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Ru'a Hussein Al-Abweh

# **What Makes People Feel at Home?**

## **Reframing Home and Homelessness Through Stories from Seattle's Tent City 3**

Ru'a Hussein Al-Abweh

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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Committee:

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**Abstract**

What Makes People Feel at Home?  
Reframing Home and Homelessness Through Stories from Seattle's Tent City 3

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Dr. Christopher D. Campbell  
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This is an exploration of "home" in pursuit of a better understanding of "homelessness". While the literature on home and homelessness reveals various perspectives, social integration was considered most relevant for this research. "Houselessness" and "homelessness" are distinct concepts. The houseless are characterized as being "unsettled", occupying spaces not considered rightfully theirs, and being "othered". The meaning of "home" is questioned and scrutinized through personal stories from Tent City 3, a houseless encampment in Seattle. An interpretation of the stories revealed that (1) human connection is the core factor in a sense of home, (2) homelessness is a condition independent of housing, and (3) people can be in flux between home and homelessness. The research proposes moving from "ending homelessness" to "making people feel at home" and presents the *Home Framework*, which can serve as a guide for approaches to houselessness, planning and policy of the built environment, and manifestations of global migration.

# What Makes People Feel at

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"...homeless is ... I guess you have to define the root word "home"... homelessness is very real. But if an individual doesn't consider themselves homeless then it don't apply. It's a crooked line to draw. I mean it's so hard...Homelessness is a situation, is a struggle."

~Anonymous 4, former member of Tent City 3, February 2017

"...home, we know, is not just the place where you happen to be born. It's the place where you become yourself."

"...it's only by stepping out of your life and the world that you can see what you most deeply care about and find a home."

"And home, in the end, is of course not just the place where you sleep. It's the place where you stand."

~Pico Iyer, global author, (from his TED Talk, *Where is home?*, 2013)

"Connection is why we're here; it is what gives purpose and meaning to our lives. The power that connection holds in our lives was confirmed when the main concern about connection emerged as the fear of disconnection."

~Dr. Brené Brown, Researcher and Storyteller, Graduate College of Social Work,  
University of Houston

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You are all a part of this, and to you I am immeasurably grateful.

## **DEDICATION**

This is dedicated first and foremost to everyone I met at Tent City 3. You are the soul of this research.

I also dedicate this to anyone who has lost their home, does not feel at home, or is far away from home. You are not alone.

Finally, this is dedicated to my family –to my parents, brother, and sister first and foremost, but also to all of my aunts, uncles, cousins, and my late grandparents.

You will always be my home, no matter where life takes me.

## CHAPTER 1. Preface: A Personal Questioning of Home

In his TED talk, *Where is home?*, global author and traveler Pico Iyer talks about the confusticating and metamorphic concept of home for those who live in multiple places throughout their lives. Like 244 million<sup>1</sup> people around the world (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2016, 1), I belong to what he calls the “fifth-largest nation on Earth” –a “floating tribe” about four times the size of the populations of Canada and Australia combined (Iyer 2013). In addition to currently living outside my nation state, I am one of many third-culture-kids (TCKs)<sup>2</sup> who struggle to pinpoint exactly what home means.

After spending my childhood in Saudi Arabia, I moved back to my country of origin, Jordan, in 2006, then to Germany in 2011, back to Jordan in 2012, and most recently, to the United States (US) in 2015. As Iyer explains, for those of us who have led privileged lives as globetrotters, home is a complex question. When I moved from Amman, Jordan to Seattle, Washington in the Fall of 2015, I left behind the place I had begun to find a home in for almost a decade. Having lived abroad before, I thought that I was thoroughly prepared for this new chapter in my life. Yet just a few weeks in, I was intensely homesick. I did not realize at the time that I did not just miss “home”. I was in the process of rediscovering what home means to me.

As I adjusted to life in the US, I encountered something that was relatively unfamiliar to me – “homelessness”. Both in Seattle and other American cities, I was struck by the number of people living on the streets –particularly those who seemed to be on their own. While the lack of shelter was evident and worrisome, what broke my heart the most was the isolation, disconnect, and abandonment.

Ironically, I found myself grappling with my own understanding of home while realizing that right in front of me, there were people having struggles with home that far exceeded mine.

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<sup>1</sup> This number from 2015 is the most updated available count on international migration.

<sup>2</sup> TCKs, also referred to as “global nomads”, are people who spent the majority of their upbringing outside their parents’ country of origin and may have also spent their childhood moving from one city to another.

During my time in the US, I have missed many shades of Jordan –my family, my friends, the food, the music, the atmosphere, the memories, the familiarity, and the stability. I have also often reminisced about my childhood in Saudi Arabia and my year abroad in Germany. While on the surface, homesickness and a nostalgia for past travels appears to be completely different from “homelessness”, I couldn’t help but wonder if there were perhaps a commonality in the detachment or distance from home.

Most people would agree that “home” is more than just walls and a roof, yet they seem to underemphasize this complexity when thinking about “homelessness”. If home transcends the physical realm, then would people living outside consider themselves homeless? Recognizing my privilege and inability to claim an understanding of what it’s like to lack housing, I wanted to find out if there was more to the question of homelessness than meets the eye.

This thesis is not purely an academic pursuit, but a search for the meaning of home, a questioning of the common perceptions of homelessness, and a critique of the resulting approaches to addressing homelessness that manifest from underlying sociocultural convictions. I straddle the line between my identity in the world of urban planning and my identity as a TCK. I take a step back from both privileged identities to reflect on the role of urban planning in shaping not only the built environment, but also the lives of the people who call it home.

With this personal and academic exploration, I invite you to join me in questioning and challenging the established ideals of home and the societal assumptions about homelessness. One can choose to accept the status quo on these contentious topics, but taking this easy route is likely to result in a limited and incomplete picture of reality. And while searching for a more nuanced reality has been at times an uncomfortable and emotionally taxing endeavor, it has also been a transformative one. I hope that you will find the journey documented in these pages as worthwhile as I have.

## CHAPTER 2. Introduction: The Case of Unsettledness and Home

*What does home mean for those who are “unsettled”, occupying spaces not considered rightfully theirs, and perceived as “the other”?*

For those who spend most of their lives in the same locale, the concept of home may be simple. It may be the town one grew up in, one’s place of birth, or one’s country of origin. These geographic boundaries also mean that people may have a smaller community they associate with home, oftentimes a homogenous one. In contrast, for those who are constantly changing the place in which they live (which I refer to in this study as “unsettledness”), home is much more complex. One group for whom place of dwelling often continuously shifts is the “homeless” community, or whom I refer to in this study as the “houseless”<sup>3</sup>.

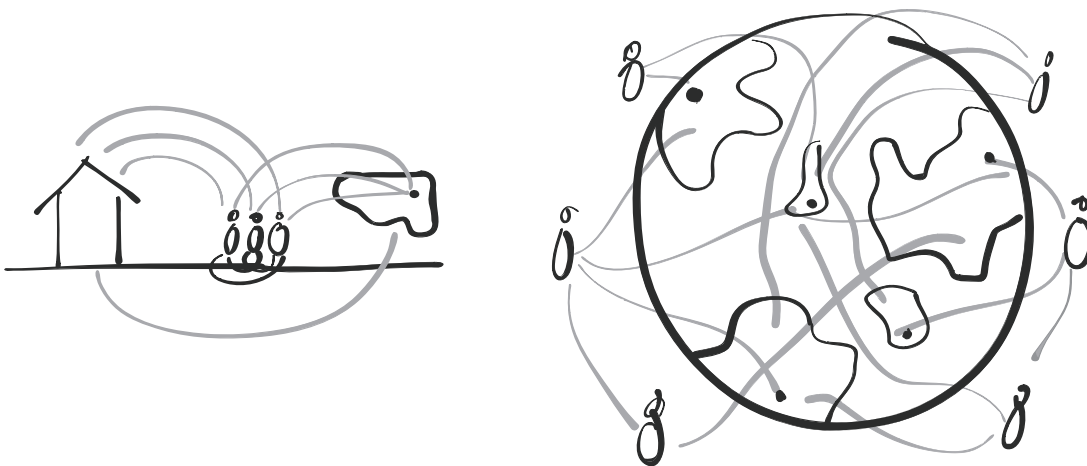
While people experiencing houselessness have very different stories and cannot be boxed into a single identity, they do share the traits of being continuously on the move, occupying spaces that are not considered rightfully theirs, and often being feared or othered. Whether moving from city to city, from one indoor shelter to another, or from one public space to another, they are “unsettled” and navigating both social and locational instability. While houselessness is found in different parts of the world, the severity of the situation in the US has compelled cities, such as Seattle, Washington, to declare states of emergency (Beekman and Broom 2015). In the past few years, houselessness in Seattle has been receiving much needed attention but is still far from being fully understood.

For the purposes of this research, I seek to gain a better understanding of houselessness as a condition of unsettledness, more often than not, out of necessity. More specifically, I focus on the houseless encampment and community, Tent City 3 (TC3), located in Seattle, Washington.

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<sup>3</sup> The decision to use this term came as a result of the literature review and will be explained in an upcoming chapter.

While TC3 and the case of houselessness is specific to Seattle, it is worth considering how houselessness as a case of unsettledness relates to national and even global patterns of movement, particularly considering the interconnectedness of economic, environmental, and social transactions worldwide. Whether because of employment, refugee crises, climate change, increased travel, rural to urban migration, or the millennial break from a traditional office job, the world is moving (literally and figuratively) more and more towards states of temporality, impermanence, and lack of ties to a single physical place (see Figure 2-1). Research is also making connections between groups of displaced people, arguing that they “include the homeless, refugees, immigrants, people fleeing domestic abuse, and those uprooted by war, conflict, and natural disasters” (Vandemark 2007, 242). According to the International Migration Report 2015, the US hosts the world’s largest number of migrants amidst a global increase in international migration (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2016, 1). Therefore, in addition to facing ongoing challenges with houselessness, the US also faces the challenge of community integration and resettlement for refugees and migrants.



**Figure 2-1: Conceptual representation of what home might be in a “settled” life (left) versus an “unsettled” life (right), the latter being increasingly common today.**

Although the focus of this study is not to gain a better understanding of international migration, the phenomenon of increased global unsettledness means that more and more people will live in multiple places during their lifetimes, whether by choice or by force. For those who are houseless, movement is a frequent occurrence and marginalization is a daily reality. Furthermore, the need for community integration is not just relevant for newcomers to the US, but also to those who already live there but are ostracized from society. While some prefer a life of travel and adventure and have less of a desire to be housed, for many of the houseless, the frequency of movement can be jarring. It also raises the question of how one reconciles “home” when a single place is rarely a constant and there is limited space (socially and spatially) for a life of dwelling in the public realm. This study looks at a paradox that the planning and design of the built environment has given little consideration to historically –the intersection of unsettledness and the meaning of home. Through personal stories from TC3, I begin to peel back the layers of “home” in pursuit of a better understanding of what it really means to be “homeless”.

# CHAPTER 3. Research Overview

## 3.1 Research Topic, Purpose, & Audience

The main purpose of this research is to question, challenge, and test current meanings of home and homelessness. The study intentionally looks at *home* through the lens of *homelessness* because of the contradictory nature of the two concepts. Through stories from Seattle’s TC3, I aim to understand and reframe the meaning of home through the lens of “homelessness”. My research explores the following questions:

1. What does home mean to people perceived and labeled as “homeless”?
2. How do TC3’s ideas of home compare to the conceptualization of home in the professional realm of urban planning and public policy?
3. Do the conceptualizations of home and homelessness in urban planning, public policy, and decision-making in general need to be rethought? If so, how?
4. What are the implications of this study for addressing:
  - a. Homelessness?
  - b. Planning, design, and policy of the built environment?
  - c. Manifestations of global migration, such as humanitarian response, community integration, and resettlement?

See Figure 3-1 for a summary of the research overview.

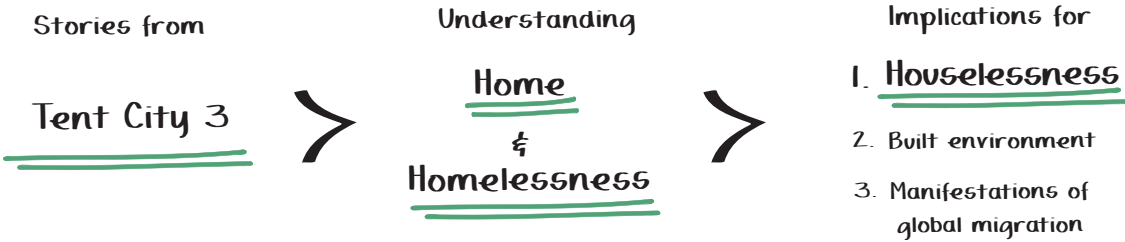


Figure 3-1: Graphic summarizing the research case study, purpose, and implications.

Through the stories from TC3 and an exploration of existing literature on home and homelessness, my research presents a different understanding of what creates a sense of home and what it means to have a sense of homelessness. Through this understanding, I question and challenge the way home and homelessness are framed in fields of the built environment, urban planning, and public policy and the underlying sociocultural values that have shaped these professions' ideas of these topics. By amplifying the voices of the houseless community, my intent is to encourage people working in the aforementioned fields to reevaluate their roles in addressing houselessness. My research also reflects on the implications of this new understanding of home on the planning, design, and policy of the built environment and on the manifestations of global migration.

In reference to the purpose of the research, the main audience is the academic and professional community in the fields of urban planning and public policy. Furthermore, anyone wanting to learn more about the topic of homelessness and houselessness may find the research of interest, particularly in the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, and the social sciences. Researchers looking into identity, belonging, equity, displacement, the right to public space, freedom of movement, social responsibility, social services, and storytelling may also find this research relevant.

For the remainder of this document, I use the term "houseless" to refer to the community of TC3 and the individuals that the majority of society refers to as "homeless". I define "houseless" as:

*Lacking an addressed, permanent residence that someone claims as rightfully theirs, whether rented or owned.*

The decision to use this term came as a result of the literature review and the stories from TC3. The reasoning for this decision are explained later in this document. The term "homeless" is reserved for a few situations. It was sometimes used in conversation with members of TC3 in order to understand their feelings and perceptions of this term. It was also used when people

self-identified as feeling homeless. Finally, “homelessness” is used when referring to a societal or public policy perspective and when quoting other researchers who used this term.

### 3.2 What the Research Does Not Attempt to Do

While there are numerous subtopics that could be addressed through a study of home and homelessness, existing ways of addressing houselessness, and the stories collected from TC3, the scope of this thesis cannot encompass them all. That being said, this thesis does not attempt to assess TC3, tent cities in general, or Seattle Housing and Resource Effort (SHARE)<sup>4</sup>. It also does not attempt to prevent, end, fight, or solve “homelessness”, prescribe a generalized reason of why people become houseless, or provide a demographic profile of those who are part of TC3 or others who are houseless. Furthermore, since the definitions of home and homeless depend on personal opinion, context, and life experiences, there is no single definition for each of these two concepts. Therefore, while the research does discuss the different factors that create a sense of home, it does not present one exclusive definition. Instead, it explores how multiple understandings of home are formed and experienced through lived and recounted narratives.

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<sup>4</sup> SHARE is the organization that manages TC3.

## CHAPTER 4. Literature Review

### 4.1 Home & Homelessness in Academia

Before discussing the stories shared by members of TC3, it is imperative to understand what researchers have already discovered and written about the intersection of home and homelessness. The literature on home and homelessness reveals the problematic nature of the word “home” and its relation to homelessness. It also spans multiple disciplines, including sociology, community psychology, urban planning, architecture, environmental psychology, gender studies, geography, and international development. Furthermore, while research on the topic emerges from different geographical regions, the US in particular has an abundance of research in this area since it has become a national concern over the years.

To begin, I present the semantics of home and homelessness, both of which are contested concepts. “Home” has been discussed in different ways and it is sometimes equated with “housing”. As shown in Table 4-1, many of the terms that emerge in the literature on home carry some implication of permanence. Even “homed” has turned what should be a fluid idea of “home” into what seems like a final state or termination. This shows that “home” may often be associated with the idea of shelter and settlement and as an end goal of a linear process.

As for “homelessness”, there are many other terms used in the literature that attempt to describe this condition or experience. Table 4-2 is a compilation of the language that has been used to discuss homelessness. Similar to the case of the semantics of “home”, homelessness has been associated with a lack of physical shelter, as is the case with “dwellingless”, “houseless”, “ill-housed”, “inadequate shelter”, “shelterless”, and other vocabulary. Once again, “unhomed” (as with “homed”) attempts to merge the complexity of “home” with an action-oriented concept. In a 1985 book called Homelessness in America, homelessness was recognized “as a national crisis of ever-increasing proportions”, with people “so desperately poor that they lack even minimal shelter”(Langdon II and Kass 1985, 305). It then goes on to say that the “extent of homelessness is a direct result of four cumulative factors: the critical

shortage of low-cost housing; deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill; unemployment; and shrinking, or sometimes simply poorly functioning, public assistance programs". The book also goes on to discuss the effects of gentrification, increasing rents, and a decrease in housing stock (Langdon II and Kass 1985, 311). Similar to the semantics, much of the focus is on housing once again. The overview of the semantics in this section of my study provides an idea of the various ways home and homelessness have been conceptualized. By starting with the semantics of home and homelessness, one begins to understand the difficulty of the question at hand.

**Table 4-1: Semantics of Home in the Literature**

Term	Sources
<i>adequate housing</i>	(Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights 1999; UNHCR 2014)
<i>adequate shelter</i>	(UNHCR 2014)
<i>homed</i>	(April R. Veness 1993; Shlay and Rossi 1992; Parsell 2012; Davies et al. 1993; A R Veness 1992; Moore 2007)
<i>housed</i>	(Nemiroff, Aubry, and Klodawsky 2011; City of Seattle 2016d; Shlay and Rossi 1992; Langdon II and Kass 1985; April R. Veness 1993; May 2000; United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, n.d.; Hyde 2005; United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 2000; Burt, Martha R.; Spellman 2007; Murray and Lester 2015; Tipple and Speak 2005; New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness 2017; City of Seattle 2016c; Saunders and Williams 1988; Kissoon 2006; Yanos Philip and Susan 2004; Iaquina 2016; Werner 2014; Mallett 2004; Culhane 1996; A R Veness 1992; Staeheli and Thompson 1997; The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness 2012; Burt 2001; Springer 2000; Henwood et al. 2013)
<i>rootedness</i>	(Hidalgo and Ndez, n.d.; Tijmes 2017; Manzo 2003; Somerville 1997; Brickell 2012; Eubanks and Gauthier 2011; Moore 2007)

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<i>sheltered</i>	(Shlay and Rossi 1992; Langdon II and Kass 1985; Gurney 1997; Foucault 1986; April R. Veness 1993; Wade 2017; May 2000; Waldron 2017; Electronic Encyclopedia 2007; Brickell 2012; Davies et al. 1993; United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 2000; Burt, Martha R.; Spellman 2007; Murray and Lester 2015; New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness 2017; City of Seattle 2016c; Saunders and Williams 1988; Werner 2014; The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness 2012; Springer 2000)
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**Table 4-2: Semantics of Homeless(ness) in the Literature**

Term	Sources
<i>dwellingless(ness)</i>	(United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 2000; Springer 2000)
<i>houseless(ness)</i>	(Springer 2000; Kellett and Moore 2003a; United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 2000; Tipple and Speak 2005; Kellett and Moore 2003b; Kissoon 2006; Kellett and Moore 2003b)
<i>ill-housed</i>	(The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty 2011; United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 2000)
<i>inadequate housing</i>	(Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights 1999; C. Robinson 2003; Ecker 2015a; Tipple and Speak 2005; Parsell 2012)
<i>inadequate shelter</i>	(Springer 2000; Kellett and Moore 2003a; The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty 2011)
<i>insecure accommodation</i>	(United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 2000; Tipple and Speak 2005; Springer 2000)
<i>rooflessness</i>	(Somerville 1992; Kellett and Moore 2003b; May 2000; Somerville 1997; Brickell 2012; United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 2000; Tipple and Speak 2005; Kellett and Moore 2003a; Kissoon 2006; Kellett and Moore 2003a; Mallett 2004; Moore 2007; Rennels and Purnell 2015)

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<i>shelterless(ness)</i>	(United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 2000; Tipple and Speak 2005; A R Veness 1992; Springer 2000)
<i>sleeping rough/rough sleeper</i>	(Parsell 2012; Springer 2000; Moore 2007; Tipple and Speak 2005; Kellett and Moore 2003b; United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 2000; Valado 2006; Kellett and Moore 2003a; Gerrard and Farrugia 2015; May 2000)
<i>substandard abode</i>	(A R Veness 1992)
<i>substandard accommodation</i>	(Dayaratne and Kellett 2008; United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 2000; Springer 2000)
<i>substandard housing</i>	(Springer 2000; Kellett and Moore 2003a; A R Veness 1992; Werner 2014; April R. Veness 1993; Kissoon 2006; Wilkins and Elliott 2010; The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty 2011; United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 2000; Tipple and Speak 2005)
<i>unhomed</i>	(A R Veness 1992)
<i>unhomeliness</i>	(Brickell 2012)
<i>unhoused</i>	(A R Veness 1992)
<i>unsheltered</i>	(City of Seattle 2016c; Shlay and Rossi 1992; Office of the Mayor-City of Seattle 2017a; The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty 2011; Ferrari, Drexler, and Skarr 2015; Davies et al. 1993; Burt, Martha R.; Spellman 2007; Murray and Lester 2015; New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness 2017; City of Seattle 2016b; Werner 2014; A R Veness 1992; The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness 2012; Seattle 2016)

In addition to the semantics, homelessness has been studied from various angles. Table 4-3 provides a list of different perspectives on homelessness found in the literature. This table shows that homelessness is often viewed as something that needs to be stopped (*how to prevent homelessness*) or exited (*transitioning out of homelessness*), implying a linear relationship between the states of “home” and “homelessness”. Other research takes a more neutral stance and attempts to understand the relationship between “home” and

“homelessness”. In addition, research on cultural understandings of home is more subjective and research on social integration often takes a psychological or psychiatric stance. In addition to being studied in association with the lack of housing, homelessness has also been addressed through the lens of cultural homelessness (military brats, missionary kids, third culture kids) (Hoersting and Jenkins 2011), nomads (May 2000), the elderly (Hoersting and Jenkins 2011), and refugees and migrants (Kissoon 2006). However, for the purposes of this research, the focus is on the literature that associates homelessness with the lack of housing.

**Table 4-3: Perspectives on Homelessness in the Literature**

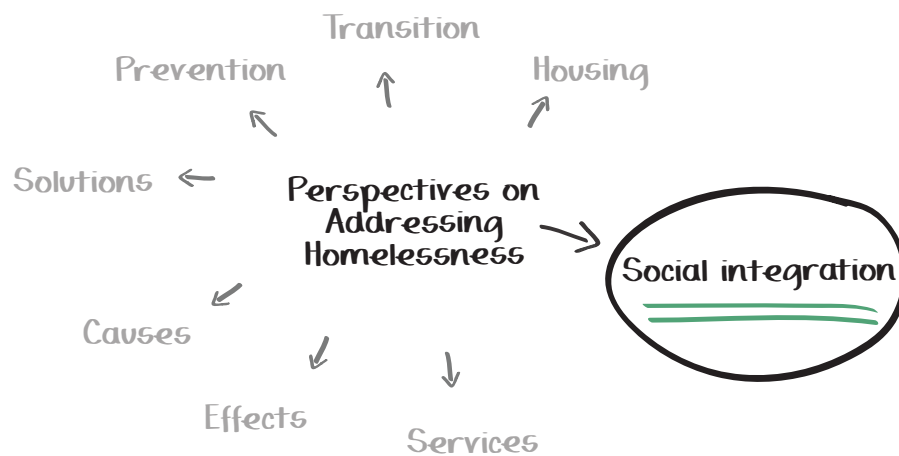
Lens of Study	Source
<i>how to prevent homelessness</i>	Wong and Hillier 2001; National Alliance to End Homelessness 2009)
<i>the causes of homelessness</i>	Philipps 2012
<i>transitioning out of homelessness</i>	Henwood et al. 2013; Hyde 2005; laquinta 2016)
<i>the relationship between home and homelessness</i>	Ecker 2015b; Parsell 2012; Kellett and Moore 2003a; April R. Veness 1993; Wardhaugh 1999
<i>cultural understandings of home</i>	Philipps 2012; Wasserman and Clair 2009
<i>social integration of the homeless</i>	Ecker 2015b; Ecker 2015a; Vandemark 2007; Sarason 1976

There are also many common intersectional themes in the literature on home and homelessness, which are listed in Table 4-4. With the addition of these themes to the literature on semantics, a more nuanced picture of home and homelessness is revealed. This provides a more realistic understanding of these two concepts and helps to unpack their many different aspects, such as gender, race, home ownership, mainstream culture identity, and childhood.

**Table 4-4: Common Intersectional Themes in Studies on Home & Homelessness**

Theme	Source
<i>gender</i>	(Nemiroff, Aubry, and Klodawsky 2011; Wardhaugh 1999; Gurney 1997)
<i>race</i>	(Ferrari, Drexler, and Skarr 2015)
<i>home ownership</i>	(The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty 2011; Kellett and Moore 2003b; Mallett 2004; Langdon II and Kass 1985; April R. Veness 1993; Tipple and Speak 2005)

<i>mainstream culture</i>	(Parsell 2012; C. Robinson 2003; Kellett and Moore 2003b; Shlay and Rossi 1992; Ground 2015; Nemiroff, Aubry, and Klodawsky 2011; April R. Veness 1993; Runnels et al. 2009; Hyde 2005; Wilkins and Elliott 2010; May 2000; Werner 2014; Murray and Lester 2015; Yanos Philip and Susan 2004; Dayaratne and Kellett 2008; United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 2000; Philipps 2012; Somerville 1992; Tipple and Speak 2005; Burt, Martha R.; Spellman 2007)
<i>identity</i>	(Wardhaugh 1999; Vandemark 2007; C. Robinson 2003; Henwood et al. 2013; Parsell 2012; Kellett and Moore 2003b; Nemiroff, Aubry, and Klodawsky 2011; Gerrard and Farrugia 2015; laquinta 2016; May 2000; Werner 2014; Ferrari, Drexler, and Skarr 2015; Eubanks and Gauthier 2011; Kellett and Moore 2003a; United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 2000; Somerville 1992; Tipple and Speak 2005; A R Veness 1992)
<i>childhood</i>	Hoersting and Jenkins 2011; C. Robinson 2003; The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty 2011; Kellett and Moore 2003a; Nemiroff, Aubry, and Klodawsky 2011; Gerrard and Farrugia 2015; Moore 2007; April R. Veness 1993; Hyde 2005; May 2000; Philipps 2012; A R Veness 1992)
<i>the elderly</i>	(The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty 2011; Kellett and Moore 2003b; Moore 2007; Langdon II and Kass 1985; Werner 2014; Ecker 2015a; A R Veness 1992)
<i>othering</i>	(Gerrard and Farrugia 2015)
<i>marginalization</i>	(Werner 2014; United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 2000; April R. Veness 1993; The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty 2011; Philipps 2012)
<i>social class</i>	(Waldron 2017)
<i>privilege</i>	(McKinney and Snedker. 2010; April R. Veness 1993).



**Figure 4-1: Graphic showing some of the perspectives for addressing homelessness in the literature and a focus on social integration for the purposes of this study.**

Of the various perspectives from which homelessness has been studied (presented in Table 4-3), the most relevant for this study is that of social integration (see Figure 4-1). Social integration may encompass any or all of the intersectional themes in Table 4-4. In terms of semantics, this lens of study lends itself to questioning a housing-focused definition of home and homelessness. Somerville describes homelessness as a “lack of social relations” (1992, 530). He also goes on to explain homelessness as an ideological construct, saying “most attempts to explain homelessness do not recognize it as ideologically constructed. Rather, they represent it as ‘fact’ and accept official or commonsense definitions. The minimal definition in terms of rooflessness tends to dominate the political debate, and rooflessness is usually explained by reference to either the ineffectiveness of housing demand or the defectiveness of housing supply” (Ibid., 531). Somerville’s understanding of homelessness challenges the semantics which focus on housing and what he describes as the dominant political debate.

In addition to a focus on social relations, other research looks into community integration and belonging in the transition from temporary to permanent shelter (Ecker 2015a; Nemiroff, Aubry, and Klodawsky 2011; Vandemark 2007). This ties into the social aspects of home, its importance in the well-being of people who experience houselessness, and the likelihood of finding housing. In his dissertation, John Ecker discusses the “psychological and social

integration of homeless and vulnerably housed individuals” (Ecker 2015a, ii). His research asks “...what facilitates or hinders an attachment to one’s community for individuals in a state of housing flux and whose housing and neighbourhood quality may be of a diminished state?” (Ecker 2015a, 3). Ecker focuses on two aspects of community integration: “(1) Psychological integration, or the sense of belonging to one’s neighbourhood; and (2) Social integration, or how an individual engages with others in their neighbourhood” (Ecker 2015b).

His research shows that “individuals with high levels of social support consistently reported high levels of both psychological and social integration. Interestingly, social support was the only factor that was strongly related to social integration, as no other variables impacted social integration in the same way”. He also found “that individuals with higher levels of integration were more likely to have the kind of housing they wanted and were generally satisfied with their housing”. Not only does Ecker argue that community integration increases the likelihood of acquiring housing, but also in finding “housing in a supportive and safe neighbourhood” (Ibid.). While the focus of my study is not on the aspect of finding housing, Ecker’s research presents evidence that social integration is a crucial component in allowing people to seek housing if lacking this form of dwelling is one aspect of homelessness they seek to change. He also discusses the gap in research, saying, “What has been less substantiated in the empirical literature is how individuals living in vulnerable housing situations experience community” (Ecker 2015a, 3).

Other research frames the question of community and homelessness from a psychiatric perspective. It argues that homelessness is a case of displacement and focuses on the “psychosocial effects of displacement that influence social and functional abilities in homeless people” (Vandemark 2007, 241). Vandemark argues, “When we lose our place in the world or our role in society, the basic sense of self and belonging is diminished. A diminished sense of self and belonging produces anxiety and depression and diminishes social and functional abilities necessary for a healthy and meaningful life” (Ibid., 242). The idea that losing one’s place in society is directly linked to a diminishing of one’s well-being implies that a disconnect from community is part of the condition of homelessness.

In Vandemark's research, homelessness is also recognized as "not simply the absence of a physical domicile; it is often and importantly absent or reduced social ties and the resources that these represent and a diminished sense of connectedness or belonging" (Vandemark 2007, 243). Community psychology research describes a "psychological sense of community (PSOC) as the sense of being a part of a "readily available, mutually supportive network of relationships upon which one could depend and as a result one did not experience sustained feelings of loneliness" (Sarason 1976, 1). Moreover, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UN-Habitat) defines homelessness as "a condition of detachment from society characterised by the lack of the affiliative bonds that link people into their social structures. Homelessness carries implications of belonging nowhere rather than having nowhere to sleep" (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 2000, xiii).

Furthering the social lens of homelessness, Kellett and Moore discuss home-making in relation to homelessness, arguing that "home is more than having adequate shelter and is as much about being placed in a particular social world" (Kellett and Moore 2003b, 123). They discuss themes of belonging and "home-making" as a process (Ibid.). Through interviews with houseless individuals in London, Dublin, and Santa Marta, Columbia, they conclude that the "desire or goal for home has significance all the more because it seems to offer a route back into the social and cultural ordinariness of life" (Kellett and Moore 2003b, 137). Other literature has provided a more dynamic conceptualization of home, stating that "we are as individuals in the process of moving in and out of home throughout our lives" (Moore 2007, 147). Similarly research by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute describes "iterative homelessness" as "the repeated and ongoing loss of, or movement through accommodation in both the short and long term contexts of homelessness" (C. Robinson 2003, 32). This is further supported in a book on addressing community problems, which says, "Homelessness is a state through which many people pass, and not a permanent trait" (The Claremont Symposium on Applied Social Psychology 1998, 53).

Finally, adding yet another layer to the social perspective on home and homelessness, some literature expresses the need to rethink the cultural understanding of home in the US in order to better address homelessness. Veness says, "If meaningful change is to take place with

regard to homelessness, future research must take on the difficult task of critically examining and evaluating the cultural ideal of home. For it is against that taken-for-granted, progress-driven idealization that our definition and management of homelessness begin" (A R Veness 1992, 445).

By leveraging multipronged semantics, a social perspective, intersectional themes, and home-making as an iterative process, the aim of my study is to begin filling identified gaps in the literature on home and homelessness. The stories from TC3 are the lens through which I take on a critical examination of the cultural ideals of home that Veness discusses (A R Veness 1992, 445). Furthermore, these stories begin to fill the gap that Ecker identified –"how individuals living in vulnerable housing situations experience community" (Ecker 2015a, 3).

## 4.2 Conceptual Framework

To understand the overall lens of this research, I present the conceptual framework from which the study began (see Figure 4-2). Although this framework evolved during the research process, it is necessary to understand the starting point that eventually led to the findings on home and resulting approach to homelessness. Three main concepts –home, realms of place, and "the other"– guided the research process, influenced the lens through which the stories were interpreted, and led to the outcomes of this research.

### 4.2.1 *Home*

A 2011 study by Eubanks and Gauthier compares Heidegger and Levinas' concepts of home, discussing the different perspectives as dwelling vs. hospitality, respectively. It tries to find a way to define "politics of place that is appreciative of the tension that exists between home and homelessness" (2011, 125) . Also, an older study by Veness from 1992 questions how we define home and homelessness in regards to the physical structure of housing. The author concludes that "the fact that a person has housing does not necessarily mean that person is defined as homed. Home is more than housing. The literature says that home is the locus of deeply held cultural values and meanings—a place rich with meaning, order, intentions, obligations, and rights" (1992). These studies were important in helping frame how home

intersects with realm of place and “the other”. The intersection of home and realm of place results in a lens for the politics of home in the public realm and what home means for those living in the public realm.

