

Haitian Migrants in San Diego and their Housing Strategies

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Immigration Policy: Recent History

- The Biden Administration has tried to overturn a 2019 “Remain in Mexico” Policy. As a result the U.S. has seen immigrants crossing the Southern border at an all time high.
- Since the Fall of 2021, Border Patrol Agents have been attacking Haitian Migrants, especially in Del Rio, Texas as they cross the border.
- **After a long journey walking, these migrants are faced with new challenges upon entering the US, such as not having legal papers for work or housing.**



Research Question: What housing solutions do Haitian migrants develop in San Diego?

Hypothesis: Haitians in San Diego will live near each other and create communities. These clusters will be in predominately low income neighborhoods near available resources (government organizations, shelters, charities, food pantries).



Research Design:

- I used a combination of individual and group interviews. as well as first-hand visual observations of urban areas.
- I used a hypothesis-test method
- Locations of Research:
 - The Haitian Bridge Alliance
 - Catholic Charities
 - Employee Rights Center
 - Fairmont Community Church
 - Haitian Migrants houses
 - Caribbean Pleasure Restaurant in San Diego
 - Tijuana-San Ysidro Border in Mexico



Literature Review

- Norris-Tirrell did research on Haitian and Hispanic immigrants in Miami and Las Vegas and found that local government offices need to better prepared to serve immigrant populations.
- Light and Bhachu examined the relationship between immigration and entrepreneurship and found that an existing resource network would make it easier for immigrants to find housing, jobs, protection, and companionship.
- Tesfai discuss the gaps in literature surrounding specifically Black immigrants and housing.

Findings: Experience Founding Housing in San Diego

- Newly arriving migrants depend on help from friends and family who are already in San Diego. They often share an apartment with several other families, with one family per room, including the living room.
- Catholic Charities is an important organization that helps with temporary shelter, welfare application, and immigration papers, but this aid only last a few months
- After the assistance runs out, migrants jump from shelter to shelter or living room to living room. Government agencies don't help with finding housing
- **Susette** lives in a living room in City Heights. She and her husband have a newborn baby.
 - “I was approved for a place but then they couldn't give me a reason for why they didn't give me the apartment....Until today he never called me to come pick up my keys.”
- Conclusion: Migrants express more concern about housing than about any other need



Findings: Travel Pattern

- Most Haitians in San Diego came from the rural parts of Haiti and first fled to Brazil & Chile where they lived and worked for several years.
- To get to the US, migrants travelled through Brazil, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Columbia, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, and more. Many migrants lost their lives on the journey.

“The locals would steal from us and rape our women. Sometimes we knew when they were coming, and tried to get ready for them, but we couldn't do much.” - Jackson

