexico-migrant-camp-asylum.html>

Hundreds of thousands of refugees have arrived at the US border over the past few years. Many have set up camp on the Rio Grande where they survive under horrific conditions.

Hoovervilles. (2018). HISTORY.

<https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression/hoovervilles>

Hoovervilles were depression era shantytowns that housed the unemployed & destitute.

Molnar, P. (2018). *Inside new refugee camp like a 'prison': Greece and other countries prioritize surveillance over human rights*. *The Conversation*.

<https://theconversation.com/inside-new-refugee-camp-like-a-prison-greece-and-other-countries-prioritize-surveillance-over-human-rights-168354>

Petra Molnar is a "lawyer and a researcher specializing in how various surveillance technologies impact people on the move" who met with many immigrants and shares observations of the technology on her visit to the Samos refugee camp in Greece.

Permanent supportive housing. (2021). National Alliance to End Homelessness.

<https://endhomelessness.org/ending-homelessness/solutions/permanent-supportive-housing/>

What Is Permanent Supportive Housing? Permanent supportive housing is an

intervention that combines affordable housing assistance with voluntary support services to address the needs of chronically homeless people. The services are designed to build independent living and tenancy skills and [...]

Shay, K. (2020). *Why don't homeless people just get jobs?* Soapboxie.

<https://soapboxie.com/social-issues/why-homeless-people-dont-just-get-a-job>

While many homeless people are actually employed, There are many obstacles that interfere with the ability of the homeless to get a job, ranging from the ability to stay clean to mental illness and substance abuse.

What is a refugee? definition and meaning | USA for UNHCR.

<https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/>

Refugees leave their home countries due to many factors, including persecution, famine, and war.

Why are people homeless? (2007). ().

<https://www.nationalhomeless.org/publications/facts/Why.pdf>

The Coalition for the homeless makes the case that "a growing shortage of affordable rental housing and a simultaneous increase in poverty." are the driving forces between homelessness in the United States.