#### 4.2.2 *The Other*

The idea of “the other” is evident in two ways for this research –the first being the perception of the houseless as the other, socially speaking, and the second is the framing of a tent city as an “othered” heterotopia. A 2015 study, which framed “homelessness” as a spectacle that creates marginalization, drew from the studies of Erving Goffman and Guy Debord; Goffman and Debord explore the “the ways in which every-day encounters with homelessness perpetuate discourses of the Other and dysfunctionality” (Gerrard and Farrugia 2015, 3). In a 2011 study by Mendel, philosopher Michel Foucault’s concept of heterotopia is applied to the case of “homelessness”. Mendel describes a heterotopia as a “heterogeneous space that juxtaposes in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible”. He argues that both homelessness as a concept and the physical encampment or tent city would be considered a heterotopia (2011, 155–56). I use Mendel’s’ interpretation to argue that TC3 is a heterotopia.

#### 4.2.3 *Realms of Place*

Ray Oldenburg defines place in the American city in three different realms –the first place as the home, the second place as the work place, and the third place as a common shared space for the community to gather and socialize. While his ranking of places in terms of priority may apply to the houseless (the first place of home being the top priority and the third place of recreation and socializing as the last priority), the difference lies in his distinction between these places in private and public realm and the amount of time spent in the three realms of place. Unlike Oldenburg’s definition which identified third space as a communal one for public activities and states that people spend the least time there (Oldenburg 1999, 16), the houseless community conducts both its private and public activities in the public realm and spends most of their time there as well. Furthermore, while the description of a third place by Oldenburg is a place where people come to unwind and converse, for the houseless

community it is also a place of dwelling. It is interesting to note that he refers to the third place as "home away from home", in the sense that is a place for community gathering (Ibid.). Through my research with the houseless, I look to discover whether their interpretation of third place as a home would be different, especially since they are perceived as "the other".

#### 4.2.4 Intersection of the Core Concepts

Firstly, the intersection of "home" and "the other" informed how I framed "home" through the eyes of the houseless community, often perceived by the general public as "the other". Secondly, the intersection of "realms of place" and "home" informed my understanding of home in the public realm for the houseless community." In addition to these two main intersections, a secondary aspect is that of realms of place. While Oldenburg makes a clear distinction between the three realms of place, the lens of "home" and "the other" in regards to houselessness challenges this division. The concept of "the other" relates to the concept of realm of place in a contradictory way since Oldenburg's interpretation of the third place, in which the houseless dwell, is much different from Mendel's application of heterotopia to a temporary encampment. Figure 4-2 presents a graphic summary of these intersections.

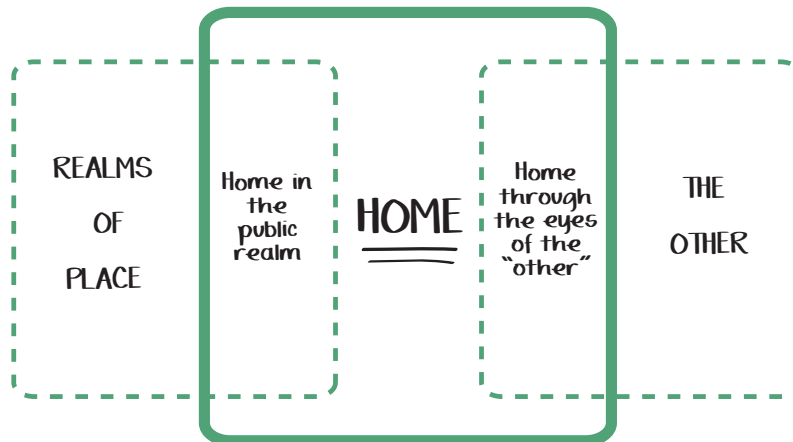
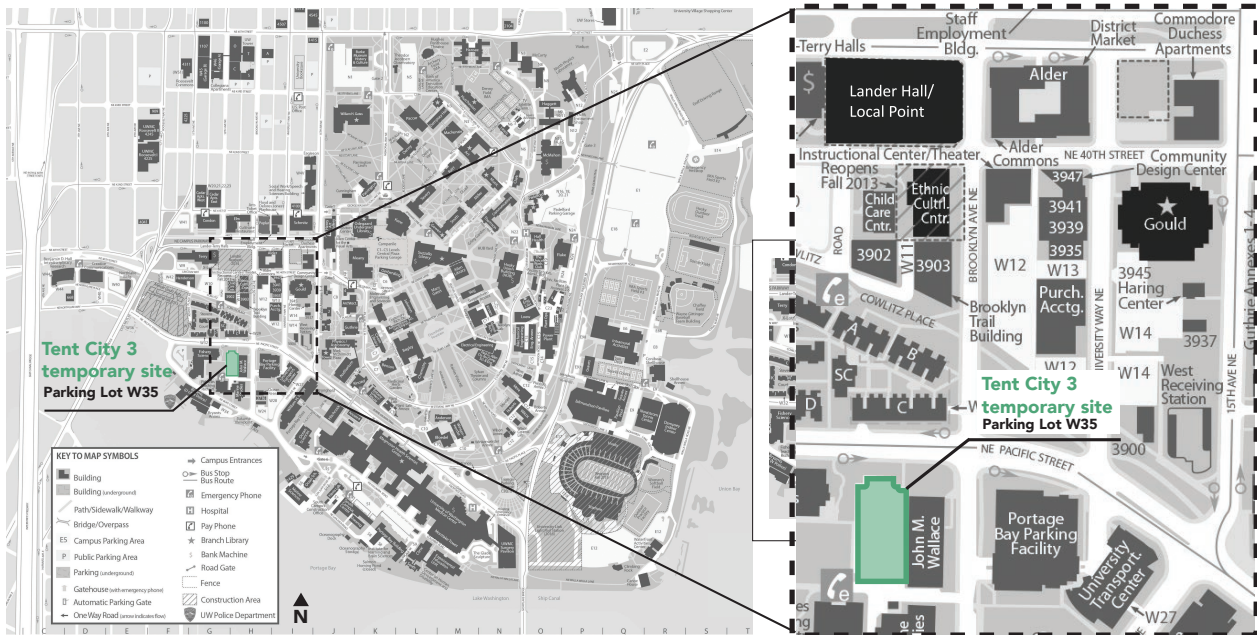


Figure 4-2: Graphic representing the conceptual framework for this study, combining "home", "the other", and "realms of place".

## CHAPTER 5. Research Methods

### 5.1 Seattle's Tent City 3 as a Case Study



**Figure 5-1: A map showing the temporary location of Tent City 3 during their stay on Parking Lot W35 on the University of Washington campus from December 17, 2016 to March 18, 2017. (Adapted from University of Washington Creative Communications & University of Washington Facilities Services 2012).**

My case study is TC3, an encampment that was hosted on the University of Washington (UW) campus from December 17, 2016 to March 18, 2017. Their temporary site was Parking Lot W-35, adjacent to graduate housing and the Fishery Sciences Building (see Figure 5-1). The UW followed the suit of Seattle Pacific University, which hosted TC3 in 2014. The initiative to host TC3 on campus was organized by a student organization called Tent City Collective (TCC). TC 3 follows “a strict code of conduct that prohibits weapons, violence, drugs and alcohol” and many residents have “jobs, and often families with small children stay there because it is a safe, secure place” (Cauce 2016). During their stay at the UW, there was a high turnover rate and a fluctuating population. The population remained around fifty people for some time, and the highest number was around seventy-two individuals (Anonymous 2. Email message to the

author. May 16, 2017.). At one point, there were forty-five males and sixteen females (Anonymous 2. Text message to the author. February 26, 2017) There was difficulty in keeping TC3 at capacity, despite joint efforts with TCC to help houseless individuals join TC3 if they wished to do so.

As part of hosting TC3 on campus, the UW signed an agreement with Seattle Housing and Resource Effort (SHARE), “which oversees Tent City 3” (University of Washington 2016) and is a grassroots organization made up of currently formerly houseless men and women. In addition to running other tent cities in Seattle, SHARE co-manages an indoor shelter program, Storage Locker Program, and a Housing-For-Work Program with the Women’s Housing Equality and Enhancement League (WHEEL). A core tenet of SHARE-WHEEL is self-management, as they believe that it “promotes the innate dignity of each person.” This is not only applied in the overall organizational management, but within the management of tent cities themselves. There are no fees or conditions to become a member of SHARE-WHEEL; it “is open to all homeless and formally homeless adults” and emphasizes the importance of participation in community meetings, where all decisions are democratically made (SHARE-WHEEL 2017a).

Each tent city is made up of up to one hundred members and follows a Code of Conduct “which requires sobriety, nonviolence, cooperation and participation.” Both couples and singles are allowed to stay at a tent city. On its official website, SHARE-WHEEL justifies the need for tent cities by highlighting the shortage of indoor shelters in King County (SHARE-WHEEL 2017b). TC3 was established in 2000 (SHARE-WHEEL 2017b) and changes location every three months<sup>5</sup> (SHARE-WHEEL 2017a). It is one of Seattle’s unsanctioned encampments, which the City describes as obstructing “the normal use of public property” and being “health and safety hazards for encampment occupants and the general public” (City of Seattle 2016e). As with other tent cities, TC3 is self-managed and has an Executive Committee that is elected

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<sup>5</sup> The quarterly move of TC3 is self-imposed and not a city policy. While reasons for this policy are not certain, an anonymous member of TC3 explained that it may have to do with TC3 not feeling welcome in host neighborhoods, not having a feeling secure in one location since the encampment is not sanctioned, and attempting to attract media attention (Anonymous 2. 2017. Phone call with author, May 30.).

at weekly community meetings. Members also do security shifts to monitor camp safety twenty-four hours a day. Unlike the typical rules of an indoor shelter, tent cities do not have any restrictions on how long a person can stay or what time they have to wake up or go to sleep. As long as a person follows the code of conduct, participates in the democratic processes, and completes the required tasks, they are welcome to stay for as long as they like, leave their belongings in their tent, and come and go as they please (Members of TC3. In discussion with the author. Seattle. March 2017).

In terms of the physical setup, TC3 uses wooden platforms to designate a location for each tent and to raise it above ground level. The majority of the tents are for singles, in addition to a few couples tents and larger dorms. There is also a community tent, which had a TV and some



**Figure 5-2: A compilation of photos of the Tent City 3 encampment while it was hosted on the University of Washington campus (Source: Author).**

tables and chairs during its time at UW. This is where community meetings were held and where people could socialize or relax during the day. In addition, there is one tent for the kitchen area, which contains storage and some tables for meal donations. Finally, there was a security tent at the entrance of TC3, where visitors could sign in, ask questions, and meet TC3 members. Figure 5-2 shows some snapshots of the TC3 encampment during their stay at the UW campus.

After leaving the UW campus and moving on to the next site in Skyway, WA<sup>6</sup>, many of TC3's members left the group. Although there was no follow up to find out where people moved to, a conversation with a friend at TC3 revealed that some found transitional housing or accommodation in a tiny home village, while another member left Seattle. This shows how the unpredictability of new sites and the quarterly move make it difficult for people to remain a part of the community.

I intentionally chose to work with TC3 for two reasons. Firstly, I wanted to work with a houseless *community* as opposed to houseless people living *individually*, as this would provide insight on the social and communal aspects of houselessness. Secondly, I chose TC3 as a case study as opposed to any other houseless community in Seattle because of their presence on the UW campus and the involvement of the student group TCC. Since I lived on campus, I could visit whenever necessary and meet with people whenever suited them. Furthermore, since TCC had already built a repertoire and trust with TC3, I was able to reach the community through an already existing relationship. In addition, the university had put a lot of effort and resources into coordinating student engagement with TC3, which was an opportunity I wanted to take advantage of. Because of the time constraints of a master's thesis, it made sense to leverage the existing opportunities rather than try to get to know another community to which I had no entrée.

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<sup>6</sup> Skyway, WA is an unincorporated area in King County, located south of Seattle and adjacent to Renton, WA (King County Department of Assessments 2016, 6).

## 5.2 Academic Procedures

Because the focus of my research involved a lot of direct interaction with people, collecting personal stories, and working with a group considered vulnerable, I went through a Human Subjects Review process through the Human Subjects Division at the UW. This entailed submitting a proposal through the online Zipline system and waiting for a review and approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that the rights and privacy of participants would be protected. My proposal was ruled exempt, category 2, which is defined as “Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior” (Human Subjects Division-University of Washington 2016).

With the hosting of TC3 on the UW campus, the UW’s Carlson Center was responsible for reviewing and approving any student engagement with TC3. The Carlson Center “develops service-learning, community-based participatory research, and leadership opportunities for UW students” (University of Washington 2017a) and was responsible for coordinating all academic engagement with TC3 during this stay on campus (University of Washington 2017b). Through an online process, I submitted a proposal for my project, which got reviewed by a committee made up of TC3 members and UW staff and students. Upon receiving a request for clarifications, I sent back revisions and received approval for my research.

## 5.3 Carrying Out the Research

My research process can be summarized into three simple steps: (1) collecting stories, (2) transcribing orally shared stories (i.e. audio-recorded conversations) and typing up the handwritten ones, and (3) interpreting the stories (see Figure 5-3). By conducting conversational interviews (which I prefer to refer to as “stories” for the more interactive and bi-directional nature of the term), I wanted to get a personal perspective of what home means to people who are houseless and have gone through different living situations throughout their lives. My positionality was influenced by three forms of transformative research methodology: participatory, feminist, and decolonizing methodologies. More details on how these ideologies influenced my approach and the ethics of the research process are in Appendix A.

The existing relationship that TCC had built with TC3 did not excuse me from putting effort into getting to know the community of TC3. In order to achieve this, I used as many opportunities as possible to be involved and become a familiar face to members of TC3, in addition to becoming familiar with the community myself. Details on the ways in which I built a relationship with TC3 are in Appendix B. In terms of who was part of the research, I did not set any specific conditions for the selection of participants. The only conditions were that the person be a member of TC3 and that they voluntarily share their story.

In order to begin the process of collecting stories, I first attended a TC3 camp meeting (which took place on Tuesday evenings) to share that I would be frequenting TC3 to speak with people. After only one person signed up to partake in my research at this meeting, I decided it would be best to come back at a different time and use a different approach. I teamed up with a TC3 member who was interested in supporting my research and we would walk around the site on campus, meet people, and ask if they would be interested in participating. This occurred on a few different days, both weekdays and weekends, and usually in the daytime. Having a TC3 member introduce me to people proved to be very effective, as people trusted him and he provided a bridge between myself and people I had not yet met. Later in the process, some of the people I had spoken to also introduced me to their friends. In a few cases, people approached me to ask if they could share their story after hearing that others had participated. Furthermore, I designed and shared simple flyers, which explained what I was



**Figure 5-3: Graphic representing the three steps of the research process with Tent City 3. From left to right, (1) collecting stories, (2) transcribing and typing up handwritten stories, and (3) interpreting the stories.**

doing and included my contact information (see Appendix C). I handed these to people who were interested and also left some at the reception desk at TC3 in order to spread the word. For all cases in which people agreed to share their story, I would request contact information that they would be comfortable sharing with me (either email, phone number, or both), in order to have a means of following up with them. The contact information was recorded for the purposes of this research, but was protected and not shared publicly.

### *5.3.1 Options Provided to Share Stories*

In order to make the process comfortable for the participants, I provided several options for people to share their story, including an audio-recorded conversation, writing (essay or poem), visual art, photography, video, and music. I was also open to other suggestions if the person did not feel comfortable with any of the proposed methods. Members of TC3 who participated in this research chose to share their stories either through an audio-recorded conversation or through writing. I collected a total of twenty stories, fourteen of which were audio-recorded conversations and six of which were written by the participants themselves (in the form of essays, short answers, or poetry). All twenty stories were interpreted and included in this study as they all proved to be valuable in providing a diverse set of perspectives about the meaning of home.

If someone chose to share their story orally, we would set a date and time to speak at the person's earliest convenience. After confirming by email or phone, I would meet the person at the UW parking lot where TC3 was hosted. In a few rare cases, I did not set up a time in advance but instead had the conversation upon meeting the person if they preferred that arrangement. The conversations with TC3 members were held either at Parking Lot W-35 on the UW campus where the community was hosted or at one of three nearby UW buildings –the Samuel E. Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center (ECC), Gould Hall, or Local Point (see Figure 5-1). People were given the option to choose the location that they would be most comfortable with. I wanted to ensure that there would be little or no interruptions and no other TC3 members around, as this might make the person less comfortable sharing their story.

The conversations were held with one person at a time and lasted an average of an hour (ranging between forty-five and seventy minutes). Before beginning the conversation, I would remind the person of the purpose of my research and ask permission to audio-record. There were no instances in which someone refused to have their story audio-recorded or backed out during the conversation, though they had the option to do so. I would start off by asking people to tell me about themselves, where they had grown up, where they had lived throughout their life, and any other experiences that led up to joining TC3. I intentionally left the conversation open-ended at the start in order allow the person to take the conversation in the direction they wanted to. I listened for cues about home and community and developed follow up questions on the spot. While the conversation did not follow a specific sequence or script, some of the questions I asked frequently were:

*(Related to the idea of home)*

- What does home mean to you?
- Has your understanding of home changed throughout your life?
- Do you think your idea of home will change in the future?
- Are you searching for home?
- Do you have memories of home?
- Do you feel at home at TC3?
- Is there something you hold onto (whether a tangible object or idea) that represents home to you?
- How do you feel about the word “homeless”? Do you relate to it?

*(Related to the idea of community)*

- What does community mean to you?
- Has your idea of community changed throughout your life? If so, how?
- Is there a community you feel most a part of?
- Do you feel a part of the community of Seattle?
- How long have you been in Seattle?
- How long have you been a part of TC3?

After conducting the interviews, I transcribed the audio recordings manually with the help of an online software called Trint (Trint Ltd. 2017).

For those who chose to write their stories, I also asked for contact information so I could follow up with them later. Writers were provided with guiding questions, similar to those listed above for the conversations. People were not required to answer all of the questions and were requested to share at least one page of writing. The results differed, with some writing one page and others writing several pages, either in the form of prose or poetry. Some people typed up their stories and emailed them, while others wrote them by hand. I later typed up the stories that were handwritten.

### 5.3.2 *Consent Form*

All participants who shared their stories were asked to sign consent forms (see Appendix D), which explained the purpose of the research and the benefit of their participation. The consent form provided the option for the participant to remain anonymous and also to allow the use of photos of any items they shared voluntarily, purely for research purposes. During the research process, there were only a few instances in which it felt appropriate to ask for photos of personal items. Since this did not occur often and was not consistent in all interviews, I did not include them in this study. The majority of the participants consented to the use of their names and did not ask to remain anonymous. Since demographic characteristics were not a focus of this research, participants were only asked to provide their name, age, and gender.

### 5.3.3 *Interpretation and Analysis*

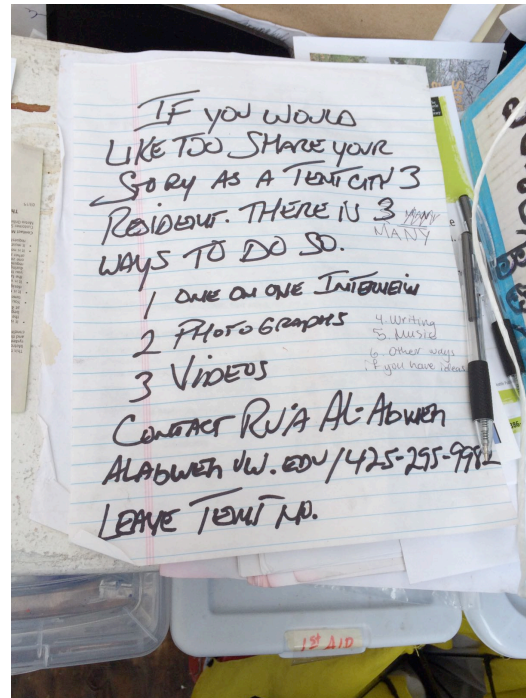
For orally shared stories, part of the interpretation actually took place while having conversations with people. The challenge was to “listen between the lines” for each person’s understanding of home and community. While transcribing oral stories and reading the written ones, it was necessary to interpret again. This time I looked more deeply for key words or lessons that related to the question of home and community, which I noted and kept a record of in the transcription template (See Appendix E). I also had a third round of interpretation when I re-read the transcriptions afterwards. For written stories, I interpreted the stories upon

reading them, and for handwritten ones, while typing them. I usually read and interpreted each written story two or three times.

### 5.3.4 Justification for the Research Method of Storytelling

I believe that the storytelling methodology was appropriate for my research because the topic is a complex, very personal and subjective one, which could not be studied with surveys or quantitative measures. It instead called for a qualitative, ethnographic approach to capture the nuances of houselessness and homelessness. As stated in "The Ethics of Conducting Community-Engaged Homelessness Research", the houseless population is not a homogeneous one (Runnels et al. 2009, 58). Therefore, listening to people's life experiences provided insight into very different circumstances and reasons for joining TC3, which a survey or quantitative approach would not have captured. It also allowed me to get to know people and gave them a chance to process struggles and obstacles they have gone through.

Overall, I believe the approach was successful as I received positive feedback from members of TC3, some of whom asked if there would be a chance to have a follow up conversation. Others also started introducing me to friends who wanted to share their stories and asked if there was a chance to speak with other houseless communities around the city. Furthermore, one day when I visited TC3, I found a handwritten announcement about my research that someone had voluntarily prepared and left on the reception table (see Figure 5-4). Finally, as with all research, there were limitations and challenges. For details, see Appendix F.



**Figure 5-4: A photo of a note written by a member of Tent City 3 and left at the reception desk, spreading the word about my research and interest in hearing people's stories.**

### 5.3.5 *Assumptions*

In terms of the stories shared by people from TC3, I assumed that everyone who shared their story spoke truthfully and did not “coach” others on what they should share. Furthermore, even though people’s definition and feelings towards home are not constant throughout their lives, I still believe there is validity in exploring this topic. Since there is always turnover in the population of TC3, participants are a valid representation of the population of TC3 at a particular point in time. That being said, the themes drawn from these stories can also be considered indicative of the experiences of houseless individuals in the US and elsewhere.

## CHAPTER 6. Stories From Tent City 3

...homeless is ... I guess you have to define the root word "home"... homelessness is very real. But if an individual doesn't consider themselves homeless then it don't apply. It's a crooked line to draw. I mean it's so hard...Homelessness is a situation, is a struggle.

~Anonymous 4

The following stories are all from people who were members of TC3 between February and mid-March of 2017, during TC3's stay on the UW campus. From these stories, two main questions of home emerged: *What Creates a Sense of Home?* and *What External Factors Threaten a Sense of Home?*. Each of these questions encompasses multiple facets. Furthermore, "Human Connection"(the core determinant of what creates a sense of home), emerged as a meta-theme. The two main questions, meta-theme, and facets are summarized in Table 6-1. Since people shared their life journeys before and during their stay at TC3, the facets extracted from the stories are not only representative of the experiences at TC3 but also of experiences throughout people's lives. These facets are elaborated on within the discussion of the stories. While the facets are not organized in any hierarchal order, this could be something to study in future research.

**Table 6-1: Summary of the Questions, Meta-theme, and Facets of Tent City 3 Stories**

<b>Meta-theme: Human Connection</b>
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<b>Question 1 –What Creates a Sense of Home?</b>
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1. Safety and Security
2. Sharing Tangibles and Intangibles
3. A Supportive, Accommodating, Nonjudgmental Environment
4. Stability, Familiarity, and Consistency
5. Active Engagement and Acts of Solidarity
6. Self-Governance and Agency

<b>Question 2 –What External Factors Threaten a Sense of Home?</b>
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1. Business Gain, Capitalism, and Corporate Greed
2. Purely Service-Oriented Approaches
3. Criminalization of Dwelling in the Public Realm
4. Stigmatization of the Other
5. Injustice and a Monolithic American Dream
6. Culture of Individualism

There are also many intersectional themes, which include race, gender, travel, lifestyle, colonialism, settlement, trauma, loneliness, isolation, childhood, spirituality, sacredness, and anti-establishment. These are similar to the intersectional themes that were revealed in the literature review (see Table 4-4). Each individual story carries multiple facets and intersectional themes. For the sake of clarity, excerpts from the stories are grouped under the facet that is most emphasized. All stories (shared by both native and non-native English speakers) were transcribed as spoken in order to maintain authenticity. Similarly for written stories (shared by both native and non-native English speakers), there was no or minimal editing done in order to maintain the authenticity of the stories and the voice of the storytellers. For details on the protocol used for transcribing audio-recorded conversations and writing the handwritten stories, see Appendix G.

## 6.1 Meta-theme: Human Connection

What helped people find a sense of home both in TC3 and elsewhere? If they did feel homeless, what made them feel this way? In conversation with people at TC3, I heard stories about a disconnect from family, friends, and loved ones, which often led people to feeling homeless. It was also common for people to fondly reminisce about family and friends, share experiences of having a sense of community, and reflect on the importance of being connected with others. It was in these times and through these experiences that people had a sense of home. Before delving into the facets of *Question 1 –What Creates a Sense of Home?*, I begin by sharing people’s reflections on the lack and existence of human connection, in addition to the factors that contributed to this condition.

### 6.1.1 *The Lack of Human Connection and a Sense of Homelessness*

Chris spoke of a lifelong struggle to fit in and to repeatedly try returning to his hometown of Philadelphia (Chris. In conversation with the author. Seattle. February 18, 2017). Upon returning after many years of being away, a fallout with friends was the final straw that made him feel that Philadelphia was no longer home:

I think I’ve been struggling as to where I belong to begin with my whole life...I was always struggling to get back to Philadelphia...the employer sent me to Wisconsin and then I was trying

to get back to Philly. And then I got stuck in Michigan. And then I get back to Philly and the fallout happens.

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...last September when I went back to Philadelphia, Philadelphia changed so radically. And then some strange interactions with some old friends –who I thought was my best friend– and it was pretty heartbreaking. And it was evident that it just wasn't home anymore.

Chris also mentioned a drum kit he had left in Philadelphia with a friend and spoke of feeling most "at home" when playing music with a band. When asked if there had been times in which he felt like he belonged, he said:

I think there were. Yeah, when I'm behind the drum set. When I'm behind the drums, to be honest with ya. That's like the only time. No matter where I'm at. I think that's about it.

For Chris, home is not place-based or a community that one "dwells" in. Rather, his story reveals that a connection with people and being around others with shared interests creates a sense of home. It is the disconnect from these people that began to make him feel hopeless and homeless. Chris also spoke of a "tumultuous childhood" that was indicative of an instable community and sense of home:

There's a lot of back and forth. But as far as memories and childhood...I don't have too many. I didn't come from a close family. There was a lot of moving around...it was a tumultuous childhood. There was a lot of activity in the household.

He also spoke of a sense of loneliness, not having anyone to depend on, and the ongoing journey to find a home back with family:

It's a bitch when you're all alone, and then you rely on somebody else to be there for you and they turn out to be insane and then they're not there for you.

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One thing is for sure –this aging process is relentless and hasn't been kind to me. So I best figure out where my home is soon and settle in for the rest of this ride. I've a son and daughter to see and three grandkids I've yet to meet. Me? A grandpa? Apparently. Perhaps in the arms of my children and grandchildren would be a good place to start looking for a new home.

Similar to Chris, Jason spoke of not having anyone to depend on. In Jason's case, it seems as though there were no positive experiences of home growing up (Jason. In conversation with the author. Seattle. February 20, 2017). He experienced a difficult childhood, traveling around with his mother and living in different "homeless communities" throughout his life, in addition to growing up in the foster care system:

I grew up with a bipolar addictive mom who loved to travel around everywhere so I grew up in homeless communities since I was a child. We traveled all around the United States in a van, hitchhiking, all that good stuff. She abandoned me at twelve [years old] in Phoenix with a couple hookers in probably *the* worst neighborhood in Phoenix, Arizona. There's a big...red light district down in Phoenix and she left me in one of them hotels. I grew up in the system. I was a foster child, DOC [Department of Corrections] at thirteen [years old], and just graduated to adult DOC until I was about the age of thirty.

I think about when I was seven years old, we jumped in a van and traveled around the whole border of the United States. And took about four years. We ended up back in Connecticut when I was about eleven or twelve and...we didn't stay very long and then we went back down to Phoenix, Arizona. And we weren't there that long. We were living in a open-air shelter down there, which was very, very dangerous. And then she got us into one of those hooker hotels down there on Van Buren and we got into a big fight and she left me there at twelve [years old]. I was twelve at the time.

After being abandoned by his mother in what he describes as a "hooker hotel", he became order of the court. Feeling forsaken by his family which did not lend a helping hand, he was left with trauma and broken family relationships:

She left me with a couple crack dealers and a couple hookers and after a couple days they were like, "We're really sorry, but we're not equipped to take care of you." So they called, I think it's called Department of Economic Security, down there. And I became order of the court. And what's awful is that I come from a great family. I mean we got roots back east that have been there for hundreds and hundreds of years. I mean we have a house that has been in for six generations, over three hundred years, four hundred years! And nobody came to take me home. It was horrible.

Despite the lack of familial bonds, he expressed mixed feelings about wanting to be far away from relatives but also enjoying the opportunity to spend time with them at their annual family gathering:

R<sup>7</sup>: When you have gatherings with your family...  
J: We have a good time.  
R: Does it feel like a place you want to be?  
J: You would feel welcome there. Anybody that shows up would feel welcome on that day.  
R: If you had a choice would you want to stay near your family?  
J: I'm on the west coast. I'm about as far away from my family as you can get besides crossing the fucking ocean.  
R: Is that because you want to be as far away as possible?  
J: Yes.  
R: But you still enjoy the gatherings?  
J: It's only once a year.  
R: When you go back does that feel like home?  
J: No. Nobody wants to be there. No one gives a shit. That's how I feel.  
R: Is there anywhere where you feel like you come home?  
J: No. And I still travel a lot. I'll probably be here for six months to another year maybe, before I leave.

Even though Jason says there is no place where he feels at home, his desire to attend family gatherings (despite difficult family relationships) implies that his sense of home may be somewhat related to a connection with relatives.

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Courtney shared another case of family-related struggles (Courtney. In conversation with the author. Seattle. February 23, 2017). When I spoke with her, she had lost all of her nuclear family members, with the exception of a sister who was in critical condition. The trauma of losing family members spurred an urge to travel and leave the pain behind before returning to her hometown:

Ok, well [I'm] one of three kids, both of my parents are dead. My brother passed away in 2001, my little brother. And now currently, I'm facing maybe the prospect of losing my sister. I'm originally from the Gorge in Washington –Camas, Washington and I grew up down there. And then when I was 23, I went to college down there, and...my mom passed away. And then when I was 24, my brother passed away. And after that, I kind of took off. I kind of dropped everything and went across country. So I've been everywhere. I've lived in Michigan. I lived in New York a couple of times. I've lived in Massachusetts. I lived in Arizona. I spent a lot of years in California, Oregon. And it took me a long time, like twelve years to go back to my hometown. And then this year in April, it'll be three years since my dad passed away. So, if my sister passes away, I'll be the only one left.

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<sup>7</sup> The "R" in these transcriptions indicates when I was speaking in the conversation (initial of my first name)

When asked about why it took her twelve years to return to her hometown and whether she did not want to go back, she spoke more about losing her parents and the difficulty in coming to terms with the loss:

I lost my mom and my brother both there, and...I felt like I had to heal because...my mom was my biggest supporter. My mom was a really awesome mom and...it was hard. And then I lost my dad. Well no, the first time I went back was when we found out my dad had an accident [be]cause he had been in New York and he lost...my step mom...and he freaked out and came back to the west coast and...I was living down on the southern Oregon Coast and loving it there. And they got me to go back to eastern Oregon where my sister was. And then we found out my dad had a brain tumor and me and my sister borrowed the car so we could get his car...and finally went back home. Finally went back to our hometown so we could go find out what was going on with my dad. And then...a few months later my dad –they took the tumor out and then my dad got to come home, and then he just –downhill, cancer spread. And so he passed away. He had his brain surgery in the beginning of November and then he passed away the following April. Me and my sister decided –because he basically died in our plate, at our house –we didn't want to live there. So we got closer to home. We got within two hours and found a house and living there.

After Courtney's father passed away, she returned to her hometown with her sister but stayed in a new house, rather than the one she had shared with her family. By doing so, it seems that she was trying to find a middle ground between being with her only remaining nuclear family member and maintaining a safe distance from family memories. Both her sister and the connection with her family seem to embody home for Courtney. She also spoke about coming to Seattle, joining SHARE, and being abused by her ex-fiancé:

...when I came to Seattle, I was engaged...after we reopened our SHARE shelters and I was running St. Luke's, my ex[-fiancé] now decided to freak out and beat me up. So I became a domestic violence victim. Or survivor. And he only spent two months in jail, only two months, and he's been out since December, like, 13th...but I've been a member of SHARE since May and I've been working steady with them.

A few days after this conversation, Courtney's sister passed away. When I tried to console her, she mentioned keeping herself busy with work and seemed uncomfortable receiving any form of affection. Both after being abused by her ex-fiancé and after losing her sister, Courtney kept busy with work, seemingly to distract herself from the pain of losing two people who she may have considered her home. By working with SHARE and keeping busy, she may have been

numbing difficult emotions and also perhaps trying to carve out a new sense of home by beginning to carve out a new identity.

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While Courtney experienced trauma as a result of losing close family members, Ivan experienced trauma because of a troubled relationship with his parents and sister (Ivan. In conversation with the author. Seattle. February 25, 2017). These family tensions caused him to move away in an attempt to find peace of mind. He also later had a fallout with a friend, which caused him to join TC3:

[I've] got three sisters, six nieces and nephews, and two grand nieces. Really have no contact with my family anymore. Kind of out of choice I think. Had to get away from the drama and yet I step right in to drama. But either way, I moved up here a little over three years ago. Was here a couple months and then was homeless. Me and my best friend had a little falling out. He was going through some personal, professional issues at the time. So he drops me off down at the downtown shelter. And I stayed at DESC [Downtown Emergency Service Center] for...almost three months. And that was not fun...I'd rather do this any day of the week than go back there. Plain and simple. That was not a nice place.

