

Jacky Li

11/14/21

ENG1121

Word Count: 1674

U2 Annotated Bibliography

Being a native New Yorker, I am no stranger to seeing the disparities in the way that people live in this city. On one block there can be array of options found, from restaurants to coffee shops, or organic supermarkets. Simultaneously there are people living below the poverty line. The hierarchy that exists in the way people live, might be encouraged, under a capitalistic society. In the colder months, this issue is more prominent because there would be train carts of homeless people sleeping and sheltering from the cold weather. The main stigma centered around homeless people are that they are lazy and/or they are on drugs. While these presumptions may ring true to some, there are also many circumstances that can lead to how one ends up on the streets. With the recent events of the coronavirus pandemic, it brings to light that life as we know it can be completely changed in unexpected circumstances. People who lost their jobs and were not able to pay rent or take care of their families will only be able to survive with the aid of government resources. I am interested in learning about the things that are being done to target this issue. Through my research I hope to gain more insight on something that I have witnessed so much but never got the chance to go deeper on the topic. There are debates on how much the government should assist homeless people. Some people want the government to provide more than what they already are, and some believe the money can be used towards other things. I am curious about how much lawmakers care to tackle this problem because if they themselves live in a wealthy neighborhood I am not sure how much they can empathize with the average citizen.

World Unreported. "New York's Homeless Epidemic | Unreported World." YouTube, 6 June 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i06ag1MwTLc>.

While there are resources that homeless people can go to for help, these services do not provide quality assistance. There is a lack of compassion in the treatment that is available for New York City's homeless crisis, even though there is over three billion dollars put into them. There is a sense that homelessness has now become an industry. People are profiting off the suffering of others. In the video we go to the shelters that one would go if they were seeking help. More than three thousand people sleep on the streets of New York City. There are at least sixty thousand people, including twenty-one thousand who are children, in the shelters. We witness the conditions of how these shelters operate. One of the shelters was feeding the people moldy food and when a man complained he was kicked out of the program. There are mothers with children who are homeless, and they just need the right guidance to get back on their feet. The homeless population also consists of many people of color, especially black people. How can these government provided services be managed so poorly? This video was very eye-opening on the experiences that homeless people in New York City go through. There needs to

be a proper evaluation on who oversees these shelters and programs. The responsibility of these shelters should be to rehabilitate people and provide them the help they need to get them to where they need to be. There is also a responsibility for New Yorkers to speak up because this is how our tax dollars are being used. Additionally, there is more work needed to de-stigmatize what it means to be homeless. Especially during these times where we are living during a pandemic. Many jobs such as performers, who are gig workers, are not able to have a stable income. There need more solutions to end this cycle rather than exacerbate it. This video provided firsthand insight on how they were on the grounds communicating and interacting with the people in shelters.

Newman, Andy, and Nicole Hong. "New York Is Pushing Homeless People Off the Streets. Where Will They Go? - The New York Times." The New York Times - Breaking News, US News, World News and Videos, 2 Aug. 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/02/nyregion/homeless-camps-relocate.html>.

The coronavirus pandemic has increased the homeless crisis in New York City. According to the article, "Covid-19 has killed over 120 homeless people in the city and has infected more than 4,100, officials say". There were cases of homeless people taking food from people outdoor dining. The mayor organized outreach programs in hopes to get homeless people off the streets and into shelters. However, for people such as Max Goren, who have had firsthand experience with the outreach, say that they throw away peoples' belongings and make their lives miserable on the streets so that they will go to a shelter. A man said that he would rather be on the streets instead of in the shelter. Without having a proper and organized plan to target this crisis there will not be long term results. Tom Harris, who was a former police officer, created an alternative approach to dealing with the homeless. The program is called the Times Square Alliance and it consists of people who have been homeless before and formerly incarcerated people. They hand out necessities and only offer social services if asked.

After reading this article, I wonder if the government understands the issue that is at hand. They offer very idealistic solutions that sound nice in theory, but the execution is flawed. It was refreshing to learn about nonprofit organizations such as the Time Square Alliance who have a more humane way in communicating with people who are homeless. This was a news article from a reputable publication. The authors of the article have a brief bio at the end to give some background information about who they are. Additionally, they were able to interview people that were from all sides which creates gave me a better perspective on what was going on. They gave the homeless people a voice when the city officials didn't seem to. This creates an unbiased tone to the writing.

In the text it states, "But Mr. Harris was determined not to rely on the police. His view was informed by decades as an officer in Brooklyn, where he found that the most effective way to stop someone from committing robberies, for example, was to address underlying problems like addiction". Approaching this issue with empathy is better than with aggression and can have longer lasting impacts.

Szekely, Peter, and Angela Moore. "New York Grapples with Growing Presence of Homeless in Midtown Manhattan | Reuters." Reuters, Reuters, 16 June 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/the-great-reboot/new-york-grapples-with-growing-presence-homeless-midtown-manhattan-2021-06-16/>.

The city proposed the relocate homeless people into hotels due to the covid-19 pandemic. The Department of Homeless Services relocated 10,000 people from overcrowded shelters to vacant hotels that have not had business due to the coronavirus. There were mixed feelings on this decision. Some felt that this was the most ethical option because it is for the safety and well-being for people. Others were nervous about the rise in crimes as well as loitering in the neighborhood. After reading this article I gained a new perspective on what locals of the neighborhood are experiencing when the city decides to relocate a large population of homeless citizens. Although not all of them are committing crimes it is easy to blame everyone for the faults of a few. Additionally, these were only temporary stays at the hotels and after a few months there will be plans to relocate the homeless people again. Due to the concerns of some locals, there was an increase in police in the neighborhood. There are also some homeless people that are getting intoxicated and deal with mental health issues. There needs to be more money to fund services that revolve around addiction and rehabilitation. This issue requires solutions that can help these people be a part of society again.

All in all, this article was very neutral because it provided quotes from residents who were for the relocation and who were concerned. In the text it states, "Deborah Padgett, a New York University professor who has researched homelessness, opposes de Blasio's move, saying that hotels provide the privacy and dignity that homeless residents need to rebuild their lives". This quote demonstrates that the writers reached out to experts that have more insight than the average person. Therefore, it is a reliable source.

The topic that I researched on revolved around homelessness in New York City. I chose this topic because it is an issue that I have always been aware of but never had the opportunity to learn more. I felt that the government never had long lasting solutions to this issue and from my research I was correct. I found that many of the homeless people, that go to the shelters, are not treated in humane way. There needs to be ways that residents of these shelters can have more of a voice so that they do not get discriminated against. I also found that there were different organizations that were trying to help in their own ways because they can empathize with the homeless people more. The people that are working with these outreaches should be more welcoming and not be violent. Additionally, although some of the homeless people suffer from addiction and mental health problems, this does not define everyone who is homeless. The ones who do deal with these health issues should be provided with the proper care that they need so that they can be functioning members of society again. This can be done by asking people who have been in similar situations before and were able to make it out on the other side. This can operate as a mentorship program so that it creates community.

I feel that I could have narrowed down my topic even more. Additionally, the covid-19 pandemic has impacted my topic a lot and there was many new information that isn't the usual. The most difficult part about this assignment for me was the process of looking for the right sources. It made me more aware about the constant information that is put out there and where it is coming from. There were multiple narratives that could have been written depending on who the writer was. I tried to remain as unbiased as possible using resources that presented multiple perspectives. After this assignment, I am now more aware of the information that is constantly being put out and where it is coming from.