

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 which 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?

1. Religious/National/Social/Racial/Political Persecution
2. War
3. Gender/Sexual Orientation
4. Hunger
5. 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. (*Why are people homeless?2007*)

- 1) Poverty
 - 2) Eroding Work Opportunities
 - 3) Decline in Public Assistance
 - 4) Housing
 - 5) Lack of Affordable Health Care
 - 6) Domestic Violence
 - 7) Mental Illness
 - 8) Addiction Disorders
- (*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)

1. Many homeless people don't have reliable phones, and this becomes an obstacle to employment. Even if they have a phone, they might not always have a way to charge it.
2. It's hard to stay clean and neat when you're homeless, and most employers require grooming.
3. Many have gaps in their employment history, which is something that employers are suspicious about.
4. They have lousy credit scores. Many employers do credit screenings on potential employees, and when you're homeless, your credit score will suffer.
5. They don't have cars, and many jobs require one. Expensive transportation can be a huge obstacle to getting to work.
6. They have criminal records as a result of their homelessness (and sometimes, their only crime was not having a place to sleep).
7. Many are disabled. Many people with mental or physical disabilities end up on the street.
8. Addiction might play a part. Addictions prevent them from looking for work and from getting hired. Many employers assume homeless people are addicts.
9. Many have jobs already. Despite having a job, people still can still lose their homes or be unable to afford housing. (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)

Homeless shelters, unlike tent camps, are inside. Their quality ranges from shelter to shelter and city to city. Like refugee camps, homeless shelters can also operate like prisons.

In an effort to run efficiently and, presumably, fairly, a bureaucratic structure was employed at The Refuge, which encompassed many rules and illustrated a clear demarcation between staff and residents. 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)

American Refugee Camps (Internally Displaced Persons)

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 in this case we will 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.

Whenever possible, Hoovervilles were built near rivers for the convenience of a water source. For example, in New York City, encampments sprang up along the Hudson and East rivers. Some Hoovervilles were dotted with vegetable gardens, and some individual shacks contained furniture a family had managed to carry away upon eviction from their former home. However, 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. Hooverville residents had nowhere else to go, and public sympathy, for the most part, was with them. Even when Hoovervilles were raided by order of parks departments or other authorities, the men who carried out the raids often expressed regret and guilt for their actions. More often than not, Hoovervilles were tolerated. (*Hoovervilles.* 2018)

Dust Bowl camps were built by migrants who fled West when their farms and homes were the victims of a man-made disaster caused by poor farming practices.

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.

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.)

The term "refugee" was banned in reference to those who left New Orleans because of the stigma.

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)

Climate Change

Lastly, 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)

References

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[depression/hoovervilles](https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression/hoovervilles)

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

In pandemic america's tent cities, a grim future grows darker. (2020, Dec. 23). *US News*

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"A slow-motion disaster is unfolding in many large U.S. cities as homeless numbers, already growing in recent years, spike during the global pandemic."

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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.

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<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/reasons-why-people-become-refugees/>

This article details the five reasons that people become refugees.

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>

Have you wondered why people living on the street don't just get jobs and stop being homeless? Learn about homeless employment statistics, the barriers to employment they must overcome, and share your solutions in the comments.

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

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

A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality or political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so.

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

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

A detailed report on the causes of homelessness in the United States makes the case that "two trends are largely responsible for the rise in homelessness over the past 20-25 years: a growing shortage of affordable rental housing and a simultaneous increase in poverty."