While Ivan had been forced to leave a shared living arrangement with a friend in Seattle, this was not his first experience in moving out. Before relocating to Seattle, Ivan lived with his sister but eventually moved out because of difficulties in getting along:

I was living with my little sister and that was not nice because she's a weirdo...and a psychotic person who likes to lie a lot. And my mom, she was not in very good health. I knew that she needed help and before I left I said, "Mom you better...go to the doctor." And you know, my little sister refused to take her anywhere. Yet I get blamed for writing off Mom when I'm the one who wanted my mother up here and my mom wanted to get away from that, from my three sisters arguing all the time. She didn't feel respected down there. So, like I tell myself, I just ran out of time.

Having to continuously change his living situation because of misunderstandings with loved ones made Ivan's life unstable. This instability was also reflected in his family relationship, as he reflected on a difficult childhood, grappling with his love for his parents despite misunderstandings, and the process of forgiving them for various situations that hurt him. He

first spoke about his relationship with his father, which had been fraught with pressure, detachment, and reconciliation:

My dad was military and he verbally abused me. You know, I understand what he wanted, but he could have gone about it in a different way...I understand he wanted me to do more and push myself. He could've...said things differently, but I understand that wasn't his way. And yet it pushed me to do different things. You know, not try as hard. It was that way for a while. And then he died in '99 and I was like, "Shit, didn't get to say goodbye" and tell him..."Hey, at least tell me that you love me." You know that's all I wanted to hear. Cause I never heard it.

But then one of my nieces found a picture of me and him when I was probably three or four years old, two or three maybe. I'm sittin' on his lap while he's working on plans for another house or somethin' like that...And you know, it kind of shook me up by seeing that picture but it did me good...because at that point [ I ] did realize, ok he did love me. I said, 'OK. Forgive him for being the way he was.'

Not only did he find a way to heal from his relationship with his father, but also worked through difficult emotions towards his mother. While Ivan was hurt that she had kept secrets from him (that he later found out about by coincidence), he acknowledged that she was probably facing struggles of her own as a result of childhood sexual abuse:

...as far as my mom, I had to forgive her too because I understand her actions towards her adoptive parents. They sexually abused her and she wanted revenge.

---

I mean, I understand –well ,I don't understand, I mean...I've never been sexually abused so I don't know. But I can only imagine having gone through the hell I've gone through, just the emotional trauma that she went through. And... I had to forgive her for doin' what she did.

As a result of challenging experiences with family, Ivan may have never had a positive experience of "home" as a child. Perhaps home was a foreign concept or one with negative connotations. While he clearly cares about his family and longs for a better relationship with them, he was also trying to find peace of mind and a place where he would not be emotionally abused. His fractured relationship with family meant he had to venture out to find home elsewhere.

The theme of broken families continues with another member of TC3 who chose to remain anonymous (referred to as Anonymous 4<sup>8</sup>). He spoke about a difficult marriage, the struggle to maintain financial security, and resulting anxiety and drug abuse (Anonymous 4. In conversation with the author. Seattle. February 26, 2017):

In hard times, I was with family. But for the last twenty-five years, for the most part, maintained the house and the bills and was a paycheck away from homelessness. Did the whole thing. Try to do what I could to provide. The last couple years of my children's life, I started having some anxiety issues and it just became too much. My marriage was awful. And we both agreed. We're friends now. My job was really strenuous at the time and I had been working for a gentleman for seven years helping to build up a company. I just needed help from family. My own marriage was over. And I got a little bit too much help from family. And it disrupted my life and my children's lives. We spent time away from each other [during] the last part of their childhood, and I served a couple of years in prison towards the end of their childhood for one of those times when I was breaking down, and I turned to cocaine and actually went and took money to do more. So things got rough from 2008 on.

With the breakdown of family relationships, his life became more and more difficult and his "home" (in the traditional sense) was damaged. This was when it seems that he began to feel homeless, in the sense that he felt hopeless and alone. When asked to explain what the struggle of "homelessness" has been to him, he replied:

The struggle of homelessness? Isolation and helplessness.

By equating homelessness with loneliness and vulnerability, Anonymous 4 makes clear that a sense of home is found in being around others and having people to turn to.

---

Anonymous 4 was not the only person to recognize that homelessness was a result of isolation and a lack of human connection. Kevin, too, spoke of his journey while houseless being about a search for something but not knowing what it was (Kevin. In conversation with the author. Seattle. March 2, 2017). It was not until joining TC3 that he realized he had been searching for love and community:

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<sup>8</sup> Anonymous 4 was not a TC3 member when I spoke with him, but had been in the past.

Actually I was looking for love, looking for community, but I didn't even know what I was looking for. I would find something and be like, it feel right, or it feel good. I wouldn't even know. But now I know. It's like everything just clicked. Now I know what I'm looking for.

---

As had Anonymous 4 and Kevin, another person, who chose to remain anonymous (referred to as Anonymous 3), found that homelessness was about a social breakdown (Anonymous 3. In conversation with the author. Seattle. March 4, 2017). He spoke of how he defines "homeless" and that he did not view many of TC3's members as fitting this description. His definition of homelessness centers on not having a family or people to care for each other:

Homeless –sick. Sick person, the mind doesn't work, of course psychology problem, and doesn't have family [to] take care of it [the person], you know, and he cannot live on his own. That's a homeless. A person cannot deal with society, also the homeless...cannot work, cannot function. But it's a lot of people here in Tent City 3, what I see, I don't see them homeless. I see them physically fit, mentally fit, and smart, but for some reason, I don't know what it is, they wanted to be in Tent City 3.

Anonymous 3 expressed that the lack of support from loved ones and psychological trauma is essentially his definition of "homeless". These themes are evident in many other stories from TC3 members that precede this one. In fact, many of the stories also link these two themes, sharing experiences in which lack of connection with loved ones was the main reason for emotional and mental struggles. While Anonymous 3 was unable to discern the reason that others had joined TC3, it may be that he is unaware that many of them fit the definition of homelessness that he described. Although they are physically and mentally fit in his eyes, their lack of healthy relationships with family and friends has left them feeling homeless.

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### 6.1.2 *The Existence of Human Connection and a Sense of Home*

In addition to sharing experiences of losing human connection, people also shared their sentiments about what gives them a sense of home. The common thread in these stories is the presence of friends, family, or other forms of community. Jason, who had shared his frustrations

about broken family relationships, also spoke about needing to live as part of a community, balancing a desire to be around a group of people with a need for some personal space:

I don't feel comfortable by myself. Never have. I lived by myself once. Lasted about three months. And then I wasn't even home! I barely even crashed in my own bedroom. It was weird.

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I was in prison as a juvenile, prison as an adult. So from between about thirteen to thirty [years old], I was pretty much institutionalized. So I've always been around a lot of people. Always in a community. I don't feel comfortable living by myself. I feel more comfortable living in a community. I have a huge amount of PTSD<sup>9</sup> [because I've been shot at so many times, that I feel safer with a community base than I do at Starbucks. You get me into a crowded room and I'm like all over the place and I get a bit fidgety.

Jason's discomfort with living alone and his acclimation to living in a community, even in difficult conditions like prison, indicates the importance of human connection.

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Similar to the sentiments expressed by Jason, when asked what home is, Kevin simply answered:

Home is when you're surrounded by people that you can live with. I mean unfortunately it's not always gonna be perfect.

For Kevin, as for Jason, being surrounded by people one can live with, imperfections included, constitutes home.

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Another member of TC3 who chose to remain anonymous (referred to as Anonymous 1) wrote about community as a necessity for survival (Anonymous 1. Email message to the author. February 26, 2017).

I believe that it is difficult to survive without community because we are part of it. We are linked in many ways – from our morning coffee to the electricity that we share – we rely on others.

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<sup>9</sup> PTSD: Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

As Jason and Kevin also expressed, Anonymous 1 believes that being “linked” with others is crucial in finding a sense of home:

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Akin to the sentiments expressed by Jason, Ron talked about family gatherings (Ron. In conversation with the author. Seattle. February 20, 2017). Unlike Jason, Ron has a close relationship with his relatives, which he considers his home:

But coming up as a kid, home was...with the family...family, mom and dad, brothers and sisters. Real close family. Family reunions, barbecues in the summer time, gatherings, family coming from New York, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. So childhood, life was great. Family was great...and I still keep in close contact with my brothers and sisters.

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...what still stands out is the gatherings, the laughter, sitting at the table and eating. The family eating together. The laughter. Playing various games –checkers, chess, dominoes. And just family. Just communicating, talking. That still stays with me. When my parents were living, and some of my other uncles and aunts were living, the older family members, they used to get together and, you know, talk about old age...and that still stays with me.

Ron’s memories of home are more positive than some of the previous stories shared by members of TC3. Nonetheless, they are all of the opinion that communicating and living with family, friends, or loved ones makes them feel at home.

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Building on the positive experiences of family, Kirk, who self-identified as being part of an indigenous community, spoke of experiences in the past where he felt a sense of community (Kirk. In conversation with the author. Seattle. February 20, 2017). He touched on differences between the mainstream “European-American” values of community versus what he had experienced:

I can tell you about the experiences I’ve had and in particular engaging in community. So I come from a household and a city that is primarily Latino, or would identify as such. How I would describe now as indigenous but they would identify as Latino; of Mexican descent in particular. There’s a huge difference in white European-American community and Latino community and how we live. The US has nuclear families. Our family structure, our culture, what we do, how we approach each other, how we respect each other. That in and of itself, there’s so much more, how I would call it, more community. Not necessarily because of the ethnic background. Just because of our culture. And how we are more open. We’ve recognized each other’s humanity more so

than it seems that...European Americans do –settlers. We take care of each other. People say, “Oh well, if you don’t like it here, go down to Mexico and see what it’s like to live there.” I’d *much* rather live in Mexico than here. Much rather. It’s much better. I’ve been there. I’ve lived there. People take care of each other. You don’t see people sleeping on the street as much, because people let people into their houses.

Kirk’s experience with a close-knit household and culture represents the kind of community many others had found at TC3 or were longing for. He also spoke of the importance of agency and having the freedom to build your own shelter:

...people can take matters into their own hands, build their own Goddamn home, and the government doesn’t come and tear it down. Shantytowns, right? Those existed here. Those still exist here. Except Mexicans can still do it and not get it torn down. There are entire communities of these called “carcitas cartones”. Beautiful, amazing. It’s people taking care of themselves. It’s taking care of each other. And the community respects their right to do that. It’s great!

Through his own understanding of family, a belief in sharing living space with others in times of need, and advocating for the right to agency, Kirk expressed a multi-faceted understanding of how a supportive community makes people feel at home. Kirk’s experiences are similar to Ron’s story about the structure and togetherness of an extended family.

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As with Kirk’s story, José had experiences of community different from that of “European-American culture” (José. In conversation with the author. Seattle. March 5, 2017). He spoke of his time growing up in El Salvador and his tight-knit community of family and friends that represented home to him:

R: Do you remember if the people who lived in the neighborhood were supportive of each other? Did they take care of each other? Did they know each other? Did they help each other?

J: Yep. All the time, he take care. All the time.

R: Do you remember a specific story?

J: I remember I know everybody, and everybody know me. In my country, the people no say your name. No. He say, “Maria son”. Everybody know you.

R: Did that make you proud?

J: Yeah! I remember all the time my grandfather, he wake up to me 4 o’clock in the morning (knocking on table) “Come on let’s go! Time to go to work!” We are children!... 11 o’clock the

morning. "Go take a shower, go the school!"

R: Did you have a lot of friends or cousins in the neighborhood?

J: Oh, I got only right there it's like 90 friends! Play every night soccer, go together in the school, go get a fish together. Run in the bus, go in the ocean.

José's memories of El Salvador reiterate the ideas of a supportive neighborhood and people taking care of each other, which emerged from Kirk's experience of growing up in (what he referred to as) an indigenous community.

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While José, Kirk, and Ron all strongly related family with a sense of home, others made a weaker connection. Daren referred to his mother's hometown as being somewhat of a home, purely because of the family connection (Daren. In conversation with the author. Seattle.

February 24, 2017):

In generalization, I would have to say my mom's hometown would be my home because that's where most of my relatives are that I've been in contact with throughout my life. So I guess I would consider that home... even though it's not my home. Not really. Never was...because...it's no place I would desire to live. So, I don't know why. I guess I consider it home just because it's where my mom was and most of my relatives.

So even though Daren has no desire to live in his mother's hometown, he still associates it with home, albeit weakly. When asked if there were things that make him feel at home, he said it was "good friends":

...if you make good friends you feel at home, comfortable, content. I guess that's why I've stayed here [at TC3] that long. That would probably be the main reason. [Be]cause I still have friends that I'm in touch with on a regular basis even since I've been here, so...

Although he does not seem to have tightknit family relationships, his community is his group of friends. Daren also spoke of the importance of music in his life and how being part of a band gives him a sense of community and belonging:

D: I always have a guitar. I've got to.

R: Is there something about music that keeps you grounded? For some people, music or being

part of a musical group is their community and makes them feel like they belong. Does that resonate with you?

D: Yeah, actually.

While friends are important to Daren, a community built around music, specifically, seems to play an even bigger role in creating his sense of home.

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Chris had sentiments of home related to family, as did Ron, José, Kirk, and Daren. He also spoke about the “traditional” idea of home as a house, saying:

At different periods of my life, I've had several situations that I felt fit and even called home. I was born and raised in Philadelphia, so I had always considered that my home. In Phoenix, a marriage of eighteen years and two wonderful children in a house that I did extensive repair and other improvements to, this being what most would consider the traditional of definitions, had been a wonderful home.

While he does make reference to his house, his focus seems to be more on the existence of a family and the life he had with them, rather than the physical dwelling. On a different trajectory, he also found that being part of a band was one of the most intimate ideas of home to him, as had Daren. Chris shared memories of following the rock band, The Grateful Dead, with a group of people who became his community and friends.

The seasons I spent unplugging from life in my late teens and following the Grateful Dead on various tour legs gave me great friends that I considered family, and that atmosphere was always a home to me.

Once again, as with Daren’s experience, music as a means of connecting with others who have shared interests is a shared theme of home.

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Others, such as Justin, spoke about the sense of home specifically at TC3 (Justin. In conversation with the author. Seattle. February 26, 2017). He described the “feel” of TC3, saying:

It's like a little community, which is nice, I like the community feel. Everybody there is pretty honest.

Being relatively new to the condition of houselessness, Justin appreciated the sense of community that he found at TC3.

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Kevin also shared his thoughts on the environment at TC3. When asked what keeps him at TC3, Kevin said:

The people. The people that are here...if you gave me a place and I had the money to afford it, yeah, I'm not gonna turn it down, but eventually I'll get to that point. I'm not worried about getting there today, because as far as money, it ain't about money with me no more.

For Kevin, as for Justin, the people who were part of the TC3 community made all the difference in how he felt about this time in his life.

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Recognition of the strong sense of community at TC3 was not limited to Justin and Kevin, however. A person who chose to stay anonymous (referred to as Anonymous 2) wrote about the instant sense of community upon joining TC3 and the stark difference between the atmosphere there versus "mainstream society" (Anonymous 2. Email message to the author. February 21, 2017):

While scouring the Seattle area I became aware of the tent cities. Having lived rough before, that sounded promising so I gave Tent City 3 (TC3) a try. I've since lived in four tent cities in the Seattle area, and in seven different locations with TC3 (soon to be eight). I was immediately impressed with the sense of community that I felt here. I quickly made friends and many acquaintances.

The difference between this community and the communities I had experienced before was like night and day. In mainstream society, people are atomized. Everyone lives in their own box, where they tune in to electronic devices that dull the mind, simulate real friendships, and pretend to offer a fair and balanced depiction of reality.

Unlike Justin, being part of TC3 was not a novel experience for Anonymous 2 as he has lived in multiple tent cities. However, for both Justin and Anonymous 2, it did not take long for them to

recognize the strong sense of community at TC3. Anonymous 2 also spoke of TC3 being closer to the “natural condition” of humanity:

I think society has much to learn from tent cities. We as a species evolved as tribal hunter-gatherers, living and moving in groups. What I’ve experienced here is much closer to our natural condition, and its much healthier from a social aspect.

Referencing a “tribal hunter-gatherer” way of life, Anonymous 2 expresses the importance of community in his own way, saying that it is a healthier way of life, socially speaking.

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Israel also felt that living with TC3 was “healthier” than other ways of living (Israel. Email message to the author. March 8, 2017):

The little gradual changes in the way I perceive home is too long to list and keeps evolving but I will recognize that I tend to be much healthier when living in social communities like TC3.

While he was aware that his perception of home is complex and “evolving”, he also clearly stated that being part of a social community felt healthier, as did Anonymous 2.

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Further emphasizing the social aspects of TC3 that Anonymous 2 and Israel discussed, Anonymous 4 said he feels the strongest sense of community in his life now while houseless:

That'd be now...even when I was married with kids and I lived on a street in a neighborhood, I had a job in the city. I'd say I feel it [a sense of community] now.

For Anonymous 4, as for many others, having a house and a “job in the city” was not enough to make him feel at home. It was only when he stepped outside this routine that he began to find home.

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As the meta-theme of *Human Connection* reveals, experiences in which people like Anonymous 4 did not feel at home were clearly related to a disconnect from people and community –whether a fallout with family or friends, a sense of loss, or a feeling of loneliness or

not belonging. In sharing their life journeys before joining TC3, people spoke about broken family relationships, a sense of not belonging, and difficult childhoods. While a disconnect from community may not be the only reason someone chooses to be part of a community like TC3, the stories reveal a correlation between having no one to turn to and becoming houseless. The stories also show that regaining a sense of home comes as a result of finding community.

This makes evident that human connection is the core component of feeling at home. In other words, if this human connection is lost, a person can feel homeless and may also end up houseless. Furthermore, none of the facets of *Question 1 –What Creates a Sense of Home?* can individually provide a sense of home without this core factor. It seems that places like TC3 have given some people a sense of home that they had lost and were trying to regain, or had never had to begin with. In finding a sense of community while houseless, the members of TC3 challenge the common expression that one goes “home” when they go to their house. The next section reinforces this idea with stories about the different facets of *Question 1*.

## 6.2 Question 1: What Creates a Sense of Home?

### 6.2.1 Safety and Security

One of the main concerns of people dwelling in the public realm is safety and security. It is also one of the issues that can be addressed more effectively when people live communally, such as the case of TC3. Jeffrey spoke of the benefits of being around a group of people in TC3 where his belongings are safe (Jeffrey. In conversation with the author. Seattle. February 16, 2017):

One of the challenges of being homeless...safety. I guess that can speak to community. That's one of the reasons I like being with a group of people. I can leave my things there...like my backpack and guitar is there now, instead me of having to [carry] it around all day, which is tedious and it puts a kind of a negative connotation on me, and I'm already...the black male super predator (laughing)...so there's already a negative connotation. I'm breathing while I'm black.

As Jeffrey shared, the physical and social insecurity of being houseless are mitigated when people trust their community. While Jeff has concerns about safety as do many others, he also

carries an additional burden of feeling that he is seen as a threat because of his race. He also talks about finding “mutual protection” in a gypsy lifestyle, even if temporary:

My community is gypsy-style, you know, and Tent City [3] kind of plays to that. But it's a temporary community of people that gather together for mutual protection...

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Jason echoed the importance of protection and safety when he was asked to elaborate on a comment he made about feeling alone:

Home is where you lay your head. I mean, you would consider your tent your home...home is where you're supposed to come home and feel safe. That's the definition of home. Where you hang your coat.

In addition to emphasizing the importance of safety that Jeffrey also spoke about, he shared that TC3 provides other forms of security:

This has given people some sort of shelter and food.

Therefore, in addition to physical safety, other forms of security, such as food security, are needed. These are easier to achieve when people live collectively, which makes safety and security one of the essential manifestations of human connection, the meta-theme of the TC3 stories and the core component of finding a sense of home.

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Anonymous 1 also wrote about survival and protection in communal living situations:

Tent Cities and encampments emerge as a means of survival for those who can't afford housing. People at tent cities form their own communities with set rules to discipline and protect members.

Unlike those who are housed and have their basic needs met, survival is a daily consideration for many of those experiencing homelessness. This makes human connection and a collective living situation much more important for the homeless than for the housed.

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Justin expressed sentiments similar to Jeffrey's about trusting people at TC3 and finding mutual protection:

Everybody has their own little tent spot. Everybody just leaves it alone.

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We get some pretty sketchy newcomers sometimes. We just keep our eye on them and just tell them what's up and then they'll straighten out usually. You can just leave your stuff charging there [community tent] all day and nobody will touch it.

Since people at TC3 are able to leave their belongings in their tents, confident that nothing will be stolen, this means that they have formed their own trustworthy community, which both Justin and Anonymous 1 spoke about.

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Anonymous 4 also wrote about the sense of security and ability to leave belongings at TC3 in order to take care of other responsibilities:

About two years ago, I was at the hostel, and when my savings were gone and I wasn't working there anymore, I became homeless. And right away hooked up with the SHARE organization that does the tent cities and such. And I got to the Tent City, I didn't have to carry my backpack or... all my stuff with me anymore. It was a weight off and I was able to go to work and not have to worry. You know, all of a sudden there's a security—a secure place and comfort. Also, shelter from the weather conditions and shelter from loneliness as well. And so [it] immediately answered a lot of problems for me and it took care of some obstacles.

For Anonymous 4, TC3 does not just provide protection from climatic elements, but protection from the condition of loneliness. This reiterates the importance of mutual protection and community to make people feel at ease and began to find a sense of home.

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While those at TC3 can depend on each other for mutual support and protection, those who are houseless and living alone face a more difficult predicament in terms of safety and security. Dan expressed his concerns for those who lived on the streets alone, rather than living in a community like TC3 (Dan. In conversation with the author. Seattle. February 25, 2017). He also mentioned that tent city “saved” him the first time he was in a state of houselessness:

...[Tent City 3 is a] rent-free place to lay my head and be safe off the streets. I mean I've never really had to sleep too much out on the streets. I never had any problems, but I could imagine them being serious, you know.

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And I've stayed at Tent City before. The first time I ever went homeless was here in Seattle. And Tent City saved me. And it's a community that sometimes I think is a little self-serving. But on the whole it's good people.

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What I don't understand is why isn't there ten more tent cities? If there were more tent cities, and maybe if they were wet<sup>10</sup>, we wouldn't see the tents lined up in the bushes or under freeways. Those people are subject to serious police harassment. I don't even know [be]cause I've never done it, but I imagine that when they're sweepin'<sup>11</sup> a camp, that it's pretty horrible and oppressive. And I do recall a fellow who got ran over by the lawnmower and killed...he was drunk and passed out and they ran him over.

The stories that Dan shared about houseless people struggling to survive on their own confirm the importance of community in providing safety, security, and a sense of home.

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Similar to Dan, Anonymous 2 wrote about the dangers of sleeping outside alone compared to the mutual protection and sense of security provided by living communally in TC3:

Most importantly, coming together in community is what keeps us safe. Sleeping alone outside is inherently dangerous. Sleeping with one eye open isn't really sleeping, which makes it hard to function the next day. That makes it extremely difficult to find and keep a job. Conversely, in the tent cities if someone is threatened with violence they need only shout for help. The next sound you'll hear are zippers opening, lots of zippers.

---

Some homeless activists would be appalled to know that I view TC3 as my home. Though my tent is small and meager, it keeps me warm and dry (with the help of my cold weather sleeping bag). My belongings are safe, as am I, and I'm surrounded by people who care about me. Every night I look forward to returning to my cozy and safe surroundings.

By describing the response to a call for help at TC3 with "zippers opening, lots of zippers", Anonymous 2 creatively expresses the community bond and guaranteed protection that many people described.

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<sup>10</sup> In this context, "wet" means allowing alcohol consumption and not enforcing sobriety or treatment as a condition for staying in an encampment or receiving services.

<sup>11</sup> "Sweeping" a camp refers to the "camp sweeps" conducted by the City of Seattle, which means forcibly moving an unsanctioned encampment from the location it is in.

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Although Ivan had never slept outside before TC3, he said that TC3 is helping him recover from a very stressful living situation that left him traumatized:

[Be]cause like I said, just leeching that house out of my body, out of my brain, it's been a rough. I mean, there's still nights I have sleepless nights. I mean, just remembering some of the stuff that happened. Now, never-ending PTSD... but like I said, living out here with these people, and knowing that no matter what, if any of those people from the house decided to pay me a visit, they're going to be in a bit of a trouble. Cause I know they got my back. That's...a big thing.

Knowing that there is community support and mutual protection are extremely important to Ivan after experiencing a dangerous living situation. He feels safe and secure knowing that there are people around to stand up for him, if needed.

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Todd further elaborated on this community bond in a poem he wrote to share his story (Todd. Handwritten poem shared with the author. Seattle. March 1, 2017). He expressed mixed feelings about having “safety in numbers” while living communally, but also feeling anxious and unsure about his situation:

Safety In numbers  
But I Hate Crowds  
It makes me anxious  
Nervous –unexpected  
But that’s what they say.  
Not knowing where or who you may end up with. It’s still cold and dark. Wet, cold –unsure.

Todd’s poem shows that despite the safety and security provided by communal living as part of TC3, he still has a sense of uncertainty and anxiety. This is similar to the perspective on survival that Anonymous 1 shared about the situation of the houseless. Also, Todd’s expression about “safety in numbers” confirms that being part of a collective group, like TC3, is better than facing the dangers of sleeping alone outside with one eye open, as was expressed by Anonymous 2.

The stories under the facet of *Safety and Security* highlight the importance of being protected and secure. Security includes not only lack of threats but also food security and access to basic services and utilities like water, electricity, and shelter. It also includes trust amongst the community members to protect each other. In this context, having a community creates not only a sense of home, but also a sense of ease. Without the clarity of mind that results from feeling safe and secure, one is unable to begin finding a sense of self and a sense of home.

### 6.2.2 *Sharing Tangibles and Intangibles*

In addition to safety and security, people talked about the sharing of responsibilities, resources, and values that helped create a sense of community in TC3 and elsewhere. Jeffrey spoke of a time when he lived in “switchboards”, where travelers could be connected with people willing to host them in their homes in exchange for simple services:

Back in those days they had these things called switchboards. They were kind of like information clearing houses. They could hook you up with people. People would offer places to stay for travelers. You could come stay at people’s houses, and if you were a musician, they loved that, because you could play some guitar for ‘em or something. And then I would meet people that way. And then I came across this group in the Bay Area called Earth People’s Park. And they were kind of like a... I guess hippie commune sort of thing...it was really easy to kind of fall in with them.

He also talked about the busker community (also known as street musicians) and hippie communes, which provided him with a place to stay in the past.

I was busking on Telegraph Avenue and I met this guy. He was another –kind of like a street person, you know, didn’t have a place to live, but he had the keys to this storage area...in an underground parking lot. And he would kind of handpick a few people he thought were cool enough to stay there out of the hustlin’. We could keep our gear there safely. We could stay there safely at night. And he knew Earth People’s Park and he introduced me to some of the Earth People’s Park communes in Berkeley. And I kind of got into the woodwork there and became a member, if that’s the way you put it. I mean the rent was whatever you could afford every month, and most people who stayed there didn’t even have to pay any money for rent...

Through communal living, Jeffrey’s story expresses the benefit of sharing resources and finding safety and security.

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Like Jeffrey, Kevin also spoke about sharing resources. When asked what home meant to him, Kevin said:

Just people you can share what you got with. Whether it's dinner, smoke break...

This implies that whether tangible or experiential, having people to share things with is what comprises home, and not a physical dwelling.

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People not only mentioned shared resources, but also spoke about shared expectations. When asked about a sense of community, Kirk spoke about roles and responsibilities:

Just knowing that you'll be taken care of. That you'll be heard. That there are rules. That there are expectations. Those are included.

For Kirk, community is not just about sharing resources, but also knowing that the people around you will listen to you and stand up for you, if need be.

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Anonymous 2 spoke specifically about TC3, discussing that community was not only sharing workload, but also upholding communal values, as Kirk had expressed:

Here we all agree to participate by sharing the workload, which means we have a shared responsibility to help each other. We watch and protect each other's belongings and uphold strict rules that prohibit racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.

Whether workload, protection, or rules, the story from Anonymous 2 and others in TC3 show that a true community is one that thrives on sharing.

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The stories under the facet of *Sharing Tangibles and Intangibles* reveal people's dependency on one other for protection, support, and workload. Cooperation and mutual expectations were expressed as important values to keep the community in tact. Whether responsibilities,

resources, values, or experiences, sharing one's valuable assets with others helped create a sense of trust and community. This is somewhat antithetical to individualist values and contributes to providing a sense of home and togetherness. While the existence of human connection and community are needed in order for sharing to take place, a sharing of resources and values will, in turn, strengthen the sense of community, and therefore, the sense of home.

### 6.2.3 *A Supportive, Accommodating, Nonjudgmental Environment*

As part of a collective community, many members of TC3 spoke fondly of how welcoming and nonjudgmental people are towards one another. This provides a sense of acceptance and belonging, which makes them feel at home. Courtney, for example, rejected being considered "homeless", arguing that where one chooses to dwell and has a community and support system is one's home:

I'm not homeless. I have a community. You know, I live in a tent, but it's cover. Yeah it gets a little cold in there at night, but...we take care of each other. We watch out for each other. We're not homeless. I mean that's our home there...so anywhere where you sleep, where you put your stuff, or where you have a support system, is your home.

While the core component of home is human connection, simply having a human connection without more elaboration on what this means is not enough to create a sense of home. This needs to be reinforced with a supportive environment that provides as much of a sense of home as TC3 gave Courtney.

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Kirk also spoke about the necessity of being accepting and welcoming, but viewed it from a different perspective than Courtney. He criticized the stigmatization of a Native American lifestyle and the control of the state on people's movement in their own land. He refers to the United States as Turtle Island, which is what some natives called (and may continue to call) this land before it was colonized and Anglicized as the United States. He also spoke about personal experiences of feeling ostracized by society. When asked about how people could help each other feel more at home, he said:

Being open and welcoming and –that’s it, accepting people. It’s a hard predicament. There are so many factors to it. Where we’re at right now, Turtle Island is for Turtle Islanders .Yet who’s here, a lot of settlers. Here it’s 220 million settlers. The vast majority of the population are settlers. Amnesty has been granted to them but these settlers formed a government and said...the people who are originally from here, Turtle Islanders, can’t move around Turtle Island anymore. It’s unacceptable. They call it immigration. I call it freedom of movement in our own land. But it’s just about embracing people. People aren’t comfortable. You’ve gone up to someone and noticed, oh they don’t want to talk to me even though I’m being nice and smiling and trying to shake their hand or whatever it is and obviously they’re uncomfortable. It’s just waiting or providing whatever it is to ensure that people are comfortable. People will never be because they’ve been ostracized by society.

Kirk’s takes on a decolonizing stance to making people feel at home and provides a reminder of the lifestyles that existed before Turtle Island was settled. Through this reminder, the current cultural values and stigmas around home and houselessness, respectively, can be called into question.

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While different from Kirk’s perspective on creating a sense of home, Ivan also spoke of the need to be nonjudgmental and accepting of people as a basic level of dignity, regardless of their circumstances:

No matter whether they make the conscious choice to drink or not and be homeless or not, which a lot of 'em have, they still deserve the decency, the chance to live in a home, even a tiny home. It's dignity. That's what it amounts to, is dignity.

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Similar to Ivan, Anonymous 1 wrote about the need to be more empathetic towards those who are houseless:

I believe a sense of belonging equates to a sense of community. Even though some of us are experiencing hardships, unemployment, addictions, breakup of families etc. we all need a place to call our own. Everyone is different and maybe some members of the community do need to understand why some people choose to live in tent cities.

By ensuring an empathetic environment, tent cities seem to create a sense of belonging that complements a sense of community. This supports the feelings expressed by Courtney, Kirk, and Ivan on what comprises home.

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In Todd's understanding of belonging, he referred to the "heartfelt" nature of the community, enduring struggles and sticking together in hard times:

My community suffers with a smile on their face everyday, we are the glue, we are the grit, we are the only ones left wanting when most have moved on. My community is strong, heartfelt, enduring. For there is no community like mine anywhere. We are Seattleites, we are 12's we stick together period.

As Todd expressed, having a place to call one's own and facing adversity with others seem to be two of the factors that make many people feel at home at TC3. This is similar to Courtney's expression of home being the place where one sleeps and has support.

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Even those who were new to TC3 spoke about how welcoming others have been. Ron compared how accepting people at TC3 were to the more judgmental attitude of people outside TC3:

You know I just walk up here and I haven't even washed my face. I mean these guys [TC3 members] –I feel welcome here. Now when I leave here...I try to get myself together, presentable, clean...but some people stare at me. It's ok. It's ok. I know who I am. But I feel welcome here [at TC3]. This is home. This is a temporary home, second home, and these guys make me feel welcome.

Although Ron doesn't see TC3 as a permanent home, it has still been valuable in providing a temporary place where he feels welcomed and accepted. Home in Ron's understanding is not just one permanent place or idea. It is a combination of places and circumstances, even if temporary, where he does not feel judged. This is in line with Kirk and Ivan's opinions on the importance of a nonjudgmental environment to provide a sense of home.

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Donna was another member of TC3 who had recently joined the group. She wrote about her story of first arriving in Seattle and realizing that she and her husband “were going to be homeless” (Donna. Email message to the author. March 2, 2017). Feeling panicked about finding a place to stay, she contacted TC3 and was happily surprised by the welcoming and friendly attitude of everyone she interacted with:

So after the initial shock and panic wore off of the realization that we were going to be homeless we started looking up homeless shelters in Seattle. The first one I called was TC3. I talked to someone named Steve who I didn't know but at least was a friendly voice on the other end of the line. He told me not to worry that if we couldn't find any sort of indoor shelter that we had a spot here at TC3. A couple of hours later I called back just to double check because by then it was cold, rainy and a little panic had set back in. I talked to Steve again and he reassured me that TC3 had a place for us. He gave me bus directions to the camp and told me to call when we got in town. We did that and this time I spoke with Ivan who was equally polite and informative. I told my husband then that I didn't know either one of these men but I knew in my heart that they wouldn't let us freeze or starve to death and I was right.

We got into camp at 10pm on a Friday night cold, scared and as unsure of a situation as one could be.

As soon as we stepped into camp most of that uneasy feeling disappeared. The camp was well lit, organized and clean which is far from any picture we had in our heads. We were welcomed into the TC3 and their community with open arms. And what we realized over the next few days was that this community wasn't just several people staying in separate tents doing their own thing but a group of people working together for the betterment not only of this camp but other TC communities as well. We are just starting our time here. I don't know how long we will be a part of this community but it's home to us now and we are looking forward to making friendships that will last a lifetime.

Donna saw more in TC3 than just a group of people living together. She saw a community supporting a bigger network of people. Although she was unsure of long she and her husband would remain at TC3, what she found was enough to make it home for the time being. These feelings are the same for Ron who also found a temporary home at TC3.

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A third person who was new to TC3 and houselessness was Justin. Joining the community of TC3 broke stigmas and misconceptions, as he explained:

So I just ran out of money and lost my housing and that's what brought me here. But it's pretty cool. I've always thought homelessness was like a bad thing. Like nobody wants to be homeless or to be known as a homeless person. But they have a lot of resources...we get a lot of really good donations...it's just a lot of cool resources and nice people that are willing to help and donate to help people's lives go a lot better and smoother...it's nice. I like it.

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...being part of it has changed a lot...[be]cause you see people on the side of the streets in Seattle. They're always shootin' up dope, passed out in front of doorways and stuff. And so that's just what I expected really, was just a tent city full of dopers and people that don't do good. But no, it's actually just responsible people. A lot of people there, they're just there just [be]cause housing is so expensive and they work twelve to fourteen-hour days and they just don't want to go to a house just to call it home, and go to sleep, and eat, and then go back to work for another twelve, fourteen hours and pay 1,600 dollars a month for housing.

Justin makes a clear distinction between "house" and "home" in explaining that people do not want to be stuck in a cycle of sleeping, eating, and working just to afford rent. Having a house to call home is not the same as actually feeling at home, which all of the previous stories also expressed in different ways.

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In the stories under the facet of *A Supportive, Accommodating, Nonjudgmental Environment*, people spoke about feeling welcomed and accepted at TC3 regardless of past experiences, current circumstances, or plans for the future. They discussed the nonjudgmental attitude of the community to all its members, which makes people feel comfortable, reassured, and validated. These stories made clear that a supportive environment has the power to give people a sense of home, even if being part of TC3 is just a temporary situation. This is especially important given that human connection is the core aspect of creating a sense of home, but cannot be fully effective independent of the shared agreement amongst the community to be nonjudgmental, accommodating, and supportive.

#### 6.2.4 *Stability, Familiarity, and Consistency*

Stability, familiarity, and consistency were common themes in people's stories. This could mean the ability to stay in one place or have a consistent group of people around, both of which aided in developing and maintaining long-term relationships. While remaining in one location was important to many, it did not emerge as a precursor to feeling at home. Some were happy

voluntarily being unsettled as long as they were with a familiar group of people. When asked what makes her feel at home, Anonymous 1 answered with a simple description:

I guess a sense of belonging, a place of my own, structure, and familiarity.

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Similarly, Anonymous 2 spoke about daily routine and the power of greeting the same people every morning:

The sense of community in the tent cities is powerful. I start my day with a trip to the kitchen tent where I grab a cup of coffee and mingle with my neighbors in the community tent. When I leave and return to camp, there are always people to interact with.

In having the same people to interact with everyday, Anonymous 2 implies the importance of familiarity, as Anonymous 1 also shared.

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Kirk spoke of home more abstractly, but also said that familiarity is what makes a place home. He referenced the place and culture that were part of his upbringing:

It's all made up. This concept of home, it's pretty abstract. Things that we're all more familiar with resonate more as home to us. So when I go back to see my family, I'll feel more at home...when I go to Mexico, which is where I'm descended from, and that's even a particular part of Mexico that I would be from... going there and being with people in a culture that I was raised in or more similar to mine...

For Kirk, familiarity was found in family and childhood, while for Anonymous 1 it was found in structure, and for Anonymous 2 it was found in routine and a consistent community.

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More people in TC3 elaborated on the importance of structure and familiarity in finding a sense of home and community. Courtney explained that moving every three months makes people feel hopeless and is a time consuming process. She expressed a need for having tent cities sanctioned so they could remain in one place for a longer period of time:

With Tent City 3 and Tent City 4 moving...we're not city sanctioned; like Tent City 5...is city sanctioned. I feel like...maybe if the city would sanction, we found a...more permanent spot for Tent City 3 and 4...where they didn't have to move. The people wouldn't quite feel so hopeless. But we do have a move and it does take a few days and we go from neighborhood to neighborhood.

The hopelessness caused by having to move every few months likely makes it more difficult for people to develop relationships, build community, and find a sense of home. For Courtney and for others, stability plays an important role in building a community. As an employee of SHARE, Courtney spoke about the feeling of stability that results from being part of a consistent community.

SHARE...makes you feel stable. It gives you a little bit of stability because you have the community...it gives you a home. It's a home. Our community, my tent city. It's a home. Our tents are our homes.

Courtney not only attributed a sense of community to stability, but also felt that home is this community. Therefore, others who also spoke about community likely associate their communities with their sense of home.

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Courtney was not the only one who had frustrations about the quarterly move of TC3. Kevin was also beginning to grow tired of moving every three months, but still wanted to remain a part of the TC3 community:

I probably will get tired of this three months move stuff... let's go ahead and end that bullshit. Come on, three months and you move us again? Put us in the woods and leave us there. I mean, why not?

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We need a good community. And whenever they move, I'm gonna move with 'em. I just wish it was kind of like more permanent...you know, this is nice, but we're only gonna be here for three months. Like right now, I just got here, I'm looking at the rest -seventeen days and we're out. And I'm still putting shit together like I'm living here forever.

While Kevin was irritated by the instability in place, this was not enough to deter him from holding onto the stability of the TC3 community. Although the high turnover rate in the population of TC3 means that the community may not actually always be stable, there are

some people who mentioned that they have been in and out of TC3. Furthermore, perhaps some people, like Kevin and Courtney, have developed an attachment to TC3 as an entity. This entity in and of itself might be home for some, especially if it is one of few places that they feel they belong to and are welcome in.

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Chris also touched on the idea of stability as a place to stay and have “a sense of normalcy”. He also expressed the challenges of completing simple daily tasks when one is houseless:

As far as coming back here [TC3], yeah it gives you stability. At least you got some place to stay, even though it's outdoors. And the weather can be rough on ya. It still takes a lot of time to do silly things like shower or do your laundry. It takes like three times as long to take care of that stuff.

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The longest I was ever in this position was eight months. It's hard. It wears on ya. It is tough. You really don't get sleep and then you wake up and you feel like you were beat up. Anything to get a sense of normalcy.

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To anybody with a resemblance of dignity, this is humiliating. And it's demoralizing. That in and of itself wears on you.

Although Chris finds his situation humiliating, he still values the stability at TC3 and the guarantee of having a place to stay. Knowing that there is a place that he can always come back to helps provide the “sense of normalcy” that he and others, like Courtney, long for.

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For some, normalcy and stability were unfamiliar concepts growing up, and this affected their sense of home. Daren expressed some challenges in maintaining long-term relationships because of a childhood that involved a lot of travel. When asked if he had a sense of home or if was looking for one, he said:

I think I'm not sure just because from not growing up in one place and having established relationships. Most people have established relationships for their whole childhood. And other than my immediate family, I haven't had that. I mean throughout my whole life, people have come and gone. So as far as that goes, I haven't had it.

Because of a childhood that lacked locational and social stability, Daren had never developed a sense of home. However, when asked if he could speak more about traveling a lot as a child, he explained that the travel itself didn't bother him much, but the loss of friends did:

You know, it really didn't bother me too much. The hardest part of it was losing friends and having to make new ones every three years. I mean you get used to it, I guess. Needless to say, probably because of that, it's been hard to hold long-term relationships.

Having never been able to maintain long-term relationships growing up, a sense of home seems to be a foreign concept to Darn. Unlike some of the others from TC3 who shared their experiences of home, Daren struggles until this day to identify what home is or whether he is looking for home.

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While Daren found that travel made maintaining relationships difficult, others were able to find stability even on the move. Jeffrey expressed a desire to travel with like-minded people while still having a base to return to:

Essentially [I'm a gypsy nomad], but I'm a fan of being in one place, having a base...but I don't have the ways and means to do that the way I'd like to do that. So I do the next best thing and make the base internal and try to make the best of where I am. The home base part...I would like to be in a vehicle, but then also another part of me likes to find a community of people that kind of think on that wavelength. Like say a bunch of people that had vehicles. That lived the hippie school bus concept. Living on some land somewhere as a base and then you take the bus and drive around the country in the summertime and then the rest of the time you just park it there. And some people always staying there and it's a place you can always come back to...I mean ideally, the fantasy bit, we're off the grid, we're growing what we need and then trading for the rest or bartering or exchanging. People have various talents, like say a bunch of musicians, street artists –again, fantasy (laughing). But I've done versions of that before so I know it's not complete fantasy.

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I always prefer to have my own place. This is a stopgap...I like to think I'm flexible. I can adapt easily, relatively easily. It's getting more and more difficult the older I get, obviously...

In Jeffrey's case, there is tension between a desire for a place to return to (stability) and the freedom to roam (a gypsy nomad lifestyle). In both cases, whether settled or on the move, he mentioned wanting to live around others. He talked particularly about a desire to be around "like-minded people":

I like being around like-minded people. If I was Bill Gates, I could buy a 20 million dollar penthouse in one of those glass towers downtown for instance, sure if I had the ways and means, I'd do it. Probably invite a bunch of people...to join me up there, to hang out there with me, but what the hey!

The last section of this excerpt emphasizes that having the company of people is more important to Jeffrey than the existence of a physical shelter or being rooted in one physical place. Home to him, therefore, is the stability of living with like-minded people, as was also the experience for Anonymous 2, Kirk, Kevin, and Courtney. For Daren, this was not a lived experience but something he desired.

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The facet of *Stability, Familiarity, and Consistency* reveals the importance of having a consistent community and environment in order to build strong, long-term relationships. This can mean stability in terms of living location, living situation, relationships, and employment. People also spoke of the harm caused by encampment sweeps and TC3's quarterly move. These moves force people to repeatedly build or find a new community, which can be emotionally exhausting and demoralizing. They can also hinder any attempts to find a sense of home. In addition to the facet of stability, people spoke of more proactive and dynamic aspects of being houseless, which are discussed in the following section.

### 6.2.5 *Active Engagement and Acts of Solidarity*

Acts of solidarity and stories of activism were common experiences for members of TC3, both before and during their time as part of this community. Common themes included social justice, selflessness, and giving back. José spoke of working with Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) as an alumnus of the program to help others deal with alcohol addiction. He said that being part of AA allows him to give back and feel good about himself:

...I stay in the AA for twenty six year. And I working for many year with the new people. Help to new people. I don't make any cent. Why I do that? I don't do it for this people. I do it for me. Because when you help to somebody, no is that's people to you help. Help to you, to feel good. To feel nice! When you feel nice with you, no matter where you are, no matter where you sleep, no matter nothing!

Counseling others in AA did not only make José feel good about himself, but also provided a long-term sense of self-worth that keeps him going no matter how difficult his circumstances may be. He also talked about the power of promising to be there for people in the midst of their struggles:

You know, how can I explain to you? I'm veteran in AA. And people believe me, what I say...this people trust in me. Because this people know me for too many year...new people need to know, I come in one day like you, and I feel this, I feel this, I feel this, I feel this and I do this, this, this, and this, and you have to take [his] hand, and you have to tell him, "Don't worry, I stay with you all the time when you need me." And this people when they open the eye, he know you there...and you do it because you feel good inside.

For José, a sense of satisfaction in helping others strengthened his sense of self. He built a community with AA, which in some ways is a home to him. At the same time, he carried this sense of purpose with him and is able to be continually be at home within himself, whether at TC3 or elsewhere.

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Kirk also spoke about his definition of "real community" being people getting together and providing help to those who need it, which is equivalent to the experience of community that José shared about AA:

That's real community. Taking care of each other. Saying I need help and getting that help. Or at least getting the attention. In Vermont, I worked for an organization called COVER [Community of Volunteers Affecting Repair]...an organization that simply repairs homes for free, totally free. So if someone needs a roof, if someone needs their floor fixed...if someone needs a ramp, we'd go and we'd build it. We'd have a bunch of volunteers. I got paid, I worked for them, but [a] group of volunteers would go and build the ramp. We'd repair the roof. We'd repair the floor. Doublewide trailer, normal homes, whatever it is. We'd make the house...we'd make the dwelling livable. And that was community there...by taking care of each other, we proved that we had community. Or that the community genuinely cared. That the volunteers coming from the community together saying "Oh, you need help? We'll help you."

He also shared experiences of joining Occupy Wall Street and the lessons learnt about what it takes to have a successful community during this time.

So Occupy started...I'm from San Antonio. Two million people, primarily Latino. The majority of Occupy members were white. And to them, to a lot of people, community was something new. And we had to make a community there, we had to set standards. It failed, it totally failed, it wasn't cohesive. That's fine. It was a learning experience for a lot of people. I moved on. I went to New York. Occupy Wall Street had already been raided. Joined a squat. That was sort of this branch off Occupy Wall Street. That was great. They had a culture. They had a community. We took care of each other. I only stayed for a month, but great experience. And the community accepted us, the greater community accepted us because we were fighting the marginalization of foreclosure of homes, homelessness, and the cops. The cops tried to raid us, the neighbors came out, this was around 3 AM one day, jumped up on the roof said, "Hey they're trying to raid us", the neighbors came out and got the cops to leave.

Kirk's experience in New York with the "greater community" accepting the Occupy activists is an example of how people can make each other feel at home, even if a situation is temporary. Furthermore, he had a sense of belonging within the community of Occupy activists because of their shared purpose. Once again, this is similar to the shared purposed of AA volunteers like José. Kirk also shared stories of traveling the world and feeling more at home in non-colonial states:

I mean going around the world, I felt more at home in France and Thailand and Malaysia than I felt in places that happened to be colonial like Australia and the United States, and this being a place I was born. I feel more at home in places where people will call out evil, where people will stand up for their collective rights, will stand up for each other.

By mentioning places in which people "will call out evil", Kirk brings in a social justice lens to the sense of solidarity, community, and belonging. Kirk also spoke of a more all-encompassing understanding of the human experience, in which home is the earth, inhabited not only by humans but also all living things:

I think it's just...culture. Something that connects us all and when we look at each other and see the humanity or see the shared existence. A lot of First Nations, when they say "people", when we us the word "people", it doesn't mean just humans, it means every living thing. It means the trees, it means the worms, it's everything.

This perspective of "home" that goes beyond the human race carries implications for environmental and social justice.

Anonymous 2 also saw home and community through the lens of social justice, as he wrote about dedicating his life to becoming a full-time activist in Seattle:

I've been outside now for a year and a half. Though I want to have a thermostat some day, I don't feel a sense of urgency. By becoming homeless in Seattle I unwittingly fulfilled my dream of becoming a full-time activist. Most of my efforts have been around homeless issues. Most notably, I was a leader in our five month direct action this past summer. I helped to create two protest encampments in downtown Seattle, and was in charge of the smaller camp (Tent City 7) for its four month existence. With the arrival of Donald Trump in the Oval Office, I'm expanding my activism into other areas, especially racial justice.

I'm still working on my writing and finally plan to start a new blog next month. I'm almost done designing the interface and have content ready to go. I have no idea where life will take me, though I expect that my writing will present opportunities to connect with others, especially folks in the activist communities.

For Anonymous 2, being houseless has given him the opportunity to seek an individual and collective purpose of fighting for the rights of the houseless. For, him, José and Kirk, this commitment to uplifting others provides a sense of self-actualization and belonging to an all-encompassing human community.

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Anonymous 4 also spoke of "becoming part of something bigger" and breaking out of the corporate "bubble" to serve a higher goal:

I'm becoming part of something bigger than myself. Most people in the corporate world, they really yearn to be part of something bigger than themselves. You know, we're stuck in our bubbles on wheels and everything's personalized for us. Our settings on our phone. The voice that comes over and does our thinking for us, and everything [is] so personalized. And just normal people when they run into each other, socially, it's awkward because the conversation is not personalized and set to their settings. And this is a time and place where it's so important to really keep a perspective on love, number one, in that we're all human and equal.

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...at least I was part of starting something that now is going to be helping a lot of other people... when I'm gone. That's what's soothing my spirit right now in my life.

Anonymous 4 makes a clear distinction between the sense of purpose he has found while houseless and the lack of a higher purpose "in the corporate world". By finding something to soothe his spirit, he is beginning to find a sense of self and a home with others who share

similar passions. Furthermore, he seems to have found another, broader sense of home amongst humanity in general, as had Kirk, José, and Anonymous 2.

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Ron also expressed a desire to give back, even while traveling:

...wherever I travel to, I do a lot of volunteer work. I volunteer in other shelters across the country...because I don't always stay in the shelters. Normally when I travel, I stay in a hotel room or something, but I volunteer in a shelter, I volunteer with the Salvation Army, different charity places, to give back. There's always about giving, not take, take, take, gimme, gimme, gimme. It's always about giving. What can I give you?

His emphasis on giving rather than taking is the ethos of the different causes Kirk, Anonymous 2, and José have dedicated themselves to.

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Steven also found a sense of purpose at TC3. He wrote about seeing his life as a spiritual mission of being with "the chosen people" and finding home "with complete strangers" (Steven. Handwritten story shared with the author. Seattle. March 7, 2017):

My being homeless is by choice coz I would rather be here with the chosen people. Now I believe this is my purpose in life that God has chose for me. My home is here with complete strangers who needs help with the second chances they have been given. M[a]y have lost a lot of family and friends but coming here I've have gotten some of that lost back. Since I been here I've learned that a native is like the black man in the south.

Although he initially refers to the people at TC3 as strangers, he then says they have helped him gain something back after losing family and friends. While home at a certain point in his life was with family and friends, it is now with TC3. José, Kirk, Anonymous 2, and others at TC3 also shared and created this sense of home at TC3.

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As is the case for Ron and Steven in particular, Ivan expressed a desire to give back to people in TC3:

If I could do something to give back to them, I will. You know...even if it's not Tent City 3; even getting them out of Tent City 3. You know, shutting down Tent City 3. Getting more...tiny home communities up. I think that should be our goal. We've got plenty of room up here! The whole country's got plenty of room to build tiny houses, especially for people who are on the streets fifty [years old] and above...they need that...our veterans would deserve even more. I know a lot of people are down on the veterans. I understand that...but having been the son of a veteran, I can't forsake them either.

Ivan's accommodating and welcoming attitude is in and of itself a form of solidarity, but he also takes it a step further by wanting to be part of something more actionable.

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Dan shared similar sentiments to Ivan about trying to help in whatever way he can:

...while I'm there, I try to participate and help people. Sometimes you can, sometimes you can't. Some people just have issues that you aren't fixing. Today I'm going out to discuss with the neighborhood of our next site... and it's fun. You get to meet people and explain to them.

His willingness to help people and engage in TC3 activities allows him to build relationships not only with TC3 members, but also host neighborhoods and the general public.

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In a similar way to Dan enjoying TC3 community engagement, Courtney expressed a sense of pride and strength on going with members of TC3 to advocate for their rights:

...Tent City 3 people, we all rode the bus together, we came as a group. And I like that. You know, you come with your little group of people and stand strong.

For Ivan, Dan, and Courtney, a sense of togetherness and offering a helping hand has given them some sense of connection at TC3. While they did not talk specifically about feeling at home, the solidarity and community are part of what helps people find a sense of home.

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While Steven viewed being part of TC3 as a spiritual mission, Jason also viewed his role through the lens of selfless duty and wanting to help those who others have given up on:

I'm here to help people who can't help themselves. That's what I'm in it for. I don't get paid a dime for all the work that I do.

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I am here to let people know that people love them still. I'm that guy that'll give you a big hug. I'm that guy that'll cry with ya. I'm that guy that'll tell you I still love ya. Even after you stab me. And coming from a person where everyone's given up on him.

Just as a person's family or group of closest friends would provide unconditional love, Jason says that he will be there for people even after everyone has given up on them. This compassionate stance is bound to create a sense of community, and in turn, begin to help people feel at home.

Many others also expressed the need to have empathy and view others' situations as part of a shared human experience. While they may have had this understanding prior to being houseless, it seems as though the experience of houselessness created a more heightened awareness of this issue. Anonymous 4 spoke about the camaraderie with people he has met throughout his journey and the alliances that have resulted:

I've met a large community of people and a lot of great friends through these organizations... people with great memories with these last couple years and I really felt a sense of community and camaraderie with. People that we consider more than just friends. And now a lot of those friends have fallen off with drugs, or differences, to put it mildly. And I'm on a steady course. And now I see myself at the tiny village as a place where alliances...I believe in are important. And love is important. And resources worldwide are important...the tiny village is a place where answers to the homeless situation are coming into play. An understanding of it as a whole. It's a model that is copied throughout the whole world.

The camaraderie and global implications he discusses are similar to what Kirk says about genuine community that is created through people supporting one another. Anonymous 4 also spoke further about how the TC3 model is reaching places outside the US:

...there's a village in Africa that runs itself democratically based off the Tent City 3 model. Their whole lives are structured on these cities. And the city of Sacramento, Portland, Phoenix I believe, somewhere in Arizona. People come from all over to see what's actually working and in place right now. So I'm excited to be where I am. And I also know there's more work to be done.

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In addition to Kirk's view on home as a place for all living creatures, Anonymous 3 expressed a holistic understanding of community not defined by boundaries or other demographic characteristics:

Honestly, community –everywhere you go is a community. As long as people [are] dealing with each other, it has to be community. Even your co-worker, your neighborhood, your fellow student, your teacher...as long as people deal with each other and communicate with each other, and work with each other, or live with each other. Community, everywhere. So people has to know what the meaning of community. To deal with each other and to keep the sense of human and to help each other as much as you can, because people [are] for each other.

When asked if he thought a lot of people do not understand what community is, he said:

Yes, big time. I think the whole world doesn't understand what the community is! Beside Tent City 3.

Anonymous 3 was doubtful that the world understands the meaning of community and felt that TC3 was the only place where community was truly understood. This is an eye-opening testament to the solidarity and social structure found at TC3, which others, like Anonymous 2 and Anonymous 4, also attested to.

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José reinforced the understanding of community presented by Anonymous 3, which encompasses any human one interacts with. He rejected defining community by racial or ethnic factors:

I want to make clear this point. For me...I don't have, oh El Salvador, oh Mexico, oh India, no. For me the person is person, no matter what country, no matter what color. For me, that's inside with me. I don't care what religion, I don't care if you believe in God, I don't care if...

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Steven echoed the opinions of José and Anonymous 3 in speaking about the "human race" and being fond of TC3's diverse community:

Our existence of a human race is why God has not destroyed the world yet. He's sending his baby girl "karma" and she's a true bitch. Sorry and that is Donald Trump and his bigotry. That's why I like Tent City 3 coz we're a community of people who come from different races and cities. We accept each other as a person who needs help.

For Kirk, Anonymous 3, José, and Steven, community could be expanded to the human race and home would be anywhere one can find connection with people or even other living things.

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Finding home through human connection goes hand-in-hand with finding a place one feels loved. Anonymous 4 talked about the importance of love as a key value in 2017:

I think in this time, love is the most important thing. Period. More important than your bank account, Donald Trump's agenda...You know...love is more important than the Ten Commandments to me. It's because it's almost like as a species, you're either like all about a solution or against it. At this time, more things get done with alliances and love...the tent city specifically represents a place where you can get all that if that's what you're looking for. This city [Seattle] has so much to offer, so much assistance from people that want it where it should be. If you see someone on the street at night it's because they choose to be, bottom line. And if the argument is, well you got no place to go, that shouldn't even be a -like, what do you mean, no place to go? This is 2017. Everybody has a place where they can feel secure. If you're out on the street walking around, it should be because you want to be.

While Anonymous 2, Steven, and Anonymous 4 were wary of the Trump administration, they also wanted to focus on catalyzing the alliances and relationships they had developed while houseless. Upon reflecting on his newfound purpose since being houseless, Anonymous 4 spoke about the tendency of people to ignore societal problems:

...it would be a question of...what do I make time for in my life? If I'm still interested in something or believe in something that I can be helpful towards, well, I need to make time for it. Because if I don't, I might resent myself and whoever else for taking away from what I feel is important. But at the same time, it's going to be kind of a question of, it's not my problem, like it is for a lot of people. You know, if I'm working and I come home and I have my microwave TV dinner and watch my favorite show or whatever, I might slip past the news because it's not my problem and I don't want to be like that. And whether it be the plight of the homeless, or in another way, it's so important to give back to be positive. And my goal being, you know, as far as my livelihood is putting something in place to help a couple other people, give them an opportunity and work...so they can make it. And I think if I have something in place that gives a couple of guys work...and a way to make it in life, then in a way I'm giving back a little, too.

Like Jason, Steven, and José, Anonymous 4 views his purpose in life as a mission to serve others. This active solidarity is bound to create a resilient community that in turn, provides a sense of home. He also spoke of wanting his son to experience the shared humanity that tent cities have, despite the fact that being “homeless” is “not what a man wants for his son”:

...as a father having a son in this situation, on one hand it's great. I wanted him to come out here and be part of this with me because he was having experiences in his life. I wanted him to see just how beautiful people are even in these circumstances. And there's a way for him to make it here. There's a lot of resources and tons of work in schools and he's so bright. You know on one hand, he can take so much for his life from this. On the other hand, it could be... on the other hand it's homeless. It's not what a man wants for his son. So it puts him in contact in a community, with all sorts of people good and bad.

Despite the hardships, Anonymous 4 sees beauty in the community of TC3. While he could keep his son protected from the reality of houselessness, he instead wants him to learn from the strength and solidarity that emerges from the difficult circumstances of houselessness.

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As the stories in the facet of *Active Engagement and Acts of Solidarity* demonstrates, Anonymous 4 is not the only person who found a higher purpose as part of TC3. Many people's experiences of houselessness motivated them to find a purpose and work towards a goal that serves others, rather than just find a job that would allow them to help themselves. People had a heightened awareness that all human beings share common desires at the core and that “community” is not limited to a race, religion, or ethnic group. While not all of these experiences were solely an outcome of being part of TC3, it seems that living with others, especially in situations of adversity, brings about a sense of empathy and desire to serve a greater good –or as some even expressed, a sacred purpose. In finding a shared purpose, people found a home with each other.

#### 6.2.6 *Self-Governance and Agency*

The final facet of *Question 1 –What Creates a Sense of Home?* is self-governance and agency. This encompasses the self-governed structure of TC3, individual agency, and self-actualization. People also critiqued governmental or institutional attempts to control the lives of the houseless. In terms of collective agency, some people spoke fondly about the self-governed

structure of TC3, which allows members to have agency over the way the community functions. Anonymous 2 spoke about the “real democracy” in tent cities and compared it to what he referred to as a “joke” of a democracy in the US:

Another aspect that makes our community so effective is that we have democratic control over our lives and our future. The notion of democracy in the US is a joke. We pull a handle on election day and think we’ve done something. In the words of Helen Keller, we’re simply choosing “between two avowed autocrats, Tweedledum and Tweedledee.”

I thought that I lived in a democratic country until I experienced real democracy in action at TC3. We have no rulers, only elected positions that can change every week. Here if I don’t like a rule or want something to change, I need only convince my fellow campers and we’ll make that adjustment at the next weekly camp meeting. In these meetings everyone can make motions, everyone can speak their mind, and everyone can vote.

The criticism of American democracy given by Anonymous 2 begs a questioning of the system that is meant to provide people with “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”<sup>12</sup>. In his opinion, the system has failed to provide people with true democracy, and therefore does not serve the purpose or protect the rights it is meant to. Yet, he seems to have found “real democracy in action at TC3”.

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Anonymous 4 also spoke about collective governance, but focused on the structure provided in tent cities, which could provide a “stepping stone” for those viewing it as a temporary situation:

All of a sudden now I'm into a large group of people of communal living, where...could be 50 to 120 people and it provides just the right amount of structure for whoever's wanting to use it as a stepping stone to really start living your life. Or it could be like way too much structure for some people that have been outdoors for a while doing it on their own. So I mean, really, with work and stuff, start saving some money enjoying the city a little. Got involved with the tent city and the larger organization politically and kind of got stalled out there for a while.

When asked whether tent cities could be a permanent solution to “houselessness”, he replied:

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<sup>12</sup> Three of the unalienable rights stated by the Declaration of Independence, which the American government is responsible for protecting for all citizens.

I think it's a permanent solution for the problem, a stepping-stone for the individual. How long they stand on that stone is up to them because they have freedom. It brings together community in and outside of our own community...it has a lot to offer.

This eloquent statement expresses the necessity of tent cities and tiny home villages as short-term solutions alongside longer-term strategies and plans.

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In addition to collective agency, individual agency was equally as important in helping people feel at home. A sense of control was especially important for Courtney who spoke about needing to be busy and structured in her life. While dealing with the loss of family members and being abused by her ex-fiancé, keeping busy allowed her to feel that her life was not going to fall apart:

And now I have more on my plate with my sister. I don't know if my sister is going to make it right now. She has too many injuries and there's swelling in the brain. They need to do more surgeries but they're afraid...and it's like...it's touch and go right now and I need to go home. I need to go back to Vancouver. But I'm scared. I'm scared...I've video chatted with people, I've seen my sister through video chat but I'm scared. I'm scared to be there with my sister. I don't want to. I honestly know that I need to be there if she passes away, but I'm scared to... but I honestly don't know; I am going to work on getting me a place.

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I get a little overwhelmed and sometimes, I feel a little hopeless. You know I still feel like that. But then it's like, when I'm not busy though...like if I have a day off, that's the worst. I hate having days off. I hate days off because then... because I'm on disability<sup>13</sup> for reasons and my brain starts going and going and I can't stop it. And then I start to feel hopeless. But then when I get busy again, it's like, "Ahh, it's back to normal."

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It's my sister, she's my only... I mean, when I come back I'm probably not going to be in a good mood.... I'm number one right now and I'm the one who does everything. And if I was to take time [off], everything would fall apart. And that's what I'm scared of. I don't want my life falling. I mean it's already falling apart. I'm losing my sister. I'm afraid what I have going right now, I don't want it to fall apart [be]cause I need it.

Although home to Courtney was family at one point, she now has begun to develop a sense of home as part of SHARE and TC3. She fears losing this sense of home if she doesn't keep busy and engaged with TC3.

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<sup>13</sup> By "on disability", Courtney means receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), which is one of the two largest "Federal programs that provide assistance to people with disabilities"(Social Security Administration 2017).

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Daren also wanted to have control over his own life. He identified as being “anti-establishment” and spoke of his frustration with being told how to run his life:

...societies, or the people that try to rule societies, suck. I mean if you go back to Roman times and look at the Romans themselves and how they tried to rule in Europe and then tried to take over the Middle East and...our government's doin' the same thing, the same exact same thing. And I hate it.

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... I'm disgusted with the fact that they think they need to tell me how I need to run my life. We were born free and who did they buy this planet from that they have to charge us to live here? So, I mean, on that note, definitely anti-establishment.

While different from Courtney's situation, Daren also had strong feelings about individual agency. He also spoke about the right to travel as a lifestyle and not be rooted in one place, despite the challenges it may bring:

You know I've met a lot of people over the years that have done just that. They move from town to town just to explore. They don't want to be settled. And they do it off the skin of their back. I'm sure it's hard and it weighs down on 'em. But there's a sense of adventure to it that I'm sure they enjoy.

When asked if traveling around is a lifestyle he would prefer, he said:

Well I would rather stay in one place unless I had the means [be]cause, you know, going to a new place with no money, nothing but the clothes on your back would be...I couldn't do it. But I've seen people do it time and time again.

Although Daren prefers to stay in one place, he also recognizes the rights of others to choose the lifestyle that suits them. This is part of having individual agency but also collectively supporting the agency of others, and creating a community that allows others the freedom to pursue the life they prefer.

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Ivan also talked about the freedom to do what he wanted without being judged or controlled – something which TC3 had somewhat provided.

The freedom to come and go 24/7. I didn't expect that. I really didn't. When you get in the shelters, you get used to a certain thing. Like out at 5 [o'clock], or up at 6 [o'clock], whatever. Food at certain time. You know, no. Come and go as you please here. And it is democratically ran. It really is.

For Ivan and Daren, having the flexibility to organize their own lives is important. This approach allows people to find a sense of self and their own sense of home. When Ivan said that TC3 was temporary for him, I asked what he was looking for after this stage, and he replied:

Honestly, something that I can just call my own, where I can grow cannabis, where I can grow fruits and veggies, listen to music without anybody judging some of the music I listen to. And just relax. But again there's also a part of me that wants to go to school; back to school.

Ivan's desires for the future are both the freedom to be and the freedom to act. His time at TC3 has not only allowed him to find himself and a temporary place to call home, but have motivated him to take the next steps in his life journey.

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Like Ivan, Justin also viewed home as a place where people do not dictate what others do with their lives:

Just a place to call your own. Where you can do whatever you want with. And nobody tells you. Yeah just your own little space I guess.

Justin's understanding of home implies a need for both spatial and social agency. This is important for all living situations, whether temporary or longer term.

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While Daren viewed his stay at TC3 as temporary, he also wanted the freedom to pursue a lifestyle that is not in line with mainstream ways of life. Dan spoke of being shown the "Leave It to Beaver"<sup>14</sup> lifestyle but choosing not to live this way:

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<sup>14</sup> "Leave It to Beaver" was a popular 1950s/60s American sitcom which painted a picture of the idealistic, wholesome American family.

I was shown the Leave It To Beaver lifestyle. So I knew about it. Chose not to continue that on. It was just. It's me...my brother has family; my sister has a wonderful family. And they all did it that way. I'm just not wired that way. I don't know why. But I've had...I can count my jobs on one hand. I've had five jobs my whole life. So I keep jobs.

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I'm a gypsy, I would say. That's what my mom calls me. "My little gypsy." It's kind of always been that way. I get restless. It's part of my ADHD, I would suppose. Although I'm a pretty calm person. I guess I am kind of hyper.

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As far as home, I'm just not the same as everyone else. I'm not runnin' away from anything, but I like the changes.

As Daren had expressed, even if a person chooses to live in one place, that should not stop them from supporting others who choose to live differently. Dan is one example of someone whose lifestyle Daren would likely support. For Dan, home is not just about a dwelling type; rather it is about a complete "gypsy" lifestyle that works for him, even if it diverges from societal norms.

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Dan, however, was not the only TC3 member who identified with being a gypsy. Jeffrey also spoke of wanting to lead a "mobile lifestyle" and be nomadic:

My dad, he'd tell me some stories. He grew up in the depression. And he was...he rode trains. Traveled around a lot like that. Maybe that's how I got the idea that you know traveling without ways and means was ok, because my dad did it (laughing) He told me some stories that really got into me...

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I would prefer a mobile lifestyle. Like translating that, if I had that kind of ways and means, instead of like some beater RV from twenty years ago, thirty years ago, I would buy a brand-new [inaudible] bus that's decked out to the nines, you know, with everything!

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Basically I'm a gypsy. Nomad-gypsy. Gypsy-nomad. That's kind of been a recurring theme in my life...since I left home. Couple times I've gone back... to regroup. But basically a nomad-gypsy. Travelling musician.

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I've been to a lot of places. I do sound. I'm a sound engineer. I've toured with bands as a sound guy. I love to travel. It's one of my little things. I love traveling. And if I can travel and come back with money in my pocket? Shoot, that's the life for me!

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I traveled once with a traveling group of street performers. They called it the New American Chautauqua [New Age Chautauqua]. And that was an interesting experience. I didn't have a

vehicle but I was riding in a bus with ten other people and we'd go to towns...you know Cirque du Soleil? Kind of like a low-tech version of that.

Having been influenced by his father, who also traveled a lot, the idea of an unsettled lifestyle is not unfamiliar to Jeffrey. Jeffrey does not find home in being settled and having a permanent house. When asked when or why he would leave a place, he said:

Based on opportunity, based on a vague feeling...what's over the horizon?...just restlessness.

Jeffrey and Dan share the feeling of restlessness that makes an unsettled lifestyle suitable for them. While others may find solace and a sense of home in a settled life, in Dan's words, these two are "just not wired that way".

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Ron also expressed a desire to travel, but unlike Jeffrey, he wanted to do it temporarily and also had different motivations:

Well my situation with housing is this: I can get housing, but I simply told the VA<sup>15</sup> I didn't want it because...right now, I don't want housing. As a vet, as a disabled veteran, believe me, I can get the housing, but what I'm doing is traveling. What my goal is to do some more traveling before I settle down. After my wife died, I just do not want to settle down right now...My sons are doing great, they're grown, and what I want to do is just travel, and visit other relatives...I'm not ready to really settle down in a house. The tent city here is fine. It's a temporal thing. It's not forever, at least not for me...and I can deal with tent cities... but my thing is...for a couple of more years, do some traveling. I figure I'm 56 years old now, probably another couple of years and I'll be ready to...settle down in a house. But I want to do more traveling, that's the number one thing on my agenda. I've been traveling now for at least, I'd say, 4 years...visiting relatives and when I visit the relative, I don't call them. I sneak up on them and all of a sudden, "Surprise!" and they'd be so shocked to see me and some of them haven't seen me in years! So it's really a good feeling to be able to travel, to be able to see relatives, not be stuck down in one place.

Ron emphasized the benefit of traveling to deal with mental health issues related to his military past and the passing of his wife:

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<sup>15</sup> "VA" in this context is referring to the US Department of Veteran Affairs.

... you know, that's what I decided after she died. I decided to just start travelling...[be]cause to stay there in Bremerton, there's just so many memories. Just to stay in once place. I had to move. I had to travel. And so to stay there. I probably would be in too deep a depression. I suffer from PTSD<sup>16</sup>, depression, anxiety...and my psychiatrist at the VA told me, he said, well Ron...that's probably what you still doin'. You's probably still kind of... runnin'...because you know...the memories and stuff...even your wife been dead now for five years...and he's probably right. But things'll get better.

In Ron's case, escaping difficult emotions and grief caused him to flee from memories of home. While he is traveling, there is still a sense of homelessness, which may remain until he has come to terms with the loss. However, he is aware that the temporary stay at TC3 and the travels allow him to slowly find the new sense of home he is seeking in the long-term.

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An individual sense of agency not only gave people a sense of control over their lives and allowed them to be open to various lifestyles, but also helped them find an individual sense of worth, purpose, and self-actualization while being houseless. Jeffrey views home "as a mindset" and a "headspace", an understanding he has developed through his life journey:

Home is not as much necessarily a physical place as a mindset...for me. Home could be right here, for me. But home is kind of where my feelings are, my headspace is...it's not a physical "this is my room, so this is home". It's expedient to say that. It just makes it convenient to talk about it as that. But you know, if I'm renting a place and it's not a place I'm gonna really be, it's just a temporary billet. You know, like a soldier based in some place temporarily and he knows he's not gonna be there for a great length of time. So for me, home has to be here [the mind] first, and then if I can extend it to a space, a place, so much the better. Like say if I bought some land somewhere and I could...that would be more closer to a real home, but even that...anything that's external is inherently impermanent, if that makes any sense...there's some Sufi masters that mentioned that to me.

Since Jeffrey finds home in his headspace first, he doesn't seem to see much of a difference between staying at TC3 and renting an apartment. Both will not provide him with a sense of home if he does not find this in himself first. When asked if there were specific things that gave him the "headspace" he described, he said:

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<sup>16</sup> PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Possibly, yeah. But the things for me that do that, I have to question where the line between the internal and the external is. See for me, music is the thing that does that. And that at the very least...if I think about it, it's right on the line between internal and external, because it manifests externally obviously, but the essence of it is internal.

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... as opposed to me searching externally for it, I mean home for me is kind of entangled with my concept of higher power, if that makes any sense. God...Allah...the ten thousand names of God. The whole idea, though, not specifically. It's more, much more general, my idea of the higher power. We come from home, and experience what we call life, and we return to home. That's probably a tenant of my religion if I was to have a real philosophy.

Music and a higher power are two critical parts of the sense of home for Jeffrey. He also frames home as a place he comes from and returns to. This is a transcendent, spiritual take on home as creation and the afterlife. While this specific interpretation of home is not the focus of my study, it is one way of viewing home as something intangible and spiritual, as opposed to something tangible, like a house.

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Others also found solace in music, as did Jeffrey. Chris spoke about the break from close friends and turning to music as his place to feel at home and find a sense of self-actualization:

See I play drums and, well like I had mentioned, I didn't come from a close family. So when I was a child I used music and art as a means of escapism. And I was just naturally good at it, especially music. So drums was like really my thing. So when I was 19, some things happened, and I had broke my right hand and I didn't have much money.

And it's not so much that music was my thing, it was just that at that age, you know, I really had the talent and I had a lot of connections. I had really no reason to think that I was gonna be nothing less than a gig...not in a rockstar or nothing, but at least playing music semi professionally my whole life. ...

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What made Philadelphia home to me was the music. It really had nothing to do with my family or being a child. It was the connections I made with friends and musicians and playing music. I started hanging out...like I said I didn't come from a close family, so I did everything I could to avoid being home. So when we went back to Philadelphia in '76 from Phoenix, I started being out of the house a lot. Be hanging outside jazz and blues clubs...and didn't have a lot of formal lessons, but most of what I had learned comes from hanging out at these clubs and with these other musicians...but that's what made it home to me...the music. I don't know why I'm getting emotional, but yeah, the friends, and music, and playing music.

Shedding a few tears as he spoke about music, it seems that he came to the realization mid-conversation that it was the connections he had made with friends and musicians that gave him a sense of home. One could argue that in the absence of this connection, a community of shared interests, and a sense of self-actualization, Chris is in a state of homelessness. He then talked about the uncertainties of home:

I'm not sure what or where my home is right now, nor where I belong or what I should be doing. It seems better to find comfort in my mind and make a home within myself than to try and label a place, or thing, as my home. For now Seattle is my home...It's a great city with a killer music scene and I've met some good people.

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I still feel the energy from days when I would play and how good I'd feel. The memories of those times provide comfort, taking me back "home".

Chris said he wasn't sure what home was but that he was looking for home within himself. At the same time, memories of his times with his band take him back home, implying that having the freedom to pursue self-actualization is part of feeling at home.

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Similar to Jeffrey and Chris, José spoke about the importance of looking for home on the inside rather than the outside:

Because the people all the time looking for something. Pero<sup>17</sup> all the time, looking for outside, never looking for inside.

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Kirk had the same thoughts as Jeffrey, Chris, and José about home within oneself:

Well that's just a comfort thing. That's just a being comfortable in your own skin; not needing other people. Knowing that I'll be ok.

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<sup>17</sup> Pero: Spanish for the conjunction "but" (Oxford Dictionaries 2017).

On the other hand, some spoke less abstractly and discussed TC3 in particular. Ivan, for example, said he found his "voice" again while being part of this community:

...living here at this camp...it's brought me...it's given me more of a voice again. And it's a better class of people there than I was living with. Plain and simple. I mean, yeah, they're rude, crass...but they're direct and to the point...Sometimes people need that. I know I do obviously sometimes. And I think I'm a better person because of it though too. Kind of like the other night... the potluck dinner there, and I'm sittin' there in front of, I don't know how many people, on a panel. I'm like, "How did this happen?" Really, I never anticipated this. I'm not a celebrity. I'm not seeking any recognition for anything. I'm just trying to do a job, that's all. That's all I...you know...trying to do a job but also trying to give myself better... emotionally.

TC3 has given Ivan the chance to share his story with people, find a purpose to work for, and better himself emotionally. These are ways to build community, find a sense of agency, and seek self-actualization, respectively.

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Similar to Ivan, Kevin spoke about finding himself at TC3:

I'll just make it short. I found myself here. I found myself home. I'm home. I'm done. I'm done. That's all it is. I have made my peace with God and I found myself.

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But I mean, this is paradise. This is what I've been living for, believe it or not. And I can't afford this anywhere else. I could move to Auburn...but then I gotta have this and that. But I'm not strong mentally or physically to wait. I need it now. I need to find that peace, and that's what I've done. I'm not worried about nothing.

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See where I'm at, at my level, no matter where I go, I'm at home. So it don't matter if I'm in Pakistan, I'm gonna find home wherever I go. Your space...I don't know the words. I'm at home no matter where I go.

Having found home within himself first, as had Jeffrey, Kevin was able to then translate this feeling into the realm of place. While this place is TC3 for the time being, he said he can also find home anywhere he goes.

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Israel's sentiments were similar to Kevin's, speaking about "mending" himself at TC3:

I do not consider my self unhoused or homeless but I have chosen to remain at TC3 so I could more effectively work on mending myself physically, spiritually, and other ways as well. TC3 has afforded me the opportunity to grow and cultivate my particular set of unique ideas and skills. All while still being a resident of Seattle.

By rejecting the idea of homelessness and focusing on himself regardless of the form of shelter, Israel has found an opportunity to better himself.

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Todd was also searching for a way to mend himself as Israel had done. He spoke of struggling to find self-respect and regain a lost part of himself:

I am in my community at least they say I am.  
You're amongst friends.  
But I don't see them.  
Drained of self-respect  
I continue, even if at a snail's pace to regain something of myself which has for too long been hidden in alleys and backstreets.

A light, dim but prominent let's me know I am not the only one. It's ok to slip. It's ok to fall. Grab my hand.

Although he feels that the pace to regain himself is slow, the community of friends at TC3 allows him to seek help if he slips.

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Just as Ivan, Kevin, Israel, and Todd were looking for or had already found self-actualization, Anonymous 4 spoke of finding a sense of purpose and drive while houseless:

...it's given me a chance to... instead of saying here I am homeless and my life's half over –here I am, I have half my life ahead of me and I can do anything I want to do. Just like the next person.

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Believe it or not, the last couple of years of my life as I've been homeless, I've been finding peace in my life, being outside the box. I'm a fine person and I'm learning to let go of regrets and try to give. Try to give instead of take so much in life. And man I'll tell you, when you do that, you live a life way better than what you know. If all you're wanting is to give less than you take, man, it comes back around. It's so good, you know? I'm where I am right now because I choose to linger there at this point. There's a lot of work, a lot of opportunity.

Anonymous 4 said that he only found peace in his life during the time that he has been houseless. This statement not only reinforces the fact that a house does not equate to home, but also highlights that TC3 allows people to step back and reevaluate their identities and what home really means to them. Israel, Kevin, and Jeffrey are some of the other TC3 members who were also able to reconsider their ideas of self and home.

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In this final facet of *Question 1, Self-Governance and Agency*, people spoke positively of the self-governed structure of TC3, having a sense of individual agency, and pursuing self-actualization. In terms of having a sense of control over their own life and their community, people brought into light the need for a sense of home even in transitional living conditions or the choice of an unsettled lifestyle. They also highlighted the ability to search for self-actualization when in an environment conducive to individual agency. People spoke of finding an inner sense of home, peace, and ease, finding one's voice, and gaining self-esteem and confidence. They also indirectly questioned individualism, capitalism, and "the establishment". In the section of this study on *Question 2 –What External Factors Threaten a Sense of Home?*, more attention will be brought to the existing systems that TC3 challenges and questions.

#### 6.2.7 Discussion

In this section on *Question 1 –What Creates a Sense of Home?*, six different facets that support the meta-theme of human connection were found. These facets are (1) *Safety and Security*, (2) *Sharing Tangibles and Intangibles*, (3) *A Supportive, Accommodating, Nonjudgmental Environment*, (4) *Stability, Familiarity, and Consistency*, (5) *Active Engagement and Acts of Solidarity*, and (6) *Self-Governance and Agency*. Without human connection, the crux of a sense of home, the six facets would be difficult to acquire. Each of these facets also results in more specific benefits for the community or individuals that contribute to the sense of home.

While people defined home in different ways, most expressed that having a *sense of home* or *feeling at home* is the combination of multiple facets. While human connection and community break isolation, the facets that emerged are needed to make the meta-theme most effective in creating a sense of home. Firstly, safety and security are both an outcome of and

reinforcement for this sense of community. Secondly, by sharing resources, responsibilities, values, and experiences, people cultivate a sense of togetherness. Thirdly, in terms of being in a supportive, accommodating, and nonjudgmental environment, this provides people with reassurance and validation, makes people feel welcome, and breaks stigmas. Fourthly, stability, consistency, and familiarity in location or community (or oftentimes, both) allow people to build long-term relationships, thereby strengthening their sense of community and togetherness. Fifthly, by being engaged in socio-political issues and practicing active solidarity, people reach a heightened sense of awareness of their shared humanity and reap the rewards of feeling good about themselves for giving back. Finally, by having agency over their lives and managing the governance of their own community, people are able to find a sense of self-worth and self-actualization, which reinforces their drive to be engaged in causes that serve a higher purpose.

Finding a home can mean finding a sense of belonging, worth, ease, security, or stability –and there may be more that people are looking for. Irrespective of specific definitions of home, all of the facets that emerged from the stories are important in order to reach the right state of mind to be able to both build relationships and seek one’s own self-actualization. This self-actualization may include finding a house or other form of long-term shelter, but more important than the outcome is the process that allows people to find their own sense of home.

### 6.3 Question 2: What External Factors Threaten a Sense of Home?

While people were able to find a sense of home despite various struggles, they also spoke of external factors that threatened or damaged this. These external factors are a direct threat to human connection, the crux of the sense of home. They also threaten the different facets that create a sense of home.

#### 6.3.1 *Business Gain, Capitalism, and Corporate Greed*

One of the facets that emerged from *Question 2* is corporate greed and business gain. Daren spoke about recent developments in South Lake Union, a rapidly changing neighborhood in Seattle:

I mean, it all boils down to greed, of course. Like the whole South Lake Union Area used to be a lot of rundown buildings. And lot of homeless population was in that area because it was secluded. They could sleep overnight and be left alone. Until Amazon moved in and bought out that whole section of the city, pretty much. Now those people were spread out all over the city. Yeah, I would say...the owner of Amazon, I think he got into politicians' pockets and said, "Look, you know, I don't want this in my neighborhood."

As Daren narrates, the houseless in South Lake Union were displaced in as a result of the new urban development. Since locational stability and agency play a role in creating a sense of home, forced displacement is a threat to feeling at home on a neighborhood or urban-level. He also implies that the decision-makers and developers behind this project do not care for the well-being of the houseless. They will do whatever they need to in order to achieve the image they envision for their development. Therefore, a sense of solidarity with the houseless is difficult for the business world to achieve. Furthermore, Daren questioned Washington state's policies and priorities regarding affordable housing:

The state of Washington, just from marijuana revenue could probably step in and say, "Ok, let's build housing, public housing, for the poor people." But they're probably not willing to do it.

Through Daren's story, one can deduce that the needs and wants of higher income groups (who are most likely housed) are prioritized not only during urban development on a city level, but also in terms of housing on a state level.

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Dan also criticized capitalism and a greed for more money. Moreover, he expressed concern for people living outside alone, as opposed to a communal living arrangement like TC3:

It's the society we live in. Everybody wants to make money. Who's gonna charge less when they can make more? The city does, you know. It is so cold at night...sometimes I feel real bad for the people out on the streets. I mean we're doing fine. We'll all take care of each other. But there's people out in the bushes at night! Those are the ones we need to worry about. In Seattle, people have mental problems, if they're not a danger to themselves, they're on the streets.

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Everything you do is expensive. I went to Jack in the Box. Twelve dollars. That adds up if you're doing it twice a day...I am a big eater. Twelve dollars! I coulda ate somewhere for cheaper and had more food. Better food.

Dan's story is similar to Daren's in that they both accuse developers and decision-makers of being apathetic towards the houseless, which makes a sense of solidarity difficult to have. Since he works in the fishing industry, Dan was unemployed when we spoke because it was not fishing season. Facing difficulty affording living costs and aware of high rental costs, he made the conscious decision to not be housed for the time being in order to save up money:

It's that simple. I just choose not to go pay rent somewhere for a month and a half. And then if I rent an apartment, first, last, and a deposit, you're not gonna get it back. They take your money. They'll find a reason to take your money. I had an apartment where I kept it the same...still didn't get it back. You would think they'd have some more scruples in that. If they have a way to keep your money, they're going to.

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And then a hotel room –in fact, when I came to Seattle after my mom's house, I went to an old hotel that I used to stay at and it used to be about 200 [dollars] a week. Now it's 390 [dollars] for the same place. What the heck? I've only been five years since I stayed there.

By making the decision (albeit, one limited by market forces) to stay at TC3 rather than seek an apartment to rent, Dan challenges one of the threats to a sense of home.

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Anonymous 3 echoed Dan's frustration with high living costs, saying that being burdened by rent made life difficult to enjoy:

You know, you have to work very hard, and then you end up you don't enjoy living. So and then you end up, why I work? You know, I come to Tent City [3]...and then whatever money I make, I enjoy it, leave with it somewhere, or enjoy it somehow. It's better than pay the rent. Now the rent is 1,100 dollar for the one bedroom. And it's not the one you gonna like so you wanna pay more if you have more money. You know, when I lived here in the 90s, it was 400 dollars, nice one bedroom and up in Northgate, nice neighborhood, and a nice building, clean.

As Anonymous 3 explains, a capitalist system can keep people locked into a routine of making money just to pay the rent. This not only makes it difficult for people to build genuine relationships since they are busy just trying to get by, but also hinders people's sense of control or agency over their lives.

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Chris, on the other hand, spoke of the “business” of houselessness, particularly in the shelter system:

It is a business. You gotta do your research. They get paid money for having you in their bed at night. They get paid money for serving you breakfast. They get paid per person for lunches and dinners. And if they get all the food donated, they keep the money anyway. The shelter I stayed at in Philadelphia was scary. There was rats and mice crawling through the place. I just didn't want to stay there.

In Chris's case, the shelter system hindered both a sense of agency (since the houseless become victims of the “business”) and safety and security.

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From a social, urbanist point of view, Anonymous 2 spoke of the destruction of the public commons because of money being spent on high-end private development. This is similar to Daren's frustrations with the development in South Lake Union, which did not accommodate for the houseless in the public or private realm:

...the public commons have been all but destroyed. Instead of hanging out in town square, people in mainstream society flock to shopping malls, restaurants, and movie theaters, where spending large amounts of money is expected and revered, even if that means borrowing more to spend more. Yet people are disconnected from one another and rarely come together as a community to help each other. We're all supposed to be independent and self-sufficient.

With people spending less time in public squares where community is often built, corporate greed plays a role in a breakdown in society. With a societal breakdown, people are unlikely to stand together in times of need or be accommodating. Therefore, a societal breakdown harms a sense of home.

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These perspectives on the facet of *Business Gain, Capitalism, and Corporate Greed* criticized a prioritization of capital gain over people's well-being or a distribution of resources. With living costs rising, people are not only unable to afford a place to stay, but also feel trapped in a system that makes housing contingent upon having a high-paying job. Furthermore, the existing system equates home with housing and alienates people from each other as they

struggle to afford a life of independence and self-sufficiency. Since human connection is the core of finding a sense of home, capitalism is detrimental to a shared sense of home. It mainly affects three of the facets of the sense of home –*Stability, Familiarity, and Consistency, Active Engagement and Acts of Solidarity, and Self-Governance and Agency.*

### 6.3.2 *Purely Service-Oriented Approaches*

In addition to criticizing corporate greed, people also criticized service-oriented approaches that were not supplemented with enabling strategies. Services alone usually just keep people at a level of survival, rather than giving them the means to fend for themselves. Jason spoke about the need for providing some opportunities to gain basic skills:

There's gotta be a little bit of a teaching process in there somewhere, right? I was talking to some of these UW, the big-wigs there...and they're like, "If you come back, what's maybe something that you might like?" How about a class to teach these people how to take care of themselves? A simple little class to teach 'em how to budget, how to fill out an application. What about grammar? How about just basic...literacy? And that's only sixth grade level, by the way. Why not teach them literacy classes? I have people in here that can't read or write. Why not teach them how? Why not teach them how to fill out an application, how to present themselves, how to wash their clothes maybe? Not everybody grew up functional. Basic needs.

The stories from TC3 shared until now show that people have faced various circumstances and may have had a nurturing upbringing or, as Jason says, may not have grown up "functional". For those who had difficult childhoods or did not have the opportunity to gain some basic life skills, Jason's suggestion of providing classes to provide these skills would be helpful. This is an example of an effective combination of services and enabling strategies.

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On the same topic of solely service-oriented strategies, Courtney also criticized the tent city system for making people dependent and "lazy", saying that some people did not make an effort to better themselves:

...to me it's called a little bit of laziness. You get into like a routine. At the shelters, people... have to leave at a certain time and they're out. But at tent cities...twenty-four hours a day you could stay in your tent...you have to push yourself to get up and go take a shower and go do something for yourself instead of stay in your tent all day.

Anonymous 3 had similar sentiments to Courtney, saying that tent cities in Seattle made people lazy as they “rely on the system”, waiting to receive assistance rather than trying to “take care of themselves”:

...honestly, the way I see, it does change people as a person. A lot of people get lazy. And one thing is good, and one other is no good. And one thing I don't see the City, they helping and giving money, also they make the people lazy. One thing about Seattle –Seattle is famous about helping homeless. So they ended up the homeless and the one they don't wanna take care of themselves or they don't wanna face life or they don't wanna work, they enjoy the homeless. Or they waiting for the government benefits, or whatever, whatever, whatever. And then the people they end up change their mind. They end up become lazy. Rely on the system more and more. And then end up face a lot of things.

Both Courtney and Anonymous 3 strongly disapproved of the service aspect of the tent city system, saying that it made it easy for people to not try improving their own lives. It would be inaccurate to claim that laziness and dependency are the reasons for chronic houselessness. However, there is something to be said about the lack of approaches complementary to the existing services. Such complementary approaches could provide people with the tools to fend for themselves, should they be mentally and physically capable and prepared to do so.

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In addition to the perspectives from Courtney and Anonymous 3, José summarized it best with a reference to a well-known proverb:

“No give me the fish. Teach me how I can get the fish.”

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Under the facet of *Purely Service-Oriented Approaches*, people at TC3 found that services alone not only fail to provide people with the skills they need to take care of themselves. While the reasons for chronic houselessness are actually more nuanced than just “laziness”, being unable to provide for oneself means people do not have individual agency and cannot reach self-actualization –a factor that emerged from TC3's stories as part of finding a sense of home.

### 6.3.3 *Criminalization of Dwelling in the Public Realm*

Another factor that makes it difficult for people to find a sense of home is criminalization of dwelling in the public realm. When asked how people can support those who view houselessness as temporary, Kirk answered with:

That would be taking people in. One –decriminalization. Instead of accusing people of committing a crime, throwing them in jail...harassing them, telling them to fuck off. Taking them in, taking care of them. Or...welcoming people into our own homes, if need be. Or providing places like the tent city, or Nickelsville<sup>18</sup>, any of those, shelter. The City of Seattle is very unique in that a lot of services are here...Seattle is an anomaly for sleeping outside that they have access to so much. Not that there isn't stigma here, not that it isn't horrible here, but other places it's worse, if you can imagine.

While Kirk acknowledged the abundance of services provided for the houseless in Seattle, he also criticized the stigmatization and criminalization, which create an unaccommodating urban environment, instability, and a lack of safety and security. All of these negative factors make it difficult for people to find a sense of home. Furthermore, he discussed the criminalization of the way of life of Native Americans pre-colonialism:

This land is colonized. How were the people living when settlers came here? That's criminalized. It's totally ludicrous. So I'm First Nations. I'm indigenous and my way of living, the way of living of my ancestors, is criminalized now. Not only is it criminalized, it's been destroyed. Or attempted to. A genocide has been committed and an ethnocide. But beyond that, it's every person's right to live however they'd like, as long as they're not harming another person. If that means sleeping outside, so be it. So decriminalizing. Right now, it's totally criminalized, if you sleep outside unsanctioned. Here in this particular city, it's not unusual to be woken up by cops at 3 AM, and told to, not nicely, get the fuck out, have all your stuff slashed. That happens. That happens. Totally ludicrous.

Kirk is of the opinion that people should have the right to sleep outside, whether or not they do so as part of an indigenous lifestyle. He views the criminalization of dwelling in the public realm as partially an attempted destruction of native culture and a personal offense to him and his ancestors. When asked how people could navigate a prescribed "settled lifestyle" and make it acceptable to be mobile or dwell in the public realm, he said:

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<sup>18</sup> A group that manages several tent cities and tiny home villages in Seattle, Washington.

It's gonna be people saying, "Fuck that lifestyle." I mean that lifestyle is not inclusive, the opposing lifestyle, the settled lifestyle, which in this particular case is colonial lifestyle. It's destroying the earth, it's taking away all our resources, it's marginalizing people, criminalizing people. It's not a system that works. Simply that. We have to understand that, accept it, move forward. Find the system...make it so that something works for people. That we'll have a future, our children will have a future...it's a matter of the entire system. Societal values are rigged to be against that. All the words to describe that –vagrant, vagabond, nomad– these all have negative connotations.

For Kirk, the way to make dwelling in the public realm possible is simply by refusing to adhere to societal norms. He views the "colonial lifestyle" as harmful to the earth's resources and a cause of marginalization.

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As the facet of *Criminalization of Dwelling in the Public Realm* portrays, by othering those who are houseless, society not only turns its back on them but makes it difficult for them to seek their own solace and understanding of home. The public realm can be someone's home, whether they choose to make it so or are forced to. When people are not allowed to dwell in the public realm, this negates the possibility of an accommodating, supportive urban environment and makes it difficult for them to find stability, safety, and security.

#### 6.3.4 *Stigmatization of the Other*

In addition to the criminalization of the houseless, they are also stigmatized by the general public. Jeffrey spoke of his time in San Francisco in the 70s, when he was in a similar condition as he is now, but not being considered "homeless" at that time:

When I got there, basically I was homeless. But...it wasn't called homeless then, for one thing. And I didn't even think about it...normally people, if you've got resources, you go to a hotel or something...and backpack, sleeping bag, and guitar...I'm good to go (laughing). Push come to shove, I could just find a hollowed out street spot, roll my sleeping bag out, and sleep there until daytime, and get up, and see what's up.

According to Jeffrey, society used to be more accepting of an unsettled lifestyle and dwelling in the public realm than they are today. Because of this, a sense of belonging in the city was still in tact, which contributed to feeling at home. When asked what it was that people viewed him as in the past, if not "homeless", he replied:

Hippies. It was the tail end of the whole hippie thing...I was trying to get in on that stuff I had been hearing about since I was 14 [years old]...

As narrated by Jeffrey, the hippie era made room for alternative lifestyles, which seem to be viewed differently today in 2017.

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Anonymous 4 also spoke of the past and a different perspective on "homelessness":

It's different times...we just drove around and stuff. Like, I guess it was still considered homeless although...I was sleeping inside...I really didn't have a place of my own for a while. But at that time...it was fun...[I was] learning as a young man...how to provide for myself.

His experience was much like Jeffrey's, in that not having a house was not stigmatized.

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Chris, on the other hand, had experienced houselessness more recently and was aware of the associated stereotypes. In a discussion with him on the word "homeless" and whether that resonated with him, he said:

What else would you call it? "Houseless?" (laughing) I don't know. I wouldn't know how to answer that, to tell you the truth. I really wouldn't. It is what it is. It automatically brings up connotations of the [inaudible] with the raggedy beard sitting in the gutter or something.

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I think the image that the homeless community itself is portrayed as needs to be changed.

While Chris was not as interested in semantics, he was aware of the stigmas and misconceptions around the houseless. The image of the houseless community that he problematizes is one of the reasons they do not feel welcome in the wider community of a neighborhood or city.

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Ivan was also less concerned about the semantics of "homelessness" than he was about people being offended that he was spending time with them at a restaurant:

It is what it is. I mean, it's a word in the English language...a couple weeks ago...I was down at Columbia City visiting him [a friend] and we went to this restaurant. And you know, just trying to keep conversation light and...[I] happen to mention...that we're [TC3] on the UW campus, and people actually got offended that I was homeless. They were offended that I hung out in their restaurant. I was like, "Oh, really?"...you know, I went in there...my social anxiety was like kicking in, but I was like, "Nawww screw it!"...and they're walking away, one of the women [says] "They let the homeless in here. Wow!" and I looked at my friend and I smiled, I said, "I mean, I'm not proud. It is embarrassing, I'm not gonna lie...because again, there are days when I can't take a shower. You know, I feel bad when I can't. Or a week when you can't wash your clothes..."

The story of Ivan's ostracization at a restaurant simply for being houseless is yet another example of the daily misconceptions faced by the houseless. Ivan was clearly deeply offended and hurt by the way he was perceived. Such judgmental attitudes towards the houseless make it really challenging for them to find a welcoming community, which is the core of finding a sense of home. As was often expressed by TC3 members, the welcoming attitude of people at TC3 (compared to the judgmental attitude of some members of the general public) is precisely why they feel more at home at TC3.

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Unfortunately, marginalization comes in many forms and is not limited to feeling unwelcome at a restaurant. Having grown up in El Salvador, José spoke of what it was like moving to the US:

It's like you take one fish to outside the lake (makes suffocating noise). First, language. Second, food. Third, discrimination. You want to continue?

The language and cultural barriers that he faced were exacerbated by discrimination. While José may not have been houseless when he first moved to the US, his identity as an immigrant meant he was viewed as an "other", much like the othering of those who are houseless. Therefore, while the specific stigmas are different, the overall alienation is comparable.

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While Ivan and José were stigmatized by strangers, others may be marginalized in their own families. Dan shared a situation in which his father shamed him in front of family for being houseless and living in a tent city:

I haven't seen him [his father] since...my brother's house about 2000. For Christmas. And I was staying at Tent City and I wasn't shy about it. I told my parents, "Look, this is what's happening." And for Christmas he gives me a sweater, a turtle neck, and a scarf, and gloves and says, "This is for your homeless camp," right in front of everybody.

Just as Ivan was offended and hurt by the encounter at the restaurant, Dan was hurt by his father's public shaming of his situation. In this case, if one's community and home are to be considered their family, Dan's experience may have harmed his sense of community and home. He also spoke about people being "so afraid of the homeless and tent cities", and shared experiences of people publicly harassing him for being houseless:

Only at the times when you're doing a function for Tent City 3 has it ever been an issue because you're actually discussing it in a direct manner with either neighbors or... I never feel too uncomfortable. Other than when we're doing something like we will be doing today. Handing out the flyers in the neighborhood. Occasionally, someone will say something. Once in a while, you hear teenagers walking by and shoutin' things, but you know what? They're gonna do that. I did it when I was a teenager. Do I regret that? Yeah. There's a lot of good people in that camp. And for whatever reason, we get stuck in a rut. Don't know how to dig our way out sometimes.

Despite harassment by some who have misconceptions about the houseless, Dan still enjoys spreading awareness about the reality of houselessness and being active in the TC3 community. By breaking down misconceptions one person at a time, Dan is part of a larger movement to de-stigmatize houselessness.

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On a similar note of the houseless being feared or seen as suspicious, Kevin said:

Cocaine is not necessarily a bad drug. It's not at all. But here's the kick –being homeless, when I go to get it, I'm gonna get bullshit.

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I mean really...[in] Wallingford [I say] "Good morning" and they look at you like...I was like "Really? Here I am trying." And that's the same people that look at you like you're going to hell or something. It's an enigma.

What may be seen as acceptable for most of society can be misconstrued as unacceptable or inappropriate for the houseless –even the simple act of saying, "Good morning", as Kevin

shared. As was the case in Ivan and José's experience, such experiences leave the houseless feeling marginalized by the people they share a neighborhood or city with.

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As the facet of *Stigmatization of the Other* shows, for many who are houseless, stigmatization is a daily reality. The stigmas may come not just from strangers, but from family as well. In both cases, these stigmas build barriers between people. Once again, as with other threats, this break from community hinders people's sense of home, as it means that those who stigmatize the houseless will neither stand in solidarity with them, nor provide an accommodating and supportive environment.

### 6.3.5 *Injustice and a Monolithic American Dream*

Injustice and a questioning of the American dream was another important facet of the threats to a sense of home. People had gone through various experiences that made them realize that the American Dream, which claims to provide the ideal home and community, is actually a monolithic idealization to many. Steven spoke of the "assumption society", or the "upper class", and their ignorance on the situation of being houseless:

The assumption society is what the upper class is called in the conversations in our society. Their way of fixing this crisis is waiting till a certain amount of people die on these streets. The leaders of the past was not "a man in a box" (office). They made decisions by going to see the voice of the people. You cannot solve a crisis this big without knowing where too start. Reading a report from an city official who made his decision based on 3 other reports on which was made on assumptions (\$).

How can you fix a crisis without seeing for yourself what is going on. That old saying "a dead man can't speak". Well now 55 dead homeless has spoken and people has heard the voices.

As Steven explained, without reaching out to the houseless and really getting to know them, the "upper class" is likely to make decisions that do not benefit the houseless. He also spoke of the injustices that had been committed against the natives, with colonizers destroying an existing way of life and replacing it with notions of the American Dream:

If they stopped and thought about their whole experience as a city, it was the natives who fought many people and lost many lives doing so, just to keep what was created by God himself for

them. If it wasn't for the native people their would be no Seattle. Why do you think all the reservations are along the Canadian border? Coz the white man could not take it and destroy it like they did with the other part of this country. Like the Jewish people this part of the world the native is God's chosen people. They've killed and the blood was spilled of many innocent woman and children. To a native male hate is our strength and death is an honor.

To someone like Steven who identifies as a native, his "home" has been destroyed by colonial settlement. As Kirk also expressed, the overshadowing of native lifestyles by the American Dream means urban settings do not accommodate for a native lifestyle. He also seems to relate to the struggles of the houseless because he also feels marginalized as a native. In being both native and houseless, he embodies a double marginalization, which seems to make him feel strongly about fighting injustice.

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Others have also committed to fighting injustice like Steven. Anonymous 2 wrote about experiencing the trap of the American Dream and realizing that it was a lie that broke down community fabric:

I had big plans for my future. The American Dream, which had been instilled in my head by the propaganda system, offered the perfect solution. According to this big lie, if you work hard you'll succeed. So, I figured I'd work really hard and keep working until I got rich. Then people would stop fucking with me and I could live whatever life I wanted to live.

I had a family of my own including one child and was married for 18 years. We rented and owned homes in Iowa and Minnesota. That once again felt like home – returning every day to a house and loved ones. Though I was active with many jobs and responsibilities, I can't say that I felt a strong sense of community. I'm fiercely independent and just didn't feel connected. In fact, I avoided my neighbors.

Following a difficult divorce, I ended up with the house, all the debt, and full-time custody of our kid. When the Great Recession hit, my finances were already compromised. My house went underwater, so to speak, which was followed by foreclosure and bankruptcy. While waiting for my house to foreclose I started studying politics and related social issues to try and understand what had happened. I soon came to realize that our political system was so corrupt that we were heading for a dark future. I also realized that the American Dream was a lie and that I had wasted my life chasing rainbows.

So, I came up with a new plan for my future. I decided to be part of the solution by becoming a full-time activist. I refused to get back on the corporate hamster wheel and instead decided to write political satire. I kept studying politics while ingesting mounds of information on many other

topics. When the foreclosure finally happened, I had done tons of research but didn't have any writing to show.

Despite having a job, family, and house in the past, Anonymous 2 "didn't feel connected" and even avoided neighbors. After his divorce and bankruptcy, he eventually decided to get off the "corporate hamster wheel" and escape the trap of the American Dream. For Anonymous 2, being houseless is somewhat of a choice. Communities like TC3 have allowed him to not only actively participate in fighting injustice, but also embody a defiance of the American Dream. Since making this decision, he has found communities where he belongs. As was stated earlier in this study, this sense of community is central to a sense of home.

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Anonymous 4 shared another struggle with the American Dream. He discussed the "brokenness" which was the result of a corporate system that he had been stuck in:

There's a lot of brokenness here...and there's also a lot of success and opportunity and people moving forward...but about two years ago, I was at the hostel and when my savings were gone and I wasn't working there anymore, I became homeless.

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Just felt trapped in a gerbil wheel living in Florida...and I left Florida with the hopes of coming out here and maybe setting up a place...I'm really tired of Florida -low wages, not a lot of opportunity...there's people here who make 30 dollars an hour doing construction that would make ten dollars an hour there. And although the cost of living is cheaper, it's not that much cheaper. Still 2017...just the same gerbil wheel and trials in my own life going on and I'm just drawn back out here.

Not only was capitalism making it difficult for him to find an income that would sustain the lifestyle instilled by the system itself, but it was also affecting his mental health:

I was working to make it. When I was done, the final straw was I had kind of a meltdown and every once in a while, when I have a meltdown, I'll turn to drugs. And in my past, it didn't help matters then and it just made it more of a mess and more of a reason just to get away. I don't want to be self-medicating in a hamster wheel.

Spending his time trying to keep up with the cost of living pushed him to turn to drugs for solace. Abusing drugs may have been a way to fill the void of community and a sense of home. Upon discussing that he had found peace while being houseless and that trying to pay for

housing was creating anxiety, I questioned the traditional approach to houselessness and homelessness as mostly a provision of more housing units. To this he said:

That totally distorts...it's not even the solution or the problem.

Anonymous 4 recognizes that housing is neither the real struggle of homelessness nor the solution on its own. When we continued to discuss housing-oriented approaches to homelessness, he said:

You're not even going to enjoy the house.

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Housing is one part of the homeless situation. Housing might stop more people from becoming homeless. If housing was easier, it was more affordable, wasn't such a strangle-hold.

He also recognized that housing is only one part of the homeless situation and could stop people from being houseless if it weren't so difficult to afford. In addition, having found a new relationship, he had begun to feel pressure to get back into the "corporate hamster wheel", and was debating the consequences:

For me, it might feel like a gerbil wheel and maybe I need to get back in the wheel again for our future. She's got these two little kids, but it's hard to tell.

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Being a new opportunity in my life, the relationship, it fogs it up...it makes me ask myself the same question. I would have to learn the answer to your question as I go. Because it really...is a whirlwind in my life...totally making me rethink everything going forward. So it's a very important consideration. I don't want to be unhappy again.

Because of his new relationship, Anonymous 4 feels pressured to go back to a lifestyle that made him miserable and give up his newfound sense of home and community. If housing were not "such a strangle-hold", this would not be such a challenging issue. As he thought about his search for happiness, he then spoke specifically about the American Dream, saying:

Pondering what the American dream really is. The house with the white picket fence. You really don't own anything until you own a couple of houses anyway. You're just renting a piece of the world that's going to be gone after you're gone. You don't own that. We can't kick it down from generations to generations.

With his statement about not owning anything “after you’re gone”, Anonymous 4 articulates his desire to live for something more profound than a physical dwelling, which will continue to benefit generations for years to come.

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Donna also questioned the American Dream as had Anonymous 2 and Anonymous 4. She wrote about learning that “home” is not the “big house, picket fence and two car garage” but where her husband is:

Home to me means anywhere my husband is. I can tell you that if I was asked that same question earlier in life my answer would have been much different. It would have included words like big house, picket fence and two car garage. But when you truly meet your soulmate things change. Where you are geographically and what you are living in are really inconsequential as long as that person is by your side.

The sentiments of feeling at home wherever loved ones are tie back to the meta-theme and core of a sense of home –human connection. Without human connection and community, no form of the American Dream could make someone feel at home.

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All of the stories that questioned the American Dream are ultimately grappling with social norms and social justice, as some lifestyles and some groups of people are accommodated for more than others. As Kirk explained:

All I can say is –justice. Justice is required. A feeling that if a problem arises, and a person is wrong, that that thing will be made right somehow. That the community is also wronged. Every time a crime is committed. In this particular case where we’re at, it’s not just individuals, it’s the genocide that’s occurred, it’s the stolen land, it’s the slavery. That none of this has been repaired, none of this has been fixed, that people haven’t even apologized, humans, the government has not apologized for this. That people believe in a government based on that is insulting to our ancestors and to humanity.

Kirk once again speaks of the many layers of injustice that he feels hinder a sense of community, starting from the colonization of native land. In his view, the existence of the whole system, which perpetuates the American Dream, is in and of itself “insulting”. Kirk is not alone

in this stance, as many other TC3 members feel that they have been cheated by the notion of the American Dream.

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The facet of *Injustice and a Monolithic American Dream* proves that people are unhappy with an existing system they feel perpetuates injustice and inequity. This brought about struggles in their pasts with finances, mental health, and history. Both a supportive environment and acts of solidarity create a sense of home, which the American Dream is not quite conducive to. As long as justice is not served to accommodate and work for lifestyles that don't fit the mold of the American Dream, urban settings will not provide the houseless with a sense of home. Kirk summarized it best by saying:

A place without justice cannot have proper community.

People may feel a sense of justice and community within TC3, but they do not feel a part of the community of the city since they feel that injustice continues to exist.

### 6.3.6 *Culture of Individualism*

The last external threat that makes it difficult for people to feel at home is a culture of individualism. Jeffrey spoke about the "brainwashing" of individualism:

We in the US, we're like brainwashed into being individuals all the time, almost to a fault...the nuclear family has even been broken up...people with families don't stick together...I'm the only one in my family like this. And the brainwashing is such I've succumbed to it to the point that I would feel loathed to even ask my immediate relatives..."Can you help me here?"

Jeffrey feels that his family is so individualistic that he is uncomfortable asking for support if he needs it. This is antithetical to the collectivist nature of TC3 and the emphasis on sharing resources and values and being supportive of one another. He also spoke about an underlying culture of fear that separates people:

It's even more fundamental than that. We're afraid of...other. It's a deep psychological concept. If the other is...engaged in doing things that you don't know what they're doing. That just brings up the fears. But it begins with fear of the other. Cause you're not like us...it's the same syndrome

all over the world. Other is suspicious. Other is suspect. Other brings out the fear factor. Creates anxiety. And it just goes downhill from there.

The concept of “the other” ties back to the theme of stigmatization but also relates to individualistic tendencies that separate people from one another.

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Kirk also scrutinized the culture of the US, framing individualism as a lack of culture. He described a “culture vacuum” in the US, where everything is about consumption rather than an effort to create community:

...even in just what I would describe as a culture vs. here what I would describe as a culture vacuum. Where it's just consume, consume, McDonalds, cellphone, Walmart, buy, buy, buy, get on the bus, don't make eye contact, don't be friendly unless it's a nice shiny white person. Be scared of everyone, once again, unless they're a nice, shiny white person. Trust liars. Do whatever you can to benefit yourself. Not that that isn't elsewhere; not that consumerism and evil aren't elsewhere. But it's not as pervasive as here. People call it out as evil. People call it what it really is and say you're being a douche.

The way that Kirk describes the American culture highlights the role of capitalism in exacerbating individualism. He also spoke of individualism being more common in urban areas:

...urban areas are typically more individually minded. Just take of yourself, take care of your family. Whether it's because of density or because of lack of security. People have to buy food, they can't just go out and gather food or it's harder. Or you can't just go hunting, typically. Or you can't be homeless without it being criminalized. And that's not around the world. I don't know, I would describe them as collectivist, they're not communal per se.

The problems that Kirk identifies in individualistic societies compartmentalize people into assuming particular roles and just taking care of themselves and their immediate families.

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Some people who had grown up outside the US gave unique perspectives on collectivism. One of these people was Anonymous 3, who was raised in Egypt. In comparing the culture there with that of the US, he said:

Over there people more connected honestly, to each other. More family values. There's family values here of course, but more over there, social...Egypt now has a big financial problem. For most of the society. So when you have a financial problem, people start to spread away from each other. People here has no financial problem, of course there is people, but the society here, most of society is well.

In this statement, Anonymous 3 implies that financial problems drive people apart and may create a culture of individualism. He says that even in Egypt where society used to be tightknit, economic hardships have driven people apart. This testimony provides evidence that capitalism can damage community bonds and as a result, a sense of home. Unfortunately, this is not unique to the US.

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José was also raised outside the US, as a native of El Salvador, and compared the collectivist nature of his home country with the nature of people in the US:

You know, in USA, everybody has to put the alarm in his house. Why? Because here I don't know his neighbor. Here I don't know the next house. He never drink one coffee with him. In my country, no! 4 o'clock, everybody drink coffee, and talk, and play!

José demonstrated the individualistic versus collectivist tendencies of society in the US and El Salvador, respectively, by comparing daily activities like setting an alarm clock and drinking coffee. While both of these activities often happy solitarily in the US, they are considered community activities in El Salvador. With the sharing of daily activities, collectivist communities are more likely to create a sense of home, as opposed to the threat of individualism to a sense of home and community.

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The stories in this last facet of *Question 2-What External Factors Threaten a Sense of Home?* discuss *A Culture of Individualism*, which perpetuates a fear of the other, especially when the "other" is leading a lifestyle or is in a condition that differs from the majority. Not only is fearing the other a form of stigmatization, but also individualism is not conducive to sharing resources and values. All of the facets that create a sense of home depend to varying degrees on a collectivist lifestyle. Therefore, as long as individualistic tendencies are prevalent, it will remain difficult for the houseless to feel that they are welcomed and at home in the city.

### 6.3.7 Discussion

While people are able to create or find a sense of home even in difficult circumstances, there are external threats that may harm this sense of home. Often, these threats are outside the control of marginalized groups such as the houseless. There are six major facets that threaten human connection and the facets that create sense of home. Firstly, *Capitalism, Business Gain, and Corporate Greed* threaten stability, self-governance, and agency. Secondly, *Purely Service-Oriented Approaches* do not provide room for self-governance and agency. Thirdly, *Criminalization of Dwelling in the Public Realm* harms a sense of stability, safety and security, and a supportive environment. Fourthly, *Stigmatization of the Other* hinders the potential for solidarity and an accommodating environment. Fifthly, *Injustice and a Monolithic American Dream* provides little support for various lifestyles in urban areas, particularly unsettled lifestyles and dwelling in the public realm. Finally, a *Culture of Individualism* is not conducive to the sharing of resources, experiences, and values. All of these facets threaten people's sense of home since they threaten human connection. While the US is an amalgam of ethnicities, races, and cultures, there still seems to be a monolithic understanding of what home means. Since it is often equated with owning a house, people who do not fit this description are ostracized and assumptions are made about their situations. If a city is to be a home for everyone, then everyone should feel that they belong regardless of their circumstances.

*Question 1 –What Creates a Sense of Home?* and *Question 2 –What External Factors Threaten a Sense of Home?* together provide a holistic understanding of the true facets and manifestations of home and homelessness. The stories from TC3 have provided a diverse set of personal testimonies of home and homelessness through life journeys that all somehow led to joining TC3. In all stories, human connection proved to be the fundamental differentiator between a sense of home and homelessness. With this newfound understanding, the remaining pages of this study discuss the major conclusions and implications of TC3's perspective on home and homelessness.

## CHAPTER 7. Discussion

### 7.1 Outcomes of the Research and Major Conclusions

After studying the literature on home and homelessness and interpreting the stories from TC3, the research resulted in a few outcomes. The main outcomes are rethinking the semantics of home and homelessness, reframing home and homelessness, and the *Home Framework*, which is a conceptual framework I developed based on the themes that emerged from the stories. Since the literature on home and homelessness has much written content but few graphic representations, there is a need for more succinct and easily digestible representations of home and homelessness. Therefore, I have attempted to create simple conceptual graphics that illustrate the concepts discussed (shown throughout this document). This is meant to provide a starting point for the development of different communication methods in the related literature. It also meant to encourage the use of these and other graphics to communicate these contentious topics in a concise and effective manner, with the intent that this would encourage conversations and a questioning of current rhetoric on home and homelessness. I find that this would be especially useful in the academic and professional world of the built environments, which is often reliant on visuals and public presentations. The list of figures contains a full list of these visuals. Theses can be used for public education by anyone who seeks to better understand those who are or have been houseless.

In emphasizing the importance of rethinking homelessness as a condition lacking human connection, the intent of my research is not to romanticize the realities of houselessness or homelessness. Living on the street or in shelters, especially if one is alone, entails numerous struggles that are not elaborated on in this research. In addition to the stories shared in the previous section, TC3 members shared experiences of chronic illnesses, dangerous living situations, and feelings of despair so extreme that some struggled to find a reason to live. Appendix H gives a glimpse into these stories and why this is an urgent question.

That said, I have found that homelessness, framed in this research as mainly an outcome of social isolation and human disconnect, is equally, if not more, concerning than houselessness.

Houselessness in some cases may actually be the outcome of homelessness. Addressing houselessness alone does not tackle the root causes of what often forces people into this situation. Notwithstanding the economic reasons that play a role in houselessness, it is still critical to look at the social circumstances that may contribute to it. As was evident in Ecker's research, addressing community integration first is most helpful in supporting people to find housing (if they chose to do so), rather than first addressing the lack of housing itself (2015b).

## 7.2 The Semantics of Home and Homelessness

The semantics of "homelessness" is a sensitive and important topic, which has been heavily discussed in the literature. Framing the issue as "homelessness" is a contentious question. It can be helpful if the understanding of "home" is not perceived as just housing, but rather as a multifaceted concept. This understanding has the potential to lead to more empathetic and multifaceted approaches. However, even then, the use of the term would only be valid if a person says they feel homeless. This study makes the argument that one cannot label someone as "homeless" as this is a feeling, state of mind, or condition that is only assumed to be true if the person identifies themselves as such.

On the other hand, referring to the issue as "homelessness" can be harmful if the understanding of home is just housing. This single-faceted understanding leads to single-faceted approaches. This is the situation for most strategies and plans related to houselessness today. Based on the outcomes of the literature review and the stories from TC3, I choose to use the word "houseless" to refer to the community of TC3 and the individuals that the majority of society refers to as "homeless". As stated earlier in this research, I define "houseless" as:

*Lacking an addressed, permanent residence that someone claims as rightfully theirs, whether rented or owned*<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> A person does not need to fully rent or own an addressed permanent residence for them to be considered "housed" ("housed" being the opposite of "houseless"). For example, sharing an apartment with a group of people or sharing kitchen access with others (whether rented or owned) means the person is housed. Couch surfing, on the other hand, could be considered a state of houselessness, since couch surfers usually do not consider themselves the rightful owners of the places in which they stay.

“House” in this research is understood to be a form of permanent dwelling typical of mainstream American culture, such as a single-family dwelling, an apartment, condominium, or other permanent form of shelter. While “unhoused” is similar to “houseless”, I chose to use the latter for two reasons. Firstly, it appeared more frequently in my literature review. Secondly, “to house” someone does not necessarily imply providing a house (in the understanding of “house” as it is defined for this research); it could also refer to providing another form of shelter. Therefore, “unhoused” could mean lacking any kind of shelter, and not specifically a “house” as it is defined in this research.

The reason for using the term houseless as opposed to the many other words found in the literature is that it simply states a fact or reality (that someone does not currently have a house they call their own). It is neutral and simpler than the use of the word “homeless”, since “home” is a complex concept. Furthermore, calling someone “homeless” can be viewed as offensive, presumptuous, or judgmental.

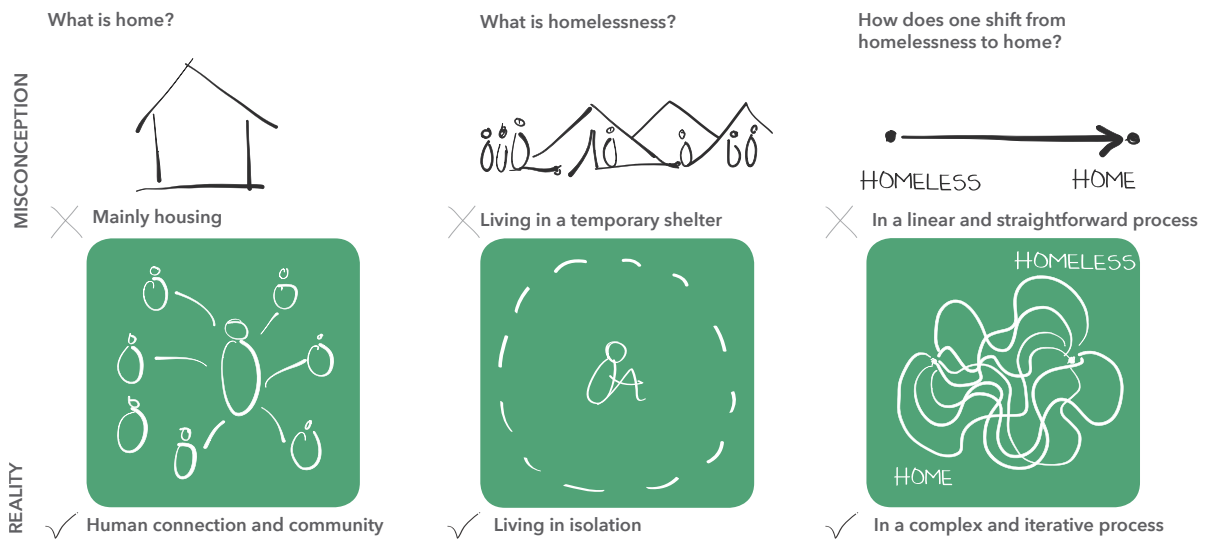
### 7.3 Reframing Home and Homelessness

Building on the reconfiguration of the semantics, I propose a reframing of the question of homelessness based on the following premises. Firstly, home is not synonymous to housing. While society does not necessarily have such a simplistic understanding of home, it seems that the nuances are forgotten or undermined when thinking about homelessness. Home actually centers around human connection and a sense of community. Secondly, *homelessness* is not purely a lack of housing or living in temporary shelter, whether on the street or elsewhere. Homelessness is actually related to social isolation, regardless of the existence or lack of shelter, and regardless of the quality or form of shelter, if it exists. Homelessness is also not a characteristic or trait but rather a condition, sense, or feeling that anyone can experience. In fact, both a *sense of homelessness* and a *sense of home* are not necessarily permanent conditions. Thirdly, the journey to feeling “at home”, finding home, or creating home is not linear and does not have a clear start and end. It is a convoluted and ever-changing process. A person can move in and out of the conditions of home and homelessness at different stages in

their life. This is supported by Ecker’s discussion on “housing flux”, in which he implies that home and homelessness are changing conditions to be addressed as such (Ecker 2015a, 3).

Therefore, a lack of permanent or fixed shelter is not the main struggle in the condition of homelessness. Rather, the struggle is mainly coping with a disconnect from a community or other human connection. Figure 7-1 presents a conceptual representation of these ideas. While a single image is used to symbolize each of the three questions in its misconception versus its reality, I do not intend to imply that there is only a single understanding of each question. It is represented this way for the sake of simplicity. The aim is to show a concise synopsis of what emerged from the stories of TC3 and some common (and not the only) misconceptions.

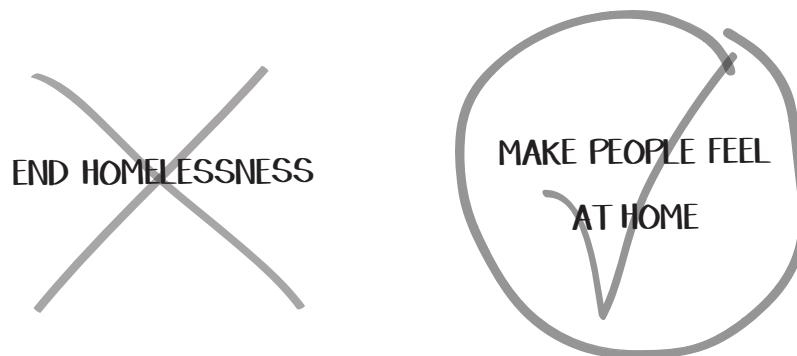
By understanding that homelessness can be experienced by anyone regardless of the existence of physical shelter or the type of shelter, homelessness can be framed as a human condition or feeling to be understood from a nonjudgmental stance –rather than a “problem” to be fought, ended, or eliminated. Instead of trying to continuously address homelessness as a question of ending homelessness, I propose framing the issue as a question of *what makes people feel at home or what creates a sense of home* (see Figure 7-2). This provides an equalizing platform for all human beings and frames the ideas as an effort to create something



**Figure 7-1: Graphic comparing the misconceptions and the realities of home, homelessness, and the process of moving from homelessness to home.**

positive rather than to get rid of something viewed as negative.

In addition to arguing that the lack of human connection may be the greatest struggle of homelessness, I also propose that a sense of homelessness may lead to a person becoming houseless. This is supported by Ecker's research which says that community integration not only increases the likelihood of acquiring housing, but also in finding "housing in a supportive and safe neighbourhood" (Ecker 2015b). Being houseless may then either exacerbate the sense of homelessness (particularly if a person lives alone) or it can lead people to finding a community in which they feel at home, such as was often the case with members of TC3. It is important to note that I am not negating the need for more low-income housing options or an increase in housing stock. I am also not opposing the models or research that has found housing to be a factor in improving the condition of people's well-being (Pathways Housing First 2017; Cho 2014; National Alliance to End Homelessness 2017). Long-term housing is still needed as is short-term or temporary housing. However, my research has found that housing is not a priority in finding a sense of home, but rather human connection is most important. This can be confirmed by UN-Habitat's definition of homelessness, which emphasizes "detachment from society", "the lack of the affiliative bonds", and the condition of "belonging nowhere rather than having nowhere to sleep" (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 2000, xiii).



**Figure 7-2: A graphic expressing the need to move from a rhetoric of "ending homelessness" to "making people feel at home".**

## 7.4 The Home Framework

In addition to scrutinizing the semantics and framing of homelessness, I propose the *Home Framework*, which is a conceptual framework resulting from my analysis of the stories from TC3. As shown in Figure 7-3, the Home Framework integrates the two main questions that emerged from the stories, organized as two categories with associated facets: *What Creates a Sense of Home* and *External Factors That Threaten a Sense of Home*. It also includes the *Benefits of Having a Sense of Home*, which result from the different facets that create a sense of home.

By promoting community resiliency with human connection at its core, the Home Framework can provide some structure in guiding a project, strategy, or initiative to cultivate a sense of home or in assessing whether this sense of home is present in existing projects. The Home Framework has the potential to create environmentally resilient, economically sustainable and self-sufficient communities since it promotes sharing of resources, solidarity, and a supportive environment. It can be used by nonprofits, the public sector, and others addressing homelessness to evaluate the effectiveness of existing strategies or to guide the development of new ones. It can also be considered a framework to create built environments that cultivate a sense of home at various scales, such as the scale of a neighborhood, district, or entire city. Furthermore, this can be applied to manifestations of global migration, whether addressing transitional or emergency situations or community integration and resettlement.

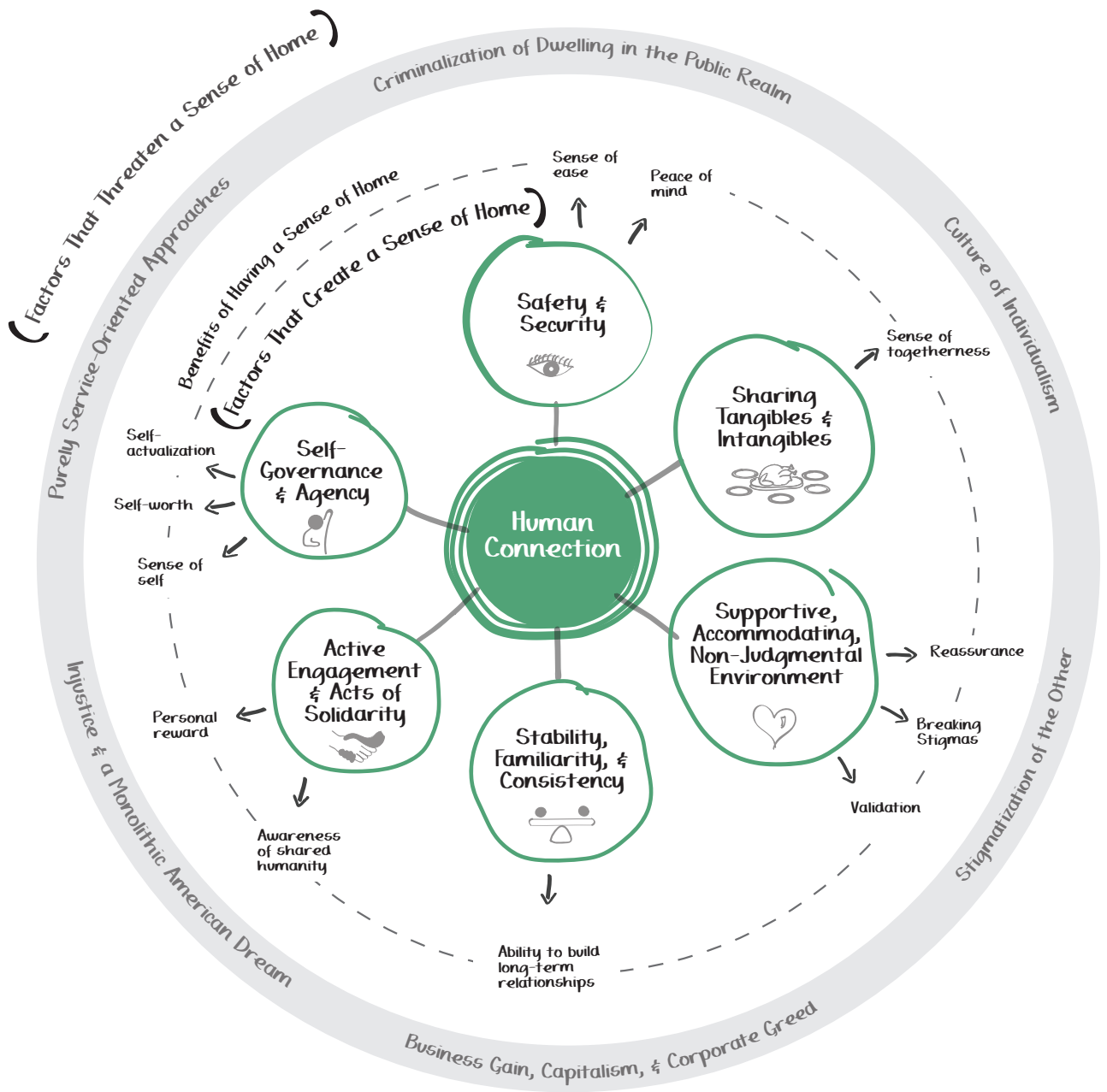


Figure 7-3: A graphic portraying the Home Framework, which resulted from interpreting the stories from members of Tent City 3.

## CHAPTER 8. Implications for Addressing Houselessness

### 8.1 Comparison of Approaches to Houselessness in the Professional World With the Home Framework

Keeping in mind the Home Framework, I address the implications of the research on urban planning and public policy's approach to houselessness. In the professional world of planning and public policy, the approaches to addressing houselessness are largely service-oriented. Even initiatives that are deemed "community-based" are often directed at the houseless rather than stemming from the houseless community itself. Therefore, while there is an effort to bring the idea of community into the question of houselessness, the application is incomplete. I examine the conceptualization of home and homelessness in the professional world and how this compares to the literature and the stories from TC3. I also discuss projects and strategies to houselessness in the US and their relation to underlying cultural convictions. While issues are discussed on a national level, the focus is mostly on Seattle as a case study. In this section, the semantics, framing, and approaches to houselessness in the professional world are addressed.

While academia recognizes the complexity of home and the nuances of homelessness, the state and the public sector continue to address homelessness as mostly a lack of housing and do not place as much emphasis on the role of community (or lack thereof) in making or breaking a sense of home. Without a reconsideration of the underlying misconceptions about homelessness in the professional world, attempts to address the issue are not fully informed or effective. In the strategies to address homelessness on a state or national level, home is framed as a destination to be reached through a linear process, rather than a more dynamic process. In other words, a person is homeless at one point and then takes steps towards becoming "homed". However, I argue that home is a lifelong journey and web-like process of discovery. It is not an end destination and it may not even be a constant. While housing might be the physical location in which a sense of home occurs, house is not synonymous to home and vice versa. Furthermore, while academia discusses the role of human connection,

community, belonging, and social integration as part of the question, the professional world still takes on a mostly service-oriented approach.

In terms of the language used to frame homelessness, there tends to be a counter approach, which carries a tone of eradicating something viewed as negative, rather than an attempt to create or cultivate something positive. Organizations have adopted various terminology, such as “*ending homelessness*” (Burt, Martha R.; Spellman 2007; Canadian Observatory on Homelessness 2017b; Homelessness 2017; Srebnik 2010; United Way of King County 2016), “*fighting homelessness*” (Office of the Mayor-City of Seattle 2017c), “*responding to homelessness*” (Schutt and Garrett 1992), and “*addressing homelessness*” (City of Seattle 2016a). “Fighting” and “ending” take on a somewhat hostile tone, while “responding” implies an emergency or crisis approach, and “addressing” is more neutral. Through a reframing of the question from “ending homelessness” to “making people feel at home”, the goal is to present a statement with a positive, or at least, neutral, connotation.

Furthermore, the Homeless Hub, a Canadian “web-based research library” (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness 2017a), defines homelessness as “the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household’s financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination” (The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness 2012). While this definition recognizes the complex reasons for homelessness, homelessness is still framed as a lack of housing. The stories from TC3 negate a focus on housing, since homelessness was expressed as mainly a lack of human connection.

The City of Seattle also still carries a limited understanding of home, an inflexible stance on lifestyle and dwelling, and a prescription of a settled, housed life as a more appropriate way of existing. A look at the City’s strategies reveals yet again a focus on housing and a service-oriented approach, homelessness as something to be eradicated, and a view of home-finding as an end destination and a permanent place. In April 2017, Mayor Ed Murray announced a regional plan to “fight homelessness” and provide services and “permanent housing” to the

houseless. The plan aims to “get people living unsheltered into permanent homes, keep people in their homes and out of homelessness”. This pairing of “unsheltered” with “homes” implies that the City views shelter as synonymous to home, a partial understanding of what home really means. The language used in the news article emphasizes services, a “data-driven approach”, and affordable and permanent housing (Office of the Mayor-City of Seattle 2017b). –all technical issues and an impersonal stance on homelessness.

In addition to the language and framing of the issue, the service-focused approach to homelessness should be of concern to urban planning and public policy. A look at both national strategies and ones specific to Seattle reveals a consistency in approaching this as mostly a question of service and aid. I argue that this is a result of a flawed understanding of homelessness and does not emphasize the importance of a sense of community. In strategies advocating for “permanent supportive housing” (Culhane 1996), the focus is on solutions for the individual rather than for a group of people. Even strategies that claim to use a “community” response still place the provision of affordable housing at the core of their strategy (New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness 2017). The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness presented a briefing paper entitled “Community Approaches to Homelessness Scope” but does not define “community” or explain what the community approaches are. While there is a mention of “Involving citizens”... “to foster greater human connection between people experiencing homelessness and community volunteers” (Wilkins and Elliott 2010, 16), the report does not go beyond this to explain its community approach.

The same can be said about “A Community Response to Homelessness in Albuquerque” developed for the years 2013 to 2017, in which the community’s role is not at the core of the strategy nor is there a framing of the homeless as having lost community. In their list of underlying beliefs, the causes of homelessness are deemed to be “poverty” and “structural inadequacies and personal characteristics or circumstances that make some people more vulnerable than others”(New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness 2017, 4). One of their broad goals to end homelessness is “Create the community and political will needed to end homelessness”. In this chapter, they explain that the general public needs to be more understanding of the circumstances of the houseless in order to provide “support for policies

and programs that can end homelessness”(New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness 2017, 24). The community’s role is framed as just a need for more understanding and providing support for policies, but not as being personally involved with those who are homeless.

The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty says they are “committed to solutions that address the causes of homelessness, not just the symptoms” (The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty 2011, 1), while at the same time frames homelessness as mostly “a housing crisis” (Ibid., 6). This implies that they view housing as “solution” to homelessness, and therefore also imply that finding a home is an end destination. A report they published in 2011 focuses on legislative issues, infrastructure, housing affordability, rent, access to housing resources, and location in relation to services and utilities (The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty 2011). There is also a section specifically about Native American housing, but its content is limited (The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty 2011, 90–92).

In September 2016, the City of Seattle launched a program called “Pathways Home”, which is promoted as “Seattle’s person-centered plan to reduce homelessness” and aims for “a major transformation of our homeless service delivery system”. The title and intent of the project in and of themselves are problematic. The title implies a linear process of going from homeless to “homed” and equates housing with home. The focus on a “service delivery system” keeps the City somewhat disconnected from the individuals this project attempts to help. The Home Framework shows that people prefer to have the tools to take care of themselves (if they are capable of doing so), rather than depend on services. It is also a more effective way of creating a sense of self and home. In a statement about this program, the mayor stated that “For too long, too much of the debate, energy and resources in this city have been focused on emergency, short-term emergency interventions. Pathways Home is our plan shift the focus to longer-term solutions” (City of Seattle 2016d). This is problematic as it delegitimizes temporary solutions as a need and seeks to accelerate and oversimplify a complex situation. This is not to say that housing is not a major need, but the focus purely on housing is a misunderstanding of the other elements that compromise home. The stories showed that some people viewed TC3 as a temporary home, but a home nonetheless. Ecker’s research and the Home Framework

argue that the having a sense of community also makes it more likely that people will find housing (Ecker 2015b). Therefore, short-term or transitional solutions that make people feel at home are necessary.

A “provider of supportive housing” in New York called Breaking Ground (formerly called Common Ground and cited as such) produced a strategy called “Community Solutions: Bringing Solutions to Homelessness to Scale” (Breaking Ground 2017). In it, they discuss the community of the homeless as seemingly separate from the community of the general public, with donor-beneficiary dynamics such as “helping a community to develop a quick and effective process to identify the most vulnerable individuals experiencing homelessness and move them into permanent housing” (Ground 2015, 15). They also still have a service-focused approach, which does not live up to the name of the strategy and does not reframe “community” as including the inhabitants of the whole city regardless of whether one is housed or houseless.

According to a study by the Centre for Research on Inner City Health of St. Michael’s Hospital in Toronto (Stergiopoulos et al. 2015), one of the more successful models for addressing houselessness is the Housing First Model. It was first developed in 1992 by the nonprofit organization Pathways Housing First in New York and “provides immediate access to permanent supportive housing to individuals who are homeless and who have mental health and addiction problems.” Housing First does include “community” and “support” in its core principles (Pathways Housing First 2017). In a piece by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, the author also clarifies that the Housing First model is “a whole-system orientation and response” which focuses on “health, recovery, and well-being”, with housing being a “foundation and platform for achieving these goals” (Cho 2014). It has also been adopted by different cities, including Seattle (City of Seattle 2016c). However, the model focuses solely on those with mental health and addiction issues and leaves out the population that is struggling with different issues. Many of the people in TC3 did not have mental health and addiction issues but were struggling with other circumstances that had led them to houselessness. Furthermore, the Housing First Model does not attempt to reframe the question of houselessness or shift away from a focus on housing as a solution. In a 2015 news

article by the Huffington Post, it was also recognized that despite using a housing first model, Seattle was still missing the mark in its attempts to “end chronic homelessness” (Goldberg 2015). Clearly, there is still need for a reexamination of the approach to homelessness both in Seattle and other American cities.

While this section is not meant to be an exhaustive review of all approaches to homelessness in the professional world, it provides some examples and critique of incomplete approaches to the question. There are likely many other strategies on a national and state level that frame the question of homelessness in a similar fashion –focusing on housing and services and not emphasizing the element of community in making people feel at home. As long as there is an incomplete understanding of homelessness and homelessness, the strategies and approaches will also be incomplete.

It is critical to recognize that urban planning, both as an academic field and as a profession, is in part responsible for creating the infrastructure for particular lifestyles. In other words, when urban planning dictates strict distinctions between the use of public and private land, perpetuates a single ideal of home, or approves urban renewal that attracts large corporations or gentrifies neighborhoods, then it is inherently also structuring and creating a world to meet certain lifestyles. These lifestyles can influence what is not approved in the public and private realm, overemphasize home ownership, and provide little flexibility for people to exist outside a corporate, capitalist system. In addition to playing a role in the criminalization and stigmatization of those who do not fit this mold, these limiting cultural constructs can create a societal division of those who are living the “right” way and those who are not. A breakdown in society and a race to fit an accepted lifestyle traps people into constantly trying to reach an individualistic ideal; and if they do reach it, it is easy to remain numb in individualistic siloes, while those who exist outside this sphere –either by force or by choice– become marginalized both in physical space and in people’s social lives.

The quintessential representation of this mold is the American dream, which has long promoted the single-family house with the white picket fence in the suburbs and car ownership. Not only does this make other lifestyles less desirable, but also less easily attainable

when the infrastructure of the city (and again, the lifestyle) is shaped to meet this American Dream. This ideal places a lot of emphasis on being settled and remaining in one place, where neighbors are similar to one another in income level, race, and ethnicity. In contrast, the idea of movement or being unsettled has been stigmatized, more so in urban areas than in areas outside city boundaries.

This emphasis on the American dream has played a role in the disconnect between urban and rural areas of the United States, where people living on either “side” (for lack of a better word) may have little idea about the lifestyle of the other. Furthermore, while policy promotes movement (such as transportation, biking, and walking) that can be planned, managed and controlled, movement becomes less appealing when it is organically initiated and unpredictable. Immigration, living on the streets, and leading a nomadic lifestyle are just some examples of movement that policy does not initiate and can have difficulty controlling. As common knowledge goes, people tend to fear that which is unfamiliar or unknown to them. This “othering” can drive people apart. To some extent, urban planning exacerbates this social divide by promoting the idea of being settled and indirectly discouraging a lifestyle of change, travel, and movement.

## 8.2 Existing Initiatives That Are In Line With the Home Framework

While there are ways to improve the approaches to houselessness in Seattle, it is important to acknowledge the existing initiatives that carry some of the values of the Home Framework. City-sanctioned encampments are a step in the right direction, as they allow the encampments to stay on City-owned or private property for twelve months, “with an option to renew for an additional 12 months” (City of Seattle 2016b). This provides some stability so that people can build relationships and transition into other housing options, if they choose to do so. Currently there are six sanctioned encampments in Seattle. That being said, sweeps still occur of unsanctioned or “informal” houseless groups or individuals dwelling in public spaces. While the City developed “specific rules for the removal of encampments that balance providing services and alternatives to people living in encampments with the health and safety benefits of

removing encampments” in 2008 (City of Seattle 2016e), TC3 members reported that sweeps are still disruptive.

The Tent City Urbanism Movement, which “explores the intersection of two phenomena—the rise of democratic tent cities organized by the unhoused and the “tiny house movement” led by people looking to simplify their lives by downsizing their environmental footprint”, has found that the “tiny house village” is “a practical, community-based approach to restoring a simple housing option that preserves personal autonomy”(Tent City Urbanism 2017). The Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI), which “develops, owns and operates housing for the benefit of low-income, homeless and formerly homeless people in Washington”, has opened six villages in Seattle. They work with “Nickelsville, SHARE/Wheel, the City of Seattle, and Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd” in the management of these self-run communities (Low Income Housing Institute 2017a). The tiny home villages do not just provide temporary housing, but also allow people to have a sense of agency, self-governance, stability, safety and security, shared resources, and support, which are all part of the Home Framework. The LIHI also works on urban rest stops, which are “hygiene centers...providing free restrooms, showers, and laundry facilities to homeless men, women, and children within a clean, safe, and dignified environment” (Low Income Housing Institute 2017b). While urban rest stops do not present a complete model of communal living that the Home Framework presents, they do provide a sense of agency, safety and security, and a supportive environment. Dignity Village in Portland, which is the “longest-existing, continually operating, city-sanctioned Homeless Village in the United States”(Dignity Village 2017), follows a similar model as the tiny villages in Seattle.

In February 2017, Mayor Ed Murray announced the launch of a Navigation Team, made up of “outreach workers paired with specially trained Seattle Police Department (SPD) personnel, who will work to connect unsheltered people to housing and critical resources, while helping address pervasive challenges around the issue of homelessness in Seattle” and a low-barrier<sup>20</sup> Navigation Center where the houseless can be connected to services and housing (Office of the Mayor-City of Seattle 2017a). Described as a “planned dormitory-style living facility that provides shower, bathroom, and laundry facilities, as well as meals and a place to store their

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<sup>20</sup> A “low-barrier” shelter is one that does not require treatment from chemical dependency as a precursor to entry.

belongings” (Ibid.), it echoes some of the values of the Home Framework, such as communal living, shared resources, human connection, safety and security, stability, and support. The Navigation Center provides much needed support for many who are houseless. However, there is room for improvement, which is discussed in the next section of this study.

Organizations addressing houselessness that share values similar to those of the Home Framework include Right2DreamToo (R2D2), “a nonprofit organization operating a space that provides refuge and a safe space to rest or sleep undisturbed for Portland's unhoused community who cannot access affordable housing or shelter” (Right2DreamToo 2017). Picture the Homeless is another example, as it runs a community land trust program that “works to develop and preserve community controlled affordable housing, commercial, green and cultural spaces...that is permanently affordable for community members” and “ a resident-controlled Mutual Housing Association” (Picture the Homeless 2017). Furthermore, the Los Angeles Community Action Network works on changing structures of power and eliminating “the race, class, gender barriers that are used to prevent communities from building true power”(Network 2017). Finally, the Skid Row Housing Trust echoes the reframing of homelessness in my research, as they believe that “Homelessness is a reversible circumstance, not a personal characteristic” and “Wellness begins with having a choice regarding the rules and conditions that impact one’s life” (Skid Row Housing Trust 2017).

While there are efforts that share some of the components and values of the Home Framework, there is still a need for more bottom-up approaches that allow people to have control over their lives and to self-govern. The Home Framework can help cities, nonprofits, and other organizations addressing houselessness to consider the important factors that give people a sense of home and the external threats which act as barriers to this sense of home and people’s ability to transition into a different living situation, if they choose to do so. The following section proposes some ways in which improvements could be made to approaches to houselessness.

### 8.3 Recommendations for Improving Approaches to Houselessness

There are a few overarching changes that could be made to the way houselessness and homelessness are addressed. Firstly, there is a need to change the narrative around houselessness. This has already been explained in detail in previous sections. In summary, rather than trying to fight, end, or eradicate homelessness, the goal should be to find ways to make people feel at home, whether they are in a transitional or permanent living situation. Secondly, I propose a more hands-off approach. This means that the City and others addressing houselessness should try to create the conditions and provide opportunities that allow people to find a sense of home, and subsequently, transition into housing, if they choose to. This would mean allowing for self-governance and bottom-up, community strategies, rather than directing “community”-based strategies at the houseless.

It also involves following the age-old proverb, “Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime” (as explained by José of TC3). Some of the ways this could be applied is by providing access to skills-based courses (as suggested by Jason of TC3) and locating houseless living spaces in areas that have access to jobs and other resources. Thirdly, it is important to recognize that housing did not emerge as a factor in this study in terms of what creates a sense of home. This does not mean that more affordable and more varied dwelling types are not needed, but that physical shelter is only a piece of the question of home. The stories from TC3 even suggest that physical shelter is not a precursor to finding a sense of home, and in fact, may be an outcome of finding a sense of home.

In addition to using the factors from the Home Framework to consider what needs to be added or changed to existing approaches, the threats can be used as a guide to what should be avoided. One threat is approaches that are purely service-oriented. Services for basic needs and chemical dependency should be supplemented with enabling strategies that provide people with a sense of agency and self-actualization. Resources should be provided for all who are in need of support but should be prioritized for those who are mentally or physically unable to fend for themselves. The Home Framework shows that people prefer to have a sense of

agency in order to reach self-actualization and fend for themselves, if they are physically and mentally capable of doing so.

For example, the Navigation Center in Seattle has the potential to be even more effective if those who benefit from its services are also given the opportunity to be part of the management and governance. As was expressed in the stories from TC3, some people prefer to have a sense of control and agency not just on an individual level, but also as a community. A sense of agency both individually and collectively is more likely to provide people with a sense of home even in a temporary situation. Furthermore, if collective agency and social support provide people with a sense of community integration and home, they are more likely to find housing they are satisfied with in the long-term as was discovered by Ecker (2015b).

My study begs a question of bigger systemic and cultural issues –capitalism, culture of individualism, and the American Dream. There is a need to rethink the economic system, which often forces people into working towards sustaining themselves individually rather than thinking collectively. This creates a system of dependency that is antithetical to self-sustaining communities. Traditional urban planning has supported a strict delineation between the uses of private and public space, which has contributed to the stigmatization of the houseless since they often dwell in the public realm. It also means that public space prioritizes the needs and desires of the housed, since public spaces are currently used mostly for leisure and recreation. Those who are housed have private places to have their basic needs met and usually seek secondary needs in public spaces. On the other hand, the houseless often need public spaces to meet their basic needs. In the spirit of considering all residents of a city one community, there needs to be a realization that the current uses of public space do not benefit those who need it most.

As long as those who are houseless are unable to afford places (whether permanent or temporary) where they can conduct their private matters, the criminalization of dwelling in the public realm is unjust. Since criminalization and stigmatization both hinder a sense of home and the ability to dwell in the public realm, then decriminalization and de-stigmatization of houselessness should be prioritized. Criminalization of houselessness is not only inhumane, but

according to the UC Berkeley School of Law Policy Advocacy Clinic, is also expensive and ineffective (De Bendetti 2015). It is also necessary to end the sweeps of houseless individuals or groups, because these forceful actions impede people's stability and sense of security. Considering the fact that Seattle and other American cities have deemed houselessness an emergency (Beekman and Broom 2015), public space should also be considered as part of the emergency response. Lessons can be learned from emergency situations caused by natural disasters where public spaces become places of shelter, sanctuary, and community resilience. Public spaces were especially important in the aftermath of the earthquakes in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2010 and 2011 (Wesener 2015). Since public spaces become sites of response for climate emergencies, then they should also be considered for a similar use in "socio-economic" emergencies like houselessness. While sanctioning encampments is a step in this direction, cities should also consider allocating public spaces for emergency or transitional housing within comprehensive and long-range plans. Both undeveloped public spaces and developed or designed public spaces could be considered for temporary dwelling.

Another implication of this research is that temporary solutions are necessary alongside long-term solutions. Since home and homelessness are conditions in flux, then a temporary condition can be someone's home. Finding a home in a temporary solution, which includes finding a sense of community, allows people to then seek longer-term solutions. This is supported by Ecker's research on community integration, which finds that social support is key not only for community integration, but also in finding housing (Ecker 2015b; Ecker 2015a). Much of the current language about houselessness (including Mayor Ed Murray's statement about Seattle's "Pathways Home" initiative) undermines the importance of temporary solutions and implies a need to move from temporary to permanent solutions quickly (City of Seattle 2016c). Considering the large scale of what Seattle and other cities in the US have deemed an emergency crisis, it is also important to recognize that there may be a need for temporary and mid-term solutions for many years, at least ten to twenty years into the future.

## **CHAPTER 9. Implications for the Planning, Design, and Policy of the Built Environment**

### 9.1 Comparison of Approaches to the Built Environment With the Home Framework

In addition to rethinking the approach to houselessness, the Home Framework and the stories from TC3 provide numerous lessons for the planning and design of the built environment. Firstly, the American Dream does not only stigmatize houselessness, but also lifestyles and types of dwelling that challenge the more normative ones. This has contributed to the stigmatization of dwelling in the public realm and living an unsettled life, since traditional planning and cultural values promote (and produce the infrastructure for) dwelling in the private realm and settling in a fixed location. Furthermore, urban development patterns and capitalism support this infrastructure.

As a result, there is little or no space in cities to accommodate for unsettled lifestyles, such as living in a recreational vehicle (RV) or a mobile home or leading a gypsy, traveler, Bedouin, or other unsettled lifestyle. Ironically, according to the Home Framework, the traditional ways of planning our environment are not conducive to creating a sense of home and are therefore driving people apart. Some of the TC3 members even said that they felt more at home in TC3 or in a houseless situation than they did when they had housing (Anonymous 2, Anonymous 4, Kevin. In conversation with the author. Seattle. March 2017). This is an important point to pause at and ponder. Have planning and policy created built environments that lack a sense of home and hamper the cultivation of genuine communities? While in some cases, the answer to this question may be an affirmative, the next section presents some examples of projects that have cultivated a sense of home and community.

### 9.2 Existing Approaches That Are In Line With the Home Framework

While perhaps not the focus of traditional urban planning and policy, there are some models of collective living that share values of the Home Framework. Intentional communities (IC), co-

housing models, and co-operatives have been gaining attention in recent years for their focus on community and sharing. A “quality of life” study comparing an IC with an unintentional community defines ICs as “communities that were specifically designed to enhance their resident's quality of life by balancing concern for interpersonal relationships (social capital), personal growth and development (human capital) and connection with nature (natural capital) with needs for physical subsistence (built capital and income)”. The study argues that ICs could be better models for sustainable development without the need for high consumption (Mulder, Costanza, and Erickson 2006, 13). Since the Home Framework places community at the core and argues against a consumption model of the existing capitalist system, ICs seem to have a higher potential for creating a strong sense of home.

Furthermore, this study concluded that ICs “have a better balance between built, human, social, and natural capital” (Ibid., 13) and “were more likely to identify community interactions as important” (Ibid., 18). Interestingly, the research also found that “IC residents were statistically more likely to view an area close to where they live as home” and people “who identified areas closer to where they live as home were more likely to rate the quality of their communities as high” (Ibid., 17). ICs also seem to cultivate a sense of belonging between people who live together, which increases the chances of creating a supportive environment and building solidarity. While there is more research on ICs the literature, my thesis does not attempt to provide a complete literature review. For the purposes of this thesis and the implications of the Home Framework, I present this study on ICs as an example of the potential of co-housing models to provide a sense of home.

### 9.3 Recommendations for Improving Approaches to Planning, Design, and Policy of the Built Environment

While ICs are one example of a model that could provide a sense of home, there is still a need to rethink the underlying cultural ideals of home and how they have limited the socially acceptable lifestyles and therefore, the available forms of shelter. Many alternative lifestyles that promote collectivism and movement may actually be more successful in creating a sense of home. As was shared by a few TC3 members, some people do not want to be settled, and

they should have the freedom to pursue this lifestyle (Daren, Jeffrey, Ron. In conversation with the author. Seattle. February 2017). Therefore, cities should not only allocate public spaces to support the houseless temporarily, but also make room for alternative, unsettled lifestyles through public spaces permanently allocated for this purpose. This could include providing spaces in urban areas where RV communities or other traveling or mobile groups could legally and freely congregate.

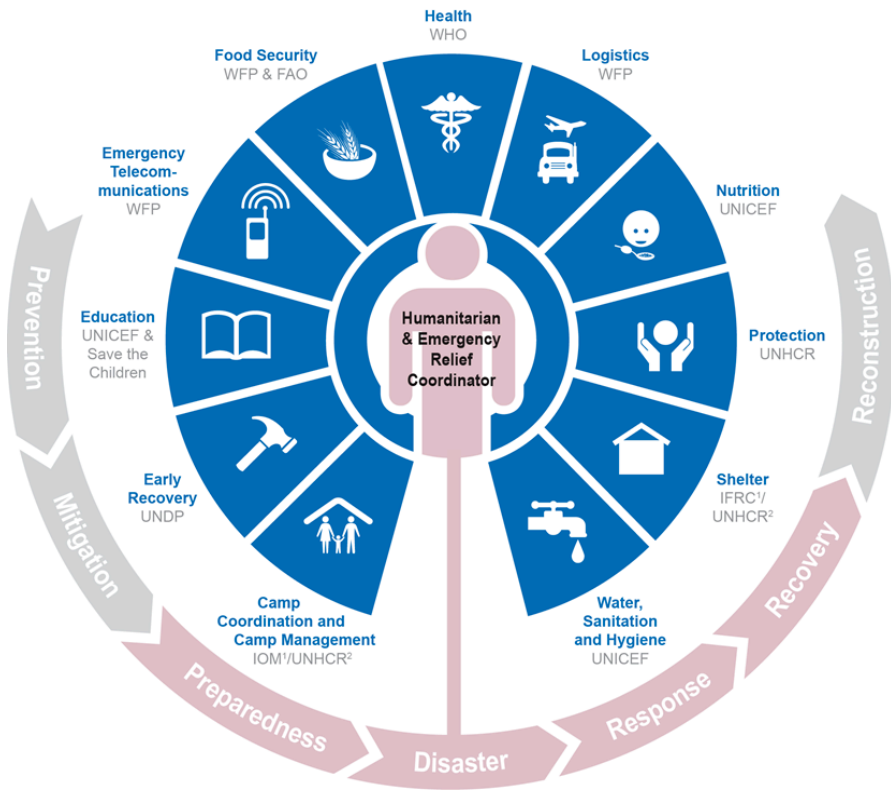
Overall, urban planning and public policy in the US could make more of an effort to question established systems and approaches to the built environment. Historically, much of the urban planning in the US has been heavily influenced by European cities. There is a need for planning departments, city administration, urban designers, and others who shape the built environment to learn from non-European cultures. This could entail bringing in more diverse races and ethnicities into decision-making on the built environment. As a country of immigrants, the US is the ideal place to catalyze on cultural diversity. American cities could also learn lessons from urban and rural environments outside of Europe and the US, particularly those that developed out of traditionally collectivist cultures. While those in the profession of the built environment are often driven to “fix” things, more emphasis should be placed on listening and questioning existing convictions to make more empathetic and compassionate decisions. Finally, as with the implications for addressing houselessness, there is a need to challenge decision making on urban development and whom it prioritizes, which is currently driven by capitalism and the market system.

## CHAPTER 10. Implications for Manifestations of Global Migration

### 10.1 Comparison of Approaches to Manifestations of Global Migration With the Home Framework

After discussing the implications on houselessness and the built environment, this section makes linkages back to the phenomenon of global “unsettledness” (more specifically those who are forcibly displaced), which spurred this research. While there is research on the question of home through the lens of global migration (Hoersting and Jenkins 2011), my study takes a step further by making connections between home through the lens of houselessness and this global phenomenon. As with the houseless, others who are displaced by force are considered “vulnerable”. Therefore, there are similarities between many of the humanitarian response efforts (such as refugee response) and approaches to houselessness. As with approaches to houselessness, much of the work is largely service-oriented and maintains a base level of survival rather than providing people with the tools to uplift themselves. While I was not able to study this topic in detail, it is worth reflecting on the implications of the Home Framework on humanitarian response and resettlement.

One example of a framework for humanitarian response is the Cluster Approach, developed in 2005 as part of the Humanitarian Reform Agenda (see Figure 9-1). It aims to coordinate the different clusters, or humanitarian sectors, to create a more effective response to humanitarian emergencies (Humanitarian Response 2017). This model centers around a Humanitarian and Emergency Relief Coordinator, with “spokes” representing the different services, like logistics, health, nutrition, shelter, protection, education, and so on. While more nuanced, the cluster model has been criticized as being “incomprehensible and dysfunctional” and that it does “everything a state would be doing—providing services, security and managing the country”. Furthermore, it has been reported that “cluster groups have no formal decision-making mechanisms or mandates”. In an article specifically discussing the criticism of this approach in Haiti, Imogen Wall, “a communications officer for the U.N. Office for Coordination of



**Figure 10-1: Diagram representing the Cluster Approach used in humanitarian and emergency relief (Source: Humanitarian Response 2017).**

Humanitarian Affairs in Haiti”, said that there is a “communication gap between Haitians and the international humanitarian community in Haiti. It's one of the things the cluster structure fails to address” (O'Connor 2011). While there is a need for immediate service and aid for survival at the onset of an emergency, supplementary approaches are needed. Without supplementary approaches that provide people with a sense of agency in the medium-term or in a transitional phase, there will be a disconnect from the local context and people will have difficulty finding self-actualization and a sense of home. Currently, the Cluster Approach is mostly service-oriented and disconnected from communities on the ground, as approaches to homelessness often are.

In addition to considering emergency humanitarian response, it is also important to address resettlement and community integration of refugees or immigrants in the places they relocate to. According to a United Nations (UN) report published in 2016, of the 244 million people

living outside their country of origin, about one fifth, or 47 million, live in the US. This makes the US the host of the largest number of international migrants (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2016, 1). Despite the Trump administration's efforts to thwart immigration and refugee entry to the US, this number may still increase in the future. In late May of 2017, US State Department "quietly lifted the department's restriction on the number of refugees allowed to enter the United States" which could result in a "near doubling of refugees entering the country" (Harris 2017). With this consideration in mind, the US, in addition to other countries hosting immigrants and refugees, will likely face an increased responsibility of resettling people and working on community integration.

For many refugees and immigrants, leaving behind their host countries is a painful and difficult decision. Some flee wars and persecution, while others leave in search for better employment opportunities. More often than not, the decision to relocate is not an easy or smooth process. People are often leaving the places they considered home for years. They may be longing to return or they may be escaping a bitter reality and want to forget the harsh circumstances they faced. Whatever the case, the question of home will be a difficult one, as they break from the relationships and communities they have been accustomed to. Therefore, it is critical to think about how people will find a sense of home and community as they transition into this new chapter of their lives.

## 10.2 Existing Approaches That Are In Line With the Home Framework

In terms of humanitarian crises, and more specifically, the question of refugee camps, one example that is somewhat reminiscent of the Home Framework is actually a refugee-led initiative. Zaatari Refugee Camp in Jordan, which has been host to Syrian refugees since 2012 (The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) 2017), has gained attention for its bustling refugee-led market. Through a socioeconomic perspective, Dalal writes about the urbanization of refugee camps. In this study, he says that "one of the most significant aspects of urbanisation, the market, is not only a mean for generating income, but also a demonstration of resistance, and a strong will to survive. The hybrid result of advanced urbanity and limited materiality expresses how refugees rejected victimisation" (Dalal 2015, 271). This demonstrates the

importance of the market in providing people with a sense of agency and self-actualization, which are both part of the Home Framework. Furthermore, it is evident that the market is more than just a source of income. It also reminds people of home. A woman that Dalal interviewed said, "I enjoy walking in the market with my friends. I feel comfortable to be surrounded with all these people...as if I was walking in old Souks of Damascus' (Ibid., 271-272). Such places that remind people of their old home are critical in providing them with a sense of comfort and ease in such harsh situations. While it is very difficult to say that people can feel "at home" in a refugee camp, the market in Zaatari Camp seems to at least provide a coping mechanism as they adjust to life in a place they have been forced to adopt as a temporary "home".

One example of an urban program that shares values of the Home Framework and relates to immigrant and refugee integration is the P-Patch Community Gardening program in Seattle. It is named after the Picardo family, which farmed the area that later became the first community garden in Seattle and is a forty-four year old program of the City's Department of Neighborhoods. P-Patches improve connections between community members in a neighborhood, act as gathering spaces, allow people to grow their own food, and provide "fresh produce to Seattle food banks and feeding programs" (Seattle Department of Neighborhoods 2016). Similar to the Home Framework, there is a focus on sharing resources, building relationships, and a sense of agency.

The High Point P-Patch in West Seattle has historically helped refugees and immigrants from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam find a sense of community. They are able to grow food that is from their home countries, which provides a connection to their identities. Since many are from low-income communities, growing their own food also allows them to save money (Belle 2015). In addition, some of the immigrants arrived with limited English, so making friends was a challenge. Gardening at the P-Patch allowed them to connect with people and " find a stronger sense of community that was previously missing in their lives" and begin "to feel better physically, emotionally, and spiritually" (Poyta 2017). As was the case with people who felt homeless and found a sense of home at TC3, the refugees were able to build a sense of community and home through gardening.

### 10.3 Recommendations for Improving Approaches to Manifestations of Global Migration

In terms of emergency and humanitarian response, the Cluster Approach could benefit from considering the Home Framework in order to be truly uplifting for the local community in a medium term or long-term recovery process. This model should be reconfigured to be community-run and self-governed, which would be particularly helpful for a transitional phase. People working in humanitarian response are often based in one place temporarily and do not have a long-term investments in the community they work for. If the community itself (which is personally and emotionally invested) is given the freedom to self-govern, there is much higher potential for a sense of solidarity that would allow people to find their own sense of home.

For those who are physically unable, mentally unable, or unprepared to take matters into their own hands, basic services will be an ongoing need. However, services should not be the only approach. Furthermore, it is important to learn from examples like the market in Zaatari Camp. The fact that this market was created by refugees and continues to be managed by them gives the refugees a sense of ownership, resilience, and dignity –perhaps the closest to a sense of home that can be reached in such difficult living conditions.

In developing policies and planning to accommodate and welcome newcomers, the Home Framework could serve as a guide for integrating people into the communities they will join. Not only will it be important to consider the factors that create a sense of home, but also the external threats. Particularly important in this case is avoiding stigmatization and a fear of “the other”, which is unfortunately often directed at newcomers. Human connection, the core of the Home Framework, is critical to support immigrants and refugees in building relationships with the people they will share their new neighborhood and city with.

Finally, the P-Patch program is a positive example to emulate. Although not meant to be living spaces, community gardens do carry the Home Framework’s characteristics of human connection, sharing resources, food security, agency, and consistency and familiarity. They also have the potential to build solidarity, self-sufficiency, and a supportive environment. As was the

case with the refugees and immigrants from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, community gardens allow people to find a sense of home upon arriving in a new place. Therefore, the P-Patch program can be considered an important element of a larger neighborhood plan that seeks to create a sense of home and integrate newcomers into their new community.

## CHAPTER 11. Recommendations and Future Research

This research, and in particular the Home Framework, begins to provide a better understanding of the different factors that create a sense of home, brought to light by those who are labeled as homeless. More research could be done to continue this exploration and further the understanding of home. This section provides recommendations and considerations for future research and work, particularly that involving homelessness and houselessness.

In terms of the Home Framework specifically, it could be operationalized into a set of guidelines with more concrete action points. It could also be turned into a set of quantifiable metrics to assess existing or future public policy plans, urban developments, and urban designs. The outcome of the assessment could give a numeric score for how well the plan or design will provide a sense of home and community. This would be applicable not only to issues related to houselessness but also urban development in general. It would also be useful to look more in depth at existing policies on houselessness and urban design guidelines to assess whether they fit within the Home Framework. This would be helpful in order to fill existing gaps or to eliminate threats that are damaging a sense of home. The framework should also be tested on an existing or new project, initiative, or policy to determine if following the different factors and avoiding the threats successfully creates a sense of home.

While this research collected some stories from the houseless, it would be beneficial to collect more from houseless communities in Seattle and elsewhere to see if the same themes emerge. Furthermore, it would be valuable to follow up with the people who shared their stories for this research, especially if they have moved on to a different dwelling or way of living. This could provide more insight on how one's feeling of being at home changes as they continue their life journey. Stories could also be collected from houseless individuals who do not live communally. This would provide insight on what home and community mean to people when they live alone, and whether this understanding differs from the meaning of home to those living communally.

It would also be interesting to study home ownership as a sociocultural identity. Perhaps a better understanding of the emphasis on owning a house and its effect on urban development could provide more insight into the understanding of home and houselessness. There is also a need for more research on decolonizing urban planning and public policy in the US. This could provide guidance on how to accommodate for different lifestyles and dwelling types.

Furthermore, while research exists on the meaning of home for refugees, this is a topic that could be studied more. Research on urban planning's role in a world of global migration is also needed. This could include studying refugee resettlement and transitional living conditions. It could also entail additional research on the benefits of self-governance, such as the case of the market in Zaatari Camp. In addition, there is a need for urban planning in the US and elsewhere to learn from various types of communities, both locally and internationally. On a local level, more attention needs to be given to ICs, co-housing, cooperatives, and other models of collective living. On a global level, there is a need for cities in the US to learn from non-European cities and cultures. The academia and professional view of urban planning still seems to be Euro-centric and it is time to look for lessons elsewhere. It is not only the responsibility of the US to look beyond European standards, but also the responsibility of cities that developed from collectivist cultures to do more research on the effect of their culture on city planning. Since the US is a country of numerous cultures, it is especially critical to learn about the lifestyles and meanings of home and community around the world.

As for public space, more research is needed on the use of public spaces for social emergencies such as houselessness. It would be interesting to compare this idea with the use of public space in climate disasters. Furthermore, more research is needed on the use of public spaces for transient living, such as RV communities, travelers, gypsies and other mobile communities. This could address the zoning and policy issues that would be need to make this idea a reality.

From a sociological point of view, urban planning and public policy could benefit from finding linkages with research on single living. Bella DePaulo, a social scientist and Project Scientist at the University of California, Santa Barbara researches single living. In her studies, she has found

that “the rise of single living” provides a chance “to redefine the traditional meaning – and confines – of home, family and community”. She argues that suburban living and the traditional nuclear family structure has proven to be isolating. People with families are less likely to befriend neighbors or be involved in their communities. She discusses the tendency of singles to explore different “lifespaces” and create new forms of family and community: “These individuals might move into their own apartment, but it’s in a building or neighborhood where friends and family are already living. They might buy a duplex with a close friend, or explore cohousing communities or pocket neighborhoods, which are communities of small homes clustered around shared spaces such as courtyards or gardens”(DePaulo 2017). It would be interesting to look for connections between urban planning and the research on single living. What can we learn from single people’s tendency to create their own constructs of home, family, and community and how can this inform how we understand the built environment?

Other intriguing research and writing that could be of interest in urban planning and public policy is that of global author Pico Iyer. Iyer’s writing brings light to the concept of home in a time of unsettledness. This is invaluable as international migration continues and people associate less and less with one single place, community, or idea of home. Urban planning and public policy will be challenged to create places that not only accommodate human mobility, but cultivate a sense of home despite people’s movement.

Finally, there is a need for insight on more empathetic, compassionate ethos in urban planning. One way to explore this is by learning from the research in the social sciences on vulnerability and storytelling. Dr. Brené Brown, a research professor at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work, researches “vulnerability, courage, worthiness, and shame”. She uses grounded theory methodology to explore what she coins “wholehearted living”(Brené Brown LLC 2017). While the linkage to urban planning may not be direct, the world of urban planning could benefit from a more wholehearted approach to its work and research, in addition to using more unpredictable research methodologies and taking the risk of a process that has “no path and, certainly, there is no way of knowing what you will find” (Ibid.)

## CHAPTER 12. Postscript: Home Is Where You Stand

Connection is why we're here; it is what gives purpose and meaning to our lives. The power that connection holds in our lives was confirmed when the main concern about connection emerged as the fear of disconnection.

~Dr. Brené Brown, Researcher and Storyteller, Professor at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work

This has been as much a rigorous academic experience as it has been a personal journey. There is little exaggeration in saying that I have poured myself into this research, often having to pause and reassess whether I was writing a thesis or personal manifesto. And in many ways, it is an unequivocal merger of both.

Much of my experience in Seattle has been a search to make sense of this new piece of my "home puzzle". And while I would not dare to equate my privileged experience with the lives and challenges that many of the houseless face, I believe that I felt homeless for some time. Only after I reached out to people around me and began to foster a community did I truly begin to feel more at home.

In parallel with my personal journey, I have also been making sense of how I fit into the world of urban planning and can contribute to fostering more equitable places through my identity as a TCK. In many ways, urban planning and public policy can have consequences on the lives of the marginalized and less privileged, even when the intentions are in the right place. This is why I felt compelled to listen to the stories of people experiencing houselessness, and the lessons about "home" that I have learnt from TC3 are numerous and invaluable.

Pico Iyer, a global author and traveler, writes and speaks beautifully about the meaning of home in a world of unsettledness. In his TED talk, *Where is home?*, he says:

"...home, we know, is not just the place where you happen to be born. It's the place where you become yourself."

"...it's only by stepping out of your life and the world that you can see what you most deeply care about and find a home."

"And home, in the end, is of course not just the place where you sleep. It's the place where you stand."

Because the people at TC3 had stepped out of their usual lives and routines (whether by force or by choice), they discovered what matters most and found (or are on their way to finding) their own meaning of home. In searching for themselves and for places in which they belong and can simply be, they have taught me that as humans, we may all be on a search to find a home, whether or not we realize it. As the people at TC3 understood well, it is when we stand together, supporting those around us, that we find home.

So we can either lean into the discomfort of each other's hardships and stand as one community, or we can keep ourselves comfortably disconnected and stand alone.

I wholeheartedly choose the discomfort.

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# **APPENDIX A: IDEOLOGIES AND ETHICS OF THE RESEARCH**

## **Research Methodology and Methods**

My overarching research methodology was guided by a creative transformative research methodology, borrowed from the book Creative Research Methods in the Social Sciences by Helen Kara. Kara categorizes creative research as four types: arts-based research, research using technology, mixed methods research, and transformative research frameworks. Kara does not attempt to strictly define creative research but explains that it is quickly changing and tries to break out of traditional disciplinary siloes (Kara 2015, 3). Furthermore, Kara states that creative research is useful for addressing “complex contemporary research questions that traditional research methods are not able to answer” (Ibid., 18).

Three types of transformative research are participatory, feminist, and decolonized research. Participatory research emphasizes the involvement of participants throughout the research process and should benefit both the participants and the researcher (Ibid., 45). It also recognizes that there are limitations to participation (Ibid.), which arose in my research in terms of time restrictions and willingness of participants to share personal stories. Kara describes feminist research as happening in three waves; the second wave in the 1970s challenged the principles of objectivity and neutrality in research and the third wave in the 1990s used the concept of “intersectionality” and moved “beyond gender as a single lens, recognizing that gender interacts with other sites of inequality” (Ibid., 40). Both of these ideas are part of my overall research approach. As for decolonized research, Kara references indigenous researcher Tuhiwai Smith and says it is a way to “redress social injustice and increase self-determination”(Kara 2015, 42).

## **Community Based Participatory Research**

This research borrows from community based participatory action research but does not carry out a full participatory action process; a full process would involve not only investigation and education, but also action (Healy 2006, 94). My research involved the collection of stories from people but I was not able to do comprehensive consultation on the development of the research questions nor was there an “egalitarian” approach through the “equitable distribution

of tasks and roles in the research process" (Healy 2006, 95). As with participatory research, my research assumes that "that the original causes of oppression lie in macro-social structures, such as those associated with capitalism and patriarchy" (Reason 1994, 328). I also agree with some critiques of participatory action processes (PAR). For example, this includes the need to recognize the power dynamics in the research process because "The failure to acknowledge the positive or negative operations of researcher power in PAR does not mean it disappears, but that such recognition is sent underground" (Healy 2006, 97). In my research, I do not claim that there were no power dynamics at all, although I did my best to allow people to shape their personal stories based on what was most relevant to them. People were aware that I was working on my master's thesis and they were also asked to sign a consent form if they were comfortable having their story shared as part of this research.

### **Feminist Methodologies: The Ethics of Care**

The literature on feminist methodologies expresses that reaching an "acceptable universal definition of feminism or of what it is that constitutes feminist research is problematic" and that the approach to feminism differs by context (Franks 2013, 38). Therefore, I do not attempt to choose one understanding of feminism to apply to this research. I do, however, focus on the concept of the ethics of care, in particular through the lens described by Fiona Robinson in [The Ethics of Care: A Feminist Approach to Human Security](#). Robinson discusses the question of human security on a global scale through the lens of care. She states that "Human life as we know it would be inconceivable without relations of care" (F. Robinson 2011, 2) and that "care is a global political issue and that decisions regarding the provision and distribution of care are of profound moral significance, insofar as they are central to the survival and security of people around the world." The question of homelessness is not only found in the US but has become a global issue of human security. My research argues that human connection is at the core of feeling at home and finding a sense of community, echoing Robinson's sentiments about the inconceivability of life without care. She also addresses the "material, emotional, and psychological conditions that create insecurity for people" (F. Robinson 2011, 4); this is in line with my decision to listen to personal stories about the journey to becoming homeless and all the related conditions. Her approach also emphasizes the importance of acting and practicing care, saying that "an ethics of care regards morality as existing not in a series of universal rules

or principles that can guide action but in the practices of care through which we fulfill our responsibilities to particular others" (F. Robinson 2011, 4). At the same time she "confronts the traditional formulation of "victims" in the human security literature" and "challenges the static conceptualization of certain individuals and groups as dependent or vulnerable"(F. Robinson 2011, 10). This ideology is appropriate for my research as I intended to learn from members of TC3 and was not attempting to victimize them or view them as vulnerable. I am actually also trying to avoid the idea of empowering people (as this has an inherent power dynamic) but instead trying to better understand a situation and question practices or policies that do not give people agency over their own lives.

Furthermore, she argues that "human security is widely understood as seeking to safeguard the "vital core of human lives from critical pervasive threats while promoting long-term human flourishing"(F. Robinson 2011, 12). This idea of "long-term human flourishing" is applicable to my research since I argue that we should always make people feel at home, regardless of the nature of their dwelling or their conditions, feelings, or circumstances. The goal is to make people feel welcome and make everyone a part of the community of a city and humanity for the long-term.

### **Decolonizing Methodologies: Ways of Being, The Other, and Colonial-Blind Discourses**

The purpose of borrowing from the literature on decolonization for this research is to question the underlying cultural values that have guided urban planning in the US. With much of planning in the US being influenced by Western Europe, there is still an underlying colonial perspective that determines how the built environment is developed, what is and is not appropriate in private space and public space, and what kind of lifestyles are acceptable. Urban planning does not only create infrastructure for a built environment but also infrastructure for certain lifestyles. This is inherently discriminatory since it delegitimizes different ways of existence and creates an "othering" of those who do not fit the mold of mainstream lifestyles.

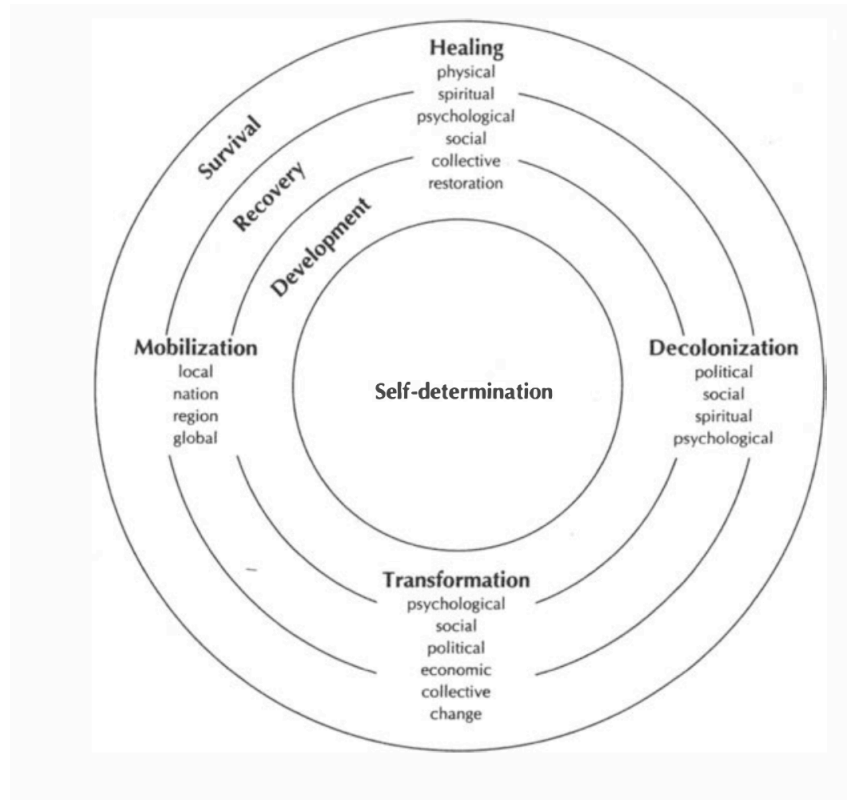
In the literature on decolonizing methodologies, there is discussion on the idea of the individual, community, space, and ways of knowing. In Decolonizing Methodologies by Linda

Tuhiwai Smith, she “identifies research as a significant site of struggle between the interests and ways of knowing of the West and the interests and ways of resisting of the Other” (Smith 1999, 2). Although this book is “addressed more specifically to those researchers who work with, alongside and for communities who have chosen to identify themselves as indigenous” (Smith 1999, 5), the idea that a Western colonial perspective creates “other” groups and delegitimizes their way of life is similar to the struggles of minorities or marginalized groups, such as the houseless. Smith also discusses the “impoverished conditions” that indigenous groups might live in as a result of “politically oppressive regimes” and how they are “constantly fed messages about their worthlessness, laziness, dependence and lack of ‘higher’ order human qualities”(Smith 1999, 4). This echoes the condition of the houseless who are also often stigmatized and viewed as not putting in the effort to change their situations.

Decolonizing methodologies also reference feminism, saying that it and “other critical approaches to research have greatly influenced the social sciences” (Smith 1999, 9). However it also recognizes that “Even Western feminism, however, has been challenged, particularly by women of colour, for conforming to some very fundamental Western European world views, value systems and attitudes towards the Other” (Smith 1999, 43). In addition to value systems, decolonizing methodologies discuss how Western research focuses more on the individual than the “social organization” (Smith 1999, 47). This is relevant for research on TC3 and approaches to houselessness as the focus is often on providing housing solutions for the individual rather than communal living. There is also discussion on the concept of space and “the ways in which society is viewed (public/private space, city/ country space)”(Smith 1999, 51). Once again, this is relevant in discussing the houseless community as they are stigmatized for dwelling in public space.

A particularly interesting approach is the “self-determination” research agenda, which differs from Western research in its less objective or neutral approach, with terms like political, spiritual, and psychological (see Figure 12-1). Using the metaphor of ocean tides, it has four directions “decolonization, healing, transformation and mobilization”, which represent “processes which connect, inform and clarify the tensions between the local, the regional and the global. “The “four major tides” of “survival, recovery, development, self-determination”

are “conditions and states of being” for indigenous peoples (Smith 1999, 116). While my research does not specifically address indigenous groups, this global, subjective approach speaks to the ethos of my research which views the case of homelessness and the understanding of home as part of a global phenomenon of unsettledness and movement. It also speaks to the idea of moving from a state of survival to self-determination.



**Figure A-1: Diagram of the self-determination research agenda used in decolonizing methodologies, which influenced this study (Smith 1999, 117).**

There is also research discussing “colonial blind discourses” which “normalize western knowledge organization and assumptions, promote western notions of being (metaphysics), and promote westernization of knowledge and its institutionalization through means perceived as neutral” (Calderon 2008). This is very relevant to research on homelessness because much of the understanding and resulting approaches stem from a Western notion of being. While those in the professional world addressing this topic may not intentionally be “colonial-blind”, “it is harder for many to “see” or acknowledge that they are engaging in these types of discourses as they have been normalized for so long, and are in fact a functional component of American identity and nation- building” (Ibid.).

### **Ethics of the Research Methodology**

Throughout the research process, I followed the basic guidelines of “The Ethics of Conducting Community-Engaged Homelessness Research” from the Journal of Academic Ethics. From the start, I made sure “to acknowledge that although people who are homeless have homelessness in common, it does not necessarily define them and they do not form a homogeneous population”. I recognized the “multi-faceted” nature of homelessness and that I would be speaking to people of all genders, ages, health conditions, living and family situations (Runnels et al. 2009, 58).

Furthermore, I followed general guidelines on informed consent, protection, and safety. While compensation is discussed as a possibility (Ibid., 61), I did not have the funding to do this. I tried to “compensate” by being flexible with the times I was available to speak to people, thanking them before and after the interview for their time, making an AutoCAD drawing for the general layout of TC3 at their next location, and informally bringing treats (such as cake, donuts, and coffee) to TC3 to thank the whole community for welcoming me. I was not able to address post-interview distress, neither for the participants nor for myself (both of which are recommended). I also did not face any issues with ethical tracking, as I did not have the opportunity follow up with anyone for more elaboration on their story (Ibid., 62).

### **Summary of the Research Methodology**

In summary, my research methodology and positionality were influenced by (but did not fully adopt) community-based participatory research methodologies, feminist ethics of care, and decolonizing methodologies. Furthermore, I tried to follow the general guidelines on ethics of research with houseless people. All of these considerations were very important in being sensitive to the complexity of my research question and recognizing the historical, ideological, and methodological nuances that influenced my perspective on homelessness and houselessness.

## **APPENDIX B: GETTING TO KNOW PEOPLE AT TENT CITY 3**

One of the core aspects of my research was building a personal relationship with TC3. Before and during the process of collecting stories, I spent time getting to know people in order to build trust and become a familiar face to members of TC3.

The ways in which I got involved with TC3 and other related efforts included:

- Helping TC3 pack and move from their former site to the UW campus on December 16 and 17, 2016.
- Joining Tent City Collective (TCC) and attending weekly meetings, which were attended by UW students and staff, members of TC3, professionals working in housing justice and advocacy, and anyone else interested in participating.
- Joining Design Activist Collective (DAC), a College of Built Environments student group, which organized a design charrette to rethink the fence, design for TC3.
- Consulting with TCC members, a formerly houseless person, UW staff, and others to brainstorm ideas for my thesis early on in the process.
- Attending two panels on houselessness and housing justice organized by the Community, Environment, and Planning (CEP) undergraduate program at UW. Panelists included people struggling with housing, people who had formerly struggled with housing, and people working in housing justice in Seattle.
- Consulting with Jason of TC3, who was on the Carlson Center committee responsible for reviewing proposals for academic engagement with TC3.
- Spending time at TC3 regularly, at an average of three to four days a week.

## APPENDIX C: FLYER FOR COLLECTING STORIES FROM TENT CITY 3



**Stories of Home and Community**  
from Tent City 3

What does **home** mean to you?

What is your **community**?

What is your **life story** and how has it led you to where you are now?

I am a student at the University of Washington collecting personal stories and expressions of home and community from the point of view of Tent City 3 residents. If you are interested in sharing your story of home and community, please get in touch!

Contact Ru'a Al-Abweh  
[alabweh@uw.edu](mailto:alabweh@uw.edu) / 425 295 9982

(Front)

With your help, I aim to:

- Learn what home and community mean to you.
- Raise the voices of members of the TC3 community.
- Question the meaning of home and community in the Urban Planning profession; this is critical as we face challenges with affordable housing and displacement in Seattle.

You are welcome to share your story in the way that is comfortable for you. You can do this by:

- Writing a story, essay, or poem
- Writing music or a song
- Creating a drawing/other form of visual art
- Making a short film/video
- Taking a collection of photos
- Having an interview/conversation with me

If none of the above methods work for you but you still want to share your story, don't hesitate to be in touch with me! We can find an option that works for you.

(Back)

# APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM FOR TENT CITY 3 STORIES

## Consent Form for Master of Urban Planning Thesis: *Homeful Albeit Houseless? Sense of Home and Community for the “Unsettled”: A Case Study of Tent City 3*

*Homeful Albeit Houseless* is a master’s thesis for the Master of Urban Planning Program at the Department of Urban Design and Planning, University of Washington. It aims to collect personal stories and interpretations of home and community from the point of view of Tent City 3 (TC3) residents, who are being hosted on the UW campus for 90 days (December 17, 2016 – March 18, 2017). You have the choice to independently tell your story and express your idea of home and community through the creative method that you are comfortable with –this could be a narrative, poem, song, art piece, collection of photos, short film, or dance. You also have the option of telling me your story while I audio record or take notes. If none of those ideas work for you, I am happy to discuss a different method of expression that you are comfortable with.

With your help, I aim to:

1. Learn what home and community mean to you.
2. Raise the voices of members of the TC3 community.
3. Challenge and rethink the meaning of home in the Urban Planning profession; this is critical as we face challenges with affordable housing in Seattle and increase in an “unsettled” life globally (i.e. immigration, refugee crises, environmental/climate migration, being unhoused).

By participating and sharing your story/interpretation of home and community, you are helping me understand your point of view, which the general public does not often hear. You are also providing me with the information I need to rethink the idea of home in urban planning and challenge the way our cities are planned and designed.

I hope that this will not only be valuable for me and those in the field of urban planning/design but also for you and others to get to know the many unique perspectives of your community members.

Thank you for sharing your story and for helping me complete my master’s thesis!

Please initial the following statements (you have the option to choose one or more; while none are mandatory, by agreeing to sign one or more, you allow me to do a better job of representing your point of view accurately):

1. I agree to participate by sharing my story in the form that I am comfortable with to be analyzed for this master’s thesis \_\_\_\_\_ (Initials)
2. I agree to have photos taken of any objects I voluntarily share. \_\_\_\_\_ (Initials)
3. (For those who produce a creative work) I agree to have my work included in the master’s thesis. \_\_\_\_\_ (Initials)
4. I agree to have my name included in the master’s thesis (if you choose not to sign this, your contribution/story will remain anonymous and your privacy will be protected). \_\_\_\_\_ (Initials)

Name of Storyteller/Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender : \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Storyteller/Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Story Collector/Researcher: Ru’a Al-Abweh, Master of Urban Planning Candidate (2015-2017), Department of Urban Design and Planning, College of Built Environments, University of Washington

# APPENDIX E: TRANSCRIPTION TEMPLATE

Homeful Albeit Houseless – Transcribing Voice Recordings

Feb 2017

Ru'a Al-Abweh

Tent City 3 Story Transcription				
Date	Name	Transcription	Lesson Learned/Takeaway	

## **APPENDIX F: LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES**

### **Representation**

With qualitative research such as this one, there is always room for more stories and interpretation because everyone's story is unique. In terms of sampling, it would have been helpful to hear from more than twenty people, but given the time available for the thesis, I needed to set a deadline for collecting stories. Also, since there were no conditions on who I wanted to speak to, this meant I did not have a systematic method to ensure a balance in gender, race, age, or other demographic characteristics. The only condition for being a part of the project was to be a resident of TC3 (regardless of how long the person had been a part of TC3) or to have been a member in the past, in order to capture the various experiences of people who join this community. There was a higher number of male participants than females, but as I was told by a TC3 resident, the homeless community generally has a higher number of males than females. So this may just be a reflection of the reality and not a fault of the research process. The research also does not cover the specific concerns of women or minority groups.

### **Collecting Stories**

I faced some challenges in the process of collecting stories. The first challenge was the time limitation to collect stories while TC3 was on the UW campus. While I could have collected more stories after they moved to their new location in Skyway, WA, it would have been very difficult to coordinate times to visit, especially with the distance. As mentioned previously in this report, living on the UW campus just a few minutes walk away from TC3's temporary location made it possible to meet with people whenever was convenient for them and to also reschedule if needed. Another challenge was the high turnover rate at TC3. I faced a few situations in which I met people who expressed interest in participating but then left TC3 before I was able to speak with them. In other cases, I was unable to meet with some who were interested because their schedules were too busy. In addition, I faced some situations in which people were not interested or were uncomfortable sharing their story.

## **Content and Story Form**

As for the form in which the stories were shared, I did not receive as wide of a variety as I had initially planned. Although I provided several options (such as writing, conversation, visual art, photography, video, and so on) and was open to other options if someone had a different idea, all the participants chose either writing or conversation. Having more variety in the forms of stories may have provided insight that written and spoken stories may not reveal. That being said, the written and orally shared stories were still very valuable. However, most of the writing pieces did not provide as much insight as the conversations. This is likely because the time spent writing the pieces varied from person to person and I was unable to follow up with questions and guide the story as I did with the oral stories. Nevertheless, the writing still produced interesting and helpful content. It was valuable in providing a platform for those who wanted to share their experiences but were more comfortable doing so on their own time rather than in direct conversation with someone. In terms of the authenticity of the stories, the scope of this project did not include fact-checking and I trusted that the people were being honest. Even if there had been capacity for fact-checking, this would be very difficult to do with personal anecdotes.

## **Personal Bias**

Finally, it would be dishonest to deny the risk of personal bias. I did my best to maintain a nonjudgmental and objective stance, but I have also had my own experiences of trying to figure out what home means for myself. This may have subconsciously influenced what cues I listened for while hearing people's stories. That being said, I tried not to ask questions in a way that would steer answers in a specific direction based on my own personal views or base my questions on pre-conceived notions or assumptions. I also tried to be careful not to romanticize the reality of living on the street or make sweeping claims about all of residents of TC3 or the houseless in general, as the reasons for houselessness are varied. I did my best to approach the project with a genuine desire to listen, understand, and provide a platform for the voices of this often misunderstood community.

## APPENDIX G: PROTOCOL FOR TRANSCRIPTION AND WRITTEN STORIES

This section provides clarification on the protocol used for transcribing the conversations and transferring handwritten ones to a digital format. Because of time constraints, transcriptions and typed-up stories were not shared with the participants for review.

### Transcribing Stories (audio-recorded conversations)

1. Square brackets [ ] are used to include explanatory text not mentioned or stated by the speaker, such as clarification for an acronym, a name or indication of the relationship to the speaker, or other clarification. For example, VA [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs].
  2. Parentheses ( ) are used to provide clarification for nonverbal communication, such as emotional expression, actions, or sounds. For example, (laughs) or (knocks on table).
  3. Ellipses ... are used to show an omission or trailing off at the end of a sentence.
  4. Em-dash — is used to indicate a break or interruption in the flow of a sentence or thought.
  5. Commas (,) are used to indicate short interruptions in a sentence or thought.
  6. Italicized words indicate a storyteller's emphasis on a word or statement. The emphasis is not my own. For example, "...in probably *the* worst neighborhood in Phoenix, Arizona". Emphasis is on "the".
  7. [inaudible] is used when a part of the conversation was indecipherable.
  8. Three dashes --- are used in between quotes from the same person to indicate that there is an omission of several lines or sentences. In other words, it indicates that the two quotes were not stated directly after each other.
  9. A long line (shown below) is used to indicate the end of quotes from one person and a transition into another person's point of view. It is also used to indicate the end of all stories for a particular facet.
-

10. Contractions (for example "don't" or "isn't") have been maintained if they were spoken as such.
11. Colloquial words and slang have been maintained and have not been corrected to their formal or literally form if spoken as such. For example, "gonna" was not changed to "going to", "ain't" was not changed to "isn't", and "told 'em" was not changed to "told them".
12. Pronunciation and accents were maintained where possible. For example, "doin'" was not changed to "doing".
13. For non-native English speakers, speech was transcribed as close as possible to the way it was spoken. Clarification is provided if the meaning of a statement is unclear.
14. In transcriptions that include a back and forth conversation with me, I have used the initial of my first name, "R", to indicate that I was speaking. The first letter of the participant's name is used in these cases to indicate when they are speaking. For example, "J" for Jeffrey. For those who chose to remain anonymous, "A" is used to indicate when they are speaking.

### **Digitizing Handwritten Stories**

Some of the people who shared their stories in writing typed and emailed them. In these cases, there was no process of transferring the story into any other format. Others shared handwritten stories. For these cases, I typed up the stories. Stories were typed up as written without making corrections to grammar or spelling mistakes. Corrections were only made if a spelling mistake changed the meaning of a sentence or statement. These corrections are indicated with square brackets [ ]. For example, someone wrote "My" but based on the context of the story, I deduced that they meant to write "May". This is written as "M[a]y" to indicate that I made the correction by adding the letter "a".

## **APPENDIX H: WHY ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS IS URGENT –SELECT STORIES FROM TC3**

The stories presented in the research gave an overview of the themes extracted from the stories and broke them down into different facets to make sense of what it's like to lack a sense of home, what factors create a sense of home, what people gain from a sense of home, and what external factors detract from this sense of home. This supplementary section explains why addressing the condition of homelessness is urgent. While sharing their journeys and understanding of home and community, people also shared traumatizing experiences that highlight the urgency of the situation and the dangers people have experienced. While some have found a sense of home with TC3, others still feel hopeless even while part of this community.

Ivan shared the story of living in a stressful, dangerous situation where the landlord did not care about what happened in the house and the police did little to stop the chaos:

Spent two and a half years in a place I like to call "the shooting gallery". That was nothing but drama, stress everyday, having to watch your back...

-----

The house is built for eight people. And yet at times we have at least...one time we had forty people...It was a private owner's house. And no matter how much I...like, "Come on man, we gotta clean this up. Never budged. It took 'em a year and a half to get the house clean. And they wanted, you know...wanted to blame me mainly. I'm like, "Go ahead and blame me. I wanna be safe." You know, I don't wanna have to worry about steppin' on blood or needles or people dying in the house. His own brother died in the house. Well then he was brought back to life by [inaudible]. If I had waited a few more minutes, [he] may not [have] come back.

-----

Well there was a bunch of tents in the backyard too. So, yeah it could have been more people even. But that landlord...he didn't care how he makes his money. He doesn't care who he had in there, whatever. He just wanted that money in his pocket. Didn't care what it cost either in the end. But, the way I look at it too, I'm glad I'm out of that house [be]cause I don't have to deal with that negativity anymore and the drama...just daily arguments between all the addicts and the thieves.

---

And then when we finally got it cleaned out, it still ended up being the same way just a different class of addict. And one of the guys, the guy that basically forced my hand in... just... made it easier for me to get out of there. He was so...a couple of days before we were just sittin' there talkin', smokin' weed, watchin' TV. You know, hanging out and laughing. I get out of the hospital and next thing I know I'm getting punched. I was like, "How'd we go from sittin' there talkin',

smiling, laughing, smoking weed, to you punching me. And that's just...it just took place in four days. I was like, "OK this is weird. This ain't right." And it took SPD [Seattle Police Department] an hour and a half each time to respond. I called 911 twice. And it took 'em an hour and a half to respond. I was like, "Wow." And I told 'em, I said, "There's threats of physical violence." And it took 'em an hour and a half. I was like, "Ok. I see how you guys are. I hope you guys clean up a little bit. Don't help me. Thank you."

----

That's, that's a big thing. I thought I had people at that house had my back, and yet there I was having to pull the knives out. And I don't like that feeling, I really don't and I'm glad I'm away from that and...just dealing with...what I'm dealing with here is a lot easier.

----

You know they've been up here for a while and stuff like that. I mean, I'm the outsider. But I gained all their trust, which I had to so I can survive. You know, and it wasn't –well, I'm not gonna lie, it was to save my own ass.

---

...the cops were there daily too. The landlord gave them keys to the house. SPD<sup>21</sup>, DOC<sup>22</sup>. They had access to the house.

Ivan also spoke of dealing with violent or dangerous outsiders trying to join TC3.

"...you know like these predators that are out there...pedophile that I turned away that one night. You know, he knew he was gonna get caught. He knew. He knew. Just his reaction. And he's, you know, doin' this thing like he's gonna punch me. I'm like, "You're gonna punch me while I'm sitting here. Really? Please do, go ahead. Make my day." And they started turnin' towards the securities and all that stuff and I'm like, "Hey, time for you to go. I was gonna try to help you out, but you don't want help? Leave." And they started getting more violent, and I'm like "Oh my God."

---

Courtney also had a difficult experience being houseless, as she narrated:

...I made a conscious choice for myself to go live in my car with my sister and that was not a good situation and I did it for like two months. And I felt desperate. That was...some of the most desperate, desperate times, is that time from March last year to May.

-----

...officially I became homeless I think a year ago. I mean I was staying with friends before that but I've been.... yeah it wasn't a good environment where I was living. It was not a good environment. It was you either do drugs to keep your place to live or go. And I chose to go and I was living in my car. And I don't have my car no more...and my sister's boyfriend is not a good person...I got

---

<sup>21</sup> SPD: Seattle Police Department

<sup>22</sup> DOC: Department of Corrections

in a fight with him and he threw me out of my car. Like [my ex-fiancé] was already up here. We were still together and you know, I was already planning, my sister was going to go to Oklahoma and I was supposed to go but then I didn't want to so I was making plans with [my ex-fiancé] to sneak up here to Seattle. [Be]cause that's where I wanted to be...with [my ex-fiancé]. And he threw me out so I hitchhiked. Hitchhiked all the way from Portland up here. That was scary. If you were driving, three or four hours, it took me three days.

---

...like I got attacked once when I was hitchhiking and they got me into a shelter. And then I started hitchhiking again [be]cause it wasn't going fast enough about getting a bus ticket. And then I got attacked again and finally they got me a bus ticket and I got up here. But it took me three days. Three of the scariest days in the world.

---

Anonymous 1 shared that she had been “forced into homelessness because of a stalking situation where individuals used their influence to manipulate my circumstances.” Others are struggling with health issues, such as Daren who is battling kidney cancer (diagnosed in the past year), and José, who has arthritis. José described his struggles with the illness:

Pero one day I came, I feel too much pain, like this [gestures] and I can't walking. And I don't know what happened my body! The doctor over there he told me in Montana, “I can't find nothing to you. It's more better you go to Seattle, WA.” I coming to Seattle, WA and I go in the doctor, the doctor check my blood one time, one more time, one more time, one more time and no find nothing. The last time, the doctor, she told me, I find your problem. You have arthritis. All my body! So oh, right now, see, I'm good! Pero someday, I can hold nothing. Nothing! The pain change all the time.

----

I coming to right here. I don't make money! Where I go? I don't wanna make a mistake? Where is the place going? Tent City 3. Only this option we got.

---

It's not too easy. I drink the same medicine use it for the cancer people. This is strong! When somebody he is sick, I got to get away!

In the last statement on needing to be away from people who are sick, José was referring to his low immunity, which is a side effect of the arthritis medication.

---

Despite many finding solace and sanctuary in TC3, many still feel hopeless. When asked what plans he had for the future, Jason replied:

I actually probably in a couple of years, I'm probably gonna go up in the mountains and just pass away. I have stage 4 liver disease. I ain't got too many more years. And I'm a severe alcoholic...

When someone casually discusses death as a preference, there is no stronger indicator that this is a true emergency. Losing lives is not a matter to be taken lightly and it is pertinent that we recognize how dangerous the lack of a sense of home is to people's well-being. Urban planning and public policy can adjust the ways in which houselessness and homelessness are addressed to support the well-being of those who have long felt ostracized and excluded from a city's community. A first step in this direction is to rethink the ways in which people's lives are affected by the built environment and create genuine communities so that people feel more at home within the wider community of a